

Istanbul and the Grassroots

Civil Society Organisations,
Local Politics and Urban Transformation

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Preface

Cities, particularly in the South, are far from offering equal conditions and opportunities to their resident communities. [...] In some of these cities, the urban divide between “haves” and “have nots” opens up a gap [...] which can produce social instability or at least generate high social and economic costs, not only for the urban poor, but also for society at large. (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2010, p. VIII)

It is widely acknowledged that in an increasingly urbanising world, a long-term and therefore necessarily sustainable way of urban development is only feasible with the help and involvement of an active civil society, potentially helping to bridge the described urban divide between rich and poor. At the same time, a deepening urban divide furthers urban informality as a continuum, including all sectors, levels and actors within the city in a constantly negotiated process (Herrle, Fokdal 2011), becoming potentially “*a new paradigm for understanding urban culture.*” (Roy, AlSayyad 2004, p. 9)

Istanbul is the subject of this study, which describes an emerging civil society in the field of urban development struggling for its right to the city. This relatively new multi-actor environment is characterised by an increasing dynamic that is introduced by a heavy-handed urban transformation agenda following the logic of a globalising economy and a state facilitating this development, systematically preferring stronger urban actors to socio-economically more vulnerable population groups furthering both social and spatial segregation. Half of the built environment of Istanbul has developed informally during the last 60 years. The so-called Gecekondu cannot be compared with informal settlements in other parts of the world in regards to the crime rate, the standard of living, the provision of utilities, schools and health care. The study is interested in understanding the complex process of the formation of civil society organisations between the poles of neo-liberal market developments,

democratisation processes with the legacy of traditional authoritarian top-down decision making. Istanbul for me, in this context, serves as a laboratory of urban development, facing the described phenomena of globalisation in a context that has been isolated for a relatively long time. My interest in this subject lies in understanding the potentials and challenges to grassroots organisations within this transformation process; more specifically, how they get established, what they achieve, how they connect themselves to other actors in the field and what obstacles they meet on their way.

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Acronyms

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
BIMTAŞ	Boğaziçi İnşaat Müşavirlik A.Ş., private public development company of the IMM
CBO	Community based organisation
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
DA	Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio)
FEBAYDER	Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray neighbourhood association
GÜLDAM	Gülsuyu Gülenso Yaşam ve Dayanışma Merkezi (Gülsuyu Gülenso Life and Solidarity Centre)
IMECE	Means literally “Working together for the community” and is the short name of the civil platform <i>Toplumun Sehircilik Hareketi</i> (Urbanism Movement of Society)
IMF	International Monetary Found
IMM	Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
IMP	Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Design Centre
JDP	Justice and Development Party (<i>AKP – Adalet ve Kalınma Partisi</i>)
MHA	Mass Housing Authority (<i>TOKI - Toplu Konut Idaresi Baskanlığı</i>)
NHA	Neighbourhood Association
TOKI	Toplu Konut Idaresi Baskanlığı (MHA - Mass Housing Authority)
UT	Urban Transformation
UTP	Urban Transformation Project

1 Chapter: Setting the Scene: Urban Transformation and Civil Society in Istanbul

I did my first explorative field trip to Istanbul in May 2008. As a young architect who was only four years in practice, I felt the urgent need to really understand urban processes before planning something. At the same time, I was attracted to the unplanned and the informal urbanisation that Istanbul is known for because I had already been interested for a long time in the question of how it is possible, if at all, to create a vivid, heterogeneous and pluralistic city. The “unplanned” city was, somewhat romantically, my idea for the subject of study that should provide a possible answer to this. “How can we plan the unplanned?” was, consequently, my first field research question. Focusing on the well-known Gecekondu phenomenon, the Turkish version of informal settlements, I learned quickly that the most pressing urban issue at stake at that time was taking place in a different venue: Everybody who was into urban development in Istanbul was talking about Sulukule. Aside from other places, Sulukule was the medially well-captured focal point of a new way of urban development that broke radically with customary old habits of low-income housing policy and governance in Turkey. It soon became clear that the informal nature of urbanisation in Turkey, which had produced mechanisms that had worked for decades, was coming to a sudden end: The patronage-based system of urban development was being redeemed by a new logic from the implementation of capitalist land-market systems in connection with state-led segregation, which was leading through new legislation to a widespread cleansing of inner cities as well as former Gecekondu areas. De jure and de facto homeowners, in addition to tenants, were getting expelled from their homes with little or no compensation. Over time, as I visited Istanbul continually, the relations to the Sulukule platform grew stronger and

more personal for me. In these visits, I was able to witness a developing scene of civil society actors struggling on shaky grounds against urban transformation in Istanbul. I soon became interested not so much in any spatial or physical outcome of informal urbanisation, but focused my research gap in this emerging field of civil society, which became active wherever the new urban policy was about to be implemented. The urban segregation that this new civil society opposed was not only a problem of informality. Therefore, I wanted to understand how informal urban development in Istanbul and the emergence of civil society as a possible corrective factor, and local politics, were interacting.

1.1 The Emergence of Civil Society Actors in the Face of Urban Transformation

As already indicated above, urban transformation has been a newly observable phenomenon in urban development in Turkey since 2001, when the country was hit by the most devastating economic crisis in its history. The crisis almost caused the collapse of the Turkish banking sector, and the currency was devaluated by nearly 50% in a short time, resulting in dramatically increasing prices, especially on imports. Subsequently, international investors pulled out of the markets, leaving directly or indirectly hundreds of thousands jobless. In this context, the newly formed Justice and Development Party (AKP) of the former mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, came to power. The historic economic crisis and the still-perceivable aftermath of the 1999 Marmara earthquake that also shook Istanbul recognisably created a climate where the religious neo-liberal party could start its radical restructuring of the republic. This restructuring occurred especially of the construction sector, which became the backbone of the economic miracle that can be witnessed in recent years, in which Turkey has shown a remarkable economic development that has led to Turkey's nickname: "Eurasia's rising tiger." (Parkinson 2011) The new neo-liberal agenda aims at implementing fully-working land markets (Kuyucu 2009b) that allow powerful capitalist actors, consequently, to take over the "use and exchange rights" (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 377) from "both the public and (most informal) low-income inhabitants." This development takes place on the fringes of the cities, such as in inner-city areas; both in the ambiguous terrain of largely informally developed settlements all around¹ the big cities in Turkey, with subsequent widely existing forms

¹ Today, these originally informal and peripheral settlements have often become fully integrated in the formal city and are hard to distinguish from the "formal" city. The former, peripheral locations have often become valuable locations due to new transportation networks and the on-going growth of the city.

of informal ownership, as well as in rundown inner-city quarters of largely marginalised population groups that followed non-Muslim minorities. This has left behind deteriorated housing conditions and partially unclear ownership conditions due to governmental long-term tactics of expulsion in 1923 and 1965 (see section 5.4). The rise of resistance movements in response to this urban transformation is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of Turkey's civil society. In a state of continuous coup d'états with a radical policy against critical minds, civil society has been rather underdeveloped in terms of being a critical and self-confident counterweight to the state, especially after the 1980 putsch new laws and harassing regulations, which made it extremely difficult for civil society organisations to form and maintain high levels of involvement. Since the 1999 earthquake, a new mobilisation of civil society actors became visible that was acting in the face of an inert state apparatus that failed to take appropriate action. Since the increasing implementation of urban transformation projects and the looming extent of this new agenda, a growing number of initiatives from civil society have become active in the realm of urban development. At the same time the implementing authorities in charge of the urban transformation projects have come up with a wide range of strategies and actions that tackle the newly emerging grassroots mobilisation and that manage very effectively to separate the different actors and thus lessen their efforts profoundly.

1.2 Research Questions

Given the above context, I wanted to have a close look at the described dynamics in different, specific settings. Therefore, I chose in the end four cases that allowed me to examine the scope of urban transformation outlined above and at the same time find comparable cases that could open up an understanding of the range of different actors in the field and their special characteristics. I examined four different neighbourhood associations in four different neighbourhoods where urban transformation projects are already or are about to be implemented.

In my detailed analysis of four cases, which are comparable in their situations and yet show, respectively, different courses in the implementation of the urban transformation projects and in their dynamics of mobilisation, I strive to answer the following questions:

- How do grassroots organisations emerge, organise and interact with other civil society actors in the field?
- How do these grassroots organisations react to potential threats posed to them by urban transformation (e.g., expropriation, demolition and forced eviction)?
- How do they influence local policies?
- How do authorities react to the newly emerging civil society actors?
- What are the possible obstacles the newly emerging civil society actors are facing?
- What are possible identifiable common grounds to strengthen sustained civil society mobilisation?

Hypothesis

The explained research questions are followed by working hypotheses, which are validated in the last chapter of the thesis.

1. Hypothesis:

The neighbourhoods affected by urban transformation with the consequence of expropriation, forced eviction and the demolition of the existing housing stock, are mainly inhabited by (originally) rural-to-urban migrants who originally squatted on state-owned land or took over already marginalised inner city areas, where they partly squatted but generally held de jure land titles.

2. Hypothesis:

The second working hypothesis assumes that these rural-to-urban migrants have largely a rather conservative and apolitical mind-set due to their widespread status as homeowners and also due to their continuous affiliation to a certain hometown or village identity, which is rooted in a more religious and less secular tradition than in the big cities, especially Istanbul. Because of this feature, the mobilisation of people to take up collective interests and show solidarity is rather difficult.

3. Hypothesis:

According to Kuyuku/Ünsal (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 3) the form and strength of resistance is largely influenced by the existing tenure situation in the respective neighbourhoods. They observe a much stronger and unified front of urban resistance in Tarlabası than in Başibüyük, which leads to an at least temporary hold-up of the implementation of the urban transformation project (UTP), whereas the Başibüyük resistance has fallen apart due to the bargaining process for personal gains. Kuyuku and Ünsal thus conclude that

the informal nature of tenure in the former Gecekondu quarter of Başibüyük leads to less unified resistance. I examined this hypothesis through my own case study research.

4. Hypothesis:

Because of the new urban transformation policies, many former homeowners get de facto expropriated, which raises pressure on these homeowners and leads to an increased politicisation and a higher degree of civil society organisation. As a consequence, a more self-aware civil societal culture emerges.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Research Approach and Design

In the pursuit of finding answers to the above formulated research questions and to prove the working hypotheses, I employ methods of qualitative social research. I chose the method of case study research because three preconditions were given according to which case study research is the preferred method. According to Robert K. Yin: "...case studies are the preferred method when

- (a) "how" or "why" questions are being posed,
- (b) the investigator has little control over events, and
- (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context."

(Yin 2009, p. 2)

In doing a case study, I chose a holistic multiple-case design, which allows for both the comparison of the outcomes of the single cases and for triangulation. The evidence gained from multiple-case designs is often regarded as more compelling and the whole study thus appears to be more robust (Yin 2009, p. 53). Nevertheless, the multiple case design confronts the researcher with considerable obstacles in terms of necessary resources and time. I address this issue in the chapter about access to the field.

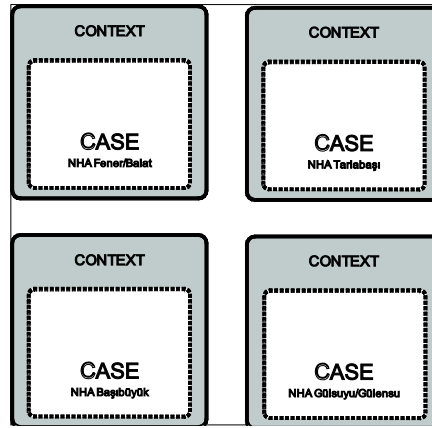


Figure 1: Case study design: Holistic (single unit of analysis) multiple-case design (see Yin 2009, p. 46), Source: Design adapted from Yin.

As the most important source of evidence, I chose to conduct three different kinds of research interviews: semi-structured interviews, elite or expert interviews and informal interviews naturally occurring in conversation (Gillham 2001, pp. 59ff). Depending on the interviewee, different kinds of interviews were conducted. The informal or naturally occurring conversation I used while talking to residents in the respective quarters of my cases. Given the variety of the four cases, I especially needed the assistance of a third person. Therefore, I adapted that technique and included a standardised core of five recurring questions covering age, profession, housing situation, membership in any neighbourhood association and the personal opinion towards the processes under way in the respective neighbourhood. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with key actors of the different neighbourhood associations investigated. The expert interviews were conducted with experts from the field outside the respective cases based on a set of general questions that were augmented with probes and prompts, depending on what was necessary. To clarify emerging questions from the interviews and to find out about the up-to-date situation of the development in the respective case areas, telephone interviews were conducted as well as email interviews. Besides these research

interviews, a variety of additional sources of evidence were used, such as documents, archival records and locally collected data such as newspaper articles, plans, and direct observation and participant observation. The last two forms of data collection were used in an explorative manner and written down in a research log.

1.3.2 Case Selection

Since I wanted to analyse the emergence of civil society actors in the face of urban transformation, it was important to me not just solely to focus on the already quite well-described informal settlements in Istanbul that form an important part of the urbanisation history of Istanbul. It is tempting to assume that an ambiguous and contradicting land tenure situation could lead to a particular vulnerability of the residents of informal or former informal settlements in terms of expropriation and forced eviction. Knowing that urban transformation is carried out as well in inner city historic centres, it was therefore important to compare the situations of peripheral and central neighbourhoods.

During my exploratory field trips, I was repeatedly pointed to the fact that the phenomenon of urban transformation was not a phenomenon predominantly affecting a certain population group sharing a certain ethnic feature, which was easily something that could be assumed because the case of the former Roma Quarter of Sulukule was attracting so much media attention and was, for a long time, the most prominent example of urban transformation in Istanbul. Therefore, I was eager to find cases of urban transformation and emerging civil society in different socio-economic ambiances to gain insight in how far the socio-economic and ethnic features were relevant for the vulnerability of the respective population group.

Finally, I decided to investigate the emergence of civil society actors in four different neighbourhoods, two of which are located on the Asian side in the district of Maltepe and are former Gecekondu areas. Başibüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu were affected by urban transformation around the same time in 2004 where now law no. 5393 is the relevant legislation. Yet both neighbourhoods, even though they are adjacent, show

considerable differences in terms of political and religious affiliation and population origin. Başibüyük has a conservative Sunni population while the majority in Gülsuyu/Gülensu comprises a more left-minded Alevi population. At the same time, the stages of implementation differ to a great extent. Whereas in Başibüyük a pilot project of six high rises has been already implemented, in Gülsuyu/Gülensu implementation is still virtual. In this study, I will draw closer to the possible underlying reasons and mechanisms of this situation.

The other two cases are inner-city areas that also became the target of urban transformation policies at the same time in 2006, with law no. 5366 as the applied legislation. Both areas are developed by the same private developer, the GAP Construction Company, and show similar historical characteristics as areas that contained originally non-Muslim minorities. Yet they differ again to a great extent in the socio-economic situation of their populations. Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray is a slowly upcoming quarter located in the deindustrialised Golden Horn in the district of Fatih on the historic peninsula. It is a traditional, working-class neighbourhood, while Tarlabası is a highly stigmatised area, a red-light district notorious for its transsexual sex workers, African migrants and a high percentage of Kurdish and Roma population. Tarlabası is located in the immediate vicinity of Istanbul's most central and touristic area around Taksim Square, yet socio-economically isolated by a number of developments of which the most visible was the construction of Tarlabası Boulevard, physically disconnecting the formerly integrated district of Beyoğlu in the beginning of the 1980s.

These similarities between the cases only occurred to me during the field research. Tarlabası and Başibüyük were firstly selected simply because there was already literature available comparing them in regards to urban transformation.

Gülsuyu/Gülensu turned out to be important once I came in contact with the contact person who I thought was from the neighbourhood association active in Başıbüyük. It turned out that this person was actually in charge of the neighbourhood association of the neighbouring Gülsuyu/Gülensu, which had an utterly different background as described above. This person was always representing both neighbourhoods in important meetings at the international and city levels. These circumstances and the comparable yet different situations concerning the implementation of urban transformation projects was the reason for me to study both neighbourhood associations. Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray attracted my attention because historian and urban activist Orhan Esen indicated it would be one of the first cases where even a less-precarious neighbourhood in terms of economic and educational backgrounds was being affected by urban transformation. The fact that the same private investor was active in Tarlabası and also developing the project in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray, and that both projects started in the same year also only occurred to me during the conducted research.

Given this scope of the selected cases, it will be possible to give at least a partial overview of how urban transformation is applied by the state actors and how both civil society resistance and the dynamics evolve from this.

In the following table the central criteria for the case selection are shown systematically:

	Başıbüyük	Gülsuyu/ Gülensu	Fener/ Balat	Tarlabası
Urban Transformation Projects	X	X	X	X
Central (5366)/ Peripheral (5393)	Peripheral/ Maltepe (5393)	Peripheral/ Maltepe (5393)	central/ Fatih(5366)	central/ Beyoğlu (5366)
Formally/Infor- mally developed	informally	informally	formally	formally
Access to Quarter and Data	X	X	X	X
local Grassroots Organisations	X	X	X	X

Table 1: Case selection criteria, Source: Own design

1.3.3 Data Sources/Access to the Field

As already mentioned above, data sources were diverse. Besides the empirical data collection, document analysis was the backbone of my research. Along with relevant literature from the field, I set up a blog² in which I collected and linked to all relevant online resources that I found during my research, such as reports, statistical data, legal texts and local web pages reporting on current developments. Also, the websites of the involved civil society actors as well as actors of the other sectors relevant to the subject can be found there. Another important source of information was the newsgroup that is run by one of the civil platforms described later. Although the newsgroup was in Turkish, it allowed me to understand the current discourse of a range of civil society actors through random sampling.

The access to the field was, besides this electronic monitoring, mainly obtained through field trips and participation in meetings and conferences both in Germany and in Istanbul. After my first reading on the subject, I did a first exploratory field trip to Istanbul in May 2008. This first field trip guided me to settlements in Sulukule, Zeytinburnu, Kağhitane and Karanfilköy and provided me with essential insights and contacts to set up the subsequent research. After four preparatory visits to Istanbul between 2008 and 2010, I conducted the final field research in March 2011. During this time span, I took part in different meetings, debates and conferences³ that

² www.istanbul-urban-research.blogspot.com.

³ Attended meetings, conferences, exhibitions, lectures etc.: Meeting of contra-UTP NHA in Basibüyük, attended by my research assistant and translator Göksin Varan (April 2011, Istanbul); IMECE meeting (March 2011, chamber of architects, Istanbul); Exhibition "Open City Istanbul—Designing Coexistence" curated by Misselwitz/Atalay (April 2010, Istanbul); Urban Age Conference Istanbul (November 2009, Istanbul); Civil Society Conference in Berlin, organised by Forum Berlin Istanbul (October 2009, Berlin); metroZones.SALOON 2 "Istanbul gegen die Wand?" (February 2009, Berlin); Lecture on informal urban development in Istanbul by

endowed me with the necessary overview of the field that allowed me to specify my research question and provided the necessary contacts that were vital to conduct expedient field research. The final field research started basically with a first contact with one person from each neighbourhood association to be investigated, because I had in mind whom generally to talk to from the different sectors of civil society, municipalities and private developers. So after the first contact with the contact persons and the parallel contact through members of the Sulukule Platform, I accessed the field with the help of a translator. From this point, contacts evolved organically. The civil platforms proved to be essential to contact actors on the local level. At this point I wish to thank in particular members of the Sulukule Platform, IMECE and Solidarity Studio.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

The presented study focuses on a “moving target” that is undergoing constant change and can, therefore, provide in this perspective an almost historic view of the investigated civil society scene in urban development in Istanbul. Nevertheless, the uncovering of certain dynamics and strategies of the different actors identified will supersede the mere description of a situation in time. Furthermore, the study draws substantial conclusions insightful for further research and policymaking as well as civil society actors.

Because this study concentrates on the formation of civil society actors, many factors relevant for the understanding of the mechanisms of urban transformation in Istanbul and Turkey cannot receive an in-depth analysis. Therefore economical, legal and historical factors and developments will be contributed as contextual information without an extensive discussion.

Also, the socio-spatial and physiological impacts of the urban development policy to the affected communities cannot be covered in this work. Even though this dimension is of great interest in the context of urban transformation, I delimit myself at this point to a perspective focused only on the socio-political scope of the phenomenon.

As I have mentioned above, the multiple case study design also has, besides its advantages, the disadvantage of being potentially very time- and resource-consuming, which can be potentially difficult for a single researcher. As indicated above, I was doing the field research with the help of a research assistant, who made the data collection possible and who gathered afterwards, in the process of the transcription and analysis of the research interviews, invaluable additional data which made the formerly collected data viable.

Even though I undertook various field trips in the span of four years, I was still dependent on local experts so that the case selection is not fully objective. Still, I researched the different cases from different angles and triangulated data from the most different directions possible.

Another limitation of this study was the limited availability of legal texts, which made it sometimes difficult to read all legislations in the original versions. Thus, I was dependent on the interpretations of third persons, which I deliberately indicate each time.

The data available from each case differed in quality and range so that not all statements can be compared with all cases. Nevertheless, I assume that the juxtaposition of the different cases described will add to academic insights on the specific topic and will motivate future scholars for future research. This was also the main reason for me to write in English, because the knowledge produced here is most likely potentially valuable in an international discourse.

Lastly, it has to be mentioned that I am aware of my potentially Eurocentric and Western conceptualisation in this endeavour. To this, it can be said that Turkey strives for membership in the European Union and in this respect is introducing many reforms to meet certain Western standards, which makes it to a certain degree viable to apply a Western mind-set. At the same time, the use of a qualitative social research methodology, which is also based to a certain extent on grounded theory methods, allowed for a certain degree of context-sensitivity.

1.5 Thesis Outline

The thesis consists of six main chapters. In the first chapter, I give a brief introduction to the subject, pose the research question, explain my methodological procedure (such as the research approach and design) and describe my access to the field and data sources as well as formulating the criteria for the case selection.

In chapter two, I provide the theoretical framework and central concepts for the study. Here I critically review the concepts of civil society as a crucial factor for sustainable urban development as well as informality as a key challenge on a global level.

Chapter three gives the contextual background for a deeper understanding of the setting in Istanbul concerning urbanisation. This chapter strives for a wider perspective on the urbanisation pattern since the founding of the Turkish Republic and gives, subsequently, in sections 3.2 and 3.3, deeper insights into the specific aspects of informal settlements in Istanbul and Turkey and into the history of urban transformation.

Chapter four provides an extensive contextual background on the subject of civil society and its development in the course of recent history in Turkey as well as an extensive inventory of civil society actors identified as relevant in the observed field of urban transformation.

Chapter five presents the case study of the four neighbourhood associations and an in-depth account of the different strategies and actions at work, both from the side of the implementing authorities and the side of the civil society organisations. From the side of the municipalities, e.g., the potential strategies of destabilisation of neighbourhoods and civil society organisations turned out to be the most relevant.

On the other side, strategies of information, strengthening group identity and creating influences and pressure on local politics and policies were prevailing.

In the sixth chapter, the case study is analysed in the context of the theoretical background, and conclusions of the main dividing forces between the different civil society actors are drawn; the characteristics of actor and network structures are assessed, and emerging tendencies of impacts of civil society mobilisation are outlined. In the last part of chapter six, some fundamental conclusions are drawn and the possible future perspectives are discussed.

2 Chapter: Theoretical Framework

Today, urbanisation is one of the most challenging phenomena to humanity. This chapter provides an overview of the current discourse on urbanisation and gives, through this, the necessary theoretical background to the phenomena described in this thesis by introducing the crucial concepts and putting them into perspective. In doing this, the focus is directed on the emergence of new urbanisation patterns that create socio-spatial structures that cannot be grasped with traditional concepts of centre and periphery, for example. Furthermore, this chapter provides an explanatory background for the focus on civil society actors in urban transformation in Istanbul in the context of the debate on the controllability of mega-urban agglomerations.

Looking at urbanisation on a global scale, the complexity and speed of the emerging variety of urbanisation patterns is one of the most remarkable features. Rapid urbanisation does not stop at national boundaries dividing rich countries from poor countries, developed countries from less-developed countries or capitalist countries from communist ones. The question of how cities with extreme dynamics both of growing and shrinking remain controllable and how this is achieved is the most pressing question posed by decision makers around the world. The ever-growing amount of stakeholders involved in the direct or indirect development of cities makes it necessary to understand the nature of urbanisation and the nature of the actors who have to be involved to make the development of our cities possible and, in the face of increasing hazards, a sustainable endeavour.

It is becoming particularly important to develop new concepts that depict the complex realities of contemporary urban space and to understand the mechanisms at work that shape cities today.

2.1 Urbanisation: A Global Challenge

“Urbanisation is an inevitable and irreversible process of socialisation which will have a drastic influence on the lives of most people on the globe in this century.” (Herrle et al. 2006, p. 2)

As already pointed out in the introduction, the phenomenon of rapid urbanisation has become one of the most prominent issues being discussed to find answers to global challenges. The widely acknowledged fact that, according to UN calculations since 2007, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and the focus on the dynamics and mechanisms at work in these urban areas, is of growing importance in respect to finding answers to the pressing question of today's globally interlinked and interdependent societies. The complexity and dynamics of the processes of urbanisation will cause a dramatic reorganisation of global relations in terms of spatial, socio-cultural, economic and political configurations. Climate change and population growth in connection with an ever-increasing uneven distribution of resources will be the most impacting processes on societies. These processes are of a complex nature and are cross-linked in an on-going feedback loop. Other processes of importance to be mentioned are the on-going globalisation of the economy in terms of commerce and production as well as changing consumption patterns in urban areas where the understanding of lifestyles becomes vital to mitigate the risk of climate change. Another potentially very dynamic process triggering global change includes the causes and results of political developments leading to political regime changes, such as those seen in the Arab spring.

Urbanisation is the most complex and yet one of the most important phenomena that need to be understood if its potentials shall be positively realised so that the great range of implicit and explicit hazards that are connected to mega-urbanisation shall prevail. The hazards are numerous and varied: ecological congestion phenomena in

terms of the pollution of air, water and soil as well as extensive land consumption, the extreme use of resources such as water, energy and food and last but not least the particular vulnerability of urban areas to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, sea-level rise and soil subsidence due to coastal locations and landfills (Kraas 2010, p. 186). Here it becomes important to focus on the positive potentials of urbanisation that are not yet widely acknowledged.

Cities are the potential powerhouses of global change and are one of the most important areas to focus on to make a step forward in the direction of the UN Millennium goals. In the debate on urbanisation, I will initially concentrate on two main threats: the debate on the global city and the debate on the mega city. Both debates and concepts depart from different points of view and are overlapping. Yet the juxtaposition of the different viewpoints is rewarding. As a background for an understanding of urban processes in Istanbul, both concepts are particularly relevant because they are closely connected to the city: Istanbul, as one of the most dynamic mega cities⁴ with a considerable share of informally developed areas in Europe, is putting all efforts into the endeavour of becoming a global city.

Mega City vs. Global City

The contrasting of the two concepts may appear obsolete because some scholars use the concepts synonymously⁴ (Kraas 2007; Kraas, Nitschke 2006, p. 20) and some mega cities are in fact becoming global cities. Yet the two concepts illustrate well the scope of the discourse on urbanisation and the different dynamics at play: The first concept, the mega city, focuses primarily on the population growth and land use of the city or urban agglomeration with the subsequent problems of governance

⁴ I refer by this term to cities bigger than 10 million inhabitants, as the term is widely applied.

and control. The concept has gained importance because there are a fast-growing number of huge cities around the world, especially in the global south, forming a new reality that houses an ever-increasing urban population that is in part marginalised and lives in slums in great poverty. The global city, in contrast, is first characterised not by its size but through the agglomeration of highly developed services mainly in finance and information technology that are vital for the coordination and management of global economic activities (Sassen 2001). Thus, global cities are the hubs of transnational corporations and high-level services as well as being located at important logistical nodal points, such as airports and harbours. The classical global cities in this respect are New York, London and Tokyo (Sassen 2001). The mentioned global cities exceed the size of 10 million inhabitants but there are also smaller ones that are hubs of the financial sector such as Frankfurt, for example.

Mega cities, instead, develop many times without significant economic development (Kraas, Nitschke 2006, p. 23). They are usually conceived as having more than five to 10 million inhabitants, depending on the author.⁵ Here it becomes obvious that a mere focus on size is not helpful. The decisive qualitative feature of mega cities is the vast population growth rate rather than the total size⁶ in connection to an

⁵ See Kraas 2007, p. 82: Next to the population (five, eight or 10 million: see Bronger 1996; Fuchs 1994 and Mertins 1992) some authors also employ as key parameters for the determination of a mega city a minimum population density ($>2,000$ persons/km²) and the existence of a single centre, which would exclude mega-urban agglomerations such as the Pearl River delta in China or the Rhine-Ruhr area in Germany. All these criteria applied will remain more or less subjective. Kraas suggests, therefore, a more comprehensive perception of mega cities focused on a qualitative and process-oriented understanding.

⁶ Exemplary mega cities and their population growth between 1970 and 2010: Bangalore (1.6–7.3 million), Bogotá (2.3–8.3 million), Delhi (3.5–17.0 million), Istanbul (2.7–10.53 million), Jakarta (3.9–9.7 million), Karachi (3.1–13.0 million), Lagos (1.4–10.6 million), Manila (3.5–11.6 million), Mumbai (6.2–20.1 million), São Paulo (7.6–19.6 million), Seoul (5.3–9.8 million), Tehran (3.4–8.2 million) and Dhaka (1.5–14.8 million), (Kraas 2007, pp. 79–80); United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2010.

unprecedented dynamic in land use. Even though mega cities vary depending on their national framework in terms of infrastructure, economic development, social cohesion and political leadership and subsequently in their governability, “mega cities have more in common with each other than with their own hinterlands.” (Fuchs et al. 1994, 7 as quoted in Kraas 2007, p. 80) Mega cities occur both in developed and developing countries, yet share a set of qualitative features that Kraas sums up as follows:

“...Intense processes of expansion, suburbanisation and densification along with a dominating primate city, infrastructural, social-economic and ecological congestion, diversification of inner urban centres, the emergence of polarised and fragmented societies along with a loss of control and governability combined with growing informality.” (Kraas, Nitschke 2006, p. 19)

Mega cities form a new phenomenon of global urbanisation that includes both motors and battlefields of global change in terms of ecological, socio-economic and political adaptation processes today. Mega cities influence global change to an extent like nation states in terms of population, migration volumes, CO₂ emission and GDPs.⁷

⁷ Along with transnational corporations that reach comparable GDPs (See tables 2 and 3).

Comparable Dimensions between selected Mega Cities and Countries		
	Mega City	Country
Population	Perl-River Delta: 48,0 Mio Tokyo: 35,5 Mio Mexico City: 19,5 Mio	Spain/Portugal: 48,0 Mio Canada: 30,8 Mio Australia: 19,2 Mio
Migration Volume	Volume of internal labour migration of five mega cities in china: about 25-30 Mio people	Immigrants from Mexico to the USA: Legally 7 Mio, irregularly 2 – 2,5 Mio people
CO2-Emission*	Beijing: 253 Mexico City: 101 Los Angeles: 166	Belgium: 101 Netherlands: 43 Hungary: 73
*Per capita and year and same population.		

Table 2: Mega cities' impacts on global change,
Source:(Kraas 2010, p. 185)

Gross Domestic Products of Cities and Countries in comparison to revenues of transnational corporations		
Cooperation	Wal-Mart	421,849 million Euro
Mega City	Mexico City	393,598 million Euro
Country	Australia	361,722 million Euro
Cooperation	Shell	373,183 million Euro
Mega City	São Paulo	274,250 million Euro
Country	Sweden	226,492 million Euro
Source: Lecture of Reinier de Graaf/AMO at Urban Age Hong Kong 2011; he refers to both the World Bank and Fortune magazine without giving further information about the year of data collection. The Wal-Mart revenue is listed like this by Fortune magazine for 2011.		

Table 3: GDPs of transnational corporations vs. cities and countries,
Source: own adaptation from Source (see above)

Kraas describes Mega cities as “laboratories of the future” where global trends can be first seen. According to her, the challenge that is posed by mega-urbanisation is not the development as such but the momentum and intricacy of the processes at work with their economic, social and spatial repercussions. (Kraas 2007, p. 80)

Due to the vast influx of rural-to-urban migrants⁸ and the subsequent demand for job opportunities, housing and infrastructure as well as the access to food, sanitation, health care and education, the loss of controllability of mega-urban structures is becoming a predominant issue. Next to the described excessive demand for basic resources, the increasing amount of actors involved in the development of the city, both formal and informal, poses a considerable challenge to the institutional framework of the said cities or urban regions.

Because the demands cannot be met or legal and institutional frameworks are not prepared, urban informality becomes a prevailing mode of survival for the urban poor in meeting their needs in a self-help way. The potentials of informality have been controversially discussed by experts for a long time. For some, informality is the result of ill-functioning state institutions and the creative answer of the population to solve the population's problems. For others, it is not a panacea but deepens the divide between rich and poor and does not lead to any sustainable development. No matter how one positions oneself regarding the phenomena of urban informality, it is a reality that has to be understood to find solutions to the challenges explained above. Therefore, the phenomenon of informality and how to deal with it becomes a focal point approaching global urbanisation dynamics. Also, in Istanbul, urban informality has been and still is an influential force in the urbanisation process. Because of this, I will depart on an excursus on informality later on in this chapter. Before doing so, however, I want to further outline the discourse on the global city to give a fuller picture of global urbanisation dynamics.

⁸ In addition, rural-to-urban migration population growth can also result from incorporations and statistical effects Kraas 2010, p. 185.

Global City Discourse

As stated above, the global city is a city looked upon by its economic significance as a nodal point in the global economic system before any question of size and dynamic of population growth and land use. The idea of the global city has probably a longer history than expected. Peter Hall (1984) identifies with Patrick Geddes (1915) one of the first authors introducing the term world city in 1915. World cities are characterized as places where economic activities are rooted and take place to a disproportionate share in comparison to the country at large where the respective city is located in. Later on, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the discussion intensified. Back then, the talk was of the world city. As quoted in King (1990, p. 14) Cohen (1981), Feagin and Smitz (1987), Sassen-Koob (1984, 1986), Thrift (1986b) describe similar characteristics that are elaborated on in the following. I will refer mainly to Saskia Sassen in the following as she is one that prominently represents the discourse.

The phenomenon of the global city departs from the view on globalised economies: The geography of global economy has changed towards a complex duality. It is spatially dispersed yet globally integrated. This has led to a new strategic role for many major cities around the globe. (Sassen 2001, p. 3) Today's manufacturing is housed in a global network of factories, whereas control and management functions are concentrated in central urban areas. These functions are performed by highly specialised services, so-called producer services, such as financial, legal and general management, innovation, development, design, administration, personnel and production technology. (Sassen 2001, p. 90) Within these specialised producer services, finance turns out to be the most determining factor organising control and management functions. Because finance has become a very complex business that needs a complex array of institutions and market places that cannot be provided by

single banks anymore, “[...] they require a vast infrastructure of financial centres with highly specialised services.” (Sassen 2001, p. 84)

Sassen’s main point here is that finance today has replaced the car “industry as the key engine for economic growth and social patterning.” Because of the complexities of organisational necessities that are needed by these highly specialised services, a new centrality has emerged in which specialised locations provide the requirements of this kind of key industry through “dense networks of firms and markets and intense social connectivity.” (Sassen 2001, p. 126) This density and complexity provided by the global city provides the necessary background for innovation. Today’s global cities can be characterised by the term “innovating by networking.” This means that contemporary innovation processes are essentially depending on the interaction of various actors from different spheres of society. (Läpple op. 2009, p. 56) This view replaces the idea of a single, dynamic entrepreneur at the core of innovation as argued by Schumpeter. (Schumpeter, Röpke 2006) Because of this profound need for networking “[...] specialisation and agglomeration economies have contributed to making cities favoured locations, especially for the most strategic and complex of these services.” (Sassen 2001, p. 126)

The primary global cities, in this sense, are New York, London and Tokyo, which besides being competing centres of a global economy, are one big transnational market place. Sassen perceives them as performing as a triad with each of these cities taking over particular functions.⁹ Beyond these cities, the finance sector, along

⁹ “[...]in the 1980s, Tokyo emerged as the main centre for the export of capital; London as the main centre for the processing of capital, largely through its vast international banking network linking London to most countries in the world and through the Euromarkets and New York as the main receiver of capital, the centre for investment decisions and for the production of innovations that can maximise profitability.” Sassen 2001, p. 333

with other leading producer services, forged a global network of cities that manage global manufacturing by fulfilling coordinating functions besides serving as international market places. Besides New York, London, and Tokyo, also Frankfurt and Paris have to be mentioned here. Many more cities work as secondary and tertiary global cities linking the international financial centres in this sense.

The global city shows specific social features that I briefly describe in the following because first, these features connect the above considerations with the social dynamics explained in the mega city and second, will be crucial for the understanding of the social impacts of urban transformation at play in the following case study on Istanbul.

In fact, what applies for the global city also applies for the mega city, as they both are partaking in the globalised service economy. Along with this economy, an increased income polarisation in the global city is becoming visible, which is leading to greater inequality in earnings distribution and in household income, accompanied by an increasing percentage of low-wage jobs especially compared to a manufacturing-based economy. (Sassen 2001, pp. 250; 323) Along with this polarisation, a dramatically increased extent of gentrification compared to post-World-War-II periods is becoming visible, resulting in high homelessness rates. This gentrification is partly triggered and accompanied by vast urban transformation projects:

“But the enormity of major central city projects in all three cities [...] constitutes yet another instance of a transformation of urban areas that is not simply a continuation of old trends but, rather, represents a massive appropriation of public resources and urban space.” (Sassen 2001, p. 323)

Sassen depicts in her analysis of the social impacts of the global city the “more unexpected” emergence of an informal economy in New York:

“This informal economy has had the overall effect not only of cheapening production and servicing costs for firms in both growth industries and declining ones, but also of increasing flexibility in their organisation. Such flexibility is particularly important in a city where leading sectors can easily outbid all other sectors for space, but at the same time need to have access to these other industries.” (Sassen 2001, p. 324)

To sum up this short excursus on the global city, it can be said that the global city is the centre of global economic functions and manufacturing through highly specialised service industries. This milieu of top-level service industries is not created in a single firm, institution or marketplace, but lives on the critical mass of actors and processes and markets that allow the global city to be innovative and competitive. At the same time, as the top-level service industry emerges, a vast low-wage and informal economy develops that allows the top-level service firms to compete and that leads to an increased income polarisation, resulting in social segregation.

Urban Informality

As has become visible above, urban informality is a trend and phenomenon that can be observed in both global cities and mega cities. It is a characteristic feature of the contemporary globalised economy and has also been a key issue in urban development discourses over the last 60 years. What becomes clear is that informality, which was formerly solely assigned to the urban poor, is spreading out and is becoming a general mode of urbanisation. (Roy, AlSayyad 2004, p. 5). The concept of informality and its discourse is important to outline to understand the shifts and the changing paradigm leading to changing policies. In the following, I give a concise overview of the matter.

The concept of urban informality is used as a generic term describing an amalgam of a wide variety of reciprocal, interlinked processes of an informal nature: informal

working conditions, extra-legal transactions of various kinds and informal housing production. Until today, one-third of the urban population has lived in informal settlements (Davis 2006, p. 23) with the subsequent problems of insecure land tenure, bad sanitation and health conditions, and potential above-average vulnerability to natural disasters.

The research on urban informality started in the late 1950s as ethnographic poverty research.¹⁰ The focus was directed on the urban poor, seen as a marginalised group lacking basic civic values. This approach was challenged by the research conducted by Janice Perlmann and Manuel Castells¹¹ in the late 1960s; they show that the marginality of urban poor cannot be banalised as a societal site effect. They unmask this attitude as a way to control the urban poor. Until the 1980s, the subject remained a domain of development economists and social scientists. The interest in the further development of the concepts of urban informality was followed by global political and economic restructuring processes. In the 1980s, the debate became broader and experienced a fundamental change. The growing informal sector is no longer perceived as a problem but as a potential solution to encounter the economic crisis and poverty in the global south (Rakowski 1994, p. 32).

In categorising the debate on urban informality, I borrow from the introduced typology of discourses done by Cathy Rakowski in 1994. In her analysis of the debate on informality, she focuses primarily on Latin America. Nevertheless, the typology developed seems useful to further adapt to other contexts such as South Asia and the Middle East. (Roy, AlSayyad 2004, p. 11)

¹⁰ E.g., Oscar Lewis "Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty" (1959).

¹¹ See J. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and M. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

The debate can be basically separated into two main factions: the structuralists and the legalists. For the structuralists, several schools of thoughts can be subsumed: One is the influential ILO¹² labour market approach, which was predominant in the 1970s (Moser 1978, 1984; Ghersi 1991) as well as neo-Marxism, dependency theorists and to some extent the so-called “underground” approach that includes, for example, Manuel Castells and Saskia Sassen. Generally speaking, the structuralist approach strives for the understanding of the social-economic conditions of a formal and an informal economy. This approach assumes that the informal sector is an integral part of any economic development and that it is the task of a strong state to install equilibrium between both. (Rakowski 1994, p. 33) Nevertheless, there are substantial differences between basic ideas concerning informality between the structuralist schools of thought: For example, advocates of the underground economy approach are of the opinion that informality represents not only a mere segment of the labour market, but also a substantial part of the economy as such (Portes and Sassen-Koob 1987, p. 31) as quoted in (Rakowski 1994, p. 38). Consequently, the underground economy approach claims a higher significance of informality within, conceptualising it only as an easy entry to the labour market and “a way of doing things” (Roy, AlSayyad 2004, p. 11) that implies it is a potentially transitory phenomenon. Moreover, informality should gain a “...status of labour [that is] undeclared and no contractual, lacking benefits, paid less than minimum wage” (Rakowski 1994, p. 38) and thus a systematic, discriminatory reality for a vast number of workers worldwide, most of whom do not exit the informal circuits of production.

¹² International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The legalist approach generally assumes that informality is the “natural” result of ill-functioning state institutions, including exuberant bureaucracy together with excessive legal costs and widespread poverty. In this, the legalist approach can be seen predominantly as neo-liberal. The legalist approach assumes that the division of a formal and informal economy is not a structural but rather a legal issue and in this, finally, a bureaucratic problem. In this sense, informality becomes “a rational economic strategy.”(Rakowski 1994, p. 38) Hernando de Soto, one of the leading personalities of the legalist approach, regards informality as a “survival strategy” and as “a safety valve for societal tensions.” (de Soto 1989, p. 243) Al AlSayyad interprets de Soto’s understanding of informality as being the “natural response to real market forces, and not to the rise in unemployment and the need for jobs.” (AlSayyad 2004, p. 13)

Legalists regard informality as the spontaneous and creative answer of the people to the incapacity of the state to meet the most basic needs of the urban poor. Furthermore, they agree on the notion that urban informality is triggered by discriminatory state regulations and costs “that advantage the powerful economic interest groups that compete unfairly with informals who have no property rights and no access to credit.” (Rakowski 1994, p. 40) They disagree with the idea that problems, especially those of the Latin-American economies, could originate from external factors such as imperialism. Moreover, they see urban informality as a dynamic potential for a competitive economic development once the state withdraws from the market and gets rid of its costly bureaucratic and legal labyrinth. (Rakowski 1994, p. 40)

The legalist approach enjoys great popularity because it promises the solution to a major urban problem through easy implementation, or as Mike Davis puts it:

However, de Sotoan panaceas remain immensely popular for obvious reasons: The titling strategy¹³ promises big social gains with a mere act of the pen and, thus, pumps life back into the World Bank's tired self-help paradigms; it accords perfectly with dominant neo-liberal, anti-state ideology, including the Bank's current emphasis on government facilitation of private housing markets and the promotion of broad home ownership; and it is equally attractive to governments because it promises them something—stability, votes, and taxes—for virtually nothing. (Davis 2006, p. 81)

The legalist approach or neo-liberal de Sotoean approach has gained a great deal of political support since the middle of the 1980s up to today, while the growing hegemony of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development¹⁴ has de facto installed a global system of trade liberalisation, a reform of exchange rates and privatisation with highly heterogeneous spatial effects. (AlSayyad 2004, p. 13) The latter institutions support facilitating the vast liberalisation of economies, especially in third-world countries where urban informality prevails, and in this has especially “assumed increasingly commanding roles in setting the parameters of urban housing policy.” (Davis 2006, p. 70)

Improving rather than replacing slums became the less ambitious goal of public and private intervention. Instead of the top-down structural reform of urban poverty, as undertaken by post-war social democracy in Europe [...], the new wisdom of the late 1970s and early 1980s mandated that the state ally with international donors and, then NGOs, to become an ‘enabler’ of the poor. (Davis 2006, p. 71)

This approach was greatly influenced by the British architect John Turner, who was a great promoter of the conviction that urban informality was not the problem but

¹³ Titling strategy means the provision of informal house owners with official land titles, which is what the legalist approach is asking for, namely the legalisation of the assets of the urban poor to integrate them into the capitalist market system.

¹⁴ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is one of five institutions that compose the World Bank Group.

actually the cure to the urban crisis; this was inspired by his work in Peru where he “was mesmerised by the creative genius he discerned at work in squatter housing.” (Davis 2006, p. 71) The World Bank subsequently adopted a policy of supporting projects, pursuing the slogan “helping the poor help themselves” resulting in a sites-and-services approach that provided basic infrastructures and civil engineering supporting mainly in-situ slum upgrading through local NGOs. This had changed by the 1980s, when the World Bank turned towards supporting the privatisation of the housing supply and, through this, supported the legalist approach that “advocated micro-entrepreneurial¹⁵ solutions to urban poverty.” (Davis 2006, p. 71)

The described approaches or schools of thought encroach on different aspects of urban informal activities. As stated above, urban informality is the sum of all informal activities in a city, which does not “simply consist of the activities of the poor, or a particular status of labour, or marginality. Rather it is an organising logic which emerges under the paradigm of liberalisation.” (AlSayyad 2004, p. 26)

As a final remark in this chapter, I want to introduce a figure through which the extent to which urban informality plays a role in different areas of the world becomes a bit more tangible. The population that lives in slums can be taken as one indicator of the extent of urban informality. Yet it should not be confused with the total dimension of the phenomenon because informality, as mentioned above, is not only a feature attributable to the urban poor. In Istanbul, for instance, many high-level buildings and structures such as hotels, gated communities, and even some municipal buildings are informally built, not to mention the job market and other sectors that add to urban informality as a general phenomenon of contemporary urbanisation. Nevertheless, in

¹⁵ The microenterprise approach is another school of thought outlined by Cathy Rakowski Rakowski 1994, p. 34 that could be subsumed under the legalist approach, being non-theoretic and neo-liberalistic.

the following figure it can be seen that albeit the differences between the locations there is a clear trend: Informality is much more than a marginal phenomenon and therefore also not a transitory phenomenon.

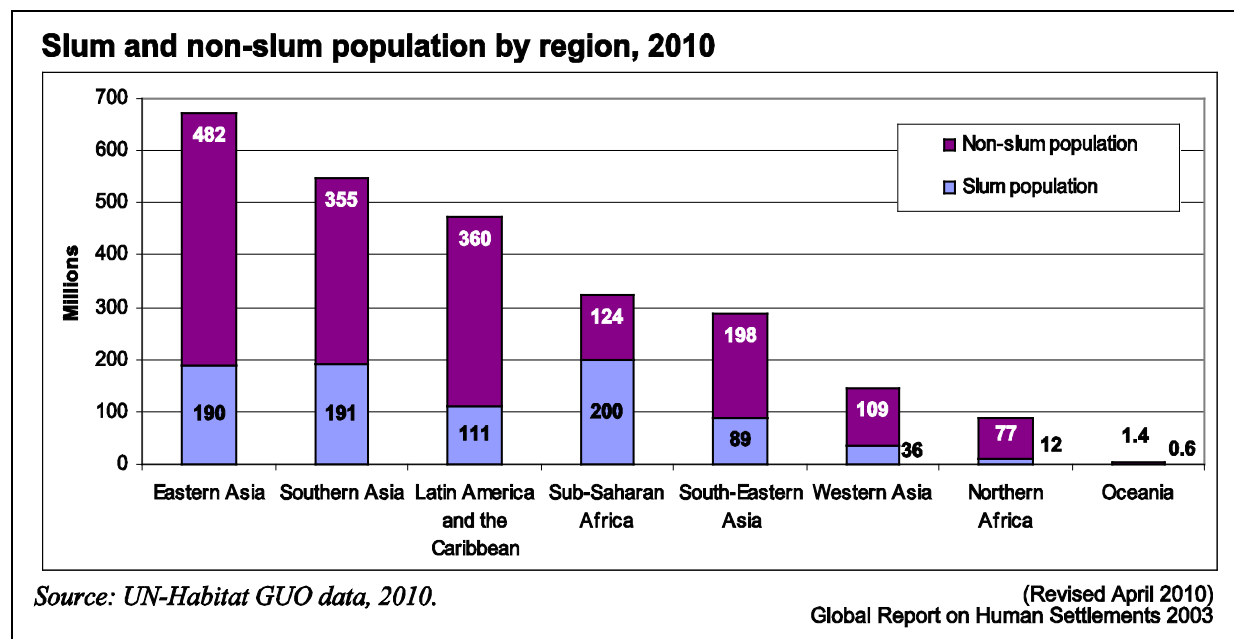


Table 4: Population living in slums according to UN Habitat in 2010,
Source: (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 19)

2.2 Civil Society: A Crucial Factor for Sustainable Urban Development and Governance

In this chapter, I introduce the concepts most vital to the following research. The term “civil society” and its specific implications, especially in the development context, are described along with the concepts of the third sector and social capital. Later on, the focus will be on the conception of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grassroots or community-based organisations (CBOs) because they are the main actors that come into play when civil society is called actively into the development and improvement of urban areas and urban populations. Besides these two forms of organisations I briefly describe the different kinds of networks that are potentially formed by these organisations and the crucial role this networking can have.

Given the above outlined development, there seems little alternative to the involvement of NGOs and community-based grassroots organisation in urban processes. Yet there are massive critiques on the current procedure of important donor organisations and their influence on global urban policies including the said organisations. Therefore, it seems crucial to me to nurture a critical view on the concepts and debates connected to the sustainable development and thus to the “good governance” of a contemporary city.

As shown in the preceding chapter, one of the most challenging aspects in today’s urbanisation processes is to maintain the controllability or governability of massively expanding urban areas facing massive liberalisation and subsequent informalisation. This becomes especially challenging if these cities are to develop in a sustainable and humane way.

“With increasing globalisation, however, there is also evidence of disengagement from previously nested local business cycles, which leads to extreme polarisation of incomes and

spatial fragmentation up to a politically explosive antagonising of particular groups.” (Herrle et al. 2006, p. 4)

Taking this development seriously, the seemingly challenging endeavour of sustainable urban development turns out finally to be the only way to govern a city successfully in the long run if peace and prosperity for all are to be sustained. The challenge of informality and slums thus means not only to meet the need for shelter “but also the broader problem of urban poverty, especially unemployment, low incomes and a lack of access to basic urban services.” {United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003 #14:v} This broader perspective must especially be promoted to decision makers around the world, because the closely interlinked fields of urban development and urban poverty cannot be considered productively without taking the different fields mentioned into account at the same time.

Informal Urban Development Resulting in a Multi-Actor Environment

The increasing size of urban areas, plus their increase in informally organising systems involving all levels spanning the administrative and economic to the social and the spatial level, is producing a quickly growing amount of actors involved in the governing of the said systems of sectors, resulting in a fragmented landscape of actors that is virtually impossible to oversee. Many of these new actors are vital to fill the emerging provision gaps and thus contribute to the functioning of the city. Yet in doing so, they frequently get into rivalry with other NGOs and the state power that sees its monopoly as potentially endangered.

Herrle, Jachnow and Ley conclude that the formal city reaches at times only about 50% of its inhabitants,¹⁶ which indicates that traditional urban development and planning concepts prove to be inadequate. From this and the above, they derive that

¹⁶ Herrle et al. 2006, p. 4.

contemporary municipal administrations lack major presuppositions to solve contemporary major urban problems. These presuppositions can be subsumed into three points: “first, a sufficient basis of legitimacy; second, necessary enforcement or monitoring capacities; and third, sufficient personnel and administrative resources for the implementation of poverty-oriented projects at its disposal”¹⁷.

From this more managerial point of view, the involvement of civil society actors becomes a necessity if urban areas are to be developed adequately in the future.

Third Sector, Social Capital and the Civil Society Debate

From the perspective of international development agencies and donor organisation concepts of civil society, the third sector and social capital have become more and more central since the role of the nation state was in retreat in large parts of the world and poverty has increased since the late 1970s. The turn towards civil society organisations as development partners can be interpreted as a major recalibration of development policies. UN-Habitat promoted the collaboration with NGOs as representatives of the third sector during the Habitat conferences of 1976 and 1996, while the World Bank developed programs for civil society cooperation and the United Nations¹⁸ founded the Civil Society Division in 1986.

The concepts introduced above, along with civil society, indicate the respective focus on civil society by international donor organisations: After the initial, more technocratic-managerial approach, the term “third sector” was more and more abandoned in favour of the term “social capital.” The third-sector debate drew the focus towards the organisational framework of formal civil society organisations and

¹⁷ Herrle et al. 2006, p. 5

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

their “comparative advantages of performance” as outside of the state and the market on a meso-level. The term developed in the early 1970s¹⁹ in the US when it was clearly located outside the state and the market and served as an intermediary instance between the said sectors of societies promoting advocacy, the articulation of needs and the representation of interests.

The focus on social capital gained popularity in the late 1990s after Putnam’s work “Making Democracy Work” (1993) proposed the idea that social capital, focusing on social networks on a micro-level, is crucial for the development of civic engagement, trust and participatory behaviour. Furthermore, he proposed that social capital is a vital resource for the improvement of government performance as well as the well-functioning of democracy and even the economy (Putnam et al. 1993). Putnam’s work became influential for development policies that found their articulation, for example, in bodies like the Social Capital Implementation Framework (SCIF) installed by the World Bank. Yet the approach has been widely criticised with regard to the fact that social capital does not have to be good per se, because social networks may well reproduce in transparent patronage networks that are non-democratic and can be abused by regimes and strongmen. In addition, Pierre Bourdieu, the prominent systemiser of the term, was well aware of the fact that social capital has the potential to reproduce inequality. Nevertheless, the term remains influential in the development context up to today and bears (having its flaws in mind) potentials for social change, being able to grasp but not to romanticise the inner dynamics of civil society.

¹⁹ “The term third sector, introduced by Amitai Etzioni in his article ‘The Third Sector and Domestic Mission’ (1973), refers to a societal sphere, ‘a third alternative, indeed sector [...] between the state and the market’ (1973: 314) that is populated by organisations that are able to combine, according to Etzioni, the entrepreneurial spirit and organisational effectiveness of the business firm with the common good orientation of the state and its public administration. Due to this capacity, Etzioni referred to the sector as being populated by ‘organisations for the future’. (1973: 318)” As quoted in Freise, Zimmer 2006, p. 7.

The role of civil society organisations in the view of international development agencies has shifted again since the beginning of the new millennium from being perceived as substantial motors of social transformation producing potentially sustainable alternatives for development to mere conformist development actors:

“[...] by the beginning of the new millennium the poverty reduction focus again reduced civil society organisations to development actors conforming to a reformist notion of intervention alternatives ('big D' Development) as opposed to a systemic alternative notion of development as a process of structural change ('little d' development).” (Ley 2009, p. 68)

Having explored the notions of the third sector and social capital, the concept of civil society can be seen as a meta-level concept that is able to incorporate both the third-sector view and the social capital approach that can address a wider range of organisations that are usually disregarded from a classical third-sector perspective because they are informal and self-help groups that might not have any “formal legal status although they may be long-standing and operate according to accepted structures and principles.” (Mitlin 1999, p. 5)

Civil society is widely defined as a societal space that contains the totality of associations, organisations and gatherings that are based on the voluntary cooperation of citizens. Its organisations ideally follow neither governmental nor market interests. Furthermore, the sphere of civil society is usually delimited from the private sphere such as the family because civil society is closely connected to the public view. Civil society is generally dependent on the provision and protection of certain basic civil rights such as freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly. Furthermore, civil society is associated with certain civil behaviours such as tolerance, the will for reconciliation and a non-violent code of conduct. Lastly, a utopian element is necessary to be able to speak of civil society,

namely the will for a democratic coexistence (Adloff 2005, p. 8). Given this ideal definition of what a civil society consists of and what presuppositions are necessary to achieve it, the Western-centric perspective becomes clear. Furthermore, in reality, the boundaries among the different sectors of state, markets and civil society are far from being clear-cut but rather overlapping and blurry and constantly negotiated. Yet a broader definition of the concept is provided by CIVICUS, the world alliance for citizen participation, which applies their research on civil societies in over 50 countries. They simply see civil society as the “arena, outside of the family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests.”²⁰ This definition allows us to speak of civil society in more imperfect conditions where certain criteria of civil society mentioned above are not fully or not at all met.

How social capital fits into the concept of civil society might be indicated by the final report of the Commission of Inquiry of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2002 on the future of civic engagement, which declared that voluntary civic engagement and by this the investment of time and money, is regarded as an indicator of societies having sufficient social capital to avoid polarisation and subsequent disintegration. Social capital is seen here as public spirit and further characterised as one of the main resources crucial to the well-functioning of a democratic society (Adloff 2005).

In speaking about civil society, it has to be noted that the debate on third-sector actors in a development context really started with a strong focus on nongovernmental organisations. International development agencies and donor organisations, along with the scientific discourse, first laid their focus on civil society in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In the late 1970s and in the 1980s, the main interest was directed towards NGOs as the main actors able to

²⁰ https://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_Methodology_and_conceptual_framework.pdf.

tackle prevalent urban issues, including urban poverty. Because the reduced role of the state and increasing democratisation and decentralisation mainly in Latin American contexts allowed for more space for NGOs, these filled the need for traditional institutional actors. This shift from the focus on NGOs to the wider concept of civil society as the vital actor to achieve social change can be explained by a range of developments: first, as Mitlin (Mitlin 1999, p. 8) points out, the fact that social movements and local self-help groups in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Philippines were effective to trigger social change but did not fit classic NGO definitions; second, the debate on social capital, which opened up for a wider range of institutions, made the single focus on NGOs also increasingly debatable; and finally, the legitimacy and effectiveness of NGOs became more and more questioned, given the fact that most are dependent on external financial sources. In this connection, the interest in a better understanding of the reality of local institutions increased with the effect that the focus of interest shifted towards diverse local movements and organisations: towards grassroots organisations.

NGOs and Grassroots Organisations

In this section, I introduce two kinds of civil society organisations through which one could say civil society is articulated. NGOs form one of the crucial and widely regarded forms of organisations, yet they play little or no role in the case studies conducted in the following research on civil society in Istanbul. Nevertheless, the description and classification of these organisations is vital to the understanding the discourse on civil society. Another factor is that even though no NGOs occur in my research, some organisations take over classical NGO functions in the civil society mobilisation process triggered by the urban transformation policy in Istanbul.

NGOs

Even though NGOs are generally referred to in civil society contexts, there is much debate about whether NGOs can be seen as part of civil society at all. Because of the dependency on donors and especially in the case of northern NGOs dependent on state funding, the boundaries between state and market are blurry and overlapping. Ley, (Ley 2010, p. 74) based on an extensive review of the literature, has decided that NGOs cannot be seen as an integral part of civil society.²¹

A NGO Typology

To grasp the range of the organisational variety that includes the term NGO, I draw upon two definitions by renowned sources. Mitlin defines NGOs as follows:²²

NGOs are defined as professional, non-profit, non-membership intermediary organisations that are independent of the state and which undertake a range of activities in order to further development. (Mitlin 1999, p. 5)

The UN Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements of 2003 introduces a more context-based definition, which might be partly obsolete given the time frame.

Nevertheless, it shows the range of connotations in the respective contexts:

Sometimes, the term NGO is used to...mean all NGOs everywhere, including Northern NGOs based in one developed country that operate internationally, international NGOs or networks... [and] Southern NGOs from the Third World, and many other kinds of non-profit organisations throughout the world. The term also has numerous culturally specific meanings. In Western Europe, it generally means non-profit organisations that are active internationally. In the transitional countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union, it tends to mean all charitable

²¹ Brunnengräber/Klein/Walk (2005); Diebel/Sticht (2005), p.132; Uphoff (1996); Mitlin/Hickey/Bebbington (2006), p.9; Bebbington/Hickey/Mitlin (2008b), p.6 as quoted in Ley 2010, p. 74.

²² Mitlin defines NGOs in 1999 still as part of civil society, whereas that apparently changed later on (see above).

and non-profit organisations. In the Third World, the term NGO generally refers to organisations involved in development, broadly defined. (Fischer 1998, p.5) as quoted in (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 153)

The definition above implies, furthermore, that NGOs are commonly categorised by their origin and field of intervention: Thus, NGOs are differentiated as northern, southern, transnational and international non-governmental organisations. Mitlin (Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004), furthermore, distinguished among four different “ways in which [NGOs] [...] interact with urban poor groups: Market orientation, welfare provision, claim-making on the state and self-determined solutions.” (Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 283) It must be borne in mind that her perspective is directed towards poverty reduction in squatter settlements. Therefore, the following distinction proves to be especially relevant to understand the role of NGOs interacting with marginalised urban population groups, which is the subject of analysis later on. NGOs that are involved in the market-oriented approach are usually involved in micro-enterprise development and saving and credit schemes, generally activities that aim to increase low-income groups’ assets independent of external funding. Nevertheless, it remains debatable in how far the “market can deliver to the poor.” (Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 284) Welfare provision is probably the most traditional field of activity of NGOs. Through this, NGOs offer services and assistance to improve the lives of the needy. Usually, local and international NGOs fill gaps here that are usually provided by the state in high-income nations. The next two categories might be the most relevant for the following case studies presented in this thesis, the “claim-making on the state” and the “self-determined solution” approach, because this is the role that the civil platforms take as described in chapter four. The first one Mitlin refers to as a rights-based approach that gained significant importance because the number of NGOs committing themselves to this approach has grown

considerably. These NGOs are active in the advocacy of citizen's rights, claiming the provision of certain services or infrastructure to marginalised urban groups, including tenure security to informally housed urbanites. According to Mitlin, this rights-based approach became prominent in the 1980s after the so-called needs-based approach²³ of the 1970s proved to have little success and at the same time evictions of the urban poor were increasingly recognised by NGOs to their full scale and atrocity along with successful anti-eviction campaigns in some countries.²⁴ Mitlin ends her chapter by stating: "Strong 'pro-poor' advocacy has limited value if there are no practical models of pro-poor development that can be implemented." (Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 285) In contrast to the rights-based approach is the "self-determined solution" approach. This approach does not exclude the state from solving the problems of the urban poor; moreover, the idea is to first autonomously define a deficit and come up with a proactive solution that then helps to estimate what would be needed from the side of public actors. In fact, Mitlin sees this solution as a strategy to involve public actors while self-determined precedence is created, which she estimates to be the approach "with the greatest potential to 'scale up' to reach large numbers of the urban poor." (Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 286) This approach seems especially attractive for NGOs because it combines direct action with a simultaneous focus on the improvement of local governance. The self-determined solution approach builds upon a mix of community and state support, which is directed towards the provision of housing, infrastructure and services and does not aim finally at state provision but at the invention of non-conventional

²³ According to Mitlin, the "needs-based approach stresses the advantages for governments in improving the housing conditions of lower-income groups (more political support healthier work force, etc) and explained how the costs were not prohibitive, especially when using upgrading and serviced sites." Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 285

²⁴ Mitlin refers here especially to "the development of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights and its work with groups in South Korea to halt evictions (ACHR, 1989)." Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 285

solutions to win the state over to contribute to the developed solution. NGOs, following this approach, closely cooperate with local grassroots organisations and try to empower them in their internal capacity of self-organisations and action as well as strengthening their capacity for bargaining with the authorities.

At the core of the “self-determined solution” approach stands the claim for basic rights that brings this approach closer to the “claim-making” approach. But as Mitlin points out, there exist three crucial differences in these approaches, which make two of them at times seem implacable. The two approaches agree on the role of the state to facilitate the provision of the urban poor. The “self-determined solution” approach, in contrast to the “claim-making” approach, does not demand the service provision by the state itself, for the capacity of the effective service provision of the state or local authorities is questioned and the ability to effectively answer the demands given the scale of services needed is questioned. Instead, the self-determined solution approach employs tactics to develop possible solutions that then, in turn, could be scaled up, be refined and further developed together with state agencies and thus widely adopted. As one example of the “self-determined solution” approach, Mitlin refers to a case study in Mexico²⁵ where the slogan “protesta con propuesta” (protest with proposal) was used to describe the applied campaign by a local community organisation. I will not go into detail concerning that case study, yet the slogan is very descriptive for the self-determined solution approach. The third and perhaps most important difference between the rights-based claim-making approach and the latter one is the relation towards politics. The “self-determined solution” NGOs tend to have a cautious but more “instrumental approach” (Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, p. 287) towards politics, which is pragmatically open to actors of all political affiliations as

²⁵ The case of FONHAPO Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004, pp. 82ff.

long as the contact is potentially constructive in the way that they can reach decision makers who are interested in the problems and solutions that are developed by local communities and in the enhancement of the situation. This last feature is the potentially most conflicting one, which can easily led to confrontations between different NGOs in the same field that pursue different approaches. In the case study of Gülsuyu Güleusu, it can be argued that there two NGOs of these diverting approaches collided. (see sections 4.2.3 and 5.2.)

NGO Networks

Besides their functions and fields of interventions as outlined above, NGOs are important network actors that can only be more comprehensively understood by taking their relationships with grassroots organisations and social movements into account. The UN Report Global Report on Human Settlements distinguishes two main kinds of NGO networks: Service networks and support networks. The first may be either small or large, widely consistent networks comprising grassroots support organisations and enabling NGOs, which cooperate to share and strengthen each other's capacities. Support networks, in contrast, are large, heterogeneous and widely ramified systems that include NGOs. Furthermore, these support networks comprise a wide range of relevant actors to the respective subjects such as universities, charities, community and grassroots organisations, and also experts who are concerned with grassroots development, usually journalists or academics.

(United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 157)

The Role of NGOs

NGOs have gained and are probably still gaining growing importance as development actors improving democratisation and are potentially successful in

poverty reduction in connection with other actors, just to mention a very narrow range of intervention that is of importance to this thesis. Nevertheless, NGOs and their impact have to be reviewed carefully. It is widely acknowledged that NGOs may not be regarded as panaceas, and as any system that gets more powerful and includes more money and more interests, it develops its own dynamics that potentially counteract effective measures in altruistic fields such as the ones mentioned above. Mike Davis goes so far as to speak of “soft imperialism” in the connection of NGOs in today’s development field:

[...] with the major NGOs captive to the agenda of the international donors, and grassroots groups similarly dependent upon the international NGOs. For all the glowing rhetoric about democratisation, self-help, social capital, and the strengthening of civil society, the actual power relations in this new NGO universe resemble nothing so much as traditional clientelism. (Davis 2006, p. 76)

What becomes interesting for this thesis is what Davis quotes one page later from Asef Bayat, who is speaking from his experience of Middle Eastern development NGO-asserting experiences from India:

“[The] professionalisation of NGOs tends to diminish the mobilisational feature of grassroots activism, while it establishes a new form of clientelism.” (Bayat 2004, pp. 80–81)

These negative features within the NGO universe can be helpful to the following research, which regards the impacts of local civil society actors on grassroots organisations. Even though, as mentioned above, no NGO in the strict sense is involved in the case study on Istanbul, there are actors that fulfil partly similar roles to the ones of NGOs as described here. This makes it rewarding to have this critical perspective in mind while evaluating the actors involved in the Istanbul cases in regard to their role within grassroots mobilisation.

Grassroots Organisations

Having described NGOs as important intermediary actors between state, the private sector and civil society, the relationship between NGOs and civil society can be portrayed as a give-and-take relationship: As Ley points out, NGOs receive legitimacy and accountability through grassroots organisations in turn for the provision of innovation, advocacy and bargaining power (Ley 2010, p. 74).

Grassroots organisations, also referred to as community-based organisations (CBOs), are the organisational base of collective actions such as “leisure activities, the development and maintenance of public spaces and assets, [...] advocacy and campaigning” (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 151) especially in marginalised communities. This basis is vital to the effectiveness and sustainability of such actions. Furthermore, it is important that the leadership of these organisations is equipped with adequate accountability and has the respect of its members. Mitlin characterises this kind of organisation as follows:

Grassroots organisations are membership organisations which are [...] independent from the state. As membership organisations, the risks, costs and benefits are shared among the members, and the leadership may be called to account by members. Most are non-profit although some operate as cooperative commercial enterprises. Many are informal and operate as loose associations. (Mitlin 1999, p. 5)

The UN Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements of 2003 distinguishes among the three most common types of grassroots organisations: local development associations, interest associations and borrowers’ groups. Local development associations are commonly village councils or neighbourhood associations speaking for a whole community. Interest associations, in contrast, represent only a particular group in a community, such as a women’s club, for example. The last type are,

according to the UN Report, also regarded as grassroots organisations even though they are for-profit organisations, yet they are usually distinguished from private businesses because of their specific involvement in the development of a community.

Many grassroots organisations are usually initiated as a response to a certain need, problem or threat that is posed to the community, be it by state or non-state actors. These kinds of organisations are referred to as single-issue organisations that exist as long as the founding reason is prevalent. Other organisations continue to exist, widening their spectrum both concerning activities and membership. Furthermore, cultural and religiously driven associations are of growing importance for the organisation and mobilisation of communities, especially in the context of liberalisation and globalisation effects that are being widely regarded as weakening the identity and autonomy of both the individual and communities.²⁶

Interestingly, the said report connects the field and time of the existence of specific grassroots organisations to a specific leadership structure. Hence, traditional neighbourhood development organisations usually occupied with basic service provisions to their community such as water, sanitation, transport, solid waste management, education or health are perceived as usually male-led.²⁷ In contrast, more recently founded organisations usually occupied with filling provision gaps or poverty reduction such as communal kitchens, milk for children or income-earning schemes are seen as controlled by “impoverished women and are usually based on self-help.”

²⁶ United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 151.

²⁷ United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, pp. 151–152.

Networks of Grassroots Organisations

Again, networks play an important role in the development of grassroots organisations. These develop usually horizontally between different organisations, such as Shack/Slum dwellers International. However, these horizontal linkages are becoming more and more important on a national and city-wide level. Besides the raising of public attention, these networks serve as exchange channels of experiences and thus know-how and increase the power of advocacy and claim-making as well as improving fund-raising opportunities.

Basic Organisational Deficits

Besides the fact that grassroots organisations are generally observed as important actors in an active civil society and thus as agents of change within the democratisation of societies, and as important factors to empower potentially marginalised population groups and being able to more or less effectively provide basic services badly needed by poor communities, basic structural deficits have to be pointed out: Grassroots organisations themselves are mostly profoundly undemocratic, which can potentially lead to internal conflicts and the unbalanced representation of community interests due to inadequate representation within the local organisations. A basic, external deficit can be assessed in that grassroots organisation tend to lack bargaining power because their counterparts in the issues at stake are potentially more resourceful in terms of knowledge, money and networks: “As a result, CBOs [or grassroots organisations] frequently require the support of NGOs or other CBOs if they are to develop and implement strategies that build their power base and maximise their access to resources.” (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2003, p. 153) Potential threats of this situation are described below.

3 Chapter: Contextual Background: Urban Transformation in Istanbul

3.1 *Urbanisation of Istanbul*

Introduction

In this chapter, I elaborate on the main developments of urbanisation of Istanbul, starting in 1923. This provides the basis for the further argumentation in this study. After giving a broad overview over the main urbanisation patterns of Istanbul, I explain, in section 3.2, the history of the Gecekondu, informal settlements that constitute a mass phenomenon within the urbanisation of modern Turkey, especially after 1950 with the beginning of industrialisation. Today, 60 years later, Gecekondus are one of the key issues that spark unrest within Turkish society: They are, on the one hand, subject to great deal of investment and a great potential for profit for the great public-private partnership of the central government and private investors; on the other hand, they have been the only way for the masses of rural-to-urban migrants to follow social and economic upward mobility. Because the state did not provide any sufficient housing programs and tolerated Gecekondus for almost half a century, the often marginalised and economically vulnerable demographic groups are now more than ever the target of widespread “dispossession, displacement and property transfer to wealthier actors.” (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 25) This leads to section 3.3, in which I outline a new political agenda concerning urban development. “Urban transformation” is the term that is used to describe a new urban regime that started in 2005 when new laws were abolished, which is allowing the cleansing of large-scale inner-city areas as well as more peripheral urban areas. This political agenda allows

district as well as metropolitan municipalities to declare zones of urban transformation in which large-scale expropriation, forced eviction and demolition are carried out in the name of either the protection of historical architectural heritage or disaster, mostly earthquake, prevention.

Istanbul is one of the few cities that are located on two continents. It is a belt city, about 100 kilometres long, spanning the Marmara Sea. The natural connection of Marmara and the Black Sea by the Bosphorus Strait, as well as the natural harbour of the Golden Horn, are the two characteristics that are the reason for the city's centuries-long prominent geostrategic situation. The first settlements were founded on the so-called historic peninsula in what is today the Fatih municipality where most monuments are to be found. Istanbul, the capital of three successive empires and known by three different names, was perpetually a religious hub and for long periods an important, economically wealthy merchant city.

Governance of the City

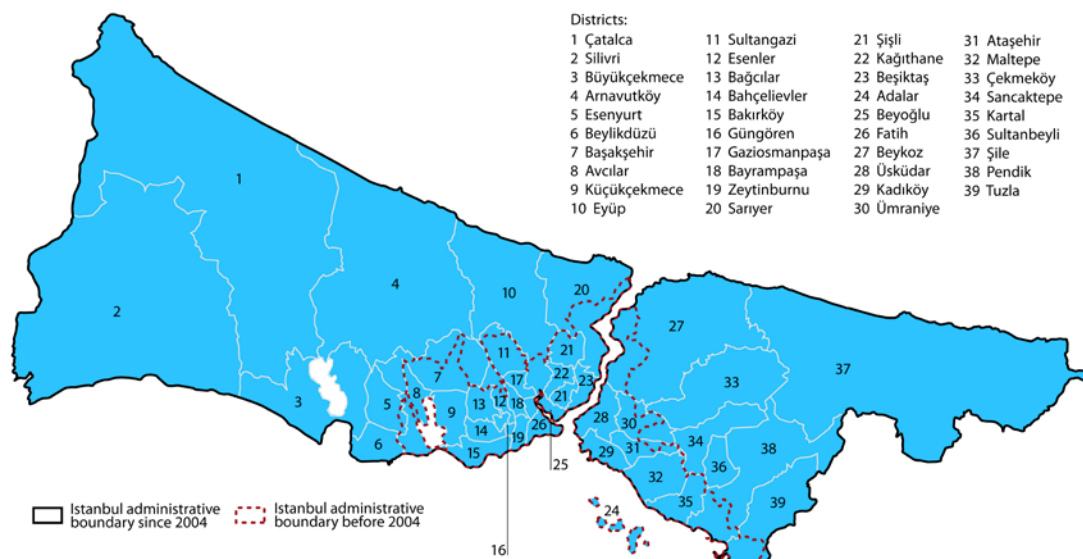


Figure 2: Map of districts and administrative boundaries of Istanbul,
 Source: (Urban Age Programme 2009, p. 26)

The city of Istanbul is governed by two tiers of administration: a national government tier and a metropolitan municipal tier. These are represented by two main political figures: the governor of Istanbul, who is directly appointed by the federal government and coordinates the involvement of the federal government's ministries in the city affairs both at the metropolitan and district level, including health care, primary education, policing and to some extent housing and transport. The Mass Housing Authority is not coordinated through the governor of Istanbul but is directly linked to the prime minister. The other key figure representing the metropolitan level and potentially one of the most important political figures in the country is the mayor of Istanbul. He is directly elected by the city population every five years. Together with the metropolitan municipal council, he heads the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

(IMM). The municipal council is constituted of directly elected mayors from 39 district municipalities. The IMM has executive powers and considerable financial resources at its disposal in terms of e.g., urban planning, transport, housing and environmental services. At the level of municipal districts, executive powers are executed by the respective mayors (ilçe mayor) and the respective municipal councils (ilçe council). In 2004, the metropolitan municipality of Istanbul was considerably extended from 1,831 km² to 5,343 km², covering the entire province of Istanbul. Consequently, the Provincial Special Authorities' executive powers got reduced in favour of the IMM. At the district municipal level, 41 first-level municipalities were merged into eight new districts, leading to 39 municipal districts in 2008. (Urban Age Programme 2009, p. 26)

The Istanbul Development Agency, Istanbul Kalkinma Ajansi, and another 15 agencies were created in Turkey in 2009 to further the European Union accession process. These agencies are created to assist in the “coordination between the municipal and central bodies as well as civic institutions for budgeting and planning of large-scale urban projects. In addition, there are provincial authorities for each of Turkey's cities which have significant areas of responsibility including master planning, although in Istanbul this responsibility has been transferred to the IMM.” (Urban Age Programme 2009, p. 26) In this connection, the Metropolitan Municipality installed in 2005 the Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Design Centre (IMP). The IMP is part of Bimtas, a private-public partnership company of the IMM carrying out consulting, construction, controlling, engineering, urban planning projects and historical heritage management projects; it was established in 1997. Initially equipped with an extensive staff, IMP developed e.g., the Istanbul Master Plan of 2009. Interestingly, the IMP did not appear during field research as a relevant actor.

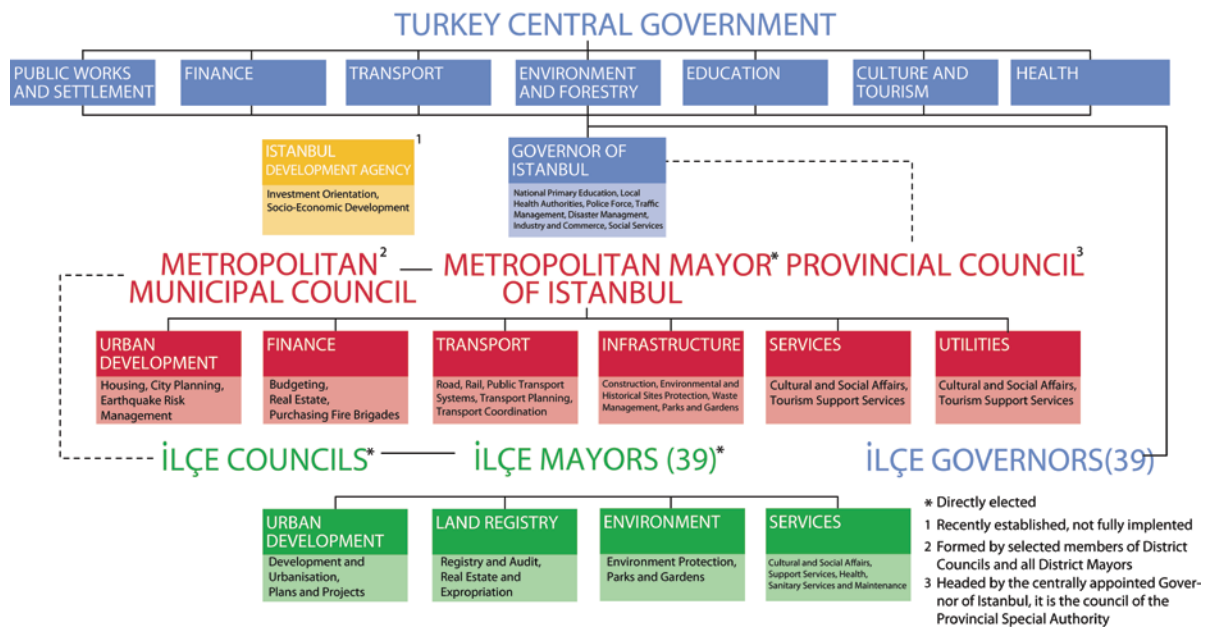


Figure 3: Governance structure of Istanbul, Source: (Urban Age Programme 2009, p. 26)

Urban Development after 1923

To understand the phenomena explained in this thesis, it is necessary to look into the urbanisation processes of Istanbul with the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk²⁸ in 1923. In the same year, Ankara was declared the capital. This decision was the starting point for 30 years of demographic, economic, political and administrative decline. Istanbul lost, in parallel to its loss of importance, a large part of its population. In 1914, Istanbul comprised about one million inhabitants. After the foundation of the republic, it shrank to about 500,000 inhabitants in 1924. Especially problematic was the loss of its non-Muslim population, which had played an important role in the economic sector, and the city was therefore hit especially hard (Tekeli 1994, p. 68). In this difficult situation, the Great Depression hit Istanbul in 1930 before the city could recover and readjust its economic system. "Istanbul so far lived on consumption, now it has to live on production," stated Yahya Kemal, a

²⁸ Mustafa Kemal, the founder and first president of the Turkish Republic after the World War I, gained the name "Atatürk" (forefather of the Turks) in 1934.

member of parliament of that time (Tekeli 1994, p. 68). In 1930, a development law was adopted aiming at the re-planning of the city. Henry Prost, a French planner, played an important role in the development of Istanbul until 1950. His surveys and planning contributed significantly to a new land use plan in the scale 1/5,000 covering the historic peninsula and Beyoğlu. This plan is widely referred to as the Prost Plan. According to this new plan, large-scale industries were to be situated in the Golden Horn while in other areas along the Bosphorus, plants and facilities were dissolved. The city was supposed to keep its main functions in place, such as its main business centres. However, reorganisation was necessary. The new planning envisioned, furthermore, a new traffic concept for the city that would connect the city by tramways, rail links and ferries with the “goal of creating an integrated transport network. This aim was also consistent with the objective of adapting the inner city traffic system to motor vehicles.” (Tekeli 1994, p. 87)

In 1950, 20 years later, Istanbul had recovered its earlier amount of inhabitants. From the 1950s onwards, more migrants entered the city, providing it with the manpower needed for the emerging industries. In this period, Istanbul began to reclaim its role from Ankara as the cultural and economic centre of the country. The significant increase in industries between 1950 and 1980, followed by rapid waves of urbanisation, can be interpreted as an expression of this reclamation of status.

From 1945 to 1950, Istanbul's population increased by 14% only to grow until 1955 by 28%, up to 1.3 million inhabitants. Between 1950 and 1965, the city again had to cope with a so-far unknown speed of urbanisation. The answer was a centralised planning system and new legislations that induced a shift from city-wide to more regional planning. Because informal settlements mushroomed on the cities fringes, it

became important for authorities to include the lands of the surrounding provinces into their territory of intervention.

Land speculators are subdividing all the agricultural areas from Haydarpaşa to İsmi, from Sirkeci to Silivri into plots of different sizes whether these are on the Ankara-Istanbul or the Istanbul-Londra highway [...] neither municipalities nor codes for buildings and roads bring definite and clear provisions related to development in the peripheries of cities.²⁹

The period after 1965 was characterised by the implementation of big-scale infrastructural projects such as the opening of the Bosphorus bridges in 1973 and 1988 and new highways that remade the cities' "time-distance relations," which restructured the hierarchy of central areas, inducing land speculation and a reassignment of central business districts. (Tekeli 1994, p. 168) The city became decentralised. A high car ownership rate, the increasing use of private bus services and the introduction to mass housing led to a further decentralisation of the city (Tekeli 1994, p. 168).

In the post-1980 period, Turkey changed its economic system significantly, turning it from an import substitution model into a neo-liberal, export-oriented privatisation model in which markets were getting more flexible and social policies were predominantly structured by market forces (Şenyapılı). In this period, Istanbul witnessed the most significant increase in population so far: between 1980 until 1985, the population increased by 98% from about three million to about 5.5 million inhabitants. After the coup d'état in 1980 and the local elections of 1984, the centralised planning system under the control of the central government was weakened because more authority and financial resources were allocated to local authorities. That also included the preparation and implementation of master plans. In

²⁹ Zeki Sayar, explaining the severity of the problem of unregulated land appropriation in the professional journal ARCHITECT in 1953. Tekeli 1994, p. 102.

the period between 1984 and 1989, the most dominant figure in the process of urban development was again the mayor of Istanbul of that time, Bedrettin Dalan; in contrast, from the mid-1950s to 1984 the most important figures were the respective prime ministers in office. (Tekeli 1994, p. 265)

Bedrettin Dalan was responsible for a range of big infrastructural and renewal projects. The building of Tarlabaşı Boulevard connecting Taksim Square with the Historic Peninsula and the removal of industry from the Golden Horn were two of these projects. It can be said that after 1984 the housing policy changed fundamentally in connection to the opening up to international markets and a subsequent need for competitiveness on the global scale, which led to the decrease of wages but also to the possibility for workers to acquire credits to build cooperative apartment housing. This was the introduction of something that would be possible to call a social housing scheme (Fehl 2000, p. 166). Along these developments, 1984 was also the year in which a major housing reform was initiated, which led to cleared resources and competencies but was put into action to slowly show major effects. It could not prevent the emergence of new Gecekondu settlements, which came into being until the late 1980s (Fehl 2000, p. 167). Again, the new amnesty law for Gecekondu settlements in the same year had a dramatic effect on the metropolitan areas in Turkey: A new building boom was unleashed that led to a vast densification of the existing Gecekondu areas but also to the densification of other inner-city areas, where an unclear land tenure situation was seemingly resolved. This shift towards liberalisation allowed for a multiplication in the housing stock without state investment. The yapsat system was an effective method that allowed masses of small homeowners to build multi-story buildings without the need for a big cash investment. (See the next chapter.)

Besides the explosion of apartment buildings due to amnesty laws and big infrastructural projects, Istanbul became the venue of the first phenomena of globalisation: shopping malls, gated communities, five-star hotels, new investments to favour tourism, new office towers, and the expulsion of production and manufacturing from the central urban areas (Keyder 2005, p. 128). These were results of the increasing investment of the state and private actors in the big cities, which then became the gateways to a global economy. Following the logic of liberalisation that was also favoured by international institutions such as the IMF at that time, the state and capital withdrew from industrial investment in the first sector. Investments were done highly selectively and, besides the housing sector, generally not in general requirements. (Şengül 2005, p. 86)

In the period after 1980, many newcomers changed with an upward dynamic, becoming petty bourgeois by developing their former, legally acquired real estate. Again, the building amnesty did not clear the land tenure situation fully. The Gecekondu areas, even though redeveloped incrementally into apartment houses, did remain to a great extent in a very ambiguous situation in the sense of land property. Together with the long history of population exchange and the expulsion of non-Muslim minorities from the old city centres, a very improper legal infrastructure of property rights was the outcome.

The state, at the same time, was more and more dependent on investment from private investment on a global scale. Due to the post-1980 initiated liberalisation process, the public sector adopted more and more market logics: Subsidies were reduced and the provision with basic supplies was more and more given to private market actors. Municipal services had to be cost-neutral and prices were readjusted according to real costs. One important prerequisite for the attraction of second-sector

investment into the real estate market was the installation of a new land regime with an unambiguous legal framework (Keyder 2009).

After the major earthquake of 1999³⁰ and the subsequent financial meltdown in 2001, this restructuring was started by the newly founded AKP party and its chairman, the former mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who became prime minister in 2003. The restructuring of the national Mass Housing Authority (TOKİ) and its endowment with major new capacities to privatise state-owned land and to take over private land with ambiguous status inside the city along with the abolition of new laws led to the implementation of a new land regime widely referred to as urban transformation.

In 2010, Istanbul had an estimated population of about 13 million inhabitants, based on cautious estimates (Turkish Statistical Institute 2011, p. 45). Turkey's economy is booming like no other in Europe, with a growth rate of 8.5% in 2011 after a 9% increase in 2010 (The Economist 2012) of which most part is produced in and around Istanbul. Migration to Istanbul is enduring: Between 2009 and 2010, the city faced a 2,6% growth rate, making it still the number-one destination of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey (Turkish Statistical Institute 2011, p. 45). As indicated above, Istanbul is striving to develop from a mega city centred on production into a global city centred on global service industries. In this pursuit, the urbanisation patterns that ensured a supply of a cheap labour force are now becoming an obstacle.

³⁰ The earthquake hit Turkey on 17 August 1999 close to the city of İzmit, about 100 kilometres east, with an intensity of 7.6, killing about 17,000 people in the whole region. In Istanbul, around 1,000 people died. The earthquake had a devastating effect on the cities' building stock.

3.2 The Development of the Gecekondu

As already mentioned above, the Gecekondu (a Turkish version of shantytowns), literally mean “landed overnight” or also “built over night” and are a key characteristic of the urbanisation process in the country and became paramount especially after 1950 in all big cities. In this chapter, I want to provide a deeper understanding of the special characteristics and underlying mechanisms of the Gecekondu and focus on the social, economic and legal frameworks that led to the precarious land tenure situation and subsequent vulnerability that exist in these parts of the city. After the devaluation of the currency in 1958, which was the result of Turkey being in arrears in its foreign-debt obligations, accompanied by declining imports and drastic falling export earnings, new credits given to the Turkish government and new budget discipline was needed, which put state authorities in a situation with limited resources (Krueger 1979, p. 22). In retrospect, the state had to make decisions about whether investment should be directed towards the support of the newly emerging industrialisation or towards the subsequent massive urbanisation (Korkmaz, Ünlü-Yücesoy 2009).

The main push factor for the massive rural-to-urban migration in Turkey after World War II was the support of mono-cultural agriculture to answer the food demands of Europe. The large amounts of funds provided by the US government also pursued the political purpose to “shield developing countries from communism.” (Şenyapılı) Under the influence of the Marshall Plan (1947-1951), Turkey followed this trend instead of supporting small and diverse agricultural entities. The mechanisation of Turkey’s agriculture and subsequent rationalisation led to vast amounts of unemployed rural labourers, who later poured into the cities.

Industrialisation had already started in the middle of the 1940s. This main pull factor for rural-to-urban migration was not fully developed when the first masses of rural-to-urban migrants were pushed out of their rural areas because of the industrialisation of agricultural production. The labour market of the new industries demanded, in the 1940s, initially more skilled labourers for the manufacturing of a now export-oriented market. This started to change in the first half of the 1950s: With the newly introduced multi-party system and a new priority of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation with the introduction of a liberal economic development model, the demand for an increasingly unskilled labour force was rising (Şenyapılı). Due to the reinvestment of credit and surplus values in the cities, the building sector was booming so that the pull factor of job opportunities for untrained labourers became the important pull factor, attracting even more rural-to-urban migrants (Şenyapılı).

Because of the lack of resources spent on urbanisation, there was no planned housing scheme to accommodate the never-experienced influx of potential workforce as a consequence of industrialisation. The speed of urbanisation led to an unplanned development in the classical sense. Even though some new quarters were planned and built according to Western models such as garden cities, high-rise areas, condominiums or cooperative state subsidised rental housing, all this remained marginal compared to the overall expansion of the city and mainly reserved for the middle and upper classes (Fehl 2000, p. 166). The authorities were helpless in the face of the massive request for housing by the rural migrants who poured into the city in pursuit of jobs and shelter. The authorities, limited in their ability to act due to several reasons, at first de facto tolerated the vast areas of informal settlements, the Gecekondu. Through this informal mechanism of urbanisation, the needs for shelter were solved by the migrants themselves, who mainly occupied empty public lots and unused areas in the inner city and the peripheries in the vicinity of the industrial

areas. There are three different perceivable phases of Gecekondu development: Already since the 1930s, “spontaneous land grabbing” was a common phenomenon of both individual people and small groups of rural-to-urban migrants, which was mainly focused on inner-city vacant plots. The attempt of local authorities to evict these first settlers created a bad image due to the brutality employed by the authorities. After 1950, migration increased dramatically. Collective land grabbing turned out to be the best strategy against potential eviction. Therefore, larger groups of mainly young men from the same villages came to Istanbul and started to build new settlements at night after thoroughly investigating the work opportunities, possible available lands and the accessible building materials (Fehl 2000, p. 168). Municipal services such as water, buses, schools, and medical centres were installed incrementally, especially when elections were close (usually every five years) to gain voters. This populist practice has been a widespread phenomenon in all of Turkey.

After the 1960s, in the face of ever-scarcer resources of available lands, professional land mafias were parcelling large parts of land on the fringes of the city, in the grey area of authorities between provinces and cities. Squatter lords first acquired the unserviced lands at the outer peripheries legally before subdividing them illegally into 100 to 120 m² parcels. These parcels were then sold to migrants without any legal basis. The price, which was still very high for the newcomers, was still only about 60% of legally developed land in a comparable location (Fehl 2000, p. 170). As a reaction to this development, municipalities tried to introduce “legal” Gecekondu areas in which already subdivided municipal lands were sold regularly to migrants. Criticism of this procedure were mainly heard from fundamentalist and socialist political groups because these lands were only given to homeowners who already

had the necessary capital at hand and thus these lands were not available for the majority of dwellers.

Only gradually did the authorities start to understand that the influx of rural migrants was the badly needed cheap labour force for the emerging industries (Şenyapılı). Between 1940 and 1950, the population of Ankara, for example, increased by 89%. According to a study carried out by the Turkish Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement in the early 1960s, 64% of the dwellings in Ankara and 40% in Istanbul were Gecekondus (Karpas 2009, pp. 10ff.). In Istanbul, today the informal settlements cover up to 65% of the populated area (Yalcintan, Erbas 2003).

Post-Ottoman Land Tenure in Turkey

The land tenure situation in Turkey is an important factor for both the occurrence of the Gecekondu in its historical development and scope as a phenomenon of urbanisation as well as its legal ambiguities, which still play a significant role in today's urban transformation policies. This situation becomes more transparent with taking the Ottoman land tenure situation and the new Turkish Republic's heritage into account. Concerning the land tenure situation, there are two facts that are closely interwoven: First, the Turkish state currently holds up to 60% of its surface as its own property (Fehl 2000, p. 165) and second, urbanisation in Turkey was to a great extent informally done on state- and foundation-owned land.

These two circumstances are connected by the incomplete commodification of land markets in the transition of the Ottoman system of land tenure towards the new Republican system on the principals of the capitalist market economy after 1923. In Ottoman times, there were basically five different kinds of land tenure: first, private property, called **mülk**, which was very rare and only to be found in the inner cities;

second, 80% of all cultivable land, called **miri**, which was the property of the sultan and was given to villagers; third, land administered by religious foundations, called **wakf**³¹; fourth, communal and public places such as streets, parks etc., called **metruk**; and fifth, non-cultivable land, called **mevat** (Duyar-Kienast 2005, pp. 84ff). After 1923, the second, fourth and fifth type of land tenure became the property of the Turkish state. The third type of land tenure is under the Vakıflar Administration (Yönder, 1998: 59-60) as cited by Dyar-Kienast in her dissertation (Duyar-Kienast 2005, p. 85). After the foundation of the republic, huge lands outside the cities lay waste without land-use planning and with neither building laws nor any clarified ownership status. These lands, which could be argued were incompletely commodified and remained outside capitalistic circuits of capital accumulation, became the prime target of informal urbanisation.

Political Amnesties of Gecekondu Settlements

Between 1948 and 1988, the Turkish Parliament carried out not less than 15 laws more or less directly directed to legalise the Gecekondu urbanisation (Yalcintan, Erbas 2003, p. 96). In the following, I concentrate on two amnesty laws in particular that prove to be the most important ones. The first law I refer to is the “Gecekondu law” from 1966, law no. 775. It was a so-called amnesty law, which provided building amnesties for many squatter residents settling illegally on state-owned lands.

Gecekondus that met certain standards were equipped with basic infrastructure and municipal services, developing into normalised communities. It is necessary to point out that these building amnesties and the provision of services did not mean that the

³¹ Keyder gives further details: “Waqf [differently written] is a foundation set up under Islamic law where the revenue is designated for a special purpose or for income, but the entrusted property cannot be sold. In the Ottoman Empire, it often served to keep the authorities away. If a property was set up as a waqf (rather than private, inheritable estate), it could not be confiscated.” Keyder 1999, p. 158

Gecekondu law was providing them with legal land titles. "Property claims to the land remained in the government hands." (Grewell et al. 2006, p. 10) At the same time, Gecekondu settlements regarded as having a low standard were demolished in the implementation of the law. To implement the law and provide it with the needed resources, a "Gecekondu fund" was installed. The fund was to give municipalities the opportunity to carry out the envisioned measures, which were in that period structurally ill-equipped with financial resources. The Ministry of Public Works and Settlements envisioned the resources to be directed to the enhancement of infrastructure in existing Gecekondus and to develop, at the same time, affordable housing. Unfortunately, the money allocated had, in the face of a hyperinflation, only a short period of relevance and achieved in the end very little. Nevertheless, law no. 775 introduced for the first time the possibility to build multi-story houses with condominiums in "legalised" Gecekondu areas. The building codes were adapted subsequently many times up to five or six stories. (Fehl 2000, p. 175) Yet the law had to utterly fail, according to Gerhard Fehl. He points out that the "Gecekondu development" law was not taking into account the mere extent of the problem. It wanted to end the Gecekondu problem at once by simply prohibiting the erection of new Gecekondu settlements and the demolition of the existing ones (Fehl 2000, p. 167). The central government started to rethink its urbanisation politics only at the end of the 1970s. In 1984, after the military coup and the reinstallation of the government, a new administrative reform was introduced that was to clarify the state and municipal obligations directed to urban development. Furthermore, state funds were redirected towards local municipalities along with the responsibility to reorder the situation at the cities' fringes. New building laws were abolished, the erection of new Gecekondus was prohibited and the amnesty of existing ones under certain preconditions was facilitated (Fehl 2000, p. 167).

The amnesty law of 1984, the “redevelopment law” no. 2981, provided building amnesty to all squatter citizens residing *both* on private- and state-owned land. Furthermore, the law gave Gecekondu residents legal land titles to their residential property and building codes were adapted for buildings up to four-stories high³² (Grewell et al. 2006, p. 11). Here it is important to note that the possibility for legal land titles was provided in exchange for compensation. Many Gecekondu residents could not or did not want to allocate the amount of money needed and sought for cheaper modes of land titling. In my case study, this amount of people included up to 50% of the Gecekondu neighbourhood of Başbüyük. A cheaper way of acquiring a title deed was to acquire a title allocation deed, the so-called *tapu tahsis belgesi*, which provided the owner with a legal title deed via payment of a fee if the plot is connected to municipal lands. Title allocation deeds can cover only the plot, a single story or flat, or a whole building. Accordingly, the allocation deeds rise in price.

Post-Gecekondu: Apartman and the Yapsat System

An important method of the production of the built environment in Turkey since 1948 (Tekeli 1994, p. 184) in Istanbul is the so-called *yapsat*³³ system. This system allowed developing real estate without capital at hand. The system works as follows: A land owner, someone who owns a plot or a house, wants to develop his plot without the said resources, or a small builder wants to build a house on somebody's ground. The home owner looks for a small builder, the so-called *yapsatçı*, and offers

³² Gerhard Fehl implies a possible building height up to more than five stories, which coincides with my personal observation in the field study Fehl 2000, p. 177.

³³ The *yapsatçı* used to be called *müteahhit*: “the responsible and committing one.” The *müteahhit* was a builder who committed himself to construct a building within a certain time frame, for a set cost in a set quality. In contrast, the *yapsatçı* which arose from the *müteahhit* is a small contractor who takes risks [He is more an entrepreneur and less a sheer service provider] as his folksy derived name implies. (Yap: ‘Do,’ ‘Build’; sat: ‘Sell’; -çı: suffix for occupation. A *yapsatçı* is a doer and a seller. Often both terms are used synonymously.” Esen 2005, pp. 51ff

him his land to erect a multi-story condominium house, usually of simple quality, the so called apartman. The builder gets, in exchange for his provided construction services, half of the flats in the newly constructed building. This compensation principle is widely known in the Mediterranean. In Turkey, it is called *kat karşılığı inşaat*: construction services in exchange for stories. The land owner gets the other part of the newly erected flats. Neither of the two has to invest capital. The building costs get covered by the instalments of the buyers of the flats of the *yapsatçı*. The land owner uses the flats many times for his own requirements, to house his growing family, for example, or rents out some and sells others (Esen 2005, p. 41). This method of producing a built environment without being dependent on investing external financial resources was the key for the densification of the whole city and at the same time “helped maintain the middle classes to keep and enhance their socio-economic situation in times of dramatic urbanisation.” (Esen 2005, p. 41)

The *yapsat* system became also widely applied after the amnesty law of 1984 in the former *Gecekondu* areas, which outnumber the middle-class districts where this system was applied by far. By the time of the 1984 amnesty law, the *Gecekondu* became a sphere of capital accumulation, however small-scale in the beginning. Especially in times of hyperinflation, as in the case in Turkey in that period, the investment in real estate by the former *Gecekondu* dwellers was paramount. The focus on the use value got increasingly replaced by the focus on the exchange value. In this sense, it can be spoken of the post-*Gecekondu* after 1984 onwards, because the building amnesties legalized the *Gecekondus* to a great extent and new building codes made the densification possible. Today, however, this unwritten social contract³⁴ is no longer accepted by the authorities, which turned a blind eye willingly

³⁴ Bugra speaks of an informal social contract or an informal social pact, which kept “poverty under control without formal social-policy measures specifically designed to that end.” Bugra 2007, p. 44

for half a century on the urbanisation processes in their country as long as they solved the housing problems, kept the rural migrants from becoming self-aware citizens³⁵ and were able to provide them with voters.

Conclusion

As Kormaz and Tanel point out it can be said that the Gecekondu led to a kind of reverse urbanisation process: first buildings, then infrastructure and legal status. Through the laws of amnesties for buildings, Istanbul's homeownership rates became one of the highest in the world (Korkmaz, Ünlü-Yücesoy 2009). New urbanites, mainly from eastern Anatolia, through the development of their initially informal parcels, could incrementally become part of a new middle class. This had two major effects that I want to focus on: First, it lessened the tensions between old and new urbanites, so it can be spoken of a kind of inclusive urbanisation. The second effect of the Gecekondu urbanisation was that the new settlers reproduced a predominantly conservative religious political profile, which occurred because small homeowners now wanted to defend their properties.³⁶ The social and economic historian Orhan Esen stated in a lecture in 2009³⁷ that on the one hand industrialisation was strongly

³⁵ “[...] the state and the manufacturing capital prefer the in-migration population to remain weak. By providing some economic interest via Gecekondu, and turning a blind eye on this illegality, they position the Gecekondu population to automatically think themselves guilty and thus unable to exercise their rights as citizens. Furthermore, by owning a house in the very initial stage of their urban experience, newcomers are prevented from developing a sense of class-consciousness.[...] Thus, the Gecekondu population tends to be casual or nonunion workers.” Yalcintan, Erbas 2003, p. 97

³⁶ It has to be said that there were also explicitly left quarters, which did deviate from the mainstream political affiliation. Tekeli mentions liberated quarters: “In the meantime a change in political trends occurred in the *Gecekondu* areas [1970s]. Residents who used to vote for rightist parties, now started to support leftist ones. This politisation increased at an accelerated rate and resulted in a fragmentation among opposition political groups.” Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010; Tekeli 1994, p. 169

³⁷ “Istanbul, gegen die Wand?” [Istanbul, against the wall?], metroZones.Saloon 2, 6 February 2009, at Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin; “Urban Conflicts, Counter Spaces, Transnational Networks”: discussion with Pelin Tan and Orhan Esen as well as Çağla İlk and Thomas Knorr-Siedow as representatives of Forum Berlin Istanbul and others.

desired, but on the other hand the state authorities wanted to avoid the proletariats. According to Esen, the answer was urbanisation without trauma. The workers should remain peasants. Capital was given to them in the form of land. Esen sees in this policy the Turkish way of anticommunism. “It was expected that this new urban environment could form an ideological barrier against the nineteenth-century European model of divided society imbued with class conflict —precisely the nightmare of the founding Republicans.”(Esen op. 2009, p. 180) At the same time, the new settlers were politically never wanted and rather accepted as a necessary evil, which became less and less ignorable. The first settlers were even rejected by the old urban population as “cultural pollutants.” (Şenyapılı)

By 1994, the Gecekondu population of Istanbul “had increased to the point where it constituted a majority” (Yalcintan, Erbas 2003, p. 91). In the 1994 local elections, the Islamic Party RP of the subsequently appointed mayor Recep Tayyip Erdogan achieved a clear victory. The Gecekondu population saw the Islamic Party as their advocate, because their leaders did not stem from the old urban elites and shared their religious beliefs, which had been widely belittled by secularised urbanites. The political development between 1984 and the rise of the AKP regime “can be interpreted as an attempt by squatter populations to transform traditional urban politics into a new form that would not exclude them.” (Yalcintan, Erbas 2003, p. 108)

Today, the aspiration of the political representation of their cause has not been fulfilled. Though today’s post-Gecekondu areas resemble to a great extent completely integrated parts of the city, politicians of the ruling AKP Party³⁸ still talk

³⁸ Founded by Tayyip Recep Erdoğan, the former Mayor of Istanbul, who won in 1994 with the Islamic Party RP.

about “tumours” on the fringes of the Turkish cities,³⁹ and basic rights of homeownership are not accessible to the former squatter population; the harmonic picture of the inclusive form of urbanisation has to be revisited in the light of today’s developments.

In the next chapter, I elaborate on the drastic changes of the traditional patronage-based relations of local politics and Gecekondu and other marginalised population groups in Istanbul after the ruling Justice and Development Party, AKP, the Islamic neo-liberal party of the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, came into power in 2002.

³⁹ “People wondered how these (Gecekondu)s could be demolished, how we could get rid of them. If you are determined, if you believe in yourself, if you are resolute, you can demolish them... Our biggest ideal was to eradicate the Gecekondu)s that have surrounded our cities like a tumour. Now we are fulfilling that idea, and we gave to accomplish this goal all over Turkey.” Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey, 2006, from a speech delivered at the First National Housing Assembly, organised by the Mass Housing Authority (TOKİ) as quoted by Kuyucu 2009b, p. 145.

3.3 History of Urban Transformation

Urban Transformation Projects (UTPs) implemented in Istanbul's Gecekondu settlements can best be conceptualised as market-making tools with which local and central state actors radically remake the property structure, exchange mechanisms and rules of market governance in informal housing areas. (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 212)

In the previous two chapters, specific features of the history of Istanbul's urbanisation after 1923 (especially after 1950) were elaborated upon. In this chapter, I introduce the current political agenda that is strongly influencing Istanbul and other big Turkish cities' urban development. The term for this new urban regime is "urban transformation," and it is implemented through big-scale urban transformation projects (UTPs). The above mentioned development of the city of Istanbul started out as a use value-based self-help housing production for migrants and the lower middle classes. This developed into a small-scale capitalistic real estate market that allowed the first settlers to establish themselves and allowed for a modest rise in class that was increasingly focused on the exchange value of the produced, built environment. With the rise of neo-liberal moderate Islamist parties that were not rooted in the old Republican elites, the rural-to-urban migrants now already living in the city for several generations hoped for the strengthening of their rights from the newly elected political stratum.

The outcome of the actions of the new political actors in power was quite the opposite: The patronage-based system that had been applied for half a century was brought to its gradual end by the new party in power. The 1999 Marmara earthquake and the most severe economic crisis in the history of Turkey in 2000/2001, together with a new party in power,⁴⁰ led to a complete paradigm shift from a populist towards

⁴⁰ Since 2002.

a neo-liberal urban agenda (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010). These major events accomplished the historic rupture that was already precluded by a trend towards neo-liberalism since the mid-1980s. The speech of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan quoted above shows how clearly the political castes turned away from their hereditary clientele. Because of the pressing need for the government to enlarge the state's income to pay back an increasingly growing national debt, the fact that the Turkish Republic still owns big amounts of land and valuable real estate in central inner-city locations and in increasingly valuable areas on the former fringes of the cities has made privatisation the prime directive of the new government since 2002 (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 146).

With this logic, new laws were issued that allowed for the radical restructuring, expropriation and eviction of neighbourhoods and their residents and homeowners in both inner-city and less central locations. Additionally, the Mass Housing Authority, which was founded in 1984 initially to regulate the housing sector was, after its de facto collapse before 2001, reorganised by a variety of legal⁴¹ and institutional reforms by 2008 and endowed with extended and wide-ranging powers⁴² that allow it to privatise and develop most state-owned lands directly and intervene as a strong actor in the real estate sector. These are altogether powerful measures, allowing for the instalment of a capitalist land market system.

⁴¹ Kuyucu/Ünsal mention in this connection law No. 4966 (2003), law no. 5162 (2004), law no. 5582 and law no. 5793 (2008) Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 18; Lopez additionally mentions law no. 5273 Lopez 2009-2010, p. 61.

⁴² These wide-ranging powers are described in detail by Tuna Kuyucu Kuyucu 2009a: "The MHA acquired the right to (I) regulate the zoning and sale of almost all state-owned urban land, (II) form subsidiary construction firms and/or engage in partnerships with existing private firms, (III) construct 'for profit' housing on state land either through its own subsidiary firms or through public-private partnerships in order to raise revenues for public housing construction, (V) sell its mortgaged claims to private mortgage-brokerage firms, (VI) execute 'urban renewal' and 'Gecekondu transformation' projects, and (VII) revise planning and zoning regulations in 'transformation' zones."

New Urban Transformation Laws

Laws no. 5366 and no. 5393 are the two important legislatives that lay the bases for the new paradigm in urban development and that are applied in the urban redevelopment projects connected to urban transformation, kentsel dönüşüm.

Law no. 5366 is a new redevelopment law for the “Protection of Deteriorated Historic and Cultural Heritage through Renewal and Re-Use.”⁴³ This law is applied in inner-city quarters with historical building stock. The law was abolished on June 16, 2005, enabling district municipalities⁴⁴ to declare transformation areas and tender these out to private developers for implementation⁴⁵ or in cooperation with the Mass Housing Authority. In this specific case, the urban transformation is called urban renewal, or kentsel yenileme. Urban renewal areas, according to law no. 5366, are declared in inner-city protection zones. The renewal areas are confirmed by a newly created renewal board in charge of all renewal areas in the city related to law no. 5366.⁴⁶

⁴³ “YIPRANAN TARİHİ VE KÜLTÜREL TAŞINMAZ VARLIKLARIN YENİLENEREK KORUNMASI VE YAŞATILARAK KULLANILMASI HAKKINDA KANUN”; Source: <http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/1509.html> as visited 8 February.

⁴⁴ But also “[...] metropolitan municipalities, district and first-level municipalities within the boundaries of metropolitan municipalities, provincial and district municipalities and municipalities with populations over 50,000 and outside the scopes of authority of such municipalities by provincial special administrations [...]” Law 5366, Article 1; translation from <http://inuraistanbul2009.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/law-5366-1.pdf> as visited 9 February 2012.

⁴⁵ The renewal areas shall be determined either by one of the administrative bodies seen above. If the renewal area is determined e.g., by a district municipality, the decision has to be adopted by the simple majority of full membership of the municipal assembly. This decision shall be submitted to the council of ministers given the fact, that the highest administration on the province or metropolitan municipal level has approved it, again by the simple majority of full membership of the metropolitan municipal assembly or the simple majority of full membership of the provincial general assembly. The council of ministers has to determine in a period of three months if the project shall be put into action. In case of implementation the decision of the council of ministers shall contain implementation stages and schedule. The stage projects in turn shall be implemented “on the decision of the simple majority of full membership of the respective municipality which determined the renewal area in the first place. (Summary of Law 5366, Article 2; translation from <http://inuraistanbul2009.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/law-5366-1.pdf> as visited 9 February 2012.)

Conservation areas are declared where the existing cultural and natural assets are estimated to be in danger of losing their characteristics. The municipality is further entitled to install “areas of residence, commerce, cultural, tourism and social facility areas in such zones, taking of measures against the risks of natural disasters and restoration and conservation of and use by living in historical and cultural immovable assets.”⁴⁷ That means that the restoration of existing building stock becomes possible, either through maintaining the existing structure or, more likely, through a demolish-and-rebuild process. All buildings within the renewal area are subject to the provisions given by the renewal project, which should follow the determination by the board of conservation of cultural and natural assets.

Here a short excursus is needed: During the field research, it turned out that the conservation boards seem to play an important role in the process. Istanbul is split into seven areas, of which each area comprises various municipalities. Each of these seven areas has a conservation board⁴⁸ monitoring the building activity in the area. The boards are autonomous but under the secretariat of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Each building needs a building license granted by the conservation board within three months. The board can suggest changes to the proposal or also prohibit the implementation of the presented project. With law no. 5366, a new board was founded that is in charge of all renewal areas according to law 5366. That means that

⁴⁷ Law 5366, Article 1; translation from <http://inuraistanbul2009.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/law-5366-1.pdf> as visited 9 February 2012.

⁴⁸ These conservation boards are called *İstanbul 1 Numaralı Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Bölge Kurulu*, *İstanbul 2 Numaralı KVKBK*, *İstanbul 3...*, *4...*, and so on. Next to the conservation areas (*sit alanları*) boards are also in charge of unique buildings that are declared as cultural heritage of the board. After a decree law no. 648, the boards are not in charge of natural conservation areas anymore. New boards in charge of natural conservation areas have been installed under the Ministry of Nature and Urbanism. (Information provided by IMECE)

the other seven conservation boards have no say in the areas where law no. 5366 is applied. This renewal board is an advisory committee with no direct executive power. The final decisions concerning renewal projects are made by the district municipality itself. In 2011, when this research was conducted, there were nine members plus a chairman of this board: two university professors from Yildiz University and Mimar Sinan University, one restoration architect, an urban planner, an art historian and a representative from the metropolitan and the district municipality, respectively. By the implementation of this new board in the cause of the implementation of law no. 5366 represents can be perceived as a short cut of existing planning institutions and a streamlining of the planning processes at work. This potentially leads to a faster project implementation and shows how law no. 5366 potentially allows for the intervention in existing planning and development procedures with a higher priority and speed.

Inner-City Deteriorated Quarters

As background information, it has to be mentioned that considerable areas in the inner city of Istanbul experienced a massive downfall due to a combination of factors. One important factor was the relocation of originally middle-class residents, often non-Muslim minorities. The emerging industrialisation of the Golden Horn led to this exodus of middle-class residents to other, more pleasant neighbourhoods. Another factor was non-Muslim minorities, who constituted an important part of the merchant life of Ottoman Istanbul and who were expelled after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1965. Also, the foundation of the state of Israel led to a massive emigration of the Jewish population (see section 5.4). These different factors were often superimposed, which led to the subsequent socioeconomic shift of the formerly better of quarters. At the same time, because of the political agenda of the Turkish

state towards regarding the properties of non-Muslim minorities, these properties were already deteriorated, because the former owners were not allowed to repair them and an unclear homeowner status remained, which led to an additional state of decay. Having the huge migratory fluxes, which were mentioned before, in mind, many first settlers who came to the industries in the Golden Horn came to the inner city areas, as well as many migrants from southeast Anatolia in the 1990s in the aftermath of the Kurdish conflict, when little available on the outskirts was left.

In this situation, law no. 5366 plays an important role in installing a legal, capitalist market system, making it possible to expropriate inner-city homeowners and to compensate them with a fraction of their living space. Renters are generally exempted from any direct monetary compensation. This procedure is extensively explained in the case study on Tarlabası in section 5.4.

Gecekondu Areas and Law No. 5393

The other pivotal legal basis for the implementation of the new urban land regime is article 73 or law no. 5393, issued on 3 June 2005. This article of the new municipal law covering urbanisation and development areas applies to areas that are regarded as “derelict, obsolescent and unsafe” because of natural disasters (mainly the risk of earthquakes). Areas and projects, according to law no. 5393, are referred to as urban transformation areas or urban transformation projects. Implemented projects are carried out in partnership with the Mass Housing Authority; the existing building stock is demolished and then rebuilt, transferring the “rightful owners” into residents of public housing projects build in public-private partnership by the MHA TOKİ (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 7).

“Because of their precarious physical, legal and economic status, Gecekondu zones became ideal targets of ‘transformation’.” (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 7)

Urban transformation projects according to law no. 5393, are generally bigger in scale than the ones in inner-city areas according to law no. 5366, because an urban transformation area shall not be smaller than five hectares,⁴⁹ which is about two-and-a-half times the area of the Tarlabası project. In the initial law from 2005, district municipalities were able to declare urban transformation zones. Through an amendment of article 73 of law no. 5393, named law no. 5998, which came into being on 17 June 2010, only metropolitan municipalities have the authority to declare these areas. According to law no. 5393, owners of Gecekondu buildings are compensated according to the land title deed that they have. In all cases, it is foreseen that all existing building stock is torn down and rebuilt by the Mass Housing Authority. (See section 5.3 on the case of Başibüyük)

I want to refer to two more important laws that have been passed in the pursuit of a capitalist land market and the abolition of the traditional patronage-based system: In 2004, with law no. 5237, a new criminal code was issued that declared for the first time that the construction of unauthorised buildings (Gecekondus) was a criminal act punishable by five years in prison. Subsequently, the demolition of Gecekondus increased dramatically (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 6). The other central law is law no. 5582, which was passed to restructure the housing finance sector, “which had traditionally been weak and insufficiently institutionalised in Turkey.” (Gürlesel, 2006; Öncü, 1988) (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 7) Urban transformation is a widely applied policy that already affects a large number of residents and will more dramatically affect a large number of residents in the near future. According to the UN AGFE Report on Forced Eviction of 2009 (Advisory Group on Forced Evictions 2009, p. 29) between one and 10 million, mostly poor residents will be affected by demolition and

⁴⁹ And not exceed 500 hectares.

resettlement in the medium run. This is, in the extreme case, more than two-thirds of the city's population. In this, not only home owners with ambiguous land tenure status due to a largely tolerated appropriation of public lands are affected by forced eviction and expropriation, but also owners with proper land title deeds are targeted more and more. In the name of the conservation of historical and cultural heritage and the mitigation of natural disasters (earthquakes) a segregated city is created and space for large-scale real estate investment is made in both terms of legal presuppositions and of valuable urban lands. Urban transformation, as it is described here, will have an enormous impact on the city and its population. The consequences can be highly discriminatory for the majority of the affected people.

4 Chapter: Contextual Background of Civil Society in Turkey

In this chapter, I give an overview of the specific development of civil society in Turkey and an overview of the important factors that lead to its specific development. This chapter is important for the understanding of the interaction of the actors involved in the urban transformation process that is examined and identified as such in the case studies. This chapter provides a background to the different civil society actors at work and provides a deeper understanding of their strategies and actions and the obstacles they are facing. Because there is a significant difference between the rural and the urbanised regions in Turkey concerning the degree of civil society organisation, this introduction to civil society in Turkey has to be limited to the urbanised regions in Turkey in which urban transformation constitutes a relevant phenomenon.

As we have already seen in section 2.1, the concept of civil society is a crucial concept in Western democracies that is widely regarded as a mainly bottoms-up developing phenomenon. The prevailing discourse about civil society views it as something that ensures the well-functioning of a democratic state order (Gellner 1994). Because we face a top-down initiated modernisation by a strong state in Turkey, the concept of civil society in Turkey is often discussed within the framework of a “continuous tradition of strong government in opposition to a weak civil society.” (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 45) Civil society in Turkey has remained pretty dormant and suppressed over a long period, as discussed later. It has been recently revitalised by various internal and external factors in the post-1980 coup d'état years and, more recently, after the İzmit earthquake in 1999.

4.1 The Concept of Civil Society in Turkey

Civil society is defined as the “arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 50).” Or, as Heper puts it: “[...] Civil society is a venue where several societal and political actors meet, interact and discuss in order to arrive at a view all of them can live with.” Even though some speak about the myth of the emergence of a civil society in Turkey, (Göle, Nilüfer 1994; in Heper Politics in the third) and others undoubtedly see it as existent (Heper, Yıldırım 2011), they all conclude that civil society in Turkey has a rather weak tradition that is deeply rooted in the self-conception and resulting policies of the republican state since 1923 as the only keeper of democracy and secularism. In this context, civil society has still a long way to go if it wants to become a reliable counterpart to the nation-state in Turkey and thus an important factor in the democratisation and maintenance of democracy in Turkey. If this sounds like a shortcoming of civil society itself, it is clearly not, because the concept of civil society is a mostly projected term that bundles activities and organisations outside the state and the market. First and foremost, the emergence and existence of a well-functioning civil society in terms of taking a pro-active position towards the democratisation of the state is relying on “the willingness of the state actors to govern in cooperation with other actors and citizens’ involvement in a broader democratic structure which matters for the development of civil society.” (Kılıçalp 2009, p. 4) The restrictions on CSOs concerned with ethnic and religious topics seem to have declined, while the resistance towards any activity of CSOs that might challenge the sanctity of the private property or the capitalist system still remains very strong.

Most NGOs or civil society organisations that are actively encouraged and supported by the state and international institutions concentrate on specific issues such as women's rights and animal welfare, but not on ideological issues which might threaten the status quo. (Adaman, Arsel 2005, p. 60)

Concerning the latter statement on the sanctity of private property, it has to be said that this is only valid for property of the new middle and upper classes, because the state and its agencies are clearly pushing for a huge redistribution of private property in potentially high-value locations in the urbanised areas in Turkey.

If we take a brief look at the debate about what are necessary prerequisites for a well-functioning pro-democratic civil society, the following can be taken into account (Şimşek 2004, P. 58):

1. Separation between the first and the second sector (the state and the economy);
2. fragmentation and hostility in civil society;
3. civility (tolerance and political/cultural relativism);
4. rule of law and/or the existence of shared values;
5. existence of individualistic culture in civil society;
6. existence of horizontal (high-quality) relations in associational life.

To have an active civil society, not all conditions must be met, but the stated points also serve as crucial categories through which a civil society can be assessed.

Therefore, it gives us important insights into the state of civil society in Turkey and in the arising problems and potentials. First, the economic sphere and the state bureaucracy are, in the case of Turkey, highly intertwined. The state-business relations are hardly formalised or institutionalised and thus lead easily to clientelism and patronage, which is a widespread phenomenon in Turkish power relations.

(Şimşek 2004) Second, civil society organisations are often highly fragmented along ideological and political lines. Especially professional chambers, trade unions and

also human rights organisations can be deeply divided into political camps that are potentially unable to find any consensus. Third, both the state and civil society organisations are characterised by the understanding that their respective world view is the “only truth” that is imposed whenever possible onto other groups.⁵⁰ Fourth, the existence of an independent legal system is maybe the most crucial formal prerequisite for the existence of a civil society. In Turkey, the judiciary system is very much influenced by political concerns and forms part of something known as the deep state.⁵¹ It is still predominantly influenced by Kemalist elites, which have a potential anti-AKP⁵² motivation, even though the AKP party is eager to install its own elite. Shared values are another key element to social mobilisation and associational life. A common understanding of the political conduct of the country is needed to hold society together, or as Şimşek puts it:

“Although politicians govern a country, there is an established understanding in civil society as to how they would do this. Thus, one should search for democracy at the bottom of a society [...] and not at the top of it [...] (Şimşek 2004, p. 64).” Fifth, there is a strong tradition of paternalism in Turkey, which is visible in the great importance of leaders who are far more than elected servants of the state. Nevertheless, because of the shift of the political agenda since 1980 towards economic liberalisation, society has developed generally towards more individualistic behaviour.

⁵⁰ The main conflict lines run between Turks and Kurds, Alevis and Sunnis, Islamists and Kemalists (Turkish nationalists). (Şimşek 2004, p. 63)

⁵¹ “The deep state is Turkish shorthand for a faceless clique inside the Turkish state that has, some claim, held the reins of real power throughout the republic’s 84-year history. There are some who see it on a continuum with the shady networks that ‘took care of business’ (including, some believe, the Armenian business) in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The deep state is held to be based in the army, but closely linked with MIT (the national intelligence service), the judiciary, and (since the 1960s) the mafia. It was during the 1960s that paramilitary groups connected to the right-wing, nationalist, and quasi-fascist MHP and calling themselves ‘ülkü ocakları’ or ‘idealist hearths’ began to act as death squads, assassinating various figures identified as enemies of Turkish unity.” (Freely 2007, p. 20)

⁵² The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Even though this behaviour is mainly directed at consumption and less at political and intellectual development, the partaking in associational life is done with a more critical perspective (Şimşek 2004, p. 66). Sixth, the existence and quality of horizontal relations in civil society is crucial to the well-functioning positive dialogue and solidarity. Furthermore, the horizontal relations can prevent totalitarian tendencies that are potentially embedded in civil society (Göle 1996). These horizontal links exist, and I will draw on them in the next chapter in the case of urban transformation. At this point, more generally speaking, the connection between civil society actors at this stage seems to be still weak but growing, according to my own experience and the literature I have read. Still, there is much scepticism in this aspect. As Şimşek puts it: “[...] In reality, the Turkish atmosphere is too unstable. Sometimes it appears to be improving, while at other times, relations may easily worsen, or even completely break down between groups. [...] at critical times they fail to interact and collaborate on even a minimal level”. (Şimşek 2004, p. 67)

To sum up, civil society in Turkey is in a developing stage and still facing basic obstacles in its way towards a counterbalance of the state and still lacking the “qualification to be supportive of democratic aspirations.” (Şimşek 2004, p. 68) Due to widespread populism, clientelism and opportunism, the idea of a common good has not yet developed and this fundamentally hampers consensus-building among civil society members (Heper, Yıldırım 2011, p. 12). Nevertheless, there are areas in which civil society is already gaining momentum and is emancipating itself from adverse influences: Civil society actors are more and more managing to serve as agenda setters in raising issues that politics tries to circumvent. Furthermore, civil society organisations are more and more involved in educational projects for citizens in various fields and thus serve as multipliers of democratic values and ideas. Finally, it can perhaps be said that today civil society actors have overcome the depolitisation

for which they have been educated and trying increasingly to trigger new political movements (Toros 2007).

Civil Society in Turkey Since 1923

In the following section, I create a chronological sequence of the main factors influencing the development of what is called civil society in Turkey. I describe this mainly in five historical periods (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 51). These historical periods have been chosen on the basis of major political events in Turkish history that substantially affected the political climate in Turkey. The timeline starts in 1923 with the foundation of the Turkish Republic and goes on until the present. If we think about civil society according to the concepts introduced above, its coming into being can be perceived from the foundation of the Turkish Republic onwards, whereas as associational life outside the state, much earlier forms are perceivable: Foundations played an important role as “philanthropic institutions” in the Ottoman Empire, which pursued social solidarity through charitable activities (Çizakça 2006). Association-like organisations can already be found especially in the second constitutional era of the Ottoman empire between 1908 and 1918.

The following time periods that mark important chapters in the political and societal development of the Turkish Republic are the following: 1923–1945, 1945–1960, 1960–1980, 1980–2000 and post-2000 (İçduygu et al. 2011).

1923–1945

The founding of civil society organisations was foreseen as a constitutional right in the 1908 constitution. The relevant legislation defining the structures and functions of CSOs was the “Cemiyetler Kanunu which,” which was in force from 1909 to 1938. In this period, the Turkish state saw civil society as a potentially ideological mechanism

to bolster up the state-led modernisation process. Thus, no bottom-up development was possible and a single-party system, together with a predominantly rural population, left arid grounds for self-organisation. Moreover, associational life is only encouraged when it is in line with the state-powered top-down modernisation doctrine. All other forms of associational life that do not fit these criteria are suppressed. This practice is also a feature of later periods of republican Turkey.

1945–1960

This period is mainly marked by the conversion from a single-party to a multi-party system, which led to an increase in the freedom of associational life (TÜSEV 2006, p. 37) as quoted in (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 53). The 1946 law on association, no. 4919, expanded the civil liberties and led to increasing association and trade union activities. This coincided with the instalment of the ruling Democrat Party, with the effect that more peripheral groups of society felt better-represented. Important factors for a positive development of the third sector are the industrialisation of the economy, potentially empowering the development of a civil society (Heper, Yıldırım 2011). But despite these positive incentives, state-oriented top-down modernisation prevailed, clogging bottom-up civil society development.

“The ruling Democrat Party between 1950-1960 followed a hostile approach towards CSOs of the opposition. For instance, the applications of Türk-İş, a major trade union confederation, to join its international counterparts were declined on numerous accounts by the government. This is a clear example that in the 1950s, although the society’s development and structure had reached a certain level for civil society’s development, the political system failed to take the necessary steps.” (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 54)

1960–1980

This period is characterised by three severe military interventions in 1960, 1971 and 1980, severely harming Turkish democracy. In this climate, the state's dominance and control over associational life continued. The coups d'état not only hampered the multi-party parliamentary system but also allowed for the installation of a security ideology that was above democracy, reinstalling an overly powerful state that overwhelmed the other spheres in society (TÜSEV 2006, p. 37). Despite the prevailing political climate of that era, however, the 1961 constitution established a basic framework for associational life that fuelled the development of civil society. The number of associations grew from 205 to 41,000 after the introduction of the new constitution (Toros 2007). Thus, the institutionalisation of the syndical movement, increased associational activity and increased participation from urban and rural areas in social movements can be observed in that period. At the same time, a rapid industrialisation and urbanisation played into the hands of a relatively more extensive bottom-up development of civil society. Even though associational life started, including professional chambers, trade unions and neighbourhood associations, it turned out that "associational structures have rather facilitated state oversight over society. Political parties similarly became self-serving organisations instead of challenging the power of the state." (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 54) After the military coup of 1971 and the provided law no. 1630 in 1972, "the framework mutated to an authoritarian setting once again." (Toros 2007, p. 407)

1980–2000

In the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état, civil society suffered a big change: Most CSO activities ceased and many CSOs were permanently prohibited by state

authorities. This did not significantly change even though the 1982 constitution signalled a comeback to democratic values. The association law no. 2908,⁵³ which came into force in 1983, maintained the provisions of the previous law no. 1630, including considerable restrictions and contradicting legislations on associations, trade unions and political parties, which translated into frequent reviews and control by state organs. As an example of contradictory legislation, it can be mentioned that some laws governing associational activities apply under private law (e.g., issues related the structure of structure of organisations) whereas e.g., the punishment code applies under public law, which creates uncertainties. Furthermore, civil servants were not allowed to be members or founders of any associations (Toros 2007, p. 407). Civil society remained more or less dormant in quantitative and qualitative terms until the 1990s. The CIVICUS Country Report 2010 carried out by TÜSEV depicts three key factors for the recovered momentum of the democratisation process after 1983 and a subsequent revival of civil society activities: the transition to an export-oriented free market-based economy, the rise of ethnic and religious identity demands and the effects of globalisation (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 55). Another important point in the development of civil society, especially in the field of housing and urban development, was the Habitat II conference in Istanbul in 1996. Various interviewees have mentioned this incident as a kind of starting point of the formation of organised actors in that particular field. As Simsek (Şimşek 2004, p. 63) points out, however, in the same conference human rights organisations could not agree on a joint program of aligned actions. Again, as already pointed out above, the deep fragmentation became visible.

⁵³ “[Law no. 2908] [...] was amended several times (in 1988, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003) and then replaced by law no. 5253 in 2004.”, (Toros 2007, p.407).

Post-2000

In the 2000s, the dynamics of civil society were shaped by developments from the late 1990s. First, the 1999 İzmit earthquake⁵⁴ has to be mentioned as a catastrophe influencing the whole nation, in which 20,000 people died. This disaster introduced a broad mobilisation of CSOs⁵⁵ showing that the state was not able to solely grant security and integrity to its citizens⁵⁶. Civil society came into public focus, as it turned out to vividly partake in support for the disaster's aftermath, helping through massive volunteering and donations. Civil society gained self-esteem and brought itself back to the forefront. (İçduygu et al. 2011, p. 55) Furthermore, two important ideological incidents spurred the dynamics of civil society in the period after the turn of the millennium. First, the clash between secularist-Islamist worldviews became visible in the aftermath of the 28 February 1997 coup that led to the victory of the Justice and Development Party in 2002. Another very important factor was and still is the on-going tension produced by the unsettled Kurdish issue and identity demands, which recently escalated again and turned into an armed conflict.

Finally, one of the key factors for the increasing importance of civil society in the 2000s and that is on-going is how the conditional acceptance of Turkey's candidacy for membership of the European Union was perceived (Kubicek 2001; Heper, Yıldırım 2011; Şimşek 2004). "By its 1999 Helsinki and 2002 Copenhagen decisions, the EU facilitated Turkey's reforms concerning the freedom of associations in the

⁵⁴ Also referred to as the Marmara earthquake.

⁵⁵ "Much of this optimism has subsided. True, many groups are still active and certainly civic organisations enjoy a higher profile in Turkey than before the disaster. However, they have been unable to sustain their level of political mobilisation or come together to spearhead a push for sweeping reforms beyond the area of public safety and disaster preparedness. Civil society, one could say, exists more as a slogan than as a reality." Kubicek 2001

⁵⁶ "This earthquake created a fault line in the Turkish political system. Everyone saw how inept the whole system is—the bureaucracy, the state mechanism. What collapsed is the whole system. In the long run, the ramifications will be very drastic." Sedat Engin from *Hürriyet*, quoted in *Washington Post*, 29 August 1999.

country.”(Heper, Yıldırım 2011, p. 7)⁵⁷ The acceptance of the Copenhagen Criteria and the integration process of Turkey were deepened and thus the hope for liberalisation and democratisation was nurtured. It can be said that the freedoms for civil society activities have been enlarged considerably “through constitutional amendments and legal reforms between 2001 and 2005. In addition, there have been significant changes in legislation directly concerning CSOs, governments have been more eager to listen to civil society demands and new and vast resources for CSOs have emerged.” (İçduygu et al. 2011, pp. 55–56)

Conclusion

As we have seen, civil society in Turkey has a long history, in which it was mainly either monopolised by the central state as an ideological tool for the fortification of the top-down modernisation process or, if not in line with state ideology, utterly suppressed. At the same time, one of the main threats to civil society is the deep fragmentation along ideological lines that keeps it from serving as a reliable counterweight to the central government and to the deep state. “If these two problems could be solved, Turkish civil society could then become a pro-democratisation factor.” (Şimşek 2004, p. 69)⁵⁸

⁵⁷ By the Copenhagen decisions, Heper alludes to the so-called “Copenhagen criteria,” which are the rules that define the eligibility of a country for being a member of the European Union. In order to meet these criteria the state’s institutions have to preserve democratic governance and human rights; furthermore the existence of a functioning market economy is mandatory as well as the acceptance of the obligations and intents of the EU. These membership criteria were laid down at the June 1993 European Council in Copenhagen.

⁵⁸ “The relative weakness of civil society in Turkey may be explained, first, by the stifling official ideology, which envisions a homogeneous nation-state that rejects different identities and subcultures. Second, the military check on politics and civil society through a number of institutional means such as the National Security Council and some informal maneuvers plays an important part. Given these conditions, citizenship appears as a function of the state and not vice versa. That is, citizenship is not based on a social contract but on a number of imperatives and duties set up by the state. The nation is thus a monolithic entity belonging to the state and not the other way around. Şimşek 2004, p. 69”

In the next chapter, I go into detail about the actors of civil society that are relevant within the urban transformation process in Istanbul. In doing that, I give further background information about the current state that civil society is in and on the fields in which it can be detected.

4.2 *Civil Society Actors in Urban Transformation*

In this chapter, I give an overview of the actors I have identified as being relevant to the field of urban transformation from the sphere of civil society. In doing this, I have identified actors from different strata according to their main field of activity. These are characterised by different grades of spatial intervention, spanning from the neighbourhood level over the city to the national and trans-national level. Apart from this, the degree of networking both in horizontal and vertical directions can differ significantly from actor to actor, depending on their level of education, social skill, political mind-set and openness. This aspect I address in the case description in chapter 4. In the following, I use the term NHA, or neighbourhood association, for the community-based civil society organisation that I investigated during my case study. The terms CBO and CSO are appropriate, yet are of a more general nature and not as precise in the local context.

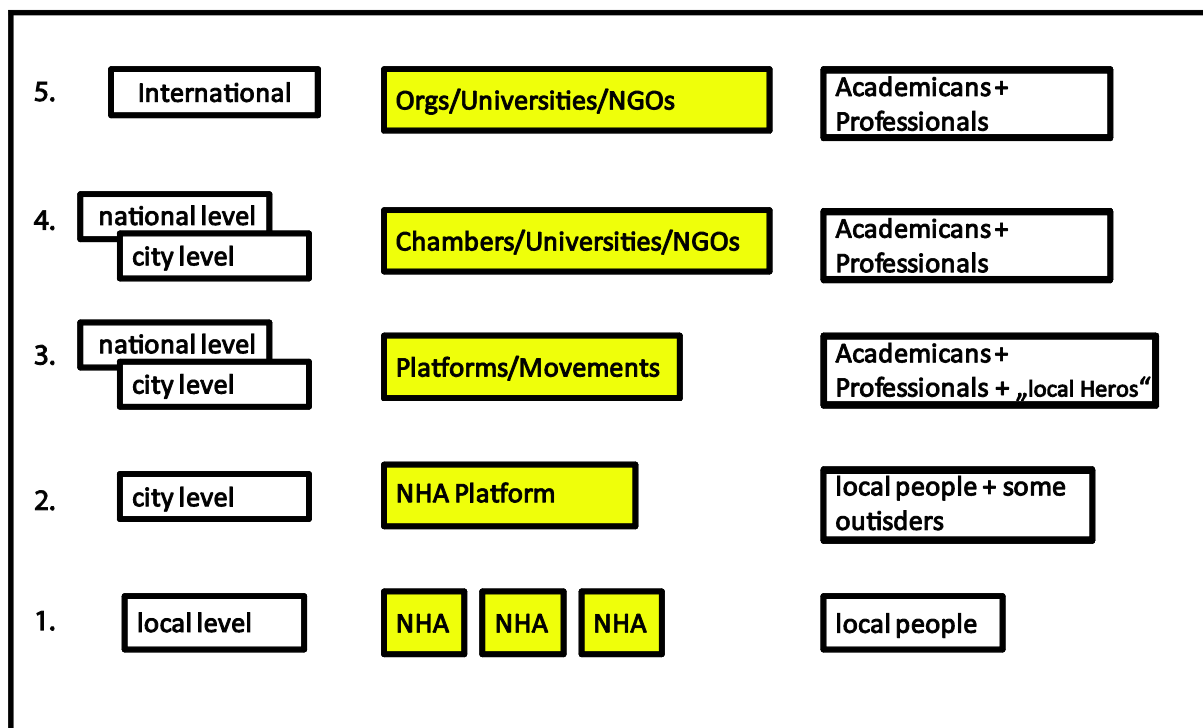


Figure 4: Civil society actors in urban transformation, Source: Own design

NHAs constitute the first level of the scheme in Figure 1. In my field research, various “types” of NHA occurred to me, as I elaborate in more detail in chapter 4. At this stage, I draw some general outlines to provide an overview of the spectrum in which the NHA scene in Istanbul is moving; I start out with my cases and then consider the broader perspective. This provides an important background to put the later elaborations of the case study into perspective.

When I speak of neighbourhood associations, I am referring to the contra urban transformation (contra UT) associations, which are important to mention, for there are also pro urban transformation (pro UT) associations. The pro UT NHAs are outlined in more detail in chapter 4. At this point, I focus on the contra UT, because my initial research question was how CSOs organise in the face of urban transformation as oppositional movements. Furthermore, the pro UT NHAs became active, at least in my case study, usually after the initiation of the contra UT associations. In the former

Gecekondu areas, it is not so easy to describe this, because the different groups—promoters and opponents of urban transformation—have organised partially within already existing associations. I come to that later on.

4.2.1 Neighbourhood Associations in Istanbul

As mentioned above, I focused on four different neighbourhoods that are being affected by urban transformation.⁵⁹ In these four neighbourhoods, two can be seen as informally developed Gecekondu areas, whereas the other two are historical neighbourhoods in the inner city. The two inner-city neighbourhoods fall under law no. 5366, whereas in the neighbourhoods on the Asian side, law No. 5393 applies. The way the different NHA associations came into being and developed differs to quite an extent.

NHA in Gülsuyu/Gülensu

The first NHA in my case study that became active was the one in Gülsuyu/Gülensu, an originally informal (Gecekondu) working-class neighbourhood on the Asian side in the district of Maltepe. After the announcement of a new master plan for the district, the former neighbourhood beautification association⁶⁰ became active and organised a quick response and protest opposing the plans under way. This beautification association⁶¹ was founded in the 1970s. It became, to some extent, revitalised and

⁵⁹ Urban transformation implies the loss of property or shelter by expropriation or disproportionate compensation, subsequent eviction and resettlement to potentially far-away areas and thus the disintegration of the individual socio-economic networks. Current state of affairs: For Gülsuyu/Gülensu, there is a master plan on the way to being implemented yet no concrete actions have been taken; In Basibüyük, the first phase of the transformation project is completed and the second on the way; In Tarlabasi the evictions of the affected area has started in summer 2011. Building activity is going to start supposedly soon; In Fener/Balat/Avansary, the project is still in the planning phase. No concrete actions have been taken yet.

⁶⁰ Beautification associations will be explained later.

⁶¹ Gülsuyu/Gülensu Mahalle Güzelleştirme Derneği (Gülsuyu/Gülensu Beautification Association).

realigned as the threats of urban transformation became anticipatable. In this case, the neighbourhood had a vivid tradition of civil mobilisation at its disposal. The political background of the neighbourhood is closely connected to its ethnic background, since the majority of its residents are Kurdish Alevi with a vivid history of leftist political mobilisation. The UTP is halted at the moment and the NHA⁶² is confident that no implementation is on the way. (See section 5.2.)

NHA in Başbüyük

The second neighbourhood association⁶³ that became active came into being on 16 February 2007 in Başbüyük. This neighbourhood was also subject to the already-mentioned master plan for Maltepe. Unlike Gülsuyu/Gülensu, Başbüyük had no tradition of political mobilisation. Başbüyük is, just as Gülsuyu/Gülensu, an originally informal (Gecekondu) working-class neighbourhood with a majority of its inhabitants ethnic Turkish Sunnis with a more conservative, state-supportive political background. In this neighbourhood, the urban transformation was already more advanced than it was when the Gülsuyu/Gülensu NHA became active. Başbüyük was to be the location of the first pilot urban transformation project according to the new law no. 5393. In the face of the building of six housing blocks in the heart of the neighbourhood and rumours about the expropriation of the vast majority of inhabitants, the NHA was officially established in February 2007 by homeowners with unclear or new title deeds. In contrast to the Gülsuyu/Gülensu association, it did not continue an already existing organisation. When it became active, it mobilised many

⁶² There is a rather complex NHA scene that I describe in chapter 4.2.

⁶³ Başbüyük mahallesi, çevreyi güzelleştirme ve düzenleme ve Tabiati koruma derneği (Environmental Beautification and regulation and Nature Conservation Association).

inhabitants for a street protest with the police for 89 days in 2007. (See section 5.3.) Today, the membership rate has dropped dramatically, and a large pro-urban transformation attitude prevails in the neighbourhood.

NHA in Tarlabası

The Tarlabası Neighbourhood Association⁶⁴ came into being on 17 February 2008, two years after a vague announcement of a renewal project to be implemented in Tarlabası and in the face of a growing distrust of the authorities. Tarlabası is an inner-city, deteriorated neighbourhood, close to Taksim Square in the district of Beyoğlu close to very high-priced areas around the pedestrian İstiklal Street. This association was also constituted from scratch and did not follow a predecessor institution, which was started by one homeowner who owned five buildings in the neighbourhood. The association managed to bundle most of the homeowners and almost none of the renters. It attracted media attention as well as attracting connections to many players from civil society, media and academia, even though the current state of urban transformation was relatively advanced. However, most homeowners sold their property, and the eviction of the remaining residents started in summer 2011 with relative media attention and a critique from Amnesty International for the “*heavy-handed forced evictions*” (Amnesty International USA 2011) (See section 5.4.).

⁶⁴ “Tarlabasi Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği,” which means “Property Owners and Social Development and Tenant Aid Association of Tarlabası” www.tarlabasimagdurlari.com.

NHA in Fener Balat Ayvansaray

The Fener Balat Ayvansaray NHA⁶⁵ had its first general assembly on 18 October 2009. Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray are in fact three neighbourhoods in the district of Fatih on the historical peninsula, close to the Golden Horn. Here the UTP is still in the planning stage. That means no concrete, visible measures have been yet taken, even though the NHA managed to mobilise its members and create media attention as well as visibility through demonstrations and other protest forms in public spaces. Furthermore, it managed to link itself to many other associations and civil society organisations in Istanbul but also gradually at the national and international level. Nevertheless, in sample interviews with residents in the neighbourhood, the affiliation to the association and awareness about an acute threat to the neighbourhood was not detectable. (See section 5.5.)

In this short overview, a pretty wide spectrum of NHAs becomes visible: In the former Gecekondü areas, we encounter both newly founded associations that are solely fighting urban transformation as well as already existing associations that are becoming revitalised through activities either against or in favour of urban transformation, as we see in chapter 4 in detail. In the inner-city quarters in which urban transformation (*kentsel dönüşüm*) is applied under the name of urban renewal (*kentsel yenileme*) according to law no. 5366, there are also newly established neighbourhood associations. These new associations are illustrated by the cases of Tarlabası and Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray. The associations of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray and Tarlabası can actually be characterized as non-political, because many members have diverging political affiliations. Alone, their common goal, the protection of their

⁶⁵ FEBAYDER - Fener Balat Ayvansaray Mülk Sahiplerinin ve Kiracılarını Haklarını Koruma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği –(*Fener Balat Ayvansaray Property Owners and Tenants Rights Protection and Social Solidarity Association*) Translation by the author.

neighbourhood, unifies them in the best case. Often, even this common goal can easily be lost and the goal for direct personal advantage takes over.

Beautification Associations (Güzelleştirme Derneği)

In the inner city there also exist the abovementioned beautification associations, which I discovered to be active in the more peripheral areas that have, in contrast to their equivalents in the Gecekondu areas, mainly a middle-class background, which is additionally usually non-oppositional:

In their response to the “Islamist” versus “Secularist” polarisation in society, they seek to create their own locality as the places of secular and cosmopolitan people; and in their response to the increasingly unregulated and poorly serviced city, they struggle to create orderly localities protected from unlawful rent-seeking practices and equipped with adequate amenities.⁶⁶ (Erman, Coskun-Yıldar 2007)

This quote provides us with a fertile background to put the development of Contra UT neighbourhood associations into perspective: The first neighbourhood associations in Turkish cities after 1980, as identified by Erman and Coşkun-Yıldar, have a large middle-class background or as they put it “[...] they are formed as the extension of big capital [...] (Erman, Coskun-Yıldar 2007, p. 2551)”. These first neighbourhood associations concerned with the beautification of their neighbourhood are “ironically paving the way for civil initiatives organised to protect their localities against the intervention of capital and state.” (Erman, Coskun-Yıldar 2007, p. 251) That these NHA were the first ones is highly doubtful, because in my case study in the Gecekondu areas, I encountered beautification associations stemming from the

⁶⁶ In this quotation, Erman and Coşkun-Yıldar do not explicitly describe beautification associations, but they talk about neighbourhood associations in general. The cases they describe later on are two beautification associations from Istanbul (Beyoğlu Beautification Association and Cihangir Beautification Association). I therefore connect it especially to these kinds of CSO.

1970s. Still, what can possibly be generalised is that these associations are rather non-political or better non-oppositional. This means that those first beautifications were not made against an urban development project in their neighbourhood nor did these associations come together to protect their neighbourhood from gentrification, for example. These first associations wanted, as mentioned earlier, the enhancement of their urban surrounding, their living space. The idea of a right to the city was yet not born and also not likely to occur in the described context. Still, as we have found out, depending on the circumstances (that is, the social background) and whether or not urban development interventions are at stake in the respective neighbourhoods, beautification associations can politicise, as happened in the case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu. (See section 4.2.3.) A look into history shows us that beautification associations increased considerably after the introduction of the multi-party system and a resulting liberalisation of politics from 1946 on (Adaman, Arsel 2005, p. 73). The Gecekondu-based associations were initially engaged with the enhancement of basic infrastructural services such as road access, electricity, water, bus lines and, later, telephone and sports facilities. As I found out in my field research, they have now become somehow reactivated in the urban transformation process in which they are engaged, depending on the attitude and opinion of the respective members, which means that depending on the prevailing attitude they are either in favour of or opposing the transformation process. Inner city beautification associations with a usually middle-class background typically engage more with the physical character of the neighbourhood and less with social problems. The Cihangir neighbourhood association, for example, is not necessarily against gentrification engages in organising a neighbourhood festival, is known for its actions against unlawful rent-seeking and is trying to make Cihangir a green neighbourhood. Generally, they speak out against a sterile neighbourhood and highlight the mosaic character of the

neighbourhood. (Erman, Coskun-Yıldar 2007) Next to the beautification associations, the so-called hometown associations have turned out to play an important role, especially in the informally developed settlements. These hometown associations are a result of the restrictive policies on civil societal life in the aftermath of the 1980 coup. They play an important role in the mobilisation the respective neighbourhoods in my case study: In Gülsuyu/Gülensu, the hometown associations of the people of the towns of Sinop, Sivas, Corum and Samsun play an important role in order to mobilize the organized local inhabitants. Therefore the neighbourhood associations are closely connected to these hometown associations. In Başibüyük, in turn, the hometown associations became important agents of a pro-urban transformation agenda in the neighbourhood and became representatives in a newly formed urban transformation commission prompted by the Mass Housing Authority TOKI through a newly established department at the Maltepe municipality.

Hometown Associations (hemşehri dernekleri)

This important factor of civil society organisations has increased remarkably since the 1990s, both in terms of members and in the number of organisations, so that they have become an important phenomenon in Turkish social-political life (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 3). Hometown organisations occurred in consequence of urbanisation processes with massive migratory influxes by rural-to-urban migration, especially after 1983. In the discourse on civil society in Turkey, there is a predominant position that assumes that, prior to the coup d'état of 12 September 1980, migrants were often organised in political parties and trade unions (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 8). After the coup, many parties and unions were forbidden. So hometown associations were a possible alternative for organised societal life, even though they also faced restrictions in post-coup d'état Turkey in which they were not

closed down but many times suspended, which led to a de facto closure of many. Further on, I elaborate on the different types of hometown organisations, which hopefully will shed some light on the close connection of the legal and political framework in which the history of these associations can be understood.

As already implied above, hometown associations (*hemşehri dernekleri*) were founded mainly by rural-to-urban migrants from the same origins, such as regions, counties or villages, moving as newcomers to the city. In the discourse on hometown associations, a distinction between village associations and regional associations is made. The village associations are often a branch of a more influential and trans-local organisation, such as a regional association. The actions of village associations are confined to social activities and mutual aid: The formation of solidarity networks, which allows the often-marginalised migrants a gradual transition into urban society, becomes the most important element. Subsequently, the creation of a common identity is a key element of these organisations.

“The hometown associations appear as the expression of a ‘natural’ community of people linked by their common origin. However, the reality is more complex: they are constructions which come about through the creation and expression of a collective identity—a group memory. It is all about transposing elements of local folklore into the urban context (Fliche 2005), and borrowing references from the common regional memory to create an interaction between a number of different orders so as to establish a set of references and values easily, which are accessible by everybody, and to ensure the reproduction of the group.” (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 15)

Village associations are usually located in the neighbourhoods where the members reside. These associations strive to obtain privileges or material advantages of the group members on the more local level, such as getting on the local electoral list.

The second type already mentioned above can be identified as regional associations (ilçe). Their members usually represent a more middle-class clientele, such as owners of small businesses, politicians and notables. The regional associations are usually located in central urban areas where they try to establish an interface with the political class and exercise influence over decision making. The aim of these associations is usually less local-minded. Frequent aims are e.g., guiding state investment into their regions or the representation of their group at a national level (Pérouse 2005). In my case study, the first type of association, the village association, proves more important. Although the phenomenon of hometown associations is not exclusively bound to Gecekondu neighbourhoods, it turned out in my research that only in the former Gecekondu areas of Başibüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu did these associations play a considerable role.

Construction of the Village Identity

To illustrate the abovementioned, often constructed nature of hometown associations' identities and values, I mention the case study of Benoit Fliche, who examined a hometown association in Ankara. In that case, which dealt with the association of the people of Kayalar, the association was founded on the individual initiative of one person who encountered considerable obstacles in the founding of the hometown association (Fliche 2005): The association was established in 1998 by a migrant from France who returned to Turkey and settled in Ankara. He had a romantic idea of his old village and tried to establish a hometown association to strengthen the community ties and a sense of belonging by emphasising the inhabitants' common origin. This shows that at least in this case it was neither the need for a self-help network that was established by the first rural-to-urban migrants nor a necessary reorientation in the face of forbidden political engagement but the

initiative of an individual “social entrepreneur.” In this case, it seems a sentimental personal motivation. What is interesting in this case are the three main hurdles he encountered in convincing people of the idea of the forming of the association: First, people feared getting into conflict with the state:

“This is explained by the still very vivid memory of the ‘political period’ (siyaset dönemi, 1975-1980), of the coup d’état of 12 September 1980 and severe depolitisation—and the ensuing repression that followed. ‘Association’ to them meant ‘örgüt’; ‘political organisation’—a term with a negative connotation alluding to the armed left-wing organisations of the 1970s. Many fell prey to a fear that their participation in an association would bring them political and legal harm.” (Fliche 2005, p. 4)

The second hurdle in convincing the people to partake in the association was the migratory history of the village residents: The original village had actually completely disappeared because of mass migration. The result was the subsequent dissolution of the village community, which lost its ability to politically mobilise and socialise. This led to the main question of the potential association members originating from the village: “[W]hat use does an association of villagers have when the village – as a physical space, a community and a social space have disappeared?” (Fliche 2005, p. 4)

The third hurdle was the anxiety of the reestablishment of old conflicts between families in the village, e.g., over lands and pasture, which had been diminished during migration.

Typology of Organisations

Nevertheless, it seems important to me to go into the different possible forms of organisation that hometown organisations can take, in order to illuminate the history and legal framework of these organisations. Two organisational forms can be taken,

depending on the resources of its founders: they can be organised as an association (dernek) or they can be organised as a foundation (vakıf). The board of an association is elected by its members and can be dismissed by its members where, in contrast, the board of a foundation can consist of one (or more) members without the need for a general meeting. (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 10) They are member-based organisations. Foundations have advantages in financial matters though they require a relatively large amount of start-up capital, which is one of the main reasons why there are far more associations than foundations (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 10). I stress this point because in the post-coup d'état republic, the legal framework for associations was very restricted and thus the form of a foundation became interesting again. In fact, hemşehri associations had to cease their activities, except for the ones serving the “national cause” (millî dava) after the coup d'état. First, the new association law no. 2908 of 7 October 1983 made it easier for associations to organise. Until that date, the founding of associations depended on the approval of the military authorities. This tight regulation can be seen as a consequence of the association's involvement “in the violent confrontations which divided extreme left- and right-wing movements in the 1960s and 70s.” (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 12) Therefore, the founding of a foundation became attractive to people wanting to politically or socially engage and therefore organise.

The foundations—whose constitution is defined by articles 73 to 81 of the Turkish Civil Code, *Medeni Kanunu*, of 4 October 1926—were, especially after the 12 September 1980 coup, a legal means of bypassing the restrictions on the freedom of association. In this way, between 1982 and 1985, actors wanting to unite behind social projects or projects related to the freedom of expression (düşünsel amaçlar), turned to the creation of foundations rather than associations (Zevkliler 1995). This loophole was closed by law no. 4121 of 23 July 1995, and by the modifications made in the same year to article 33 of the 1982 constitution, which made

the prohibitions applying to associations, equally applicable to foundations—notably relating to the cessation of activities (Zevkliler 1995). (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 12)

Conclusion

As we have learned, hometown organisations are now an important and permanent phenomenon in Turkish civil society and which originated in the post-World War II urbanisation process when great numbers of rural-to-urban migrants came into the Turkish metropolises. The strong identity employed by these associations, which is translated into a common code of ethics, is of a rather constructed nature as we have seen above and has actually very little to do with the original village and the alleged country-based solidarity experienced there. The reorientation into common origins is a common feature of migratory populations and becomes especially crucial in the Turkish context, because according to a certain discourse the main objective behind the 1980s coup d'état was the depolitisation of Turkish society (Dorransoro 2001). This is promoted by basically two factors: first, through an ideology of security, which criminalises all deviation and second, because of highly efficient techniques of diffusion of societal organisation that work due to a large control over the media, which is much more effective than similar techniques in democratic systems (Roy, AlSayyad 2004, p. 10). In the end, it can be said that hometown associations are not rebuilding a pre-existing local solidarity: *“rather it is the point at which political and social networks fuse giving rise to a means of communication with the political-institutional system.”* (Hersant, Toumarkine 2005, p. 4)

4.2.2 Neighbourhood Association Platforms

Structure of Istanbul Neighborhood Association Platform (IMDP)
(Istanbul Mahalle Dernekler Platformu):

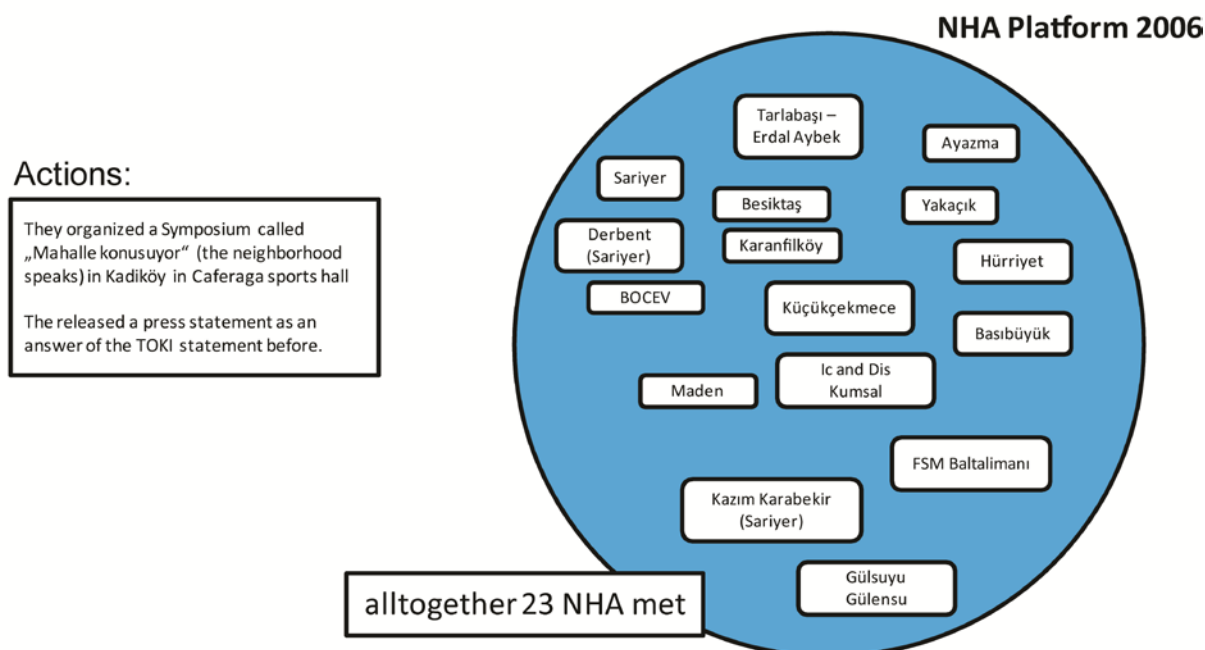


Figure 5: Structure of Istanbul neighbourhood association platform (IMDP⁶⁷), Source: Own design

At the next level of the diagram of civil society actors relevant to urban transformation, there are what I have categorised as NHA platforms. By this, I mean the union of different neighbourhood associations on a city-wide level to assist each other and find and promote common goals more effectively: “So that our voice can be louder, that we can create a common spirit and to strengthen our solidarity.”⁶⁸ This could be e.g., to attract more media attention, to have more influence in policy making and to articulate one’s own aspiration for basic citizen rights. This kind of horizontal linkage between the different actors active in urban transformation have been made through several attempts. The IMDP, the Istanbul Neighbourhood

⁶⁷ Istanbul Mahalle Dernekler Platformu

⁶⁸ NHA Informant 10, Spokesman of IMDP, 20 March 2011.

Association Platform (Istanbul Mahalle Dernekler Platformu) was the first one of its kind so far. It was founded in 2006 and was more or less active until 2009. In July 2006, about nine neighbourhood associations came together with the help of a civil platform⁶⁹ called Solidarity Studio (Dayanismaciatolye), which originated from a group of teachers and students from Mimar Sinan University, for a first constitutional meeting. The platform consisted of about 23 different neighbourhood associations. Later on, in 2006 a much-noticed conference was organised in the Caferaga sports hall in Kadiköy called “The Neighbourhood Speaks” (mahalle konusuyor). This was, so to speak, the beginning of the platform. After that convention, they released a press statement as a response to a TOKI press statement saying that all prostitution, drugs and terror came from the Gecekondus and that the urban transformation projects would end this undesirable situation. The IMDP released a press statement turning against this assessment. Half a year later, they came up with a kind of manifesto stating what they would fight against.

The platform was characterised by very horizontal hierarchies, if any. Because of the size of the city, the NHAs were divided into three regions according to the different voting regions of Istanbul.⁷⁰ For each region there was one NHA representative in charge of informing the others about what was decided.

⁶⁹ The term civil platform will be explained later on in the chapter and put into context.

⁷⁰ Region A included Gülsuyu-Gülensu, Başibüyük, the district of Hürriyet and Yakacık. Region B included the district of Sarıyer, Karanfilköy, the district of Kazım Karabekir, the district of Maden and fsm Baltalimanı. Region C included Ayazma, Ic-Dis Kumsal and Küçükçekmece.

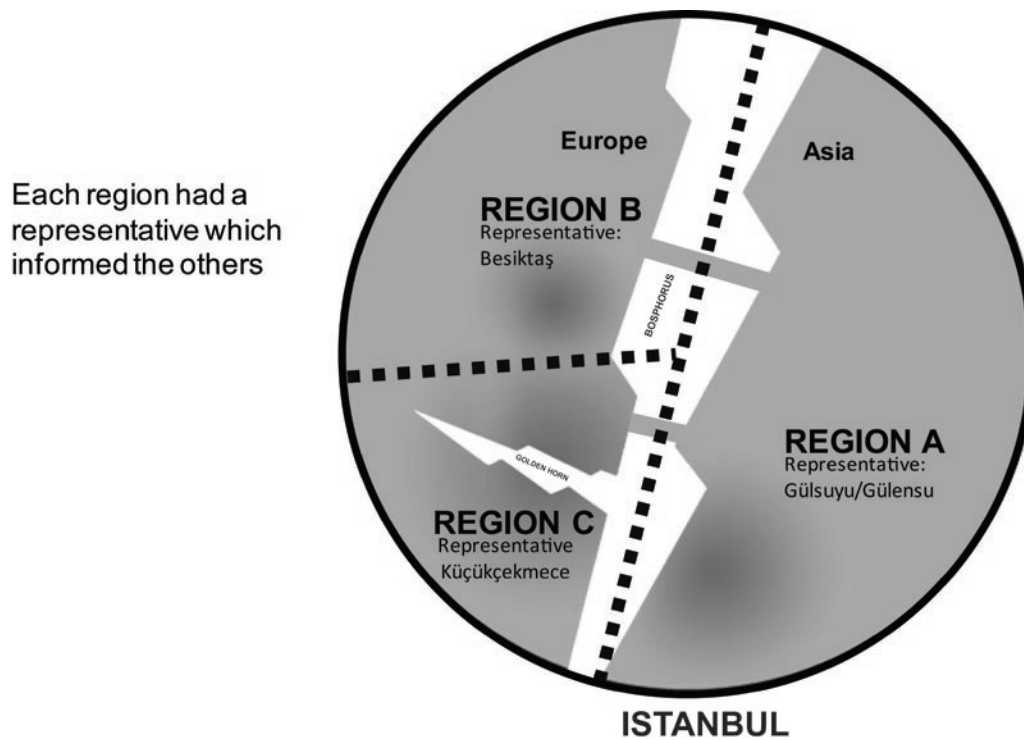


Figure 5: Division of NHAs into three regions according to the voting regions of Istanbul,
Source: Own design

Even though the different parts of the platform still exist, the platform as such did not succeed in the end. In two interviews I conducted with the former spokesman of the platform, he mentioned the following six reasons as critical for the dissolution of the platform: First, the apolitical nature of the platform turned out in the end to create an ideological void and programmatic vacuum. This can be interpreted as the organisation missing common values. Second, there was no hierarchy: In the beginning, the idea of a direct, democratic organisation of autonomous NHAs was an advantage. It motivated them in the beginning. However, in the long run, it turned out that this kind of organisation did not fit the political culture of Anatolia very well.⁷¹ Third, it was difficult to find a common ground, because the diverse situations the NHAs were facing in their neighbourhoods were perceived as differing a great deal. It was very difficult to find the common interest behind the local problems. This could

⁷¹ NHA informant 10, former IMDP spokesman, conducted 20 March 2011.

be interpreted as missing a common goal. The fourth critical factor mentioned in the interviews was the missing links to other oppositional CSOs such as chambers, other civil platforms, academics and also politicians. This can be described as the missing horizontal link and perhaps also in a sense the vertical link. The fifth and to me very important reason was the fact that the Gülsuyu/Gülensu NHA, which was one of the strong motors behind the platform, fell apart, and that was perhaps why the whole platform ceased to exist. There are key agents who play a pivotal role due to personal charisma because the organisation is very little or not at all formalised. An active homepage still exists⁷² that is used by the new Gülsuyu/Gülensu NHA.⁷³ Altogether, 12 NHA are still represented there, although it is not updated frequently. The last problem mentioned that led to the breakup of the IMDP was the mere size of the city, which made it very hard to maintain contact on a regular basis due to time and monetary resources. Despite the organisational setup with the system of the three regions, it was hard to maintain the connection to the members, given the other problems mentioned above. Meanwhile, the different NHAs continue to exist and are still active.

⁷² <http://imdp.blogcu.com/>.

⁷³ Gülsuyu/Gülensu Life and Solidarity Center (GÜLSUYU/GÜLENSU YAŞAM VE DAYANIŞMA MERKEZİ).

Istanbul Urban Movements Forum

Another approach to found a city or even nationwide platform of different CSOs was started in the course of the European Social Forum (ESF) held in Istanbul 2010.⁷⁴ It was called the “Istanbul Urban Movements Forum” and organised by the Istanbul-based citizens’ platforms IMECE and Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio), Konut Hakkı Koordinasyonu (Right to Housing Coordination)⁷⁵ and the neighbourhood associations of Febayder from Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray and Tozkoparan Dernek from Tozkoparan. The aim was to create a common basis for action and to unite the different organisations active in the field of urban transformation in Turkey.

The aim was to bring together different neighbourhood organisations and unite them. And not only the neighbourhood organisations but also the platforms such as IMECE and Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio) with their differences and things in common. But after the first meeting they dissolved.⁷⁶

Furthermore, the idea was to come up with a position paper or manifesto and exchange common experiences with the international organisations attending the European Social Forum 2010. The Urban Movements Forum was not restricted to actors from Istanbul. The European Social Forum allowed for a nationwide mobilisation:

One or two weeks before the ESF, different movements met. From Istanbul, Ankara, Mersin, different cities met, and a final declaration was drafted. In the ESF this draft was supposed to be discussed. It wasn’t well organised. So, that was in July in 2010. In the ESF, some meetings were

⁷⁴ <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=11049408437>. The Facebook site of the ESF in Istanbul. The official site www.sosysalforum.org was not reachable on 25 November 2011.

⁷⁵ This platform stems from the district from Sarıyer. According to my interviews, it is a very political platform of people from different NHAs of the district, led by people from Derbent, which is one neighbourhood of Sarıyer.

⁷⁶ NHA informant 1, NHA Gülsuyu-Gülensu, 20 March 2011.

organised together but the problems in Turkey and the problems in other countries or the problems from people from other countries were quite different.⁷⁷

In the course of the Urban Movements Forum, a common declaration was drafted, the Urban Movements Forum Manifesto.⁷⁸ This manifesto formulated common positions against the commodification of the city, common demands for the right to the city,⁷⁹ focused the repeated call for unity amongst urban movements and contained three concrete suggestions for the future: the creation of a periodical for the enhancement of the communication between neighbourhoods, “a legal commission for urgent intervention and consultation” and an “urban resource centre for defending [...] neighbourhoods and [...] [the] city”.⁸⁰ Even though this common paper was drafted, it turned out that the communication among the civil platforms was still very difficult:

They [the other civil platforms] got to this process with the same purposes. So I mean, at the end they got on the road with the same common ideas. And there was also this kind of text [manifesto] afterwards. That was not a kind of a common [joint] text, which can be used in the middle of a struggle, but general ideas. In order to make different kind of discussions, they had different meetings after the forum about the city movement. The discussions did not go further. So afterwards, it came to a point that in the meetings with neighbourhoods with they realised that that can be better. That can create more effect. The meetings just with neighbourhood associations can be more productive as if you meet with another movement [civil platform]. So, afterwards this platform, Istanbul Urban Movements⁸¹ [Istanbul Kent hareketleri], was dissolved. It was not very

⁷⁷ Civil platform informant 1, IMECE, 23 March, 2011.

⁷⁸ See Annex E and <http://istanbulurbanmovements.wordpress.com/2010/07/07/urban-movements-forum-manifesto-26-27-june-2010/> as visited 25 November 2011.

⁷⁹ In line with Harvey and Lefebvre.

⁸⁰ <http://istanbulurbanmovements.wordpress.com> as visited 25 November 2011.

⁸¹ Ibid.

much coming forward. It was not a platform actually, but under this name urban movements, many dernekler gruplar, many associations, gathered together.⁸²

I return to this subsequent event to the Istanbul Urban Movements Forum in the conclusion of this chapter. The last thing to be mentioned concerning the Istanbul Urban Movements Forum around the European Social Forum is that it additionally turned out (besides the fact that the horizontal connections between the CSOs in Turkey was rather fragmented or at least not very effective) that furthermore the experience of the organisations present at the ESF were very different and that also there it was quite difficult to reach a common ground. In Turkey, the main issue concerning urban transformation and urban politics is the demolition of whole neighbourhoods, whereas the experience of the other groups was more concerned with more project-based questions, such as the demolition of a theatre, etc. So the Turkish issue in this light turned out to be fundamental and concern the whole city and the right to the city concept even more.⁸³

⁸² Civil platform informant 1, IMECE, 23 March 2011.

⁸³ Lefebvre 2003, Harvey 2008.

Conclusion

Here we have seen two attempts of horizontal linkages between the two levels of civil society actors introduced in the diagram in Figure 4, namely the neighbourhood level and the civil platform level. Furthermore, we have gained insight into the potential difficulties in these endeavours, such as the missing motivation for collective action because of diverging problems in the different neighbourhoods, the absence of a common goal, the mere extension of the city and last but not least, the sometimes contradictory political cultures of different associations involved. In the case of the Istanbul Urban Movements Forum, it became obvious that the political affiliation and fundamental attitudes complicated the agreement on collective action. this in mind, it is a very interesting fact that there are some city-wide subjects that seem to have the power to gather a great majority of oppositional forces on the different levels of civil society:

[...] they are trying to organise at the neighbourhood level like connect the different neighbourhoods and that they will use the yaşam platform for that. Because it is less divided, which is kind of funny, because all these movements are taking part in it. The yaşam platform is in fact against the third bridge⁸⁴. (Köprü yerine YAŞAM platform – Life instead of a third bridge platform) And you have all the chambers. Everyone is in fact in this platform. It is becoming bigger than the third bridge issue. [...] They are very much united. They say it is more. It has been many years now that they have weekly meetings. So it is quite well organised. I think because the chambers are pretty active in it. [...] The third bridge will affect everyone. It is a much bigger issue in fact than the urban transformation. Because [even

⁸⁴ The envisioned construction of a third bridge crossing the Bosphorus strait between Istanbul's northern Garipçe and Poyrazköy districts is causing a great deal of commotion because its growing number of opponents claim that its ecological and social impacts are utterly disproportionate to the relief it will bring from traffic congestions in the city. Furthermore, it lays emphasis on the car as prime mode of transportation again, while other cities rely to a much higher percentage on public transport.

though] you have urban transformation projects everywhere, also in middle class neighbourhoods now, but only quite recently. Is has been all Gecekondur areas so far.⁸⁵

This final example potentially guides a way towards the future of how horizontal linkages and collaborations between the different civil society actors in Istanbul could be organized. A city wide subject could have the power to gather a wider range of civil society actors and overcome ideological hurdles. Another platform that emerged after the data collection of this study is trying to mobilize on an even wider level than the third bridge platform. It is called “Neighbourhoods get together AND Istanbul claims its right to the city”⁸⁶. In the beginning of 2012 the first demonstration⁸⁷ was organized and the first position paper circulated (see Annex). This “right to the city” narrative is seen as the embracing narrative able to forge the wide coalition needed in order to be able to influence the planning agenda of the public and private sector. The position paper starts like this: *“We, as NGOs, neighbourhood associations, grassroots, urban movements and platforms plus academicians, activists, architects, planners, legal consultants, documentarists, artists, labourers, deputies... from differing political backgrounds, ideologies, and occupations;[...]”* This remarkable bandwidth of supporters gives some reason to suspect a new start of a potential city wide coalition.

⁸⁵ Expert informant 3, 21 March 2011, Istanbul.

4.2.3 Civil Platforms

Here I give a brief overview of the civil platforms relevant to urban transformation in Istanbul as they have occurred to me during field research. The term “civil platforms” is my own creation. The regarded CSOs are loosely, non-hierarchally organised, yet very active and visible in the urban transformation discourse. They are also referred to as civil initiatives, civil organisations or simply movements. Furthermore, they can be easily confused with urban social movements.⁸⁸ The latter is focused on movements that are started by the residents themselves, who are dissatisfied about the situation of their urban environment, to achieve social and political change for their respective neighbourhood. This does not apply to the civil platforms introduced here, because they are not directly affected by the urban transformation process. They act in a rather advocating manner. Their members consist of mainly highly educated middle-class people such as students, academics and professionals. For this reason, I don’t use the term urban social movement here. Furthermore, since they differ in their organisational pattern, which is constantly changing depending on the respective situation because they usually have no long-term funding other than members’ fees, I call them platforms rather than organisations.

The following selection of civil platforms is done according to the actors I found active in my case study. Regarding Figure 5, at least two more platforms are depicted that I did not see as being directly connected to my cases and therefore did not meet and also not elaborate on, but which are nevertheless important to mention to get a comprehensive understanding of the scene: the Human Settlements Association

⁸⁸ Urban social movements are “organisations formed by residents to protest about, or make demands for changes in, the urban environment and urban services. The term was originally applied narrowly by Manuel Castells to those urban movements which contributed to wider revolutionary social change.” (Marshall 1998)

(İnsanlar dernleri İYD) and the Housing Rights Platform. The former was the first association active in the field of urban issues. It was formed around the 1996 UN Habitat Summit in Istanbul and was founded by Korhan Gümüş. This organisation was somehow the forerunner of all civil platforms that I describe here. The Human Settlements Association led the first struggle against the restoration around the Galata Tower. This association also played an important role in the beginning of the Sulukule platform. The latter is, to my knowledge, what I called earlier the Right to Housing Coordination (Konut Hakkı Koordinasyonu). This group consists of a fusion of people of different neighbourhoods from the district from Sarıyer and led by people from Derbent, a neighbourhood in that particular district. They are less a civil platform but more a NHA platform, which is highly political.

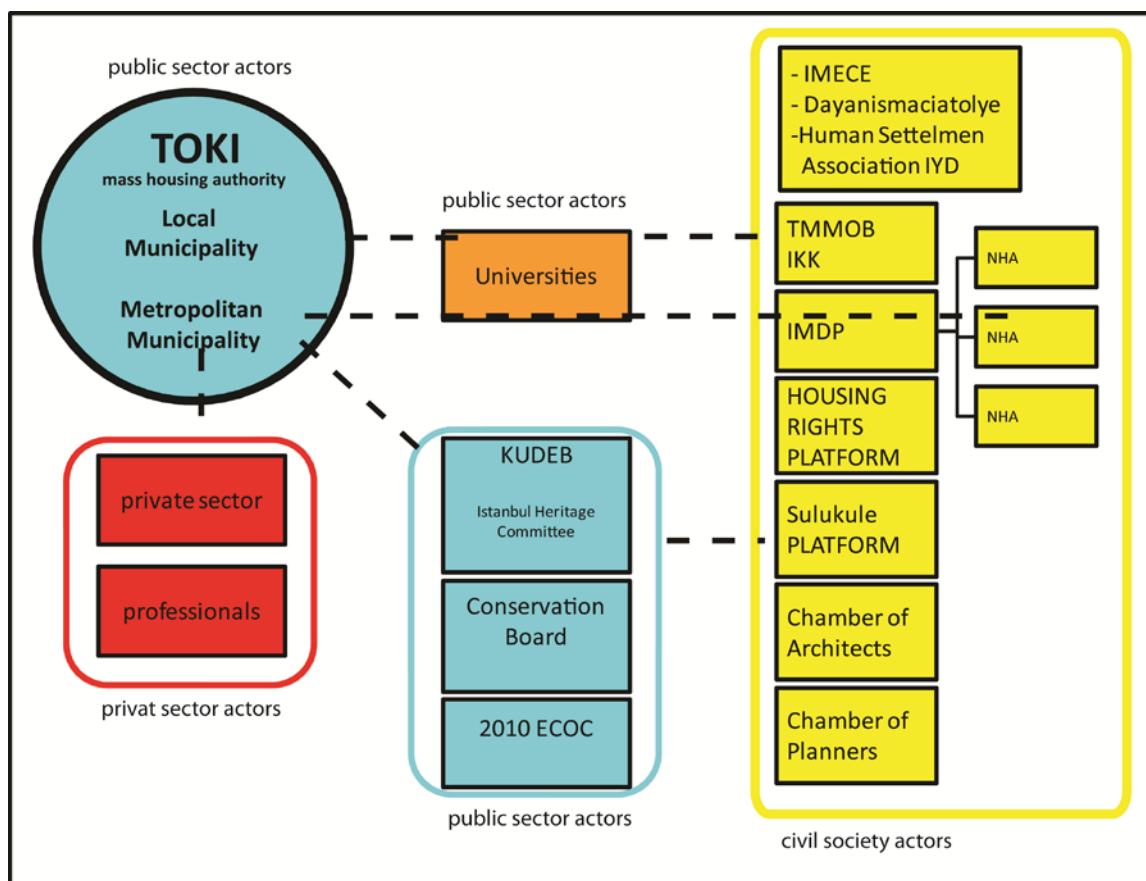


Figure 6: Diagram of actors involved in urban transformation in Istanbul, Source⁸⁹

⁸⁹ This graphic shows my formalised version of an actor's diagram created during a workshop in the "Civil Society Workshop Series" in 2009 funded by the European Union, which was a networking activity for NGOs active in advocacy in France and Turkey to find forms of collaboration. This diagram was the outcome of a

Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio)

Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio) is a civil platform that developed in 2004 from a circle of students and two professors of the departments of urban and regional planning at the Mimar Sinan University (University of Fine Arts) in Istanbul with connections to the neighbourhood association of Gülsuyu-Gülensu, which were opposing the announced urban transformation project.

We had a workshop in Gülsuyu-Gülensu. And this was the very first civil initiative organisation⁹⁰ in a Gecekondu neighbourhood. We didn't call ourselves a civil initiative there. It was an academic work. However, we got lots of data. There were almost 200 people working there one week in a workshop. But in a university, you can't really built a project. So we said we have to do something apart from the university. We started like this. But I mean we didn't have a place. We didn't have anything. Also, people from IMECE were working there as well. Then, they didn't find it political so they wanted to go on their own way. [...] Some of us were also members of bir umut.⁹¹ And they said that bir umut has a building where [...] one floor is a meeting room. So Solidarity Studio could come and make the meeting there.⁹²

This shows that Solidarity Studio evolved out of academic practice in the field. Out of the necessity of a more permanent commitment to the first neighbourhood they worked together with, they formed the civic platform Solidarity Studio (DA), which

strategic mapping exercise. It was created by Aslı Kiyak, Human Settlement Association/Sulukule Platform, Erdoğan Yıldız, İstanbul Neighborhood Associations Platform, Aylin Örnek, Diyarbakır Development Centre, Cecile Canpolat, AITEC Nurdane Bourcier, ACORT—L'Assemblée Citoyenne des Originaires de Turquie (for the original diagram, see the Annex). See homepage: <http://civilsocietydialogue.blogspot.com/> as visited 2 June 2012.

⁹⁰ As set out above, I use the term civil platform as equivalent to a civil initiative, or as in this quote, civil initiatives organisations, due to the described reasons.

⁹¹ Bir Umut (One Hope) association, founded after the earthquake in 1999.

⁹² Civil platform informant 2, DA, 30 March 2011.

now is a part of the “One Hope” association (Bir Umut), founded after the earthquake in 1999 in Izmit that caused 20,000 casualties. As we have seen already in the last chapter, this earthquake constitutes an important dynamising incident for the mobilisation of civil society in Turkey. Bir Umut formed as a solidarity association in pursuit of concrete aid for the victims of the earthquake. Today, Bir Umut dedicates itself to a wide range of charitable activities such as job offers, legal advice from voluntary lawyers, education, work for women, furniture contributions and explicitly advice in case of the threat of urban transformation. This last point refers to the activities of Solidarity Studio as forming part of Bir Umut. As part of Bir Umut, Solidarity Studio finds itself within a framework that allows for extensive support of the neighbourhoods they work with.

If you go to a neighbourhood the only problem is not the planning.⁹³

Solidarity Studio engages in “voluntary, independent and civil work” (Petit 2011, p. 10) especially in the field of urban planning and legal support. In their work, they try to implement basic democratic and emancipative characteristics in the respective neighbourhoods: This could be, on the one hand, the introduction of elected street representatives from each street in a neighbourhood and on the other hand a minimum amount of women partaking in the meetings and actions between the civic platform and the neighbourhood association. There is a widespread predominance of men who are active in the neighbourhood associations.

Interviewee: Because if you go to an association you see some men, mainly 40 or 50 years old, with a moustache and beard, and with a big belly and they sit and they make politics and all the rest of the neighbourhood is leaving [...]. So we said, if you want to work with us, let's agree on this. We need representatives from each street. Who are really representative,

⁹³ Ibid.

everybody knows them, and everybody is supporting them. [There] [...] should be an elected street representative. And there should be at least a quarter women. Because otherwise they would not let the women come to the meetings even. So, it makes it very difficult for the neighbourhood. But I always say it.

Martin: How do they react?

Informant: They don't like it. They say that they don't understand. We asked them and they didn't come. Or, they bring the women, but the women serve tea.⁹⁴

Generally, the work of Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio) can be described as pragmatically focused on the technical and scientific support of the respective neighbourhood. This includes urban planning and legal advice in the pursuit to come up with an alternative solution that is based on a participatory process with the inhabitants and that will allow the existing local population to stay in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, the communication with official bodies is part of their commitment, even though it is especially important that this part is conducted by representatives of the neighbourhood because the communication often turns into bargaining processes and does not focus necessarily on the right of staying in their neighbourhoods. Dayanışmacı Atölye (Solidarity Studio's) field of activity is city-wide and spans over neighbourhoods in the inner city as well as in the former Gecekondu areas, both on the European and on the Asian side: different neighbourhoods in the Sariyer⁹⁵ district; the Gülsuyu Gülensu neighbourhood in the district of Maltepe; in Tarlabaşı in the inner city as well as in Sulukule⁹⁶ in the district of Fatih on the historic peninsula. In Sulukule Solidarity Studio, members were part of two successive

⁹⁴ Civil platform informant 2, DA, 30 March 2011.

⁹⁵ The Sariyer district is located on the European side, up north behind the second Bosphorus Bridge.

⁹⁶ Consisting of the adjacent neighbourhoods Hatice Sultan and Neslişah Mahalle, which are since 2008 known as Karagümrük Advisory Group on Forced Evictions 2009, p. 21; it is one of the oldest Roma settlements in the world where some 3,500 to 5,000 people used to live (ibid.).

democratic planning experimental workshops, or temporary civil platforms, which committed themselves to the development of an alternative proposal for the neighbourhoods, which have since been demolished and its residents relocated.

STOP Platform and SULUKULE STUDIO (2008 and 2009)

First, STOP (Sınır Tanımayan Otonom Plancılar, or Urban Planners without Borders) was established in summer 2008, specifically for the preparation of an alternative plan to the now nearly fully implemented urban transformation project. In this civil platform, about 40 volunteers worked for three weeks and came up with an alternative plan for the future of Sulukule. This plan had a radically different approach to the existing scheme of urban transformation: The first aspect was to maintain as many people as possible in the original neighbourhood and the second was to pay paramount attention not only to the improvement of the physical environment but also to the enhancement of the employment situation and thus the quality of life. STOP's underlying motivation was a mix of professional ethics, social responsibility and a spirit of solidarity (Çavuşoğlu 2008). In 2009, the Sulukule Studio was established as another experiment of participative and collective planning and continued the work on an alternative solution for the future of Sulukule and garnered the attention of the press and public interest, commenting on the day-to-day developments such as the Deutsche Bank Urban Award.⁹⁷ The alternative plan developed by the STOP Platform was, finally, the cause for a split within the civil platforms movement because STOP, which consisted substantially of Solidarity Studio members, was seen by some other civil platforms such as IMECE as revisionist, helping the local

⁹⁷ Sulukule Studio was nominated for the Urban Age Award 2009, which is awarded by Deutsche Bank and the London School of Economics. Sulukule Studio refused the award in solidarity with the people made homeless by the mortgage crisis in 2008/2009 in the USA of which Deutsche Bank was seen as a profiteer and contributing cause. (see <http://sulukuleatolyesi.blogspot.com> as visited 4 December 2011.)

authority instead of the local people in contributing alternative plans that would also lead to the displacement of people and would not be able to fully keep the local inhabitants in the neighbourhood.

Sulukule Platform

The Sulukule Platform is a civil platform that managed to gain perhaps the most press attention in its resistance towards the new urban transformation process in Istanbul and foremost in the neighbourhood of Sulukule. Sulukule Studio concentrated fully on one neighbourhood and worked closely together with a local cultural association, which was different from Solidarity Studio or IMECE.⁹⁸ It started its activities after Sulukule was declared an urban transformation area in November 2005 after the abolishment of urban transformation law no. 5366 on 16 June 2005. The Sulukule Platform evolved in the course of 2006 after the Sulukule Roma Culture Development and Solidarity Association, the earlier-mentioned Human Settlements Association, the Chamber of Architects and Bilgi University established a consensus and discussion of resistance between July and August of 2006. By 2008, the Sulukule Platform consisted of about 40 people.⁹⁹ Its members are academics and professionals from various fields:

[...] Social scientists, urban planners, architects, some NGO people, like around 40 people I would say are in the body. There are few people who are forerunners in the campaigns. Press person, housing rights, every person within the platform is involved with some the issue that is directly connected to their professional practice. That is the most interesting thing. That means you don't need to do the whole thing, because nobody has the time to do so. Somebody also has a full time job. ... This is how Sulukule Platform runs as a collective. We are not stronger

⁹⁸ Sulukule Roma Culture Development and Solidarity Association, The local NHA, which was established in June 2006.

⁹⁹ Civil platform informant 4, Sulukule Platform, April 2008.

than the government. We can be. We created a public interest, awareness. I think that many people are supporting, many people are following what Sulukule Platform is doing. The most interesting thing is the process. How you negotiate, how you work like that.¹⁰⁰

The organisation is very decentralised with a rather fluid membership structure.¹⁰¹

One of its first, if not the first, action of Sulukule Studio was the festival “40 Days and 40 Nights,” which was an answer to the immediate threat of demolitions. In these 40 days and 40 nights,¹⁰² a festival with a lot of music and street interventions such as painting houses and panel discussions were launched to bring important knowledge from outside the neighbourhood and to raise attention in the media to show what was at stake when urban intervention was implemented. Sulukule was one of the first neighbourhoods declared an urban transformation area and the first one where demolitions took place. This event was, next to generating a remarkable amount of public attention, an important point for networking the different actors important in the process such as chambers, platforms, neighbourhood associations and professionals from different fields. During the festival, it was possible to stop the demolitions under way.¹⁰³ After this first unifying and attention-raising event, Sulukule Platform worked with the inhabitants on different analyses, assessments and alternative plans for the neighbourhood to base their claims of the people staying in the neighbourhood on solid foundations and to come up with a constructive solution. The platform was never per se against a renewal of the neighbourhood along transparent and comprehensible democratic lines, which would guarantee the socio-economic

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ During my contact with the Sulukule Platform starting in April 2008 I was in contact with a steady, solely female group of activists, which can be considered a stable core group.

¹⁰² Traditional time span of a big wedding.

¹⁰³ Civil platform informant 5, Sulukule Platform, April 2008.

enhancement of the neighbourhood. Since direct talks didn't produce any results and demolitions and resettlements were on-going, the Sulukule Platform prepared various extensive reports for and with international institutions such as UNESCO and UN-Habitat. However, the Sulukule Platform initiated social projects for children, such as music workshops and concerts to raise awareness. Today, the Sulukule Platform is still updating its blog¹⁰⁴ and has founded various successor platforms such as STOP and Sulukule Studio (see above). Furthermore, a formalised association, Volunteers of Sulukule,¹⁰⁵ was founded to be able to apply for funding and thus maintain the social projects mentioned above. Many of the actors involved in the Platform disperse their knowledge in other organisations, while Sulukule today is demolished and its inhabitants have been resettled to a satellite town 40 kilometres away named Taşoluk; from here, the great majority has returned to adjacent neighbourhoods of the former Sulukule area. The new townhouses for middle-class owners will be handed over during 2012. Sulukule, in this respect, is the first neighbourhood that almost underwent a full transformation and therefore is often used as a reference in all the affected neighbourhoods.

IMECE

IMECE¹⁰⁶ is a civil platform founded at the end of 2006 that consists of students, academics and professionals and that has its roots in academia. In the beginning, many students from Yildiz Technical University were involved. Later on, members also came to a great extent from Mimar Sinan University. The core of IMECE consists of about 20-25 people, out of which 10 are intensely involved. Because

¹⁰⁴ <http://sulukulegunlugu.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁰⁵ <http://sulukulegonulluleri.blogspot.com>.

¹⁰⁶ IMECE is a common expression meaning something like collective solidarity for the community, literally "working together for the community." Hasskamp, Lea 2010

there is no official membership, it is not possible to say exactly how many members they have. It is oscillating along with the projects that are due.

“There is some kind of connection, people are coming temporarily and support the platform. It changes... Sometimes it can be the case that some people come for one type of work and then they don’t come again.”¹⁰⁷

This quote illustrates the dynamic character of the civil platforms’ membership structure. “IMECE has arisen from the torrid need for a common platform that is independent but enriched by its solidarist action, learning growing; [...]”¹⁰⁸ It began with a group of friends, students of urban planning, some from social political science. They started by discussing with the headline “You are the urbanist.”¹⁰⁹ In this first discussion, they debated about what kind of battle they are going to have and they agreed on 16 principles¹¹⁰ defining their view on urban planning, the city and themselves as a movement, and how to organise and how to act. They speak out for participation as a necessary prerequisite in any urban planning processes, for the city as a holistic entity, a public sphere that is not a commodity and thus cannot be marketed. Furthermore, they place themselves on the side of any urban struggle with the “objective [...] to constitute the agency which operates as a ground that unites various struggles.” Principal No. 11 claims the rights to shelter, labour and living as fundamental human rights. The civil platform rejects the class discrimination against

¹⁰⁷ Civil platform informant 1, IMECE, 23 March 2011.

¹⁰⁸ From a flyer from IMECE as sent to me on 22 January 2011 (see Annex G).

¹⁰⁹ Civil platform informant 1, IMECE, 23 March 2011.

¹¹⁰ See “IMECE’s Principles” as sent to me on 22 January 2011 (see Annex G).

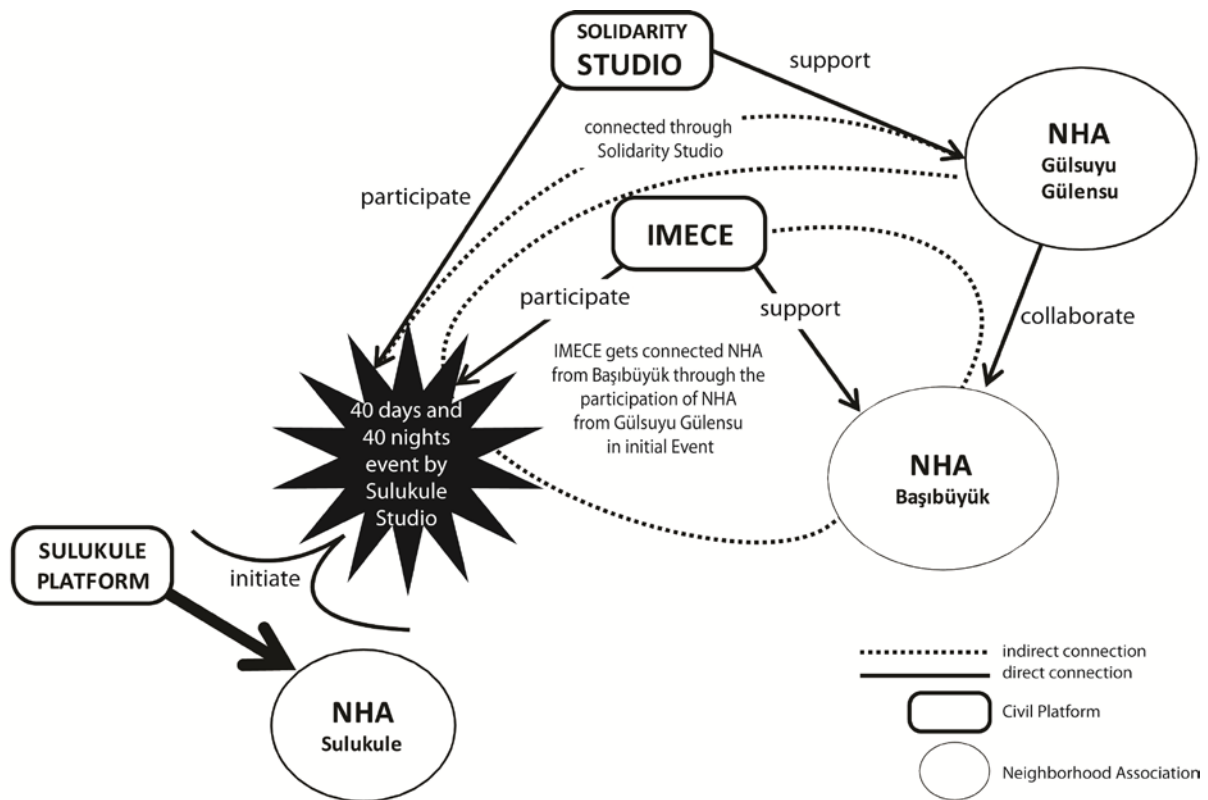


Figure 7: Starting point of networking between different actors in 2006, Source: Own design

those rights caused by property relations. IMECE describes itself as “a movement independent from all political, professional and civil organisations. It is open to all based on its principles.”¹¹¹ Their main goal is to make the urban changes transparent to society. After they drafted the principles, they tried to get into contact with other movements and NHAs. The first action was the painting of various houses in Sulukule to show that those buildings were inhabited. The paint was contributed by the support of syndicates and NHAs. This took place during the “40 Days and 40 Nights” festival in Sulukule organised by the Sulukule Platform. The main purpose was to create solidarity with the neighbourhood and citizens. This event was one kick-starter for the further connection of the scene of Urban Oppositional

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Movements¹¹² and also an important step for the media presence of the topic of urban transformation in connection with social segregation. Nevertheless within that time many other events took place that I cannot capture here, where the scene emerged and became connected.

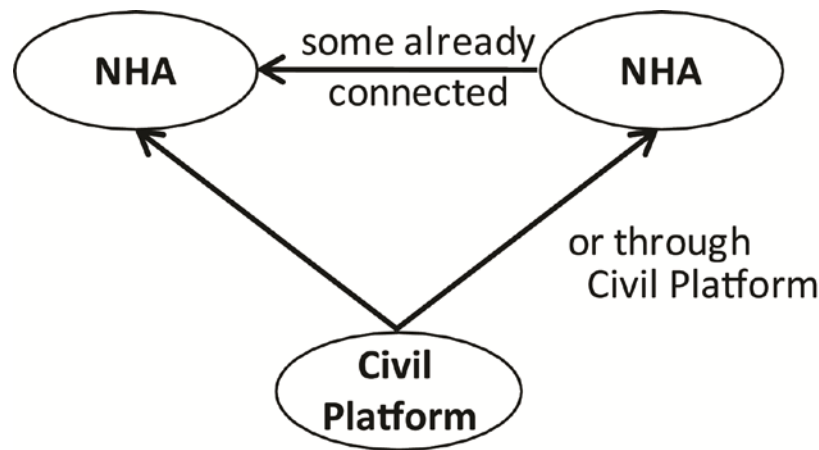


Figure 8: IMECE works as a connector, Source: Own design

Since the foundation of IMECE, they have collaborated with different neighbourhoods such as Solidarity Studio on both inner city and Gecekondu neighbourhoods. Yet, because their work is less on the ground and in detail, and they see themselves as mediators and multipliers of information, and they are also active on a national level and even international level: The neighbourhoods in Istanbul that they have been active in are, as mentioned, Sulukule with the first activist action, later on in Gülsuyu-Gülensu (probably together with Solidarity Studio), Başbüyük and Ayazma¹¹³ and

¹¹² I use the term urban oppositional movement in contrast to the earlier-mentioned term urban social movement as a catchall phrase encompassing all civil society actors mentioned so far.

¹¹³ Ayazma is the first and so far only Gecekondu neighbourhood that has been completely demolished in 2008 and its inhabitants subsequently relocated to completely new neighbourhoods in Bezirganbahçe. Again, TOKI was the state actor in charge of the whole project. It is located on the European Site of Istanbul, close to the Atatürk Olympic Stadium built in 2002.

other neighbourhoods in Ankara.¹¹⁴ On the international level, IMECE attended, for example, the “Right to the City” Conference in Hamburg in June 2011 and ran a workshop titled: “The Condition of Neo-Liberal Urbanisation in Istanbul.”

The support of IMECE focuses on professional advice, for example, in explaining plans and their consequences to NHAs. Furthermore, IMECE functions as a connector or intermediary between the different civil society actors depicted in Figure 2, such as NHAs that are both from the same and different cities (see Figures 8 and 8) or connecting NHAs with chambers and international institutions.

Besides the described activities so far, the compiling and spreading of information such as the writing of reports is one of the core activities of IMECE.

“The true information and the spreading of this true information are the most important duties of IMECE. In order to live up to this ideal, we are constantly compiling and publishing reports such as the City Report 2004–2009¹¹⁵ and the Third Bridge Report¹¹⁶ published in 2010.”¹¹⁷

Besides the report itself, the diffusion of it is of great importance. After a report gets published, the group usually goes to the neighbourhoods and tells about the outcomes in the reports, making presentations to the local people. They also deliver a printed version. In case of the Kent Raporu, it was first published on their website. Later on, they declared it openly in front of the metropolitan municipality and in front of different media. Furthermore, IMECE is running a mailing group, which is partly fed

¹¹⁴ In 2008 and 2009, a sister organisation of IMECE existed called “Kentsiz Hareketi” (City Movement). This organisation contacted many neighbourhoods in Ankara. This is how IMECE as well as NHAs from Istanbul and Izmir were connected to these neighbourhoods in Ankara too. (According to mail contact with Civil platform informant 1 on 6 December 2011) http://kentsiz.blogspot.com/2009_06_01_archive.html.

¹¹⁵ Available under <http://www.toplumunsehicilikhareketi.org/images/stories/imece/IstanbulRaporu.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ Available under <http://www.toplumunsehicilikhareketi.org/images/stories/imece/IstanbulRaporu.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Civil platform informant 1, IMECE, 23 March 2011.

by themselves and partly by other, loosely connected persons, mainly experts from the field, i.e., from universities, other platforms and neighbourhood associations.

“IMECE also has a mail group which is not only working among themselves, it expanded itself.

The main thing is to give information about the city movements via mail. Now there are 650 people networked in this mail group.”¹¹⁸

The mentioned mail group is very active and well-informed, spreading and exchanging information about day-to-day topics such as the general elections, related demonstrations and calls for solidarity, new urban renewal projects and background information about the transformation process. Furthermore, it also engages in environmentalist activism, which gained importance because new legislations imply the large-scale privatisation and commodification of natural resources such as lakes, rivers and the like. Since I joined the newsgroup on 7 May 2011, I have received an average of about three to four emails by different authors per day.

Conclusion on Civil Platforms

In the last paragraph about civil platforms, it was shown how important and effective these actors can be in their potential to connect the different civil society stakeholders relevant to the field of urban transformation between the different strata, such as, for example, at the neighbourhood level and the institutional level, such as professional chambers and trade unions,¹¹⁹ as described in Figure 2. They are able to immediately share their know-how and come up with effective ad hoc and also more long-term strategic solutions. Furthermore, they have a great capacity in advocacy,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Trade unions were mentioned in different texts and a few interviews to be important oppositional actors in urban transformation on the site of civil society, though I did not encounter them being active in any of the neighbourhoods analysed nor in any of the activities I directly and indirectly monitored.

empowerment and in connecting the affected neighbourhoods with professional chambers, national aid organisations and international organisations. Yet the activities of civil platforms lack continuity and a stable organisational structure including missing funding, which makes a long-term commitment often particularly unsustainable to the members of these platforms, or is just possible if these are in some way economically independent. Furthermore, I found that the different described civil platforms came during collective actions and attempts for collaboration to an end where fundamental ideological attitudes were encountered, and it turned out to be more effective to stop the inter-platform collaboration and focus each one of their respective neighbourhoods on not dispersing their powers and continuing to have at least a short-term impact. The potential clashes of the different programmatic approaches can be described as follows: There is the pragmatic approach, which tries to help as many people as possible and to give practical advice on the ground, which in other words is betting on the empowerment and local democracy of the affected neighbourhoods. (Petit 2011) There is also the more political or idealistic approach, which tries to connect different actors to form a city-wide coalition that should ideally lead to a revolutionary movement that should have the goal of the commoditisation of the city as such as a consequence. Looking at the pragmatic approach, it cannot be concluded that there is no political background to the civil platform as such. Most activists are endowed with political attitude and motivation. Given this, it is perhaps more useful to speak rather of an avoidance of the political dimension in their work than of a non-political attitude. Political affiliations can easily serve as much as a uniting and strengthening force in reality as a dividing force within a neighbourhood because there is a wide and implacable range of political affiliations. Nevertheless, the civil platforms, as I have found out, still have a personal interrelation and general appreciation for each other. Furthermore, they found within

themselves pragmatic ways of avoiding their ideological divergences and still giving as effective support as possible to neighbourhoods under threat of demolition.

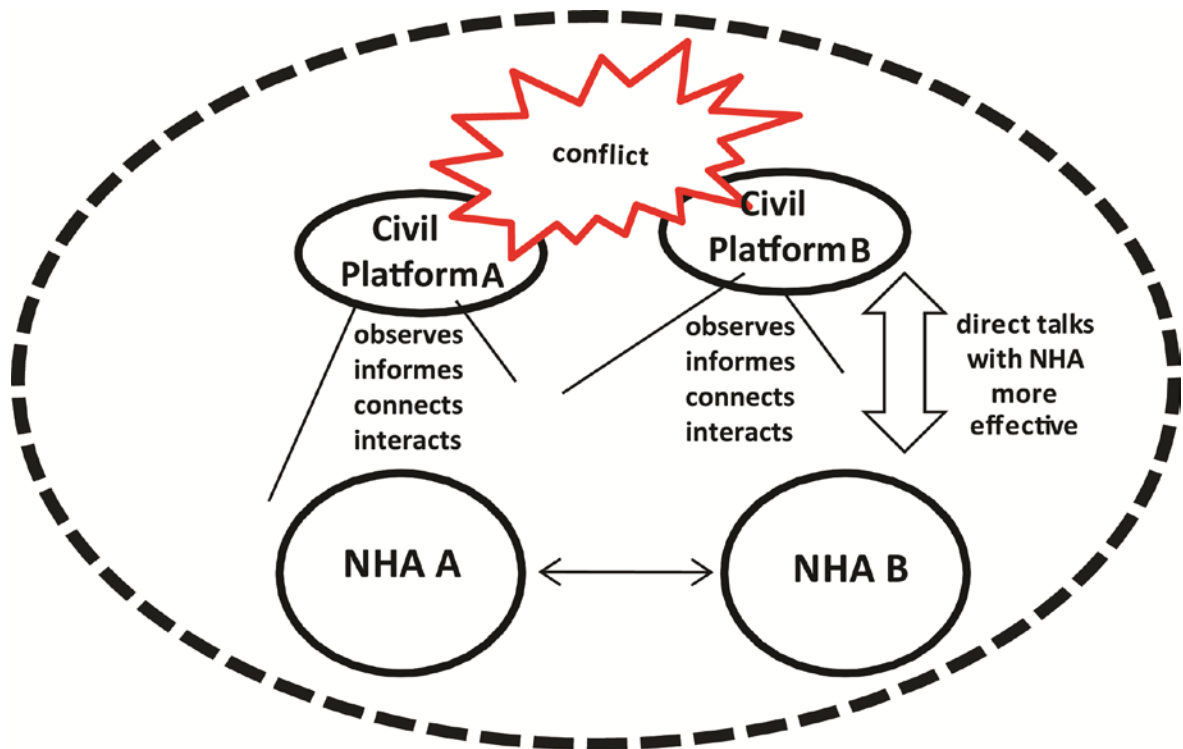


Figure 9: Interrelation between civil platforms and NHAs, Source: Own design

4.2.4 Professional Chambers

Chambers form another important civil society actor in Turkey. The chambers of architects (mimarlar odasi) and city planners, and an umbrella organisation, the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB)¹²⁰ were the ones I identified as especially active in the field of urban transformation. They take a clearly oppositional stand towards the urban transformation policies carried out by the state, the greater municipality and the district municipalities in charge of the respective project areas. Even though business unions and chambers seem to be deeply fragmented along political and ideological lines (Şimşek 2004, p. 61), within the

¹²⁰ TÜRK MÜHENDİS ve MİMAR ODALARI BİRLİĞİ.

mentioned chambers and union there seems to exist a consensus of their political self-understanding. In the fundamentals stated on the website of TMMOB, the following points can be found:

"[...]TMMOB] and the member Chambers of the Union:

- Go beyond the narrow definition of politics; and regard every aspect of the life as a part of politics,
- Oppose abuses of human rights and encourage the protection of human dignity.
- Make efforts for the democratisation of the country.
- Without any hesitation, take part in the efforts for the formation of public opinion."¹²¹

In line with these self-commitments, I perceived the chamber of architects as being especially involved in the respective areas of my case study. The mode of intervention was primarily from the legal assistance of the NHAs or by directly filing court cases against urban transformation projects: They either filed them directly and the inhabitants of the respective neighbourhood acted as joint plaintiffs (as in Tarlabaşı), or they gave legal support to the neighbourhood association (as in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray/Ayvansaray) or they filed the case alone. Even though they have a limited budget and limited human resources, they file court cases in all so far relevant urban projects I came across, such as the third bridge crossing the Bosphorus, which is an important city-wide issue. They look back on a history of organising and supporting oppositional movements against large-scale urban planning projects:¹²² The chamber of architects initiated the opposition against the building of the first Bosphorus Bridge in the late 1960s and supported the second

¹²¹ http://www.tmmob.org.tr/index_en.php as visited the 28 November 2011.

¹²² Expert informant 5, lawyer chamber of architects, 17 March 2011.

important opposition against the building of Tarlabası Boulevard in 1986, which was a large-scale infrastructure project cutting the district of Beyoğlu in two while demolishing about 300 historic houses in the heart of the city (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010). Even though the chamber of architects lost much of the power it used to have in the 1960s and 1970s,¹²³ they form frequent coalitions with civil platforms and neighbourhood associations and provide and share resources wherever available; e.g., a conference initiated by the civil platform IMECE where different platforms and neighbourhood associations met was held at the chamber of architects' branch office in Istanbul.

4.2.5 Universities

As these universities are important institutions that are somehow the cradle of the earlier described civil platforms, I try to characterise their ambiguous role in the process of urban transformation as I have perceived it in the conducted interviews:

“Universities are, with regard to urban transformation projects, ambiguous. For example while [...] professors from the Mimar Sinan University are against the transformation projects and fight for civil and oppositional movements, their superiors are planning this project. [...]Officially universities do not have an attitude. Just an individual one.”¹²⁴

This statement alludes to the fact that in the case of the Tarlabası neighbourhood in Istanbul, the surveyors in charge who prepared the feasibility study prior to the transformation project are professors from the same university as the professors who are engaged in favour of the local neighbourhood association:

¹²³ Civil platform informant 2, solidarity studio, 30 March 2011.

¹²⁴ NHA informant 8, NHA Tarlabası NHA, 19 March, 2011.

[...] If you look at the universities you can see some academics who are interested in these kinds of urban issues and who are working as urban activists. But they are very few. The rest of them work for the municipality and they are the ones who sign these projects. So I mean the university is not also innocent in this, let's say. [...] The ones in critical positions are called by the municipalities or other institutions. They are asked to be an advisor to a project. Most of them, they do these jobs. But they are not really interested and they don't really examine what the project is about. They just give their names and they get money. So, I mean, it is a little bit corrupt, let's say.¹²⁵

Though universities are no genuine civil society actors they can, nevertheless, facilitate civic engagement and can work as important sources of civic exchange and dialogue within society and thus be important to the emancipation of a civil society, which can counterbalance the power of the state. In many Western countries, universities are trying to develop interfaces between the university and civil society, such as community design centres in the United States that organise “collaborative interdisciplinary community/university partnerships for the research and design of physical improvements.”¹²⁶ In the case of Turkey, universities are not on their way to the middle of society as the stated quotes have shown. The incentives towards the civil initiative of universities are based on the individual commitment of individuals and are not by any means institutionalised. Thus, the role of the universities in Turkey has to be seen increasingly critically, since they seem not able to be independent actors important to the formation of a well-functioning civil society, which would be needed in Turkey. The universities in Turkey are becoming less and less

¹²⁵ Civil platform informant 2, solidarity studio, 30 March 2011.

¹²⁶ From the website of the community design centre of the University of Cincinnati <http://www.uc.edu/cdc/> (as visited 7 December 2011).

independent, the government tries to influence the curriculum, and posts are filled more and more according to political affiliations, while critical professors get suspended (Popp 2011).

4.2.6 NGOs

So far, I have not used the term NGO, which is prevalent in the current civil society discourse. Applying a wide definition of the term,¹²⁷ of course, all presented stakeholders presented so far, such as the different NHAs and civil platforms, could be called NGOs. Because this term would, in my close view to the stakeholder situation in the civil society in Istanbul, lead to little insight and would neither depict the characteristic features of the different stakeholders nor allow me to adequately refer to them, I would use a rather more narrow definition that Diana Mitlin, as quoted in the PhD thesis of Astrid Ley (Ley 2009, p. 72) employs:

NGOs are defined as professional, non-profit, non-membership intermediary organisations that are independent of the state and which undertake a range of activities in order to further development.

Given this more narrow definition of the term, it implies that when we talk about NGOs, we are concerned with professional organisations with a clear mission and structure. Furthermore, just because they are non-profit does not mean that they are entirely based on voluntary work. The explanation given above further implies that these organisations do not have memberships, which does not apply to any of the

¹²⁷ "A non-governmental organisation (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organised on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organised around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early-warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations system differs depending on their goals, their venue and the mandate of a particular institution." From <http://www.ngo.org/ngoinfo/define.html> (6 December 2011).

introduced forms of organisations, initiatives and platforms above. This is why I step back from the term NGO in my elaboration on the relevant civil society stakeholders. In this context, the term NGO seems unhelpful to me.

4.2.7 International Organisations

International organisations play an important role in the urban transformation process in Istanbul. As already stated in section 3.4, the opening of accession negotiations with the EU was an important milestone in the development of new freedoms and rights directed at forming a pro-democratic civil society. Nevertheless, recently this liberalisation process seems to be experiencing a reverse shift in which the hurdles for civic engagement and intervention against state actions become once again enhanced.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, institutions such as UNESCO, the European Court for Human Rights, UN Habitat AGFE Mission, Amnesty International and universities from abroad such as University College London in the case of Sulukule, are some examples of international actors that became visible in field of urban transformation in Istanbul and who were active in different ways: critically commenting on the development; giving advice to state actors; building up pressure, like UNESCO threatening Istanbul with losing its world heritage status; and supporting oppositional movements. Vice versa, many of these international organisations were actively and repeatedly invoked by different civil society actors from Istanbul, from the neighbourhood level up to the national level and including professional chambers, trade unions and the like. How effective these connections with international actors were and can be I cannot assess at this point. Sulukule, for example, has been

¹²⁸ For example, the amendment of article 73 of law 5393 in 2010 constitutes a significant new obstacle for civil rights in Turkey. The amendment makes it impossible for particular citizens to file a law suit against a planned urban transformation project. It is only possible through a regular association or the like.

demolished and all inhabitants resettled even though the considerable involvement of international organisations has taken place. But perhaps without the involvement of the international actors, the media attention and thus the diffusion of what has happened in Sulukule would not have been as widespread.

Interviewer: Does international pressure help?

Interviewee: International, EU or UNESCO, if they have support in the media, I think that helps. But it doesn't help in the real scene. Those people doing nothing really. They are coming, they are checking, they are going, I don't believe them. It's nice to give support in the media eyes. For the government it is important. But in the real sense? I don't think the EU can be helpful. Because Spain has the same problem. It is not about having a board above you internationally.¹²⁹

As this quote illustrates, the de facto impact of international organisations on the ground remains to be questioned and requires further investigation. At this point, I want to stress that the connection to international organisations is with no doubt of great importance to the grassroots organisations because it elevates their respective struggle to a bigger audience. Networking with different kinds of international actors will also lead to the professionalisation of the grassroots movements. The impacts of this kind of development would be worthwhile to study.

¹²⁹ Civil platform informant 4, April 2008.

5 Chapter: Urban Transformation on the Ground (Case Study)

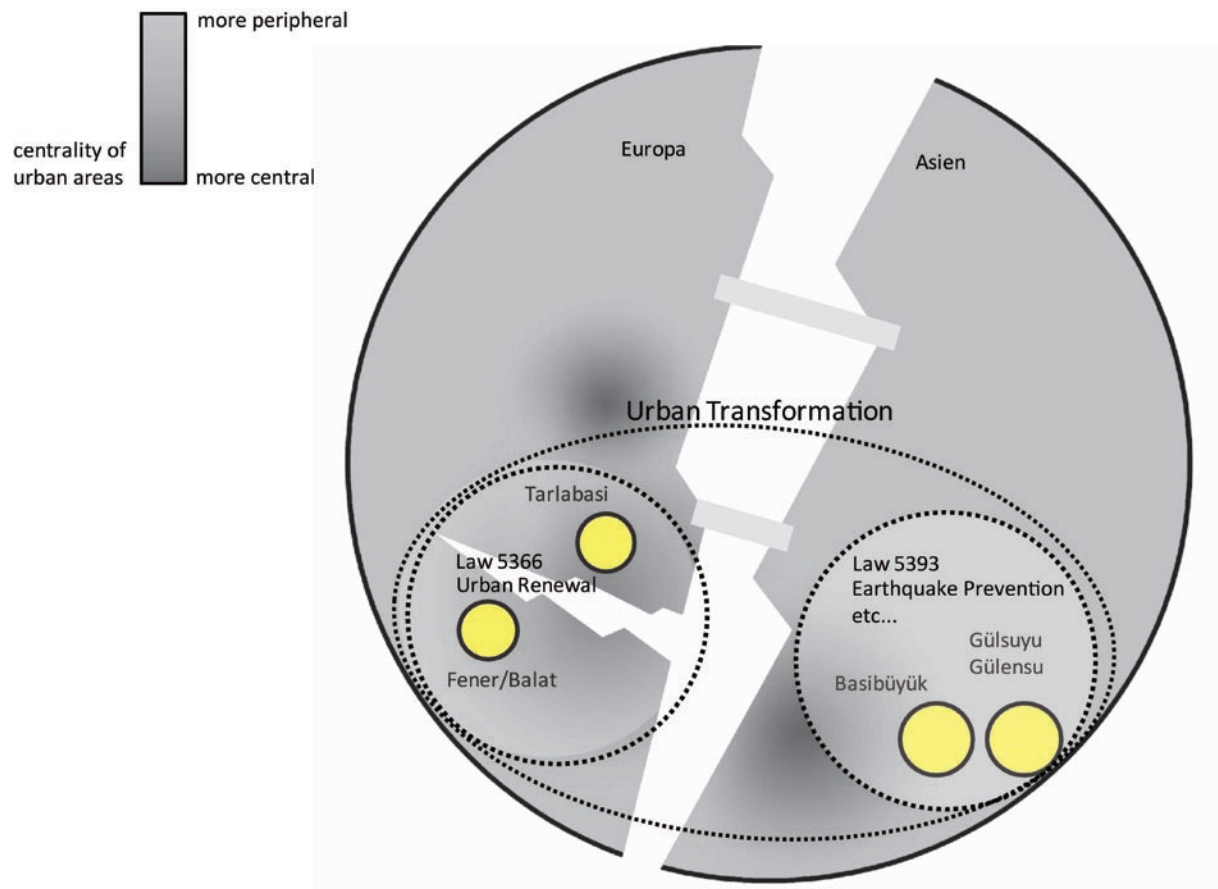


Figure 10: Cases in the case study on a schematic map, Source: Own design

5.1 Introduction

In my case study, I analyse four neighbourhoods in Istanbul that are under an acute threat of urban transformation and thus threatened by expropriation, eviction and demolition of their houses. Two of the neighbourhoods, or better implementation areas,¹³⁰ investigated are located in the inner city, Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray and Tarlabaşı, and are affected by law no. 5366 and thus by a process called more specifically urban renewal (*kentsel yenileme*; see section 3.3). The other two neighbourhoods investigated are located at the former peripheries of the city and affected by law no. 5393, which is generally used in more peripheral and less historic areas of the city, mainly Gecekondus (see section 3.3). These last two neighbourhoods are also traditional Gecekondu neighbourhoods, informally evolved over the last 60 years and partly on state-owned land.

The four areas were chosen first because they show a wide range of characteristics typical to urban transformation under way in Istanbul both in inner-city and in traditional Gecekondu neighbourhoods. Second, the cases were chosen because of existing secondary literature, which gave me the opportunity for triangulation during document analysis. Within the four areas investigated, the wide scope of actors involved and their respective strategies, their repertoires of resistance and the problematic within in the grassroots organisations facing this development becomes evident.

¹³⁰ Because of the urban transformation projects, in this case more specifically the urban renewal project in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray, which is affecting three neighbourhoods.

5.2 The Case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu

5.2.1 Introduction

Gülsuyu/Gülensu was one of the first neighbourhoods confronted with urban transformation in 2004. The local grassroots organisations and some of their representatives are very active in the process of city-wide networking among other civil society actors both horizontal and vertically (see section 4.2). Because there is a high level of organisation-building experience in the neighbourhood, the newly founded GÜLDAM association can be especially seen to some extent as a pioneer in the newly evolving civil society movement since 2004. In this, the association acts as multipliers and connectors and provide know-how to other, less-networked neighbourhood associations.

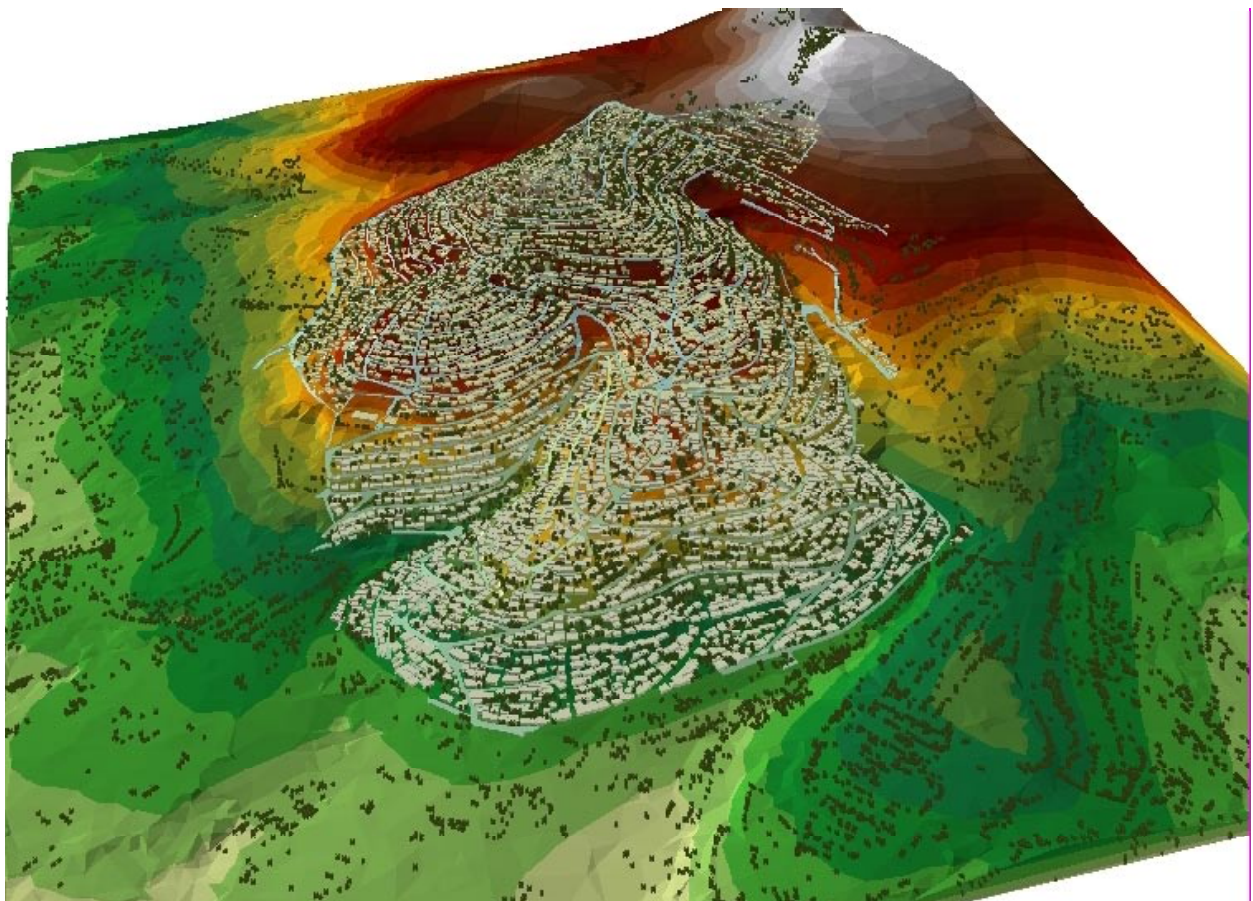


Figure 11: Topological model of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, Source: (Aksumer 2007, p. 57)

Situation and Migration

Gülsuyu and Gülsu are actually two adjacent Gecekonu neighbourhoods in the district of Maltepe, situated on the hills north of highway number E-5 on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The first migrants from eastern Anatolia arrived here in the late 1950s. Because of the proximity to car manufacturing industries south of the highway, the first “settlers” build their Gecekonus on available state-owned land. The southern slopes offer a spectacular view of the sea and to the Bosphorus as well as to the Princess Islands. This view might be a reason for the increasing land value here in recent years.

The migration happened basically in three waves: The first took place at the end of the 1950s from eastern Anatolia, from such places as Siirt, Sivas, Erzincan and Tunceli in Gülsuyu.¹³¹ Since the middle of the 1970s, a second wave of migration occurred. This time the settlers came from the Black Sea region, from such places as Samsun, Sinop and Giresun.¹³² This second wave of migrants settled on the higher area above Gülsuyu that is now called Gülsu. In the 1990s, the last wave of migration started out from the Kurdish regions in the eastern part of Anatolia due to the conflict of the central government with PKK, and these migrants settled higher, mainly on remaining state-owned land (see Figure 17; the red area named after 85) .

The two areas, Gülsuyu and Gülsu, are not separated by natural borders and thus function together as one neighbourhood.¹³³ When talking about the origins of the population of Gülsuyu and Gülsu, it is important to mention that the first settlers were Alevi and attracted subsequently more Alevis in the later waves of migration

¹³¹ AGFE REPORT 2009, p.53.

¹³² NHA informant 1, 16 March 2011.

¹³³ AGFE REPORT 2009, P.53 and my own corresponding observations during field research.

from the Black Sea and central Turkey¹³⁴ to Gülsuyu/Gülensu. Therefore, the neighbourhood is still an Alevi stronghold, which is traditionally more left-minded.

Livelihood, History and Situation

The original Gecekondü dwellers found work in the nearby industries, such as in automobile manufacturing, suppliers and other metal industries, as well as in chemical industries such as fertilizer production near the industrial zone of Kartal¹³⁵ in the district of Maltepe. In the interviews it was reported that since 2000, jobs in the industrial sector have diminished due to automation and thus people tried and still try to find more and more employment in the service sector—impacts of structural change. Today, the majority of the inhabitants of Gülsuyu/Gülensu work in the informal sector,¹³⁶ mainly in the construction and textile industries. In the neighbourhood itself, many textile workshops are emerging due to the high unemployment rate. Women are working additionally as cleaning ladies, mostly on an informal basis. They clean the houses in the affluent neighbourhoods, including Acibadem, Kadıköy, Suadiye and Ataşehir. In these neighbourhoods, the standard of living is higher.

“The ones who can afford to live in these neighbourhoods earn well and spend as much money as Europeans.” Erdogan Yildiz, Interview 16.03.2011

Political Background of the Neighbourhood

Gülsuyu/Gülensu has an extensive tradition in political activism. It is well known for its left-wing groupings and has witnessed a long history of street fights and

¹³⁴ Grewell, Merlis, Wang (2006), p. 13.

¹³⁵ Kartal is supposedly facing a large-scale urban transformation process. The master plan with its characteristic parametric shapes was carried out by Zaha Hadid.

¹³⁶ NHA informant 2, 20 March 2011.

barricades. Many groupings active in the neighbourhood are forbidden and have faced rigorous persecution.

“Affected by the political environment of the 1970s, our neighbourhood became an important part of leftist movements and declared itself a location for dissenters. Especially during 1978–80, revolutionaries were very powerful in this area.” **(Korkmaz et al. 2009, p. 14)**

In the 1970s, Gülsuyu/Gülensu already faced evictions, which resulted in riots that led to the killing and detention of various leftist activists. In that period, many houses were also built by leftist groups and handed over to residents of the neighbourhood later on. That may somewhat explain why these leftist groups, which are still in existence, still feel responsible for the defence and representation of the neighbourhood, as is described more in detail later on.

Characteristics of the Physical Environment



Figure 12: View from the west to Gülsuyu/Gülensu, Source: Martin Schwegmann, March 2011



Figure 13: Unfinished house with street number; in the back, a second-generation condensed legalised settlement, Source: Martin Schwegmann, March 2011

Gülsuyu/Gülensu is a typical Gecekondu settlement. The first houses were one-story houses made of simple bricks built in a self-help method. Over time, during a building amnesty and with subsequent building permits, these one-story houses became

replaced with four-story apartment buildings built in the yapsat method (see section 3.2). These four-story buildings are typically inhabited by one extended family, with different generations under one roof. We interviewed several residents (see Section 1.5) asking them about their living conditions. All homeowners told us that they live together with their family members under the same roof. The central point of the two neighbourhoods is demarcated by a central, triangular square at the border of Gülsuyu and Güleusu where Kazım Karabekir Caddesi, Mesut Caddesi and Gazi Sokak meet. The square is adorned with a golden bust of Atatürk and surrounded by shops, restaurants and small businesses.



Figure 14: The centre of Gülsuyu/Güleusu with a golden bust of Atatürk and original one-story Gecekondu buildings, Source: Martin Schwegmann, March 2011

The lowest part of Gülsuyu is mainly business-oriented because many shops and small businesses are located in the streets. The area is indistinguishable from a non-Gecekondu area: the buildings are maintained and fully built. Services are provided by hidden water and sewage pipes and regular electrical lines, which show high and steady maintenance from the homeowners. As you ascend the slopes on which

Gülsuyu Gülenisu is built and as you enter the more recently built part of the neighbourhood, the scenery does not change dramatically because the street pavement, electrical lines and hidden water and sewage pipes continue. Still, some unfinished houses are visible with steel rods extending from the roofs waiting for another story to be added. Also, the electrical lines appear more self-built and improvised. Here, still original one-story houses are more typical.



Figure 15: Less-consolidated structures in the upper part of Gülsuyu, which has been populated since the middle of the 1970s. Incremental development is still partly visible. **Upper left picture:** Shows the houses that have been built in the 1990s that do not have any title deeds. **Bottom right picture:** Shows the view from Gülenisu towards the Princess Islands. Source: Martin Schwegmann, March 2011

Legend



Figure 16: Building heights, Source: (Aksumer 2007, p. 58)

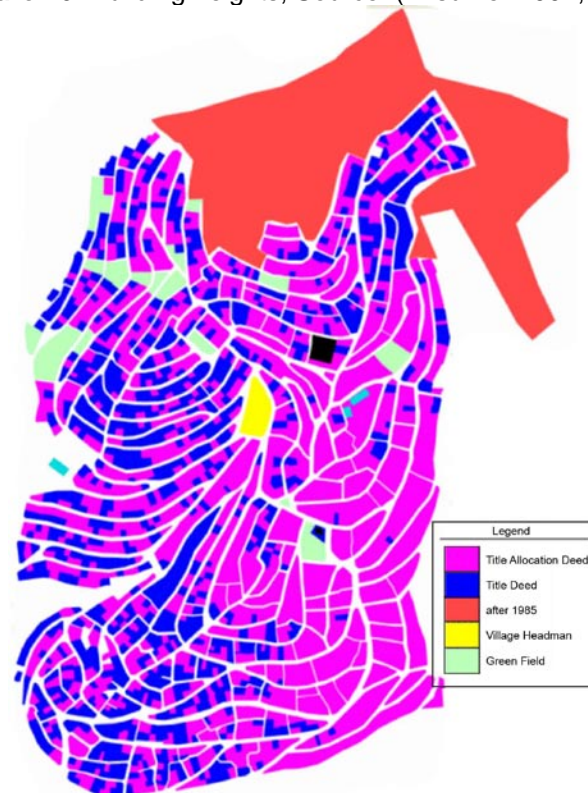


Figure 17: Land tenure status of GÜlsuyu/Gülensu, Source: (Aksumer 2007, p. 60)

Land Tenure Status

The tenure status plays a decisive role, especially in original Gecekondu settlements concerning tenure security and the amount of compensation homeowners get in the case of urban transformation projects. The less secure the tenure status is, the more likely the implementation of urban transformation is, because the legal situation of homeowners is more vulnerable and the resistance could be less powerful. This topic is observed in the following case study. According to the data available it is, however, hard to fully compare the cases in terms of tenure status, because the same kind of data is not available for all four cases. That means that a reliable quantitative statement cannot be made. Still, according to the interviews conducted and the data available from third parties, it is possible to make a qualitative statement concerning first the tenure security and second the relation between tenure security and the effect on the organisation on local grassroots organisations. In Gülsuyu/Gülensu, we find a tenure situation typical for many Gecekondu areas: According to Figure 19,¹³⁷ a mix of legal and semi-legal title deed holders is clear. Semi-legal refers here to title allocation deeds, tapu tahsis, which allow for later upgrading into a full title deed under certain conditions (see section 3.2).¹³⁸ As explained in the footnote, the title deed can cover a plot, a single story or flat, or a whole building. According to the interviews conducted in the neighbourhood, both title deeds and title allocation deeds cover only the respective plots. Reviewing Figure 19, a mix of about 50% of title deed

¹³⁷ These figures are derived from the undergraduate final project of Gizem Aksumer at the Department of Urban Planning at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul. This study can be found on the Solidarity Studio homepage. According to this study, the maps have been created on the basis of material of the metropolitan municipality of Istanbul. I cannot assess the quality and liability of this material. Therefore, I will take it as a point of departure in my considerations.

¹³⁸ "A cheaper way of acquiring a title deed was a title allocation deed, the so called tapu tahsis belgesi, which will provide the owner with a legal title deed via payment of a fee and if the plot is connected to municipal lands. Title allocation deeds can cover only the plot, a single story or flat, or a whole building. Accordingly, the allocation deeds rise in price." (See section 3.2.)

holders and 50% of title allocation deed holders becomes clear. The area that has been populated mainly in the 1990s remains without title deeds. The described tenure structure only corresponds incompletely to the earlier-described migration pattern and subsequent urbanisation of the neighbourhood. Even though the area has been urbanised uphill as described above, the visible pattern of tenure status is not, accordingly, as one would expect: for example, the first settlers do not have more secure tenure status than the ones arriving later. This is only the case for the area that was built up in the 1990s that has no title deeds and is also less developed: only one-story houses have been built here. In the rest of the neighbourhood, it remains puzzling that homeowners with title allocation deeds have also built multi-story houses: Does that imply that they feel very secure with the title allocation deed at hand, or have they been wrongly informed about the consequences of a *tapu tharsis*? One hint is the described amnesty laws (section 3.2) that Gecekondu areas were subject to. In Gülsuyu/Gülensu, an amnesty law¹³⁹ was enacted in 1989 when a “‘rehabilitation development plan’ was prepared spanning over the Gülsuyu and Gülensu areas, legalising the Gecekondu, offering them the right to title deeds and to build up to four stories.” (AGFE Report 2009, p. 54) As one can see, the permit for four stories resulted in the rebuilding and thus consolidation of the formerly one-story building stock (see Figure 16). Still, no direct correlation between land title and building height can be determined.

¹³⁹ Law no. 2981, called “Law on Procedures to be Implemented on Constructions Contradicting Building and Gecekondu Regulations.” See AGFE Report p. 54.

Property Analysis

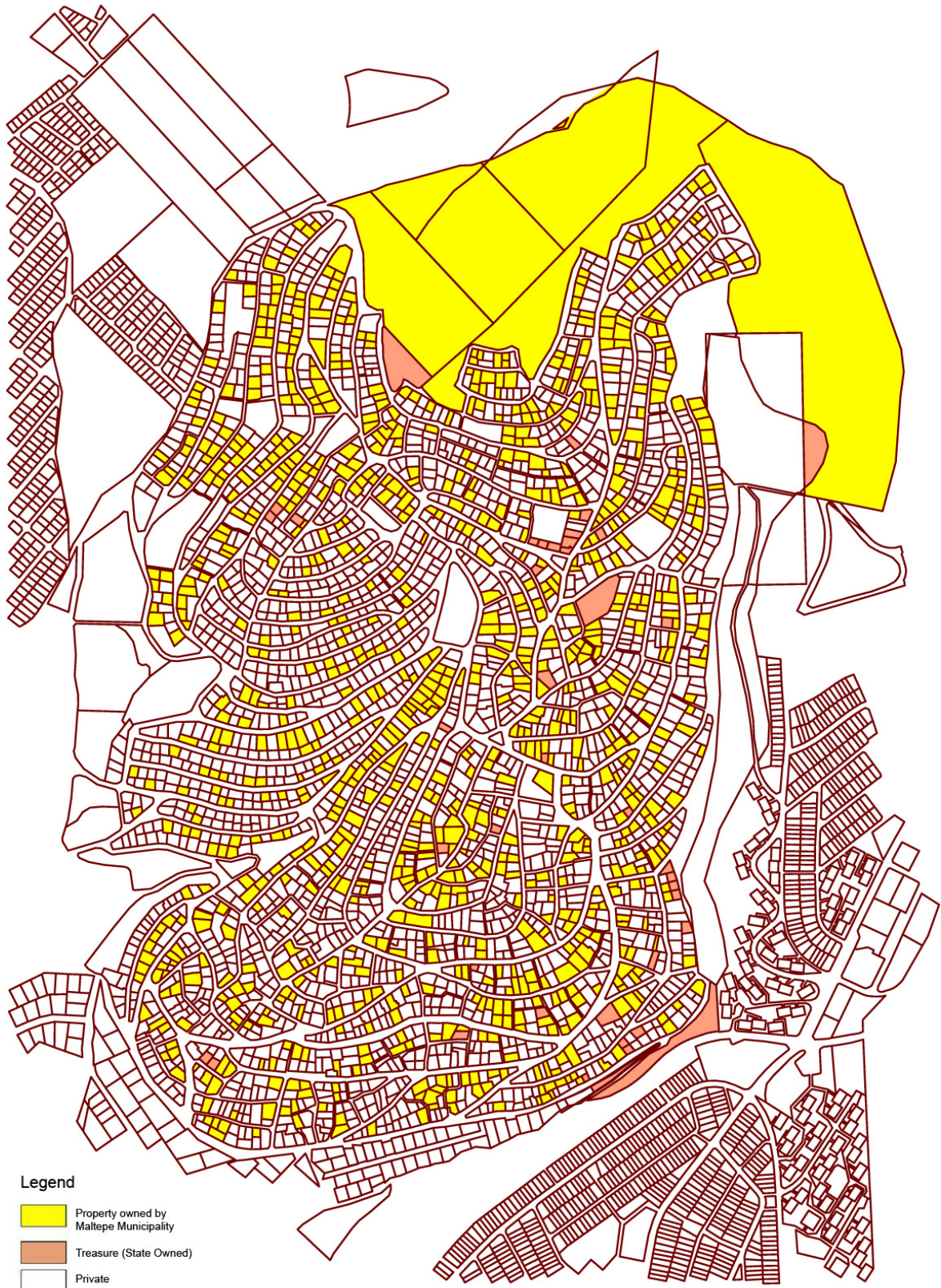


Figure 18: Property status of lands in Gülsuyu/Gülensu, Source: Maltepe Municipality

5.2.2 Urban Transformation and the Emergence of Civil Society Actors

Urban transformation in Gülsuyu/Gülensu started in 2004. The Metropolitan Municipality issued a master plan in the scale 1:5000 called the “Maltepe Regulatory Reconstruction Plan of North of E5.”¹⁴⁰ The urban transformation area comprised by this master plan included seven neighbourhoods in the district of Maltepe: Gülsuyu, Gülensu, Başbüyük, Zümrütevler, Aydınevler, Girne and Findikli Mahallesi. (is one missing there?) As far as Gülsuyu/Gülensu is concerned, about 35,000 inhabitants are affected by the urban transformation project, which corresponds to 60%-70% of the population of Gülsuyu/Gülensu.¹⁴¹

Authorities criticise a too-high density of buildings and the lack of public infrastructure and open spaces. Thus, the master plan provides for the implementation of green lands, commercial areas, cultural and sports facilities. The concrete consequences of the master plan were neither further commented on nor explained by the municipality. The muhtar¹⁴² of Gülsuyu/Gülensu received the master plan 10 days prior to the end of the period in which objections to the master plan could have been made by the local people. The rightful time frame would have been a minimum of 30 days. Because no further explanation was given concerning the implementation, it could be assumed that the new zoning would consequently mean the eviction and demolition of the existing neighbourhoods to a great extent in all seven designated areas. This could be deduced, for example, by the street width, which was to be changed in the plan from six to eight or from seven to eight meters. The master plan only comprises

¹⁴⁰ “Maltepe E-5 Kuzeyi Nazım İmar Plan (1:5000).” According to local government informant, Maltepe Municipality, 23.03.2011.

¹⁴¹ According to AGFE REPORT 2009 and interview with NHA informant 1.

¹⁴² Village headmen.

new zones and leaves open the way in which these new functions will be implemented. It does not show the potential architectural and socio-economic and cultural implications such an intervention would have on the existing neighbourhood. The UN AGFE Report¹⁴³ from 2009 consequently concludes that “there has been no consultation, as of yet, with the residents about the UT project.” (AGFE Istanbul 2009). Even though the transformation process has not come any further than the planning stage in Gülsuyu/Gülensu so far, implementation could potentially start at any time. In the adjacent neighbourhood of Başbüyük, which will be explored in detail in section 5.3, the transformation process took shape in a pilot project or first phase in which six 15-story buildings were built in 2009.

¹⁴³ AGFE - Advisory Group on Forced Eviction.

The (Re-)Formation of Civil Society Actors

In this section, I give an overview of how the different, already-existing civil society actors such as neighbourhood associations and other, more traditional institutions such as muhtars and kanaat önderi reorganised in the face of the new master plan in 2004 and how this reorganisation changed over time. Furthermore, I give a brief insight into the history of the traditional forms of organisation in the neighbourhood in order to better understand the situation today and later on to draw conclusions in comparison to the other examined neighbourhoods.

Going back to 2004: As I previously explained, the municipality of Maltepe sent a declaration to the muhtar¹⁴⁴ of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, announcing the new regulatory reconstruction plan 10 days before the deadline for objections was due. In response to this master plan of 2004, the organisations and people of the neighbourhood traditionally of importance for the grassroots decision-making processes in the neighbourhood came together: the muhtar, a neighbourhood beautification association (Gülensu Gülsuyu Güzelleştirme Derneği) and the “Kanaat önderi,” something like a council of elders, a traditional concept from rural Turkey.¹⁴⁵

The grassroots representatives of the neighbourhood could not interpret the master planning according to its concrete outcome and consequences to the neighbourhood.

To understand the master plan, the beautification association involved consulted architects and engineers in order to interpret the actual meaning of the plan. They

¹⁴⁴ A muhtar is an elected headman of either a village (köy) or of a quarter of a city (mahalle). Urban muhtars are mainly in charge of the issuing of residence certificates. Kreiser 1992, p. 113 They work part-time for a salary of some €300 per month.

¹⁴⁵ Kanaat önderi are local, predominantly male opinion leaders with their own supporters who are usually members in different hometown associations. Kanaat önderi is a well-known concept from mostly more rural areas.

found out that the bottom line of the master plan was probably the eviction of seven neighbourhoods north of Highway E5 and that a total of approximately 70,000-80,000 people in these different neighbourhoods and 60%-70% of the 40,000 to 50,000 people living in Gülsuyu/Gülensu would be affected. The AGFE Report assumes that 35,000 inhabitants would be affected and thus provides a similar figure (Advisory Group on Forced Evictions 2009, p. 24).

Repertoire of Resistance

As a response to the planned urban transformation, the association, which was traditionally involved in the improvement of the technical and social infrastructure of the neighbourhood (see section 4.2.1) organised rapidly: They delivered a petition signed by 7,000 people, started 32¹⁴⁶ court cases against the planning under way and delivered another 12,000 petitions to the municipality, claiming the change of the existing planning. The 32 court cases were filed by one plaintiff of each street affected by the master plan to block the execution of the planning. The costs of the legal battle were borne by a collective effort of the neighbourhood (Grewell et al. 2006, p. 22). The argument against the master plan brought forward was that a maximum of 40% of rezoning was already reached by an earlier application plan from 1984.¹⁴⁷ The court finally decided that the association was right, that the initial planning had to be stopped¹⁴⁸ from implementation and all plans must in future be arranged together with the inhabitants.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ While Grewell, Merlis, and Wang report 30 lawsuits filed, during my interviews 32 were stated.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ According to an interview given by Erdogan Yildiz in Diwan Istanbul, 2009, and correlating information from NHA informant 1. Here it has to be acknowledged that all legal victories of this kind in the reviewed cases as in

Before going into today's situation and before explaining the development of CBOs between 2004 and 2011, I include here some background information about those already-existing actors in 2004.

Old and New Civil Society Actors in Gülsuyu/Gülensu

Gülsuyu Gülensu Güzelleştirme Derneği is a local beautification development association. This organisation type exists in most neighbourhoods and also in non-Gecekondu neighbourhoods, and in those neighbourhoods where no urban transformation project is underway (see section 4.2.1). These associations fulfil an important function as interfaces between neighbourhood and local political representatives. These associations are also traditionally committed to community enhancement in terms of infrastructure, health and education. Furthermore, they function as an umbrella organisation of all cultural, arts and sports activities and organisations in the neighbourhood. These associations do not necessarily have a political background but rather start out from the necessity of improving the inhabitants' own neighbourhood, which could include, in a non-Gecekondu area, obtaining new street lights. Since the transformation process started, these neighbourhood improvement associations have become potentially more politicised.

The association "Gülensu Gülsuyu Güzelleştirme Derneği" was founded in the 1960s to improve the neighbourhood's infrastructural setup, such as electricity, water, sewage, bus lines and sports facilities. Later in the 1970s, the organisation became mainly political in its focus and almost did not engage anymore in technical neighbourhood issues. Especially after the coup d'état in 1970, the situation became more radical since many associations were forbidden. The main subject of the

Tarlabasi and Basibüyük were circumvented by a relatively quick redraw of the urban transformation project and no substantial changes have been the result of such legal battles so far.

association was then less urban issues of the neighbourhood and more political issues. In the 1980s, the association was forbidden but then re-established in the 1990s.

Besides beautification associations, so-called “homeland” or “hometown associations,” so-called *hemşehir derneği*, play a role in the societal life. These associations are founded by migrants from other parts of Anatolia to maintain their traditions and a collective identity in the city (see section 4.2.2). These associations are also committed to organising weddings and funerals. These associations do not form necessarily in every neighbourhood. That means that people who originate from one city do not necessarily found an association in two adjacent neighbourhoods. It probably also depends on how the different neighbourhoods are connected traffic-wise. However, in Gülsuyu Gülenisu, the association of the people from Çorum, south of the Black Sea and 600 kilometres northeast of Istanbul, for example, played an important role in grassroots mobilisation connected to the urban transformation project.

Furthermore, Gülsuyu and Gülenisu are known as a hub of many leftist movements and organisations that look back on a long history of political activism including street fights and barricades. In Gülsuyu Gülenisu, one sees a great deal of graffiti on the walls with the names of these organisations: ESP, HÖC and DHP (Platform Democratic Rights),¹⁵⁰ which are some of these leftist organisations. In the conducted interviews, the function of some of these organisations was described, besides campaigning and claim-making, as assisting on local issues concerning organisational issues of the neighbourhood and communication with state authorities.

¹⁵⁰

http://www.mlkp.info/index.php?icerik_id=3575&Der_Polizeiterror_geht_weiter,_die_revolution%C3%A4ren_Organisationen_leisten_Widerstand! as visited 13 September 2011.

Another important concept within the organisational framework of the neighbourhood both in Gülsuyu and Gülsu as well as in Başbüyük is that of “kanaat önderi.” This can be literally translated as “opinion leaders,” individuals that are such respected individuals in the neighbourhood that each of them has their own supporters. These individuals are usually male and members of different hometown associations. They seem to play an important role and need to be incorporated in local mobilisation and decision making.

Furthermore, the village headmen, the muhtars, need to be mentioned. A muhtar is an elected headman of either a village (köy) or of a quarter of a city (mahalle). Urban muhtars are mainly in charge of the issuing of residence certificates. (Kreiser 1992, p. 113) They work part-time for a salary of some €300 per month, which is a normal income for poorer working-class districts.

To sum up so far, basically five different types of local organisations or community-based organisations relevant to the neighbourhood exist:

1. Beautification associations, typical to many neighbourhoods, both Gecekondu and non-Gecekondu, not traditionally politically minded;
2. Hometown associations, which exist mainly in Gecekondu areas and that are potentially trans-locally connecting different neighbourhoods organising residents of the same origin from a specific town or region nurturing a certain village or region identification and are committed to the organisation of weddings and funerals.
3. Political organisations and motivated leftist groups and parties with a long history and strong, mostly extreme political views and an extensive repertoire of resistance.

4. “Kanaat önderi,” which is something like a council of elders, a traditional rural concept of local decision making
5. The muhtar, the elected neighbourhood headman, who seems to be the most formal institution in this list of players. He is located in-between the municipality and local communities. His involvement in grassroots organisations seems highly depended on personal factors. (See section 5.3.)

As explained above, after the declaration of the 1:5000 master plan, a rapid mobilisation of the some of the existing CBO occurred and immediate action was taken. This was instigated by the acute threat to the neighbourhood on the one hand and a generally left-wing, counter-state, counter-authority-directed mind-set of the inhabitants on the other hand. We will see that the latter is not necessarily important for immediate action but becomes important for the capacity of mobilisation in the long run.

Continuing with the history of grassroots mobilisation in Gülsuyu Gülensu, it turns out that the beautification association was the core of action in the beginning. A group of academics from the fine arts university, Mimar Sinan, became involved in the neighbourhood around the time of the declaration of the master plan. In 2006, students of professors Murat Cemal Yalcintan and Erbatur Çavuşoğlu from Mimar Sinan University conducted a one-week workshop in Gülsuyu Gülensu. It was, in retrospect, the beginning of the “very first civil initiative organisation in a Gecekondu neighbourhood.”¹⁵¹ Back then, it was called academic work. They gathered lots of data in this first workshop, in which about 200 people worked for one week in the neighbourhood. The civil platform Solidarity Studio, Dayanışmacı Atölye, is described

¹⁵¹ Civil platform informant 2, DA, 30 March 2011.

in more detail in section 4.2.3. It is important here to show the connection of the emerging platform rooted in academia and the emerging or better-reorganising neighbourhood associations in the neighbourhood of Gülsuyu and Güleusu. Erbatur Çavuşoğlu, an assistant professor and one of the founders of Solidarity Studio said to me about the beginning of the organisation: “In a university, you can’t really build a project. So we said we have to do something apart from the university. We started like that.” Erdogan Yildiz, one of the chairpersons in the neighbourhood association of Gülsuyu and Güleusu, comments on this event and the subsequent collaboration as the first time in urban transformation in Istanbul that a university and a neighbourhood association collaborated and came up with an alternative plan guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens, development without resettlement or eviction and with a focus on maintaining intact social networks within the neighbourhood. In 2006, the neighbourhood association of Gülsuyu Güleusu, together with some people from Solidarity Studio, were closely involved with the formation of a neighbourhood associations platform: Istanbul Mahalle Dernegi Platformu IMDP (see section 4.2.2). About 20 neighbourhood associations from all parts of the city gathered to exchange knowledge and to unite themselves to raise a stronger voice for their own concerns. The Gülsuyu Güleusu neighbourhood association became an important voice representing other neighbourhoods on the Asian side of the city.

By 2008, the neighbourhood association lost unity within its own organisation but also with the other local organisations because of growing dissent. The leftist movements claimed that the project of an alternative plan was too moderate, and that they could defend the rights of the people of Gülsuyu Güleusu more effectively. The strategy of the neighbourhood association in collaboration with Solidarity Studio also appeared as too moderate in their eyes. Also, within the neighbourhood association,

there was turmoil regarding the collaboration with the civil platform, which ultimately led to a splitting-up of the neighbourhood association. This growing dissent within the neighbourhood was somehow furthered by the intervention of IMECE, another civil platform, which offered a different view on urban transformation and which basically opposed the idea of developing alternative plan solutions. Solidarity Studio decided to wait for the people of Gülsuyu Gülen su to find out which direction they wanted to take in the neighbourhood association elections, which occur every two years. The association board supporting the idea of an alternative plan lost the election in favour of a more radical group that is still in charge and situated closer to IMECE's ideas.¹⁵²

Here the competition between the two different civil platforms becomes visible which was also the case in Sulukule, for example (see section 4.2.3). The split did not occur because of the intervention of IMECE, because the intervention of IMECE opened up an inherent debate within the neighbourhood. With this split, the IMDP also lost a strong motor and came to a de facto standstill as well. At the end of 2009, the majority of the board members of the initial neighbourhood association, the traditional beautification association, resigned to found an initiative called the Gülsuyu Gülen su Life and Solidarity Centre.¹⁵³ Since the beginning of 2011, this initiative has an association with the official title Gülsuyu Gülen su Yaşam ve Dayanışma Merkezi – GÜLDAM (Gülsuyu Gülen su Life and Solidarity Centre - GÜLDAM). Since then, GÜLDAM is the new voice of Gülsuyu Gülen su that can be heard in the rest of the city as far as it could be observed. They are also taking part in the new “right to the city” platform mentioned above.

¹⁵² According to email contact with expert 3.

¹⁵³ *Gülsuyu Gülen su Yaşam ve Dayanışma Merkezi.*

As described above in Gülsuyu Gülsu, the urban transformation project has not been implemented so far. Even though the local grassroots organisations are momentarily not united, the missing implementation could be read as a successful resistance and organisation of civil society against the UTP. For example, in the adjacent Gecekondü neighbourhood, Başbüyük, the first phase of the UTP has been implemented; six 15-story housing blocks were already erected in 2009. The strategies employed so far by the neighbourhood association are well-known: collecting signatures, sending petitions, filing court cases and protesting in the streets form the robust repertoire of many neighbourhood associations. In Gülsuyu Gülsu, they have gained momentum together with a setup in which heavy conflict, potentially resulting in fierce street fights, is implicit. More important, local initiatives have been successful in building horizontal networks with other local initiatives and civil platforms, which allows them to articulate their concerns to a wider audience and to gather substantial city and nationwide solidarity.

Gülsuyu Gülsu is a neighbourhood that already faced demolitions in the 1980s, and the inhabitants can collectively recall these experiences. This could be one reason for the relatively high degree of sensibility and interest of the local population in the avoidance of the UTP. The demolitions in the 1980s were due to political circumstances in the neighbourhood. The politicised neighbourhood was hit by demolition because of its political affiliation and, in turn, is now especially alert towards the UTP development in Istanbul because of this experience.

5.2.3 Conclusion

Gülsuyu Gülenisu was one of the first neighbourhoods affected by urban renewal in 2004. Until today, no phase of the planned urban renewal project was carried out, unlike in the neighbouring Başibüyük. I can only try to comprehend the reasons for this difference between the two neighbourhoods: First, the ownership structure is perhaps less ambiguous, as it seems that there are less homeowners with no title deeds. At the same time, there is a more mixed homeownership structure, for example, a parcel legal title deed holder next to a title allocation deed holder, which makes it more difficult to implement large-scale high rise buildings (see figure 18)¹⁵⁴. Another reason could be that there is no plot available as in Başibüyük that would allow for a pilot project with relatively little impact on the existing structures. Another reason that was stated by the grassroots organisations themselves was that of a potential open conflict even stronger than the one in Başibüyük, which can be explained by the neighbourhood's political affiliation.

In general, Gülsuyu Gülenisu seems to be one of the very organised neighbourhoods that were able to mobilise a high percentage of its population through already existing and partly new grassroots organisations. Again, renters seem underrepresented, even though some grassroots organisations are trying to implement more democratic and transparent mechanisms to reach as many inhabitants as possible. Also, the collaboration between local and city-wide and even international organisations is remarkable.

¹⁵⁴ The underlying reasons for this different homeownership and thus landownership structure would be important for further research.

Even though there is a strong, growing dispute within the neighbourhood and its various organisations, which could potentially lead to further fragmentation, solidarity amongst the people and a sense of collective interest seems stronger than the interest in private gain that homeowners could realise when selling their property at the moment. The internal dispute stems from the question of which means of resistance to choose in the face of urban transformation process underway; whether to totally refuse any kind of urban transformation or to come up with a feasible alternative that improves the neighbourhood and the criticised features of it such as open space, sports facilities, sanitation and at the same time guarantees the remaining of the local people in their neighbourhood. So it can be argued that it is not a question of whether or not to fight the urban transformation project at the moment but how to do it. Again also, here a basic divide between the earlier introduced terms of claim-making versus a self-determined solution approach in section 2.2 becomes visible. Which choice to take in this matter will not only be of great importance locally but could also be important for the evolving of a wide coalition of civil society actors in the whole of the city.

“Everybody is affected from these projects following the neo-liberal paradigm. We have to overcome the artificial divides [between Kurdish and Turkish or Sunni and Alevi]. We really have to come together and develop a consciousness for our communities and neighbourhoods.”

Erdogan Yildiz, GÜLDAM association, 20.03.2011

Nevertheless, it has to be taken into consideration that the solidarity and union within the neighbourhood in Gülsuyu Güleusu would also experience a profound challenge in the case of an intervention, like the pilot project in Başbüyük.

5.3 *The Case of Başıbüyük*



Figure 19: Pilot project in Başıbüyük built by Mass Housing Administration, Source: Pelin Tan, 2009

Başıbüyük is, like Gülsuyu and Gülsu, a traditional Gecekondu neighbourhood that is subject to urban transformation. In 2008, the first phase of an extensive urban transformation project was implemented by the erection of six 15-story high-rise buildings. Even though they are geographically very close to Gülsuyu and Gülsu, the neighbourhoods differ to a great extent: While in Gülsuyu and Gülsu there exists a left-wing Alevi population with a great tradition of resistance and thus a profound mistrust in the Turkish state, in Başıbüyük a more conservative-minded Sunni community that is traditionally pro-state oriented is prevalent. Gökhan Bilgihan from the IMECE Platform put it like this:

“There is a revolutionary tradition in one part in Gülsuyu and in the other part. In Başibüyük, there are [people with] more conservative, religious and fundamentalist Islamic profiles.”¹⁵⁵

The case was selected especially because it is affected by the same urban transformation process as in Gülsuyu and Gülsu and because the first phase of that project has already been implemented. Thus, the juxtaposition of these two neighbourhoods in terms of civil society mobilisation and the way in which they interact with each is potentially rewarding for the reason that they are affected by the same urban transformation process and yet have opposing social and religious backgrounds.

5.3.1 Introduction

Başibüyük has been one of the first areas where the new urban transformation paradigm has been applied. Widespread mobilisation within the affected communities, together with fierce street fights and violent police operations, have happened during the starting up of the implementation of this first project phase. Since then, a substantial shift within the community's response towards the project has occurred.

Situation and Migration

Başibüyük is a poor working-class neighbourhood (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 219) situated two kilometres west of Gülsuyu and Gülsu, also in the hilly terrain north of Highway E5 in the district of Maltepe in close proximity to an extensive regional park. Like Gülsuyu and Gülsu, Başibüyük is a Gecekondu neighbourhood that is built to a great extent on former state-owned land. Başibüyük is built on the premises of an old village (Ergun, Gül 2010, p. 4) outside the city, which became attractive to the first

¹⁵⁵ Civil platform informant 1, IMECE, 23 March 2011.

migrants from central Turkey in the 1960s. As in Gülsuyu and Güleusu, settlers were attracted by the nearby industries and potential job opportunities. However, the main population growth occurred in Başibüyük during the 1980s and 1990s (Ergun, Gül 2010).

The neighbourhood is further bordered by a military zone on the west and an extended campus of a state hospital on its eastern side. (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 217) Because the area had a village status, the land enclosure took place with relative ease.¹⁵⁶ First, in 1984, Başibüyük became incorporated into the district of Maltepe and thus became part of the city. This happened very likely during the implementation of redevelopment law no. 2981 from 1984, which gave the long-tolerated and somewhat neglected Gecekondus (see section 3.2) a new reason to order the unregulated urbanisation process. In this respect, 1984 proved to be important for the different strata of land tenure status we find in the neighbourhood.

Livelihood and Educational Situation

The population of Başibüyük reached 10,000 in the mid-1980s and grew to 19,000 by 2010.¹⁵⁷ The livelihood situation is similar to that in Gülsuyu Güleusu. People are widely occupied with low-paying jobs with mainly no social security. The initial attraction of the nearby industrial jobs has shifted over the years to a structural lack of industrial jobs for unskilled and limited skilled labour. Concerning the education level in Başibüyük, the majority of the population does not have a high school education (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 219). Furthermore, Kuyuku quotes an unpublished research project by Bilgi University conducted by Murat Güvenç in 2005, which

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Turkstadt; NHA informant 4, former chairman of anti UT NHA, stated about 24 ,00 inhabitants by 2011, in interview on 20 March 2011.

concludes that “the population of Başibüyük is significantly below the Istanbul average on educational attainment, income, job security and status of occupation.” According to Kuyuku, the population is predominantly employed in the informal sector of the construction industries. He further points out that there is a traceable amount of people occupied with agricultural jobs, hinting at the importance of urban farming covering basic needs (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 219) . During the conducted interviews, gardens were repeatedly mentioned as an integral element in the neighbourhood.

Political Background of the Neighbourhood

As mentioned above in contrast to Gülsuyu/Gülensu, which has a more left-oriented Alevi community, in Başibüyük there is predominantly conservative Sunni community. This results in a traditionally pro-state attitude amongst most inhabitants. As will be mentioned later on, the political affiliation within the neighbourhood is traditionally AKP-directed. This changed in the last local elections in 2009 when the party lost 20% of its voters. Considering the current development, a backswing towards the more conservative parties is likely. Since the implementation of the first phase of the urban transformation project, a growing majority of inhabitants is turning towards a pro-urban transformation project attitude and is turning tendentially away from the newly elected CHP-governed municipality, even though this municipality has now taken a moderate pro-urban transformation course.

Characteristics of the Physical Environment

Başıbüyük is located on a slope stretching from 112 meters above sea level to its highest point of about 280 meters above sea level, offering a grand view of the Marmara Sea, the Princess Islands and the Bosphorus, like Gülsuyu and Güleusu. However, Başıbüyük is directed mainly towards the southwest.



Figure 20: View from Başıbüyük to the sea with TOKI development in the back, Source: Maltepe Municipality, 2011



Figure 21 Aerial photo of Başibüyük, Source: Google Maps, 20 March 2011

The buildings are predominantly built as reinforced concrete frame structures with filled-in perforated bricks or other stone filling. The higher one gets, the buildings get lower and less concrete is used. This might be seen as a direct connection to the land tenure status, as we will see later on. In Figure 26, the vertical extension of the build structure is analysed. It becomes clear that in the southwest corner of the settlement, the buildings are the highest, with five to eight stories. Generally, the prevailing height of building is one to two stories. This seems again closely connected to the land tenure status because the higher buildings are located in an area with proper land titles and it becomes clear that the owners invested in the vertical extension of their buildings. This was generally reported to me even though both Figure 28 and information given by the municipality indicates ambiguous tenure status as well. Başibüyük comprises about 2,800 buildings consisting of about 5,700 units with a total population of about 19,000 people (in 2010). Out of these 2,800 buildings, 990 are situated within the transformation area.

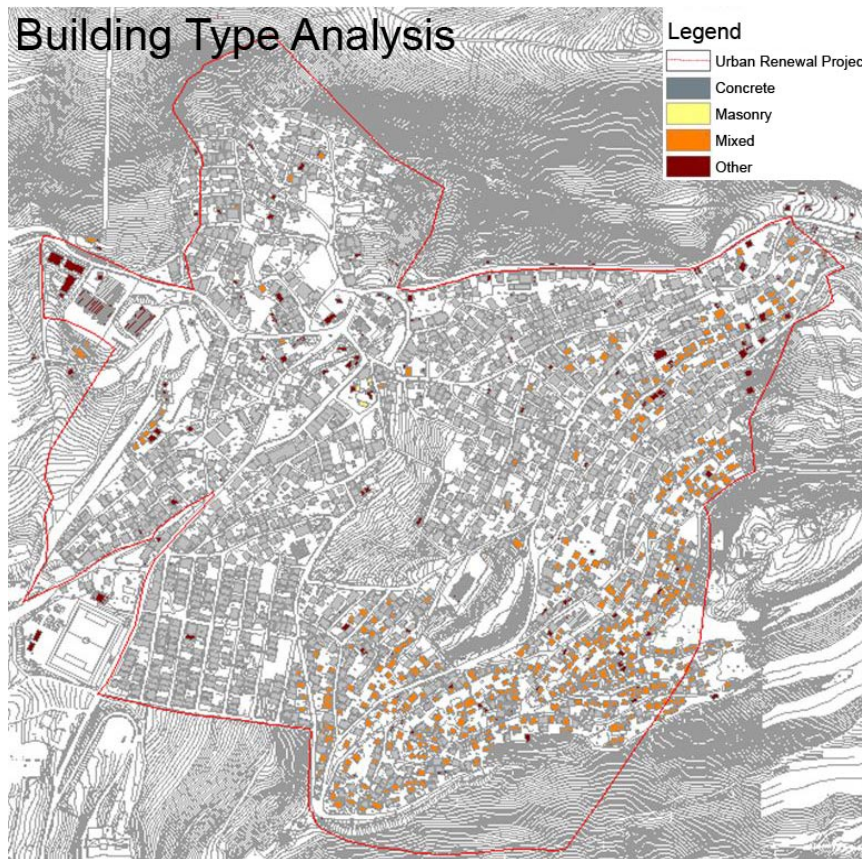


Figure 22: Building type analysis; Source: Maltepe Municipality 2011

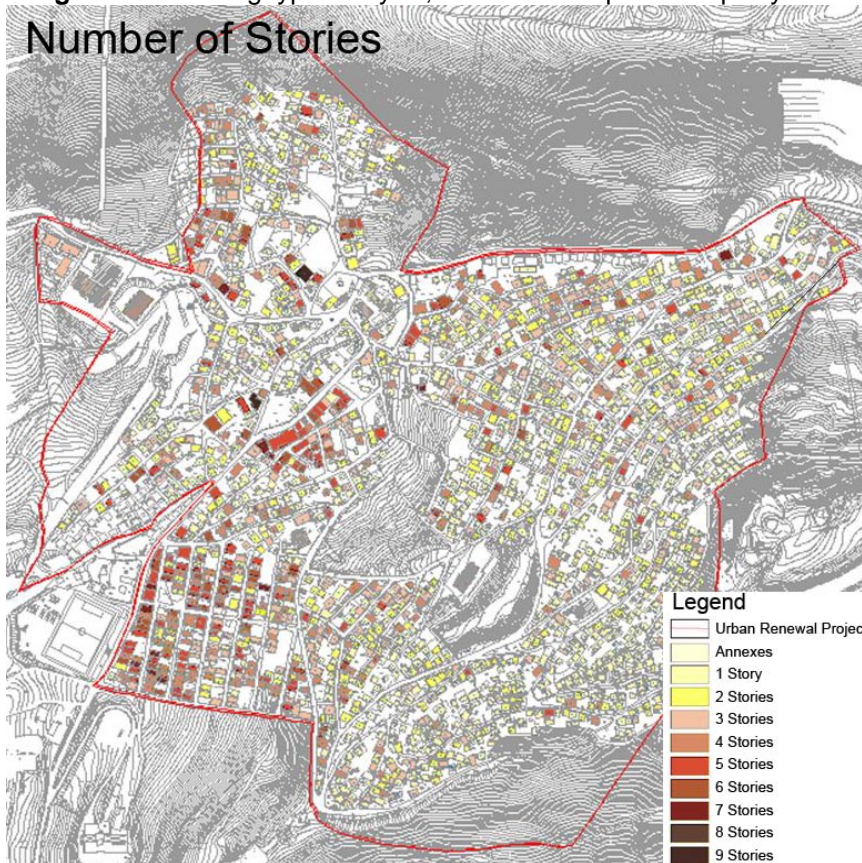


Figure 23: Analysis of number of stories, Source: Maltepe Municipality

Property Analysis

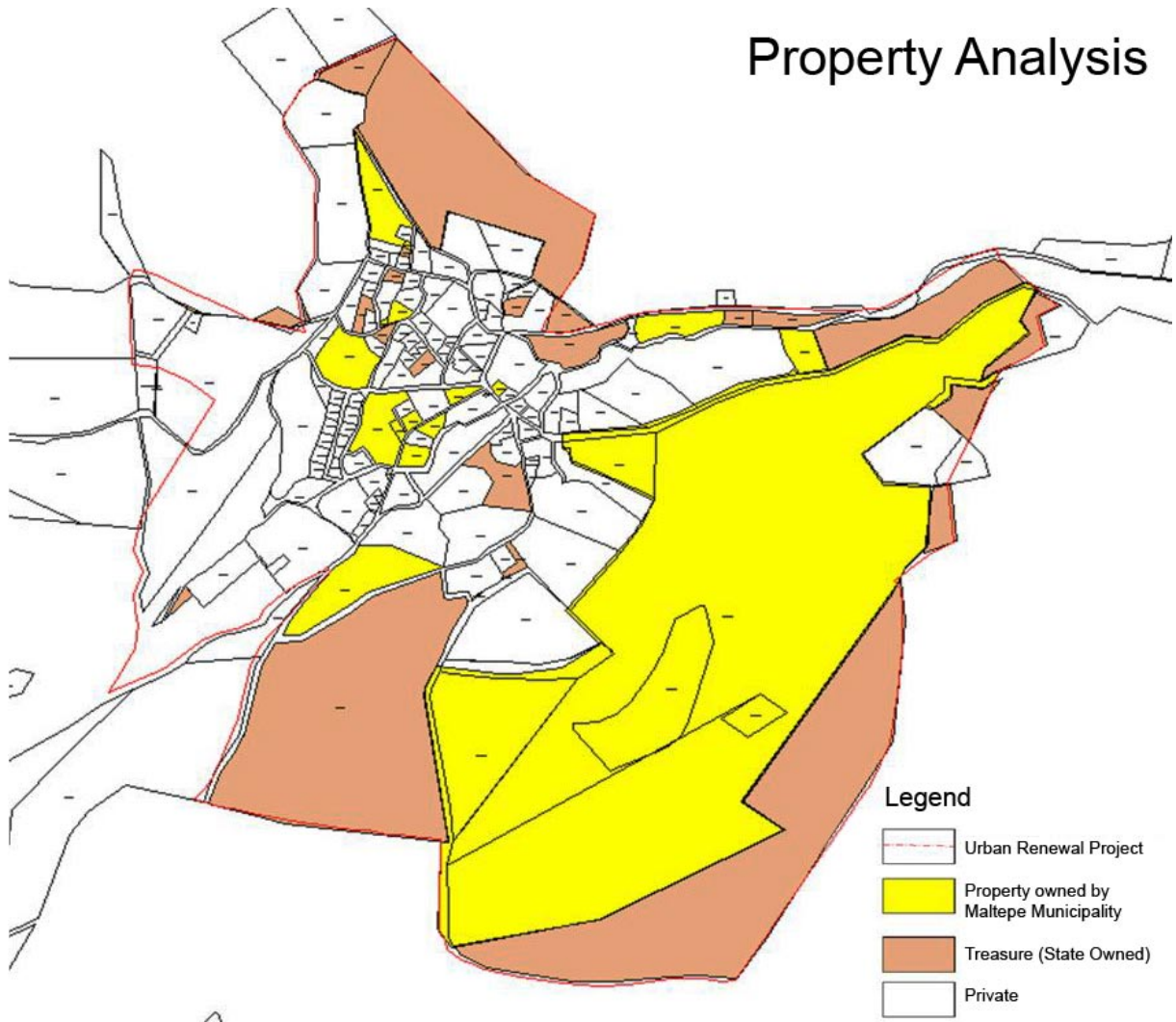


Figure 24: Property analysis, Source: Maltepe Municipality

Land Tenure Status

As discovered in my interviews,¹⁵⁸ the first migrants settled on private lands that were located at the lower part of Başbüyük. Because the parcels were acquired from private owners (according to the conducted interviews) the first settlers have “legal” title deeds. These title deeds seem to only cover the lands, however, and not the structures that were built¹⁵⁹ (see section 3.2). Over time, the private plots ran out and

¹⁵⁸ NHA informant 5, chairman pro UT NHA, 23.03.2011

¹⁵⁹ During field research, I was able to acquire a title deed from within the said area that only applied to the plot, not the structure. The title deeds prevailing in Gülsuyu and Gülsuyu cover only the plots as well. (See section 5.2.)

newcomers started settling on state-owned land, most of which is part of today's transformation project. The ones settling on state-owned lands did not acquire proper land titles. According to the research conducted by Tuna Kuyucu in 2008, he concludes that this can possibly be explained by the fact that they bought these lands from third parties in the informal market with state acceptance and/or involvement (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 218). It can be said that about one-third of the residents have either weak land tenure status or no land tenure status at all. The residents in Başbüyük consist of homeowners and an unknown, greater number of tenants. It is important to distinguish between de jure and de facto home owners. De jure home owners are the ones with approved title deeds (tapu) and the de facto owners are the ones with either no title deed or the previously explained title allocation deed (tapu tahsis belgesi) introduced through redevelopment law no. 2981 from 1984. The difference between these kinds of homeownerships is the amount of compensation de jure and de facto homeowners will receive in case of urban transformation and the subsequent demolition of the existing housing stock, as will be explained later in this section in more detail. The type of land title leads to a considerable difference in the compensation of the homeowners, and tenants do not get any compensation at all. Thus, this difference has a big and direct impact on people's views and attitudes towards urban transformation. In fact, the differences in the respective tenure status is becoming one of the main dividing forces in the organisation and mobilisation of grassroots organisations, as we will see later on in section 6.7.

"The ones who have title deeds think the other Gecekondu can just be torn down. Mine is already registered, so I will surely get much money. If it is worth 50,000 today it will be 300,000 tomorrow."¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ NHA informant 4, former chairman of anti UT NHA, 20 March 2011

means that the area that is perceived as privately owned by de jure homeowners holding legal title deeds for their plots show a higher degree of consolidation and investment perceivable by the increased number of stories. Yet these homeowners in the south-western corner of the shown settlement are located, according to Figure 27 and explicit statements from the municipality, on state-owned land. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the urban transformation area comprises solely buildings with weak land tenure status (no title deeds or title allocations¹⁶¹). In this case, it is probably clearer here than elsewhere in this work how directly the ambiguity of tenure status is connected to urban transformation. Here the argumentation (section 3.3) that sees the process of urban transformation as a market-making tool, meaning commodifying irregular land markets by the implementations of UTPs, becomes most apparent. According to the conducted interviews, out of all 2,800 buildings in Başibüyük, 1,800 have title deeds (tapus). Within the urban transformation area, there are 990 buildings, of which 547 have title allocation deeds (tapu tahsis belgesi) and the other 443 are informal buildings with no documentation.

¹⁶¹ Tapu tahsis belgesi.

5.3.2 Urban Transformation and the Emergence of Civil Society Actors

In this section, I give an overview of the urban transformation process that has taken place in Başibüyük since 2004 and the corresponding dynamics of the formation of civil society actors. As outlined already in the case of Gülsuyu and Gülsu, Başibüyük was confronted for the first time with urban transformation in the year when the “Maltepe Regulatory Reconstruction Plan of North of E5”¹⁶² in the scale 1:5000 was drafted. Just as with Gülsuyu/Gülsu, the neighbourhood of Başibüyük was one of the initial seven neighbourhoods where this plan was supposed to be implemented. Later on, four of these neighbourhoods were taken out of the planning area due to little expected profitability.¹⁶³

The next crucial step in the history of urban transformation took place on 7 March 2005 when law no. 5393 was issued, which “... authorises district municipalities to implement ‘transformation projects’ in derelict, obsolescent and unsafe (due to natural disasters) parts of cities.”¹⁶⁴ These projects are commonly carried out by a cooperation of the respective district municipalities; the Metropolitan Municipality and the Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ) (see section 3.3).

Through the introduction of this law and for inner-city areas law no. 5366, the legal and organisational framework has been installed for the successful implementation of urban transformation projects in Istanbul. The result of this transformation as it is neutrally put is nothing less than the renewal of the “existing building stock through a ‘demolish/rebuild’ method and transfer of the ‘rightful owners’ into public housing

¹⁶² According to an interview given by Erdogan Yildiz in Diwan Istanbul, in 2009.

¹⁶³ According to statements of several interviewees.

¹⁶⁴ Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 6

projects”¹⁶⁵. Tenants are generally neglected in this procedure as we have already seen in chapter (compensation chapter). Kuyucu and Önzal comment that Gecekondü areas became “ideal targets of [urban] ‘transformation’” due to “their precarious physical, legal and economic status”.¹⁶⁶ What is important to say at this point is the fact that “the law offers no concrete definitions or objective criteria with which to designate certain areas as decaying, obsolescent or dilapidated.” (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 254) This lack of clear criteria for the implementation of urban transformation projects can be very dangerous and lead to arbitrariness in the decision-making process. Until the amendment of article 73 of law no. 5393, the proclamation of an urban renewal zone was possible through a majority of votes of the district’s parliament. With the amendment of article 73 of law no. 5393 on 17 June 2010,¹⁶⁷ the rights of the designation of transformation areas have been passed over to the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul.

According to the regulatory reconstruction plan introduced in 2004, a total of 40 hectares were declared as an urban transformation area. That is almost 50% of the Başbüyük area, which comprises about 90 hectares. Of the homeowners living in this area, as is stated in the last chapter on land tenure status, 50% hold allocation documents for title deeds (so-called tapu tahsis) and the other 50% have no documentation on land titles at all. The cooperation of the official stakeholders in the urban transformation process became reconciled by the signing of two protocols in 2006 by the Mass Housing Authority (TOKİ), the Greater Municipality of Istanbul and the district municipality of Maltepe. These protocols were signed on 24 February

¹⁶⁵ Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 7

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Law no. 5998 from 17 June 2010 is the amendment of article 73 of law no. 5393.

2006 and 14 November 2006. The plan introduced in 2004 implemented new zoning and new street widths of up to 13 meters wide, indicating an extensive change in the neighbourhood's spatial and social setup (see Figure 54 in Annex). In 2008, the first phase was implemented.

Political Setup in the District

When speaking about the implementation of the urban transformation in Başibüyük, it is important to look at the political landscape. The first mentioned plan was drafted under mayor Fikri Köse of the Justice and Development Party (JDP)¹⁶⁸ who was elected in 2004 in the local elections by a tremendous majority of the Başibüyük residents. At the same time, the Metropolitan Municipality was and still is ruled by Mayor Kadir Topaş (JDP) as well as the Mass Housing Authority, which is probably the most powerful stakeholder in this process as explained in section 3.3 and also under the direct influence of the prime minister.

Formation of the Opposition

Unlike in Gülsuyu/Gülensu, no direct mobilisation against this planning took place in the first place. The mobilisation against the planned UTP started later than in Gülsuyu/Gülensu: In late 2006, a neighbourhood association against the planned urban transformation project was initially founded with 17 people.¹⁶⁹ It was called the

¹⁶⁸ JDP (Justice and Development Party) = AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), in Turkey, which is referred to as AK Parti, the party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

¹⁶⁹ According to NHA informant 4. the former founder and head of the NHA, they have 7,000 members now (March 2011).

Başıbüyük Neighbourhood Association for Environmental Beautification, Regulation and Nature Conservation.¹⁷⁰

In the beginning, after the first announcement of the transformation plans, there were rumours that everybody would lose their properties due to unclear compensation procedures. This led to a strong solidarity amongst Başıbüyük citizens. With the beginning of the building process of the first phase of the transformation project at the end of 2007, a majority of people organised with or at least was sympathetic to the contra-NHA going out to protest in the street to state their solidarity and unrest about the planned project. Later in 2006, barricades were erected by the inhabitants of Başıbüyük to hinder the authorities from accessing the designated transformation area. Subsequently, street fights occurred resulting in injured and imprisoned demonstrators. In the pictures of the protests, the number of elderly women on the streets waving banners is remarkable. It was then revealed to me that including many women in the street during a protest is a strategy to calm down the police, because they would traditionally use less force against elderly and especially female demonstrators. As a result of the street protests, the contra-UTP NHA was prohibited as a terroristic organisation in 2007 but was re-established in September 2007. The massive police force and the legal punishment of the associations might have had an intimidating influence on the movement in the neighbourhood.

Next to the mobilisation in the street, an anti-UTP NHA was already established in 2005 with more symbolic actions, as they are described in section 5.7: They sent a petition signed by 4,300 inhabitants to the metropolitan municipality as well as letters to the municipality. Furthermore, the association engaged in legal actions and went to court to stop the project because it violated “public interest, principles of urban

¹⁷⁰ Başibüyük mahallesi, çevreyi güzelleştirme ve düzenleme ve Tabiati koruma derneği.

planning and rules of democratic governance.” (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 10) On 15 November 2008 (CASE No. 2007/1203) the 5th Administrative Court of Istanbul ordered the Başibüyük UTP to be stopped. In spite of this verdict, the project implementers continued the construction work, appealed successfully in court and changed municipal code no. 73 so that the verdict became irrelevant.¹⁷¹

Grassroots Mobilisation

After the contra NHA started negotiations with the municipality, the street opposition came to an end. The former president of the contra NHA, Adem Kaya applied to the city council for the CHP. Fikri Köse lost the following local elections in 2009, and his opponent, Mustafa Zengin from the social democrat CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), won the elections.¹⁷² In Başibüyük, the CHP received 35% of the votes in Başibüyük, whereas they had only 7% in the last local elections in 2004. Subsequently, Adem Kaya retired from his posts as a NHA representative and tried to enforce the interests of the homeowners affected by the transformation project.

“I am like a bridge between the neighbourhood and the city council. But the international cooperations dominate. They have more power.”¹⁷³

Shift within Mobilisation

The first phase of urban transformation finally started on an almost empty plot in 2008, which used to be a park in the neighbourhood containing 11 freshwater wells.

¹⁷¹ According to a telephone interview with NHA informant 4 and email contact with local government informant 3 from the municipality of Maltepe.

¹⁷² Fikri Köse, the former AKP mayor of Maltepe, had promised before the local elections in 2004 to enact a zoning revision to provide the Gecekonu dwellers with formal land titles. Subsequently, he won in the 2004 local elections 72% of the votes of the residents of Basibüyük. In the local elections in 2009 he “only” could achieve 55% of the votes in Basibüyük, mainly due to the UTP Kuyucu 2009b.

¹⁷³ NHA informant 4, 20 March 2011

Six 15-story blocks were built and only four former Gecekondü houses had to be demolished belonging to the same person: Hassan Kemer. This obviously was the perfect location for a pilot project in the area, which was to be very cost-effective because almost nobody was affected and the project could show the people their potential future compensation. Subsequently on 20 March 2009, nine days before the elections, Hassan Kemer received his full title deed assuring him four flats in the newly built development and thus a big profit of almost 100% on reselling them. However, the election investment, (a term coined by the contra-UTP NHA), came too late for Fikri Köse. He lost the election in 2009. But since then, two-thirds of the inhabitants of Başbüyük requested their title deeds and, following the example of Hassan Kemer, are now in favour of the transformation project and want to get relocated to the new project. Ironically, it seems that the grounds on which the new development is built is not adequate for the height of the buildings constructed. A local resident pointed out that in the grounds underneath the buildings, cracks are visible and because of the water wells the needed stability for such buildings is not provided. This pilot project substantially changed the mood towards the urban transformation project in the neighbourhood. Since this incident, Hassan Kemer became the symbol for two-thirds of homeowners in Başbüyük now and their number is growing, how that there is profit from urban transformation. His brother, originally engaged in the anti-UTP neighbourhood association, told us that he was initially against the project.

In the beginning of the process all inhabitants were against the project. In the beginning the neighbourhood was united and putting up resistance. But since Hassan Kemer gave his four-story building to the Mass Housing Authority and was getting the exact right people became increasingly convinced of the new project. This is why the formerly united residents became split up and unity eroded. I became convinced of the project and gave my house and also got the exact

A local newspaper article titled, “Urban Transformation Changed My Life,” depicted Hassan Kemer shaking hands with the former AKP Mayor Fikri Köse (see Figure 26). This change became the example. What started as a right-to-housing movement in 2006 has become gradually more and more a bargaining process for land titles and land rent. Another interesting fact about the pilot project is the social structure of the new residents in these new buildings: Half of the newly built units are occupied by former policemen and AKP supporters and members of the ministry of health.¹⁷⁵ In this connection, the pilot project can be seen as a Trojan Horse in two respects: On the one hand, it makes the residents want the same rights and compensation as Hassan Kemer, and on the other hand, it introduces a considerable amount of potentially pro-state and pro-urban-transformation-oriented people and thus changes the social structure to a great extent.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with a former member of the anti-UTP neighbourhood organisation who now is a member of the pro-UTP neighbourhood organisation and the brother of the homeowner who was first affected by the pilot project. Resident 15.

¹⁷⁵ NHA informant 4: “The policemen who have beaten us in the 70s are now living there. Seventy flats were offered to policemen. Most of them are reselling again now and profiting from the resell. [...] There were also 70 flats offered to and bought by AKP members. Twenty flats were given to people from the health ministry.”



Figure 26: Local newspaper depicting Hassan Kemer with Mayor Fikri Köse; land title deed of Hassan Kemer

The described change in the majority of residents' mind in Başbüyük led to a significant change in the landscape of local grassroots organisations. To now promote the pro-UTP majority of Başbüyük, the 1986-founded Başbüyük Beautification and Development Association¹⁷⁶ took the position as their advocate. Initially, the NHA was founded to secure a basic infrastructure in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, this pro NHA was an important institution to form the so-called urban transformation commission (Başbüyük Kentsel Dönüşüm Komisyonu) consisting of five local NHAs that work as a link between residents and the municipality. This

¹⁷⁶ Başbüyük Güzelleştirme ve Kalkındırma Derneği.

commission was built on the initiative of the district municipality of Maltepe, as is explained later on.

Compensation of Homeowners in Başibüyük

In the following, I give an overview of the compensation procedure of the residents in Başibüyük who are affected by urban transformation as I have understood it during my field research. As already mentioned, there are three different types of homeowners who are affected by the urban transformation project: people with formal title deeds, so-called tapus, people with title allocation deeds (tapu tahsis belgesi) that assures them of getting a proper title deed for their property under certain circumstances (see section 3.2) and last, homeowners with no title documents at all. What these homeowners have in common is that they are living in their own houses, which they have built at some point in the past by themselves with more or less the help of others. This circumstance makes the latter homeowners de facto homeowners, whereas the first homeowners supersede this stage and can be called de jure homeowners. The ones with the mentioned allocation title deeds are somewhere in-between in a legal grey zone, with somewhat more rights than the ones owning-occupying their houses. The de facto rights can be perhaps best measured by the amount of compensation the owners get for their houses in the case of demolition due to urban transformation.

In the case of Başibüyük, the Mass Housing Authority is the entity that is compensating the owners whose homes are getting demolished in the process. There is cooperation between the district municipality and the Mass Housing Authority: The district municipality's task is to resolve and clarify the property questions in the transformation area, to demolish the existing structures and to hand over the grounds to the Mass Housing Authority, so that they can start constructing in

a public-private partnership and compensate the owners due to their legal land tenure status. This whole procedure seems to be still very new and the different competencies are still to be clarified. In the case of Başibüyük, a new department within the municipality of Maltepe was installed in 2010. The task of this new department is to be the interface between residents from the transformation area who are willing to join the transformation process. That means that the residents must clarify their property status and to give information about their property to be compensated. In the interviews, these people were the ones who had their houses measured. Still, there was a great deal of complaining by the homeowners in favour of the transformation that the municipality has slowed down the process immensely and that the pro-transformation homeowners are trying to get into direct negotiations with TOKİ in order to speed up the process. In 2011, a commission was founded officially on the initiative of the district municipality. This so-called urban transformation commission (kentsel dönüşüm komisyonu) consists of five local associations¹⁷⁷ plus one chairman who functions as an interface between the local population and the Mass Housing Authority, coordinating the negotiations on compensations and title deeds. The involved grassroots organisations are, as already mentioned, the described beautification association, another association committed to helping people to write official letters and three homeland associations, or hemşehir derneği. According to the chairman of this commission, the contra-urban transformation association was also invited to this commission but declined.

The three kinds of homeownerships that were explained result in different kinds and amounts of compensations, which can be seen as an indicator of their level of legality in the view of today's political procedure. In sections 3.1 and 3.2, I already discussed

¹⁷⁷ Ordulular Derneği, SIAD or Sinoplular Derneği, Gümüşaneliler Derneği, Başibüyük Koruma Derneği and also Güzelleştirme Derneği (Beautification Association).

the different political agendas at different times in the urbanisation process in Turkey. In this context, it becomes clear that legality is not necessarily a valid concept to judge whether somebody has the right to be there or not and subsequently whether this person has the right to get more money for his property or vice versa. The ambiguity of the argumentation of the authorities becomes very apparent in the following extract from an interview I conducted with the branch manager of TOKİ Istanbul¹⁷⁸,

After getting [title allocation deeds] tapu tahsis, after this imar afer, this building amnesty [by the redevelopment law no. 2981 in 1984], the people paid their taxes, like citizens. That is why we are trying to give them their rights. But the problem is that these are given with law. [Another][...] problem is that after these plans the state has not done anything to transform the areas, to improve the situations there. So there was a plan to improve the district. But they haven't applied this plan. [...] "tapu tahsis belgesi" is an invented solution by politicians for an interim use in Gecekonu areas. It is a property deed which is not to be mistaken with a title deed. "tapu tahsis belgesi" is a result of the many amnesties. It works like this: The ownership does not belong to the property of the Gecekonu. But the property holder has some rights on that land. In turn, he has to fulfil certain tasks in order to obtain a tapu tahsis belgesi [title allocation deed].

The branch manager acknowledges the contradictory nature of the situation of the de facto homeowners, as they have been given the full right to vote and the duty to pay taxes and instalments as citizens, as the informant stresses. Here, a distinction between ownership and property is made, that is, in this case, a rather constructed one, because the state is the owner of the lands and it should lie in the state's hands to endow the long-term homeowners with the legal title deeds through whatever procedure (see section 3.2). There is no former owner that needs to be compensated

¹⁷⁸ State agency informant 1

as in the case of post-wall Berlin, for example. This aspect is highly relevant because the argumentation of the state and district authorities is constantly targeting this point.

In the following phone call, which I recorded during an interview with the Maltepe municipality in March 2011, the compensation procedure becomes more vivid:

Thank you, yes that's me. What is your name?... Cicek Yildiz. But you didn't bring the file. You have to hand in the file and see if you are within the project area. ... Please come to the municipality so I can tell you what needs to be handed in.... I cannot recall because I cannot recall the name. [...] You have brought the pink-coloured folder in which you put the documents. Do you have a land title allocation deed? Then you need a receipt from the muhtar, a certificate of voting, a bill of costs for gas and power consumption, a copy of your identity card. When you are here you obtain in the second floor a voucher from the Citizen's Registration Office. *Phone call between municipality employee and a resident of Maltepe. The interview is translated from Turkish to German to English. The names in the interview are changed.*

This phone call very likely reflects the conversation of a homeowner from Başbüyük in pursuit of a title deed and a subsequent compensation. The compensation and registration procedure, as far as I could see, consists of the following steps: First of all, the authorities demand certain documents to prove the actual homeownership of the affected residents in the transformation areas. The concerned applicant must hand in the allocation deed, tapu tahsis belgesi, if it exists. Furthermore, a certificate of the local village headmen (muhtar) notarising the residency of the person concerned is needed, as well as a voting certificate and a bill of costs of service charges such as electricity and gas and a photocopy of an identity card. According to the law, it is in principle not possible to give rights for more than 400m² per owner. The municipality is valuing the price according to the market price. In my interview with the branch manager of TOKİ Istanbul, she said "that means not so much below

the normal prices.” Everything is counted for the compensation, including the floors, the ground floor and the trees; everything has a price per square meter. The branch manager gives an example:

Cafer Yilmaz for example has an apartment worth 30.000 Lira. The apartment he bought from TOKI costs 56.000 Lira. The difference of 27.000 Lira he has to pay in monthly rates of 154.45 TL. That sounds not that bad. According to the example that I have at hand, somebody who has a house with 700m² on a 400m² plot with a title allocation deed receives in the end 32.000 TL. The new flat might cost maybe double, which he can pay back with monthly rates like in the example above.

What has to be acknowledged is the fact that the new flat is only 85m² big. That means that what the homeowner gets as compensation per sqm are 45 TL/sqm in comparison to 705 TL/sqm in the case of the new flat compared with the 1470 TL¹⁷⁹ he would get on the free market, which is 32 times the price the homeowner receives for living in the neighbourhood for 30 years and having a title allocation deed. The statement “that means not so much below the normal prices” appears in this context dishonest. Besides the obvious imbalance within the compensation procedure, another fact becomes very clear which has not been given much attention so far: The people living on 700 sqm are not able to live on 85 sqm. Thus, the urban transformation project in Başibüyük will lead to a complete exchange of the local population no matter whether the homeowners are able to finally profit from the intervention. They will not be able to continue to live there.

In the case, the homeowner has no title deed; he has the right to buy as many flats as he has but has to pay an even higher price.

¹⁷⁹ Additionally see flat advertisement of flats in Başibüyük in Annex.

If somebody has seven flats without any papers, he or she gets the right to buy seven flats as well but has to pay much more than the ones having tapu tahsis. They are paying more in that case, because they don't have that kind of valuable place, they don't have tapu tahsis. [...]

Renters are not our first choice. It is a protocol. There is a Kayabaşı Project. We gave apartments to the renters. This is the project made for the lower class and middle class.

Renters neither get any financial compensation nor get anything credited. They have the right to buy an apartment in the new development offered by TOKI (MHA) but have to take part in a lottery to obtain the flat. The tapu tahsis belgesi holders also take part in a lottery. But this only decides WHERE they get the flat, not IF they get a flat. So there are two kinds of lotteries. People are often mistaken, as the case of Sulukule has shown, in thinking that if they take part in the lottery they would win a flat. In fact, they just win a flat to buy. Nevertheless, renters benefit from cheap long-term loans, a situation that sounds better than it is because renters, even more than homeowners, are in most cases not able to pay regular instalments plus service charges.

5.3.3 Conclusion

Başıbüyük, as one of the first implementation areas of urban transformation, can be seen as a counter-example of the case of Gülsuyu and Güleusu, to some extent.

Why the implementation was more successful in Başıbüyük is not easy to assess. The ownership structure of de jure and de facto homeowners was spatially perhaps more clearly divided than in the case of Gülsuyu and Güleusu and the amount of homeowners with no title deeds at all is potentially higher. Also, the existence of a central plot with few existing structures on it made a pilot project more feasible. This pilot project might be considered as one of the main factors turning the atmosphere in the neighbourhood into a pro-UTP atmosphere. Also, the different mind-set of the population in the neighbourhood along with the leader of the oppositional neighbourhood association joining local politics becoming a member of the city council plays into this process. These potentially important factors led to the erosion of the anti-urban transformation movement that was initially “built around a collective ‘right to housing’ agenda” (Kuyucu 2009b, p. 285) and managed to mobilise a vast amount of the local population through various forms of resistance. The factors mentioned above ultimately substantially undermined solidarity amongst residents. The initial movement turned into groups bargaining with the municipality and the Mass Housing Authority for the enhancement of private property rights and thus for private gain, neglecting the effects of the urban transformation process, namely that most homeowners affected will have to leave the neighbourhood, and that social networks such as extended families will not be able to live together in the future. Local modes of subsistence like urban gardening will cease to exist.

5.4 The Case of Tarlabası



Figure 27: Typically vivid street in Tarlabası (Photo: T.Stini)

“Law 5366 actually, [...], firstly occurred because of the Tarlabası Project. It was seen as the Tarlabası Law.” Lawyer of the Chamber of Architects, Istanbul

Tarlabası is the third case that I examine and the first one in which law no. 5366, the law for “the protection of deteriorated historic and cultural heritage through renewal and re-use” is applied. This law is used for urban transformation projects within the historic inner city whenever historical neighbourhoods are going to be affected, such as Sulukule, for example. In this case, urban transformation (kentsel dönüşüm) is called urban renewal (yenileniyor or yenileme projesi), because the intervention is supposedly less intense because the restoration of historical buildings and ensembles is involved, which in the projects that I scrutinised is clearly not the case. I elaborate on that in section 5.4.2. As the quote in the beginning implies, Tarlabası is and was potentially meant as the prototypical inner city transformation project for the application of law no. 5366. Though Sulukule was declared an urban transformation area three months earlier than Tarlabası in November 2005, it was carried by a partnership of the municipality and the Mass Housing Authority, whereas the Tarlabası renewal projects are carried out in a public-private partnership. After Sulukule, which is in the end the first inner-city transformation project that has been nearly completed now, Tarlabası is still in process. The first evictions are taking place since the summer of 2011 and the first houses on Tarlabası Boulevard are going to be demolished soon. (See Figures 28 and 29.)



Figure 28: Buildings on Tarlabası Boulevard being prepared for demolition.¹⁸⁰



Figure 29: Buildings on Tarlabası Boulevard getting prepared for demolition.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Pictures by Jonathan Lewis from <http://www.tarlabasiistanbul.com/>, posted on 14 December 2011.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

5.4.1 Introduction

The quarter is situated on the European side in the district of Beyoğlu close to the well-known pedestrian shopping street of İstiklal and Taksim Square, the most important social, cultural and political hub of Istanbul. Tarlabası is situated on a 40-meter-high slope, which is averted from the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn and thus did not, unlike other parts of Beyoğlu, such as Galata, Cihangir or Asmalımescit, attract noteworthy investment and subsequent gentrification in the last 10 years. In fact, Tarlabası is, even though being some hundred meters away from the touristic main quarter of Istanbul, a derelict inner-city slum area with a historic yet dilapidated stock of buildings. The underlying mechanisms and reasons that led to this situation are explained in the following.

Tarlabası is not an official neighbourhood that is, e.g., statistically monitored. Yet it is broadly known and stigmatised by its name and closely associated with transgender sex workers and crime. Every interviewee I spoke with referred to the said area in Beyoğlu by the name of Tarlabası. When I contacted the Turkish Statistical Institute to find up-to-date data about the population of the neighbourhood it turned out that Tarlabası does not formally exist. Tarlabası, rather, is the colloquial name of an area comprising six neighbourhoods that are situated along Tarlabası Boulevard, a main street connecting Taksim Square with the historical peninsula and one reason for the state Tarlabası is in, as is shown later on. The neighbourhoods that form Tarlabası are Kocatepe, Bülbül, Şehit Muhtar, Çukur, Kalyoncu Kullugu and Bostan.

The declared area of the renewal project comprises nine blocks where 278 plots are located. These nine blocks are situated in three of the mentioned six

neighbourhoods: two blocks are situated in Bülbül, three in Şehit Muhtar and five in Çukur. This means that the neighbourhood of Çukur is the most-affected neighbourhood, where the renewal project area makes up 30% of the neighbourhood's superficies. In all Tarlabasi there are about 20,000 inhabitants.¹⁸² In the project area 3,200 inhabitants are living, who comprise 16% of the population. At this point it has to be mentioned that the actual renewal area is much bigger and ranges southwards over Tarlabasi Boulevard towards İstiklal Street. The southern site is not tendered out yet and subsequently not yet even included in the planning phase.¹⁸³ The north side of the renewal project area was already planned and worked on when the whole renewal area was declared, so that in the master plan of the municipality e.g., no differentiated uses are identified for the northern part. That means that the private developer GAP İNŞAAT already had its own planning underway before the municipality had a master plan ready. I return to this in section 5.4.2.

History and Migration

The district of Beyoğlu, where Tarlabası is located, was formerly known as Pera (Greek for “on the other side”), which refers to its geographical location across the Golden Horn from the so-called historic peninsula. It was, for two hundred years, a foreign trading colony under Genoese rule that had to surrender after the Ottomans conquered Constantinople on 23 May 1453. The first buildings in Tarlabası were erected in the 16th century (Şahin & Çağlayan, 2006) when the Ottoman Empire opened towards the west and Western diplomats and their attendants started settling

¹⁸² The data received from Turkstat 2011 given the six neighbourhoods comprising Tarlabası shows a total population of 17,843 whereas the dark figure might be considerably higher (see Annex.)

¹⁸³ This was the actual stage of affairs in March 2011, when I conducted the interviews with Beyoğlu municipality.

in Pera. Along İstiklal Street and Taksim Square, you can still find most of the consulates. Thus, Tarlabası was by tradition home of non-Muslim minorities such as Greeks and Armenians, for example, who constituted the majority of the population in the quarter. Today, there are still many churches¹⁸⁴ to be found in the neighbourhood, although the Greek population in the city has decreased dramatically from about 100,000 (others state about 280.000)¹⁸⁵ in 1923 to about 3,000¹⁸⁶ today.

“The special feature of Tarlabası is that the non-Muslim majority has gradually left the neighbourhood, which led to the abandoning of the houses over time. In their place poorer and marginalised groups moved in.”¹⁸⁷

To understand the history of the emigration of the non-Muslim minorities and the subsequent confusion about the ownership status of many buildings as well as the dilapidated situation of the latter, it is important to take a closer look at the different stages of this development. The following facts are also partly relevant for the next case that is discussed in section 5.5, the urban renewal project affecting the neighbourhoods of Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray. When looking at the migratory history of Tarlabası, it is helpful to consider the history of the emigration of the Greek and Armenian minorities in the 20th century. Three waves of emigration of the Greek minority to Turkey can be traced: The first started after 1923, triggered by the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923, a post-World-War-One Greco-Turkish peace treaty that included a massive population exchange between the two states,

¹⁸⁴ Eight Christian churches are to be found today in the six neighbourhoods of Kocatepe, Bülbül, Şehit Muhtar, Çukur, Kalyoncu Kullugu and Bostan, of which the northwestern part is known as Tarlabası with Tarlabası Boulevard as a frontier in the south.

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.demography-lab.prd.uth.gr/About-en.asp> AD: 100.000 of less than a million inhabitants in 1923. The second figure above was found on http://chicago.agrino.org/turkish_pogrom_against_the_greeks.htm

¹⁸⁶ Ziflioglu 2011.

¹⁸⁷ NHA informant 8, 19 March 2011.

which led to the resettlement of about 1.5 million Greeks from Anatolia and Eastern Thrace and of half a million Turks from all of Greece except Western Thrace. The Greeks of Istanbul were exempted from this first exchange in the Lausanne Treaty, which became further consolidated in their status by a Greek-Turkish convention signed in July and October 1930. Nevertheless, it is important to mention because this exchange in population was widely regarded in my interviews as the first wave of Greek emigration also from Istanbul, and it marks the starting point of a climate of expulsion of Greek and other non-Muslim minorities also from Istanbul in retrospect.¹⁸⁸ The second remarkable wave of emigration was triggered by the state-organised pogrom against Greeks, Armenians and Jews in 1955 on 6 and 7 September where organised mobs, which were trucked into the city beforehand, primarily attacked the Greek minority of Istanbul. The events were triggered the day before by the staged bombing of the house in which Kemal Atatürk was born, by a Greek citizen. Later, it turned out that the bomb was planted by a Turkish usher who confessed and who had acted on behalf of the Turkish government. Forty percent of the attacked buildings belonged to non-Greek minorities such as Armenians and Jews.¹⁸⁹ In the next 10 years, the Greek population shrank further, from 80,000 to 48,000. In 1964, the Greco-Turkish “Ankara Convention” from 1930 was rescinded on behalf of the Turkish state. This 1930 convention had guaranteed Istanbulites holding Greek citizenship the right to live and work in Turkey. These Istanbul citizens, most of whom had born in Istanbul and many of whom had never been to Greece, were subsequently prohibited from all trading and commerce. This resulted in the deportation of about 40,000 ethnic Greeks from Istanbul. They were allowed to take with them each only 20 kilograms of belongings and an equivalent of 22 dollars in

¹⁸⁸ Cf. <http://www.hri.org/MFA/foreign/bilateral/minority.htm> as visited 20 December 2011.

¹⁸⁹ Güven 2005.

cash. Moreover, the property they left was confiscated by the Turkish state 10 years later.¹⁹⁰ Further and more detailed measures for the de facto expropriation of the non-Muslim communities can be found in the footnote below.¹⁹¹

As shown, the emigration or better expulsion of the former homeowners, which also applied to the Tarlabası area,¹⁹² led to the vanishing of the non-Muslim community to a great extent and left behind abandoned houses. The last two major events in the history of expulsion coincided with the beginning of industrialisation in Turkey, which led to a mass migration from the countryside as shown earlier. The new migrants settled first and foremost in the Gecekondü areas, which I have described on the basis of the first two cases. Inner-city dilapidated and left-behind quarters like those in Tarlabası were another prime target for domestic migration.

¹⁹⁰ Sasanlar 2006, p. 94.

¹⁹¹ "In November 1942, Ankara put into force the notorious 'Varlık vergisi' Law imposing a wealth tax on property. The provisions of that law were enforced with exceptional zeal only against Turkish subjects belonging to non-Muslim minorities. As a result, the Greeks were forced to liquidate all their property, but since even so they were not able to meet the imposed obligations, they were uprooted from their homes and put to forced labour. (It should be noted that the Greek minority, although it constituted only 0,5% of the whole Turkish population, contributed 20% of the country's total income emanating from this tax)." From <http://www.hri.org/MFA/foreign/bilateral/minority.htm> as visited 20 December 2011.

"In 1967 (Law 903/67) imposed an inspection tax of 5% on the income of minority foundations. This law also prohibited the establishment of new minority foundations and the repair or restoration of real estate belonging to minority foundations. [...] Previous changes in Turkish legislation enacted in 2003 and again in 2008 took only limited steps to correct a 1936 Declaration which had officially registered an incomplete list of minority properties. A further ruling in 1974 had prohibited non-Muslim communities from acquiring new property." http://chicago.agrino.org/turkish_pogrom_against_the_greeks.htm as visited the 30.05.2012

"In 1983 Christian religious and charitable property was excepted from Law 2912/83. This law cancelled old lease agreements and permitted property owners to charge rents at current market values. By preventing Christians from benefiting from this law, the Turkish Authorities ensured their financial strangulation". From http://chicago.agrino.org/turkish_pogrom_against_the_greeks.htm as visited the 20th of December 2011

¹⁹² I don't use the word neighbourhood in this case because Tarlabası consists of parts of six neighbourhoods.

Immigration in Tarlabası

The first important wave of migration occurred in the beginning of the industrialisation era after the Second World War, starting after 1950 from central Anatolia. In the 1960s, in a next wave of urbanisation, people from the Black Sea region arrived. In 1990, in the course of the Kurdish conflict, many Kurds from west and southwest Anatolia came to Tarlabası. In recent years, many Roma came to Tarlabası, as well as migrants from outside Turkey: from West African States such as Nigeria and Guinea, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and India (Stini 2011, p. 23). For them, Istanbul serves many times as an interim stop on the way to the member states of the European Union.

In his thesis, Stini (Stini 2011, p. 25) situates the different groups of residents who I want to discuss at this point: The Roma population is located towards the north/west in the direction of Dolapdere, according to his observations, whereas he locates the Kurdish population in the central and south/eastern part of Tarlabası. The African migrants, who are according to my interviews¹⁹³ about 100 people mostly from Western Africa, including Niger, Nigerian and Guinea, live in one street that is informally called African Street. There, they live in very poor conditions according to Stini's observations: up to 10 people in one room. The latter are located within the renewal project area

¹⁹³ NHA informant 8, 19 March 2011.

Physical Characteristics

Tarlabası's current building stock originates predominantly from the 19th century. As the area was originally home to non-Muslim communities as stated above, the houses still resemble the original owners and many buildings show e.g., Greek names in the facades (see Figure 31).



Figure 31: 19th century building stock of Greek minority, Source: Jonathan Lewis, 2011

Most buildings, with the exception of some buildings that have been recently renovated,¹⁹⁴ are in a dilapidated condition and, due to many uncertainties starting from an often ambiguous tenure situation to a constantly denied permission for renovation by the municipality, are badly maintained. Scattered buildings have collapsed or have been demolished. To support the adjacent buildings, they have been reduced to a minimum structure to support the adjacent buildings and prevent further collapse.

¹⁹⁴ These buildings lie outside the renewal project area.



Figure 32: Empty house filled up with trash¹⁹⁵, Source: Jonathan Lewis, 2011



Figure 33: Demolished House with remaining Minimum Supporting Structure, Source: Jonathan Lewis, 2011

¹⁹⁵ This house is actually not used for recycling. The neighbors put a small patch in front of the house. See http://jonathanlewis.photoshelter.com/gallery/Tarlabasi-Garden/G0000jbDSzBW_v4

Scattered throughout the neighbourhood, buildings with a mere existing outer shell are a characteristic feature and are used often by waste collectors to recycle their material. These kinds of houses also exist in other parts of Beyoğlu that are not under the acute threat of transformation yet. The buildings are predominantly three-and-a-half stories high and have an average base area of $50\text{m}^2 - 70\text{m}^2$ (Göksu, p. 20); they are inhabited generally by families of three generations under one roof, sharing one kitchen and one bathroom. Furthermore, shared affordable rental flats exist, which made the area recently more and more attractive to younger people from outside the neighbourhood, both from Istanbul, Western Europe and the US. The buildings facing towards Tarlabaşı Boulevard are mainly higher and measure up to eight stories. Here the historic building stock is punctuated with more recent building from the 1980s. The reasons for the dilapidated physical condition of the housing stock are multiple and partly already referred to. I go into more detail in section 5.4.3.

Critical Turning Point (Tarlabaşı Boulevard)



Figure 34: Tarlabaşı Boulevard construction site in 1986-88 disconnecting the area of Tarlabaşı from the rest of Beyoğlu, Source: Source: (Stini 2011, p. 22)

“The critical turning point was in the mid-eighties, when they were opening Tarlabaşı Boulevard. After these three important incidences in the ‘20s, ‘50s and ‘70s¹⁹⁶ that were changing the [social] structure of the district, this area, in the ‘80s after the destruction in order to open the boulevard, it was totally different than.[...] It was the second important city opposition. The biggest opposition

¹⁹⁶ Expert informant 5 is referring to the expulsion of the non-Muslim minorities as mentioned above. The allusion to the 1970s is referring to tensions triggered because of the Cyprus conflict between Greece and Turkey. I could not trace back the impacts on Tarlabaşı directly, so I did not include it earlier.

was initiated through the construction of the first Bosphorus Bridge.”¹⁹⁷

As a critical turning point in the development of the neighbourhood, the building of Tarlabası Boulevard has been widely identified during my interviews: This project was carried out during Mayor Dalan’s term in office, where more than 300¹⁹⁸ Levantine buildings were destroyed and the spatial linkage of Tarlabası and the rest of Beyoğlu and the Taksim Area was fundamentally disrupted.¹⁹⁹ This not only led to the second city-wide city opposition as Can Atalay, Lawyer of the Chamber of Architects points out above, but also led to a substantial shift in the social structure:

“With this ripping out [of Tarlabasi Boulevard] the social structure has deeply changed. After this destruction, the sex workers, transvestites, prostitutes, who cannot live on the other side [main shopping street İstiklal] of the boulevard, were kicked out to the other side [Tarlabası] and they started to work and live on the other side. And there was an interesting example, there are lot of transvestites that bought houses there, many, also Kurdish people. The second, and all of the sudden the entertainment businesses, services, they started to move to Tarlabası in order to save money. At the end of the mid-80s after the war broke out in southeast and eastern Turkey, so many Kurdish people moved to Istanbul, you know. So, they started to settle down in the Tarlabası area. They started to buy property. Cheap ones.”²⁰⁰

As can be seen in the quote above, the building in Tarlabası Boulevard initiated an asynchronous development of İstiklal Street and the Taksim area and Tarlabası, which led to a slow upgrading on the one side, and a slow yet substantial dilapidation

¹⁹⁷ Expert informant 5, lawyer in the chamber of architects, Istanbul 17 March 2011.

¹⁹⁸ Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ “Before the building of the boulevard there was a very close connection of streets. [...] There were 26 continuous streets before, now there are four.” NHA informant 8, 19 March 2011.

²⁰⁰ Expert informant 5, lawyer in the chamber of architects, Istanbul 17 March 2011.

on the other side, which resulted in a socio-economic and subsequently physical degradation.

Livelihood

The livelihood situation in the neighbourhood can be described as precarious. As already described above, the huge socio-economic division can be demonstrated by the income. The former head of the Neighbourhood Association of Tarlabası, Erdal Aybek, who carried out a social study together with the municipality of Beyoğlu and the developer of the neighbourhood GAP İNŞAAT, indicated that about 70% of the people in the project area have neither social security nor health insurance. The majority of the residents of Tarlabası work on the other side of the Tarlabası Boulevard as labourers on a daily basis, such as street vendors, flower sellers, as waiters or as waste collectors.²⁰¹ Additionally, there are 139 businesses functioning in the area that are mainly workshops. Most of them are located on Tarlabası Boulevard.²⁰² The monthly average income of all Tarlabası residents ranges between 300 YTL to 2000 YTL, which is between €120 and €800 a month.²⁰³ The monthly income of the new residents in the project area he expects to be twentyfold. As Sahin and Çağlayan point out: “The kind of occupations done by them are reproducing their low social and economic status. Rather than providing upward

²⁰¹ On the blog www.tarlabasiistanbul.com an article about waste collectors quotes a waste collector making on good days 30 to 40 TL and on slower days only 10 to 15 TL. Cf. <http://www.tarlabasiistanbul.com/2011/11/no-papertigers/> as visited on 30 December 2011.

²⁰² “The most common businesses are workshops. [...] 33% are handbag, clothing, nickel coating, iron or turn bench workshops. 22% are made up of other shops such as antique shops, cassette sellers, electricians, water stores, etc., and 7.2% are made up of wig shops and hairdressers. Apart from these, coffeehouses, restaurants, markets, food stands, bars, hotels, hardware stores and bakeries can be found in the area.” Göksu, p. 41

²⁰³ According to a unpublished field study report carried out by the Tarlabası Community Center of Bilgi University in 2006; the writers of the report interviewed randomly 200 people in the whole Tarlabası area, which constituted about 1% of the residents. This conversion was calculated on the 30 December 2011 (1 TL = 0.4 €).

mobility chances and opportunities for integration into urban community, these occupations contribute to the discrimination and stigmatisation of these groups at a wider societal level.” (Şahin, Çağlayan 2006, p. 8)

Land Tenure Situation

The renewal project area comprises nine blocks and 278 buildings (Figure 33) and affects about 3,200 residents.²⁰⁴

In the renewal area, the 278 buildings have a total of 450²⁰⁵ title deeds, so-called tapus. A strategic social plan for Tarlabası counts 550 shares and 400 shareholders (Göksu, p. 20). I identified two different kinds of tapus in the project area:

1. Title deeds for the parcel that the building is situated on.
2. Title deeds for the stories that comprise the building.

The 450 title deeds have individual owners as well as (minority) foundations, the municipality and the state. Again, the individual title deeds again belong to one or more natural persons. Many of these owners do not live in Tarlabası; some live abroad, which makes those owners, whose title deeds have four or five owners, the most vulnerable in the process, because they usually cannot come to an agreement easily and get even more quickly expropriated.

According to Erdal Aybek, one-quarter of the residents in the project area are homeowners, and another quarter are relatives who live with the homeowners in the same house or flat. Another 50% are renters.²⁰⁶ Sixteen of 278 buildings were

²⁰⁴ NHA informant 8, 19 March 2011.

²⁰⁵ According to NHA informant 7, founder and current chairman of NHA in Tarlabası, 17 March 2011.

²⁰⁶ From interview conducted on 19 March 2011. The project leader of GAP INSAAT, private Sector informant 1, interviewed on 21 March 2011, told me that 28% of the residents are homeowners and a total of 72% are renters, which does not substantially contradict the statements of NHA informant 8.

abandoned as described above.²⁰⁷ Faruk Göksu, author of the strategic social plan, gives the following results: 75% are renters, were as 20% are owners and the remaining 5% don't pay any rent, regardless of whether they are relatives of owners, friends or occupiers.

Şahin and Çağlayan reach similar figures in a field study report carried out in 2006 on the entire Tarlabası area consisting of six neighbourhoods north of Tarlabası

Boulevard:

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Own property	66	33,0
	Rent	115	57,5
	Property of relatives, pays no rent	7	3,5
	Property of a foundation, pays rent	10	5,0
	Property of a foundation, pays no rent	1	0,5
	No answer	1	0,5
	Total	200	100,0

Table 5: Home Owner - Renters Rate in all Tarlabasi - Out of the 66 persons, who claimed to be the owner of their property, 64 had a title deed (tapu), Source: (Şahin, Çağlayan 2006, p. 16)

The table above is the result of a representative survey among 200 residents of Tarlabasi. Next to the results about the ratio of Property owner versus renters it shows, that the title deed situation is generally not unclear like in the two so far described neighbourhoods on the Asian side of the Bosphorus where many residents did not have title deeds at all or title allocation deeds, *tapu tahsis*. Even though the land tenure situation is not ambiguous, property owners are threatened by acute expropriation. (See compensation procedure for renters and owners in the next chapter)

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

5.4.2 Urban Transformation and the Emergence of Civil Society Actors

Tarlabaşı was declared an urban renewal zone, according to law no. 5366, by the council of ministers on 20 February 2006,²⁰⁸ eight months after the issuing of the law. According to an interview with the municipality of Beyoğlu,²⁰⁹ the northern part of the Tarlabaşı renewal project area was already planned by the GAP Construction Company before the municipality had the master plan carried out.



Figure 35: The whole transformation area as planned by the municipality of Beyoğlu north and south of Tarlabaşı Boulevard. The renewal project area referred to in this paragraph is the northern part (see Figure 30). Source: Beyoğlu Municipality

The northern part was tendered out and awarded to the GAP Construction Company, part of the well-known Çalık Holding (which is managed by Prime Minister Recep

²⁰⁸ Uğur 2010.

²⁰⁹ Interview with local government informant 1, urban planner at Beyoğlu municipality, 15 March 2011.

Tayyip Erdogan's son-in-law Berat Albayrak²¹⁰) first on 4 April 2007.²¹¹ The Tarlabası Urban Renewal Project is the first project that is getting implemented in the district of Beyoğlu (see Figure 36).

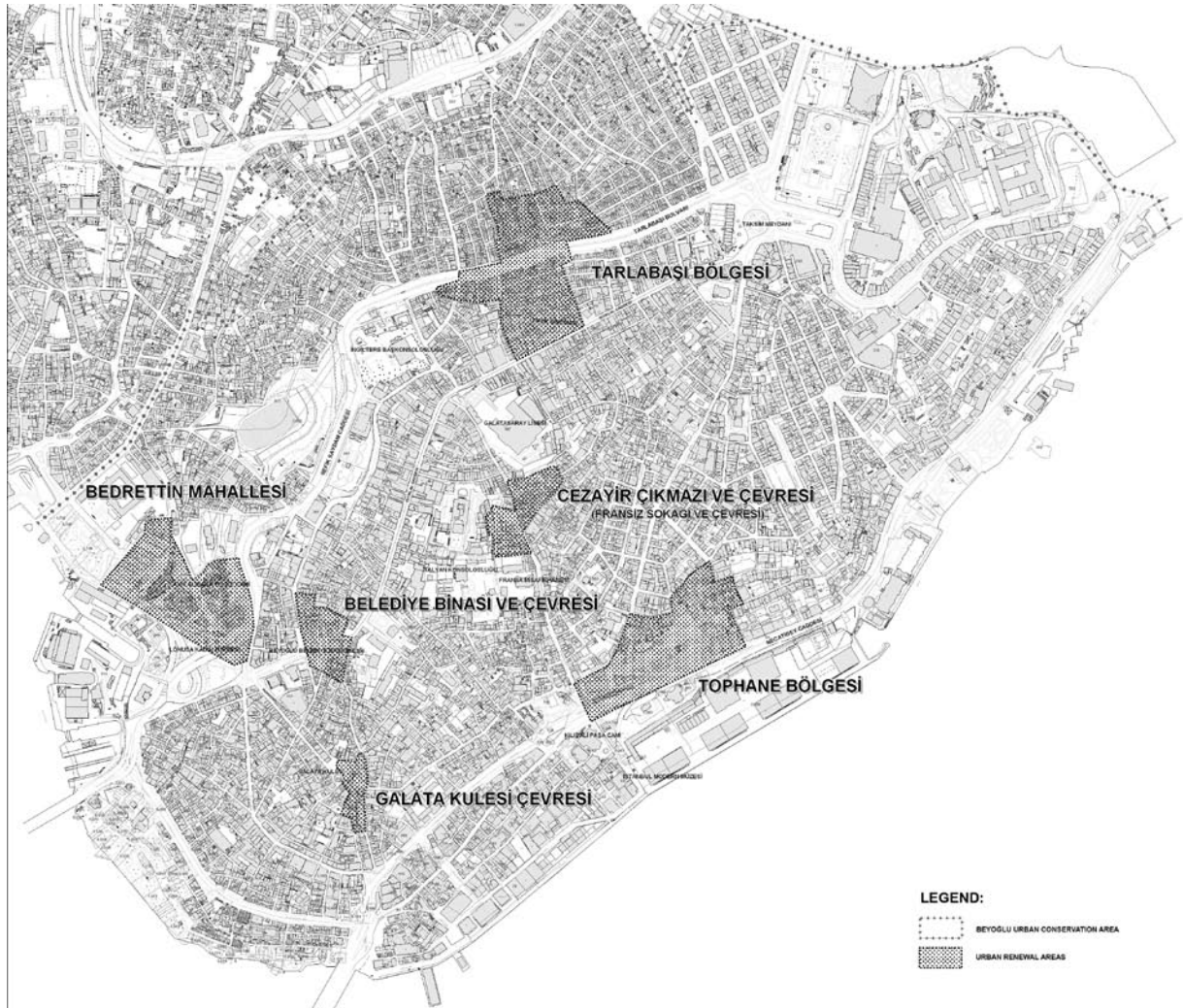


Figure 36: Urban renewal areas in the district of Beyoğlu. Source: Municipality of Beyoğlu

History of the Implementation Process

After the declaration of the renewal project area in February 2006, the municipality invited the homeowners of the project area of Tarlabası to a first public meeting. In this meeting, the renewal project was presented as if the objective of the project

²¹⁰ Istanbul's Tarlabasi neighbourhood not keen on gentrification 2010

²¹¹ Ibid.

would be the renovation of the individual houses by the respective owners with the help of a World Bank credit, which the homeowners could pay back in long-term down payments. The project presented in this first meeting in 2006 had nothing in common with the Renewal Project to be implemented at present. The demolition of the existing houses was out of the question and the mass resettlement was also not conceivable. Back then, there was no neighbourhood association in Tarlabası. Every homeowner went individually to this meeting with his or her title deed and made an inquiry. Today, the pictures of the smiling faces of the homeowners during the meeting in 2006 are used in the official project brochure, with the headline “Reconciliation with Full Participation.” (GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 20)

In the end, the municipality used this as a political argument. Everybody agreed in the first meeting. They used the photos as propaganda. At that time, the photographs were taken in which the residents posed happily and enthusiastically because they believed in what was said. The municipality used these photographs as proof of them informing the inhabitants and having agreed with the residents on the project. This was, of course, wilful deceit.²¹²

²¹² NHA informant 8, 19 March 2011.



Figure 37: Photographs of the first meeting in 2006 (left column) that are misused in the current project brochure²¹³. Source: Tarlabasi Project Brochure (GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 21).

After this first meeting, there were subsequent meetings up until 2008 between the home owners and the municipality in connection with GAP, the private developer.

Characteristics of the Renewal Project

The GAP Construction Company developed the architectural project for the project area during this period together with six well-known Turkish architectural offices.²¹⁴ As already mentioned, the project area comprises nine blocks and 278 buildings.²¹⁵

²¹³ GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 21.

²¹⁴ Architectural offices that planned in Tarlabası: TECE Arch.(385,386); Mimarlar Yapı Tasarım (361); E&C Arch. (387); MTM Arch. (360); Tures Arch. (386, 363); Duru Arch. (362); Sepin Arch. (593, 594).

The renewal project involves the renovation of all buildings, streets and infrastructure in the area [...]. The majority of buildings covered by the project are cultural assets which have to be conserved.²¹⁶

This last statement referring to the building stock in Tarlabası as cultural assets that have to be conserved is very interesting: The project presented by the GAP Construction Company draws an utterly different picture:



Figure 38: Renewal project design of Tarlabası²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Urban renewal project commences in Tarlabasi 2010; this figure also occurred during my interviews. GAP Construction Company indicates the number of buildings as being 269 in their project brochure GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 9.

²¹⁶ GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 9.

²¹⁷ GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 9.

When you take a close look at Figure 40, it becomes apparent that the planned project does not foresee the conservation of the buildings of the neighbourhood. The project can only be realised with massive intervention and the demolition of the existing building stock. It envisions a 24-hour mixed area (with tourism, commercial offices and high-priced housing) and with underground car parks.

Interviewer: Do they preserve the buildings or do they build everything new?

Interviewee: The historical monument [board] is going to decide that. They want to have one-unit blocks but also the preservation of the historical ones. They are going to integrate in this unit but they are also going to preserve the historical structure, facades...

Interviewer: That is a difference: the historical façades or the whole structure?

Interviewee: The morphology of the street will be protected; the measurements of the streets are going to be maintained.

Interviewee: But the monuments are going to be torn down and only the facades will remain?

Interviewee: The historical structure is going to be protected with new floor plans.

Interviewer: Will they maintain the buildings?

Interviewee: The plan typologies are going to change. Some are going to have a courtyard; some are going to look to the street. The old plan was approved by the board. The plans are done with the idea of tourism, business and entertainment. [...] Technically, they can have a maximum of eight floors according to this plan. And behind, the residents will have maybe four floors.²¹⁸

In this extract of my interview with the participation commissioner of the municipality of Beyoğlu, it becomes quite clear that the end result of the project will be the preservation of the street with at most the rebuilding of the entire building stock,

²¹⁸ Interview with local government informant 2, in the presence of private sector informant 1, GAP project leader of the Tarlabası renewal project, 21 March 2011.

including the facades. These are very likely to be rebuilt entirely in a retro-like design, partly imitating the original buildings from the 19th century.

“Like in Tarlabası, they say they keep the facades, which is the worst way of dealing with old buildings. But this is also somehow established in Turkey. You know if it is a grade 2 building it means you keep the facade and do whatever you like inside. And mostly the facade is not kept but rebuilt. This is continuously happening in Beyoğlu with much larger and much more valuable buildings either and also is being done by our star architects.”²¹⁹



Figure 39: Renewal project in Tarlabası, as seen from the north²²⁰

The Tarlabası renewal project brochure draws a colourful picture of a new, clean and safe neighbourhood. In the provided renderings, the exchange of the original population is already implied. There are no more veiled women, moustached men,

²¹⁹ Interview with expert informant 1, conservation architect, 15 March 2011.

²²⁰ GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 29.

transvestites and waste collectors in the streets. The full participation and compensation will lead very probably to the entire exchange of the current population of Tarlabası. According to the project leader of GAP, 80% of the original population of the neighbourhood will be exchanged. The actual number might be even higher. Also, monuments such as two Christian churches have not been kept in the initial project. Initially, they were planned to be torn down. In 2008, and also in 2011, the Turkish government signed a decree about the returning of property that was taken from minority foundations 75 years ago.²²¹ The inclusion, which means the non-destruction of the churches, was presented to me as the result of the full participatory process done within the Tarlabası renewal project:

Interviewer: You said in the beginning that you wanted to develop the project together with the owners and the renters. In what way did the ideas of the renters and owners get into the project: architectonically, design-wise or in connection to the function?

Local government informant 2: Yes, absolutely!

Private sector informant 1: [...] There is a Syrian church. The foundation of this church wanted to continue their activities. At their request, we changed the plans for two parcels so that the Syrian church could continue to exist.²²²

A second feature was mentioned about the real impact of the participation: The shop owners wanted to maintain their shops in the ground floor. According to the project leader of the Tarlabası renewal project, the floor plans were changed and small shop units were inserted in order to maintain the current commercial functions on the ground floor. Again, first it is very interesting that there was no commercial use

²²¹ Turkish government to return properties to minorities 2011.

²²² Interview with private sector informant, 20 March 2011.

foreseen on the ground floor, which would have substantially changed the appearance of the neighbourhood and would have made a 24-hour neighbourhood difficult to achieve. Second, it is very questionable whether the current shop owners will continue to stay in that neighbourhood.



Figure 40: Sakiz Agaci Street before the renewal²²³



Figure 41: Sakiz Agaci Street after the renewal²²⁴

²²³ GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 34

²²⁴ GAP INSAAT unknown, p. 35

In 2009, the municipality started a court case to initiate the expropriation phase. This is a key issue within the whole renewal process and the so-called “full participation”: As in the transformation areas in the periphery falling under law no. 5393, homeowners get expropriated if no agreement can be reached with the municipality: that is, if they do not accept the offered compensation from the municipality and the private construction company. In this case, the designated amount is transferred to a bank account, which the affected homeowner has access to. This sum is usually a fraction of what the developer will receive in the new development per square meter.

“o what this [law no. 5366] allows the government is that they expropriate one parcel without a notice. They write a letter to the owner, and tell that your building has been expropriated and 1/6th of the value is already deposited in a bank account in Ziraat Bank, you may go and take it. And you only have the right to disagree with the amount of expropriation. The money part. You cannot say I do not agree with that [generally].²²⁵

Also, in the case that an agreement between the homeowner and municipality can be reached in Tarlabaşı and in all other cases, it means that the original house or flat of the property owner will be demolished and rebuilt.

Compensation Options for the Property Owners of Tarlabaşı

There are three types of compensations that can be gained upon having a title deed:

1. Individual/foundation owners would sell their tapus [title deeds] to the partner company of the municipality that took the responsibility for the project. Tapus will become the property of the partner company and individuals will leave the area.
2. The partner company and the municipality will agree with the individuals for them to be kept in the project with their own tapus. The fact is, all the tapus must be “**story title deeds**” (“**kat**

²²⁵ Interview with expert informant 2, 18 March 2011.

mülkiyeti” in Turkish) located in the projected buildings. All is due to the agreement by means of fees.

3. Individual owners would trade [swap] their tapus with the partner company of the municipality and move out from the land to their next (*built up by the local/metropolitan municipality, or the partner company, or TOKİ -The Governmental Administrator Body for Social Housing-*) designated area. Tapus [title deeds] will become the property of the partner company and individuals will leave the area.²²⁶

These three variants only regard the ground floor of the respective building as the area of compensation. That means in the case that a homeowner owns a building with three stories on a 50m² plot, amounting to a 150m² living area where he lives with his whole family, he will get a 25m² flat within the newly projected development as compensation. If he wants to buy additional square meters he has to pay extra. According to Erdal Aybek,¹⁰ additional square meters would cost 120.000 YTL, which equals the sum that the homeowner would get for his 50m² plot if he would choose compensation model one. That means that the homeowner would have to pay one and a half million Turkish Lira in order to get the same amount of square meters for his family as he had before. If he does not agree to these terms, he will be expropriated and forcefully evicted.

The third possible variant of compensation is to swap the property in Tarlabası with a flat in Kayabaşı,²²⁷ a mass housing complex built by the Mass Housing Authority

²²⁶ From an email sent to me by local government informant 1, urban planner from Beyoğlu municipality, 21 October 2011.

²²⁷ “It is the biggest satellite city development in Turkey to date, a fact that the [TOKİ website](#) proudly emphasizes. 65,000 apartments will be built here, and once the project is fully completed, the population of Kayaşehir [this is the official name] is expected to total 400,000 people.[...] At the moment, however, only 3% of the planned 65,000 apartments target the very low-income group. Apartments in this category require a monthly payment of 306 TL (approx. €139) over the course of 180 months [15 years], as well as an initial 1,000 TL fee to be paid upon application. Additional costs of the move will include bills, fees for the doorman and money for the daily commute to work. Taking one public bus and a *dolmuş*, the roundtrip journey to Taksim

(TOKI), which is about 30 kilometres away northwest of the city on the far outskirts difficult to reach by public transport. As we have learned earlier, the economic basis of most people in Tarlabası lies in Beyoğlu, where they work on a day-to-day basis; commuting to a place like Kayabaşı is hardly affordable for the vast majority of the residents.

costs approximately 8 TL, a considerable chunk out of the average Tarlabası resident's salary." From <http://www.tarlabasiistanbul.com/> as visited 6 January 2012.

Compensation Options for Renters in Tarlabası

For renters, there is no foreseen direct compensation. Renters are also offered flats in Kayabaşı, which can be bought with an initial payment and monthly down payments plus instalments. For most renters, this is not possible due to irregular jobs and subsequent irregular payments (See footnote 225).



Figure 42: Kayabaşı, the TOKI development 30 kilometres away from Tarlabası where home owners and renters can be relocated, Source: Jonathan Lewis, 2010

Another indirect support to the renters of Tarlabası can be seen in the practice where renters who live in flats that have been already sold to the private developer don't have to pay rent until they have to move out. During the field research, I was repeatedly told that renters pressured their landlords to sell their flat so the renters could save some money.

Nevertheless, the word "participation" is very frequently used, and the municipality of Beyoğlu seems to show its good will in employing a commissioner for the negotiation

with the homeowners, renters and even occupiers who functions as a mediator between the GAP Construction Company and the homeowners. He describes his role as follows:

“My role is to get in contact with the residents and to talk with them, the residents and homeowners, and to persuade as many as possible and to allow as much as possible project participation. I am in charge of the communication with the residents, in order to communicate in a transparent manner. Not only with homeowners, but also with renters and occupiers.”²²⁸

By the end of April 2010, all homeowners of the renewal area had received notifications from the municipality that they will be expropriated if they do not sell their properties by the offered conditions. The first renters had started to move out of the project area by 2009.

Foundation of a Neighbourhood Association

On 17 February 2008, the homeowners²²⁹ founded the “Tarlabaşı Property Owners and Social Developments and Tenant Aid Association”²³⁰ to secure their rights, which they saw as being endangered by the mainly one-on-one negotiation procedure between the municipality and the homeowners, which pressured them to sell their properties. They supposed that the municipality had a hidden agenda concerning the renovation of the neighbourhood and that the main driving force was not the salvation of the historical neighbourhood but much more profitable reasons. In the beginning,

²²⁸ Interview with local government informant 2, 21 March 2011.

²²⁹ NHA informant 7, a car part trader from the historical peninsula owning several buildings in Tarlabaşı, appears to be the founder of the association.

²³⁰ Tarlabaşı Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (www.tarlabasimagdurlari.com).

the association had 225 members;²³¹ this number dropped dramatically when it came to expropriation.

“After this project appeared we had two meetings with the municipality. We recognised that the municipality had a hidden agenda. There was another reason behind everything, other than the municipality had told them. There was profit behind it. We wanted it known to the public. The people living here is normally very low, the level of education is very low. [...] Most of them are analphabets. Many Kurds cannot speak proper Turkish. How can they defend their rights? Because of this I decided to found this association.”²³²

The initial founder of the neighbourhood association is a car part trader from the historic peninsula, who had never lived in the neighbourhood but who bought several buildings in Tarlabası as an investment 20 years ago. In the beginning, he approached an acquaintance, an experienced, charismatic and strong-willed grass roots activist, and asked him to become the chairman of the newly founded association. He was aware of two conditions. First, that the fight would be very difficult and enduring and second, that the association could only be successful when they believed in their aspirations. The aims when founding the association he described as follows:

1. To slow down the renewal process as much as possible (five – 10 years),
2. To raise international awareness through public pressure,²³³
3. For people to stay in their houses, and
4. If renovation for the area is inevitable, to carry it out themselves.

²³¹ According to my calculations, that must be about 30% of all homeowners in the renewal area.

²³² Interview with NHA informant 7, 17 March 2011.

²³³ The website of the association is the only website of local organisations or platforms that is in both Turkish and English. Only the STOP Movement in Sulukule (www.alternatifsulukule.org) had an English website, which is now offline and obviously has a different owner (as visited 5 January 2012).

The neighbourhood association of Tarlabası has no official funding, as with the other neighbourhood associations and other organisations described so far. In the beginning, they charged a membership fee, but since the end of 2010 they ceased charging a membership fee.

Even though Erdal Aybek was not a homeowner, but a renter in Tarlabası, and more than 50% tenants were living in the project area initially, only three or four renters became active in the association. One underlying reason for this can be seen by the fact that there is no compensation foreseen for renters in the urban transformation of Istanbul. However, renters in Tarlabası are usually less resourceful in terms of education and time, and generally also not used to defending their citizens' rights. I return to this in the next chapter when I discuss the threats for the residents resulting from the implemented renewal project and the applied strategies of the municipality in pursuit of attaining its objectives.

Actions of the Neighbourhood Association

In reacting to the stagnating negotiations and the increasing pressure to the homeowners due to the threatened expropriation, the NHA explored a wide range of actions: First, they tried to convince the members not to sell their property and fight for their rights. They sent 200 petitions to the municipality, asking questions about the exact features of the project and the future of their buildings and demanding either the right to the renovation of their own buildings or proposing a development already described in chapter three: *kat karsiligi*. This literally means “in response to an apartment, in response to building”²³⁴ and would allow for a small-scale development

²³⁴ This is the name of a widespread phenomenon in Turkish urbanisation that developed in the 1950s and was widely applied not only in *Gecekond* areas but also in formally developed areas. The idea is simple: The homeowner has a building but no resources for the amplification of this building. At the same time, he has a need for more space because of his grown-up children. The homeowner makes an arrangement with a small constructor: The owner contributes the land, the constructor the building know-how. The constructor builds a

of a single plot of the homeowner provided that the density is getting higher, that is, that a new building would have to be built and that the new building would have to have a higher gross floor area. The NHA quickly met with the municipality and private construction company, but after seven meetings²³⁵ the neighbourhood association realised that no progress could be made during the talks and that meanwhile the municipality was proceeding with their strategy for one-on-one negotiations with each homeowner.

After this phase, the association members started to file court cases: 200 homeowners filed court cases against the expropriation, of which 84 used the lawyer of the association, Baris Kaska. In March 2011, 175 court cases still had yet to be concluded, with the consequence that no progress could be made in terms of the renewal project until these cases were decided. This strategy slowed down the implementation of the project for approximately three years.²³⁶ Additionally the association submitted a file to the European Court of Human Rights, or ECtHR, against the renewal project in 2010. Furthermore, the case initiated by the chamber of architects at the third administrative and regional court against the renewal project in Tarlabası, in that 123 title deed owners' joint plaintiffs, is still underway.

Mobilisations of association members and residents in the streets were also part of their repertoire, yet there was little success regarding the amount of people under threat of the renewal project. Three demonstrations in front of the municipality were organised, which were attended by about 50 people, according to the chairman of the

multi-story building on the plot. In the end, 50% of the new flats go to the constructor and the other 50% stays with the original homeowner.

²³⁵ NHA informant 7 talks about 13 meetings, and private sector informant 1 talks about seven since the foundation of the association.

²³⁶ According to the founder of the Tarlabası NHA, NHA informant 7, interviewed 17 March 2011.

association. Furthermore, the association contacted the UNESCO Chief of Europe and North America for World Heritage, explaining the forthcoming events in Tarlabası and asking for their intervention. On 24 September 2010, the chief answered that Tarlabası was not located within the World Heritage property of “Historical Areas of Istanbul” but that UNESCO was well aware of law no, 5366, and that she had forwarded their request to the Permanent Delegation of Turkey to UNESCO for their consideration as well as to the Advisory Body of the World Heritage Committee and to the ICOMOS International for Information.²³⁷ Besides these direct actions of the association stated above, there are a number of articles that have been published in national and international newspapers. Amnesty International issued a press release in the summer of 2011 heavily criticising the eviction process under way.

Situation as of May 2012

The actual state of affairs of the situation as it appears to me is as follows: Despite the pending law suits and the mobilisation described earlier, most homeowners, including most of the board members of the neighbourhood association, have sold their houses, and most renters have either left the neighbourhood or have been heavy-handedly evicted.²³⁸ According to the head of the neighbourhood association, out of 444 house owners 236 have sold their properties and 190 have gone to the highest courts. During these court cases new estimates are made regarding the value of the respective properties. On average the estimates carried out by the surveyors, value the properties in question 200% higher than the compensation offered. However the first demolitions have taken place along Tarlabası Boulevard.

²³⁷ Answer letter from UNESCO available on the Homepage of the Tarlabası Neighbourhood Association <http://www.tarlabasimagdurlari.com/> and see the Annex.

²³⁸ Amnesty International USA 2011.

Most people left the project area. The former chairmen and charismatic leader of the association resigned in 2010 due to internal disagreements.

Connection with Other Civil Society Actors

The connection with other civil society actors is of special interest to this study to understand the underlying dynamics in the civil society development in the urban transformation process in Istanbul. The Tarlabası neighbourhood organisation is connected to most actors outlined in section 4.2. This connection, though, is very narrowly restricted to the individual members of the association, such as the founder of the association and the former chairman, NHA informant 8. NHA informant 7, the founder and today's chairman, told me that he takes part almost every week in meetings of other neighbourhood associations in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray, Toskoparan or Cihangir. All these areas are districts located within the inner-city districts of Fatih (the historic peninsula) and Beyoğlu (the Taksim area). Furthermore, NHA informant 8 commented that he was in close contact with the Sulukule Platform as well as with the Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray neighbourhood association, and also the NHAs of Kartal (on the Asian side) and Çiftehavuzlar, for example. The chamber of architects usually forwarded people to him who were interested in founding a neighbourhood association or who needed advice. He pointed out that he would give advice on how to found an organisation and also shares his experience, supporting legal questions such as filing court cases.

Additionally, the Tarlabası neighbourhood association was in contact with the civil platform of Solidarity Studio, which was present more than 30 times in the neighbourhood. They criticised the association for not taking in renters and reminded me of the case of Sulukule in which the renters and home owners were split and where all were expelled from their neighbourhood in the end. Due to Solidarity

Studio's effort, the association included renters in the organisation's name, but did not manage to mobilise a noteworthy amount of renters for their cause.

NHA informant 8 also managed to connect to international networks, for example, to those in Berlin, where he had lived for a while and where he took part in the conference on civil society in Istanbul and Berlin in celebration of 20 years of town twinning in 2009, organised by the Forum Berlin Istanbul.²³⁹

²³⁹ <http://issuu.com/august-bebel/docs/berlin-istanbul-zivilgesellschaft-2009/1>.

5.4.3 Conclusion

The Tarlabası renewal project is the second implementation of law no. 5366 after Sulukule so far, and according to my interviews the first area where it was supposed to be introduced. The Tarlabası renewal project can be seen as a blueprint of how the city of Istanbul will be developed in its most sensitive inner-city areas, given the fact that only the district of Beyoğlu has declared at least six renewal areas according to law no. 5366 to be implemented in the next years (See Figure 36) . Even though the project partners, the district municipality of Beyoğlu and the construction company of Çalik Holding GAP İnşaat assert the will to ensure the conservation of environmental, historical, architectural and cultural values as well as social welfare and quality of life within the city, it remains highly questionable whether these goals will be met at all.

Having shown that the present renewal project will neither keep the original building stock nor the original floor plans or facades, the claim for conservation can best be seen as naïve. The aspiration to support social welfare is hardly possible because the renewal project will very likely cause the exchange of the whole population of the renewal area. The claim for the conservation of the historical building stock provides the basis for the current implementation procedure of the forced measures expropriation of legal property owners, heavy-handed evictions and demolition of the existing building stock. Even though participation is a repeatedly used term, this study has shown that it is systematically mistaken with information and that no incorporation of any resident's proposals is made. There is massive criticism about the project by grassroots organisations, professional chambers, oppositional politicians and international bodies. Furthermore, the legality of law no. 5366 is highly

debatable due to its inconsistencies in terms of tendering procedures and lacking transparency. For example, the urban renewal areas are exempt from all zoning fees, which causes up to 35% reduction in construction costs,²⁴⁰ a feature criticised by the chamber of architects, for example. The social plan brought in is insufficient or non-existing because neither my interview partners nor a local community centre had heard of any such plan. The paid compensation to the homeowners is a fraction of what can be realised by the developer in the project area. In this context, the expropriation can be seen as unlawful and does not meet international standards of human rights. It can be seen that the application practice of law no. 5366 is highly discriminatory and a violation against the universal declaration of human rights, paragraph 17, section 1: Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. Section 2: No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property. At the same time, there is a whole set of informal strategies of the public-private partners to fortify the dilapidated situation in the neighbourhood as is shown in section 5.6.

Considering the level of grassroots organisation, it can be said that an active neighbourhood association was formed and took care of the homeowners' concerns for a long time. It was able to draw considerable media attention, bundle legal actions by providing legal advice and brought forth local and trans-local networks with other civil society actors and organisations. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood association never became an organisation of renters and could not mobilise the neighbourhood as a whole. The fact that the main protagonists of the said organisation did not really

²⁴⁰ From Uğur 2010.

come from the neighbourhood might have weakened it in the end. The actions of the neighbourhood association could not stop the implementation of the urban renewal project. The experiences gained within the process of Tarlabası are continued by its former leader. Today, most of the area is empty and the first buildings have been torn down. Crime has increased massively in the neighbourhood because no social control is there anymore.

5.5 The Case of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray

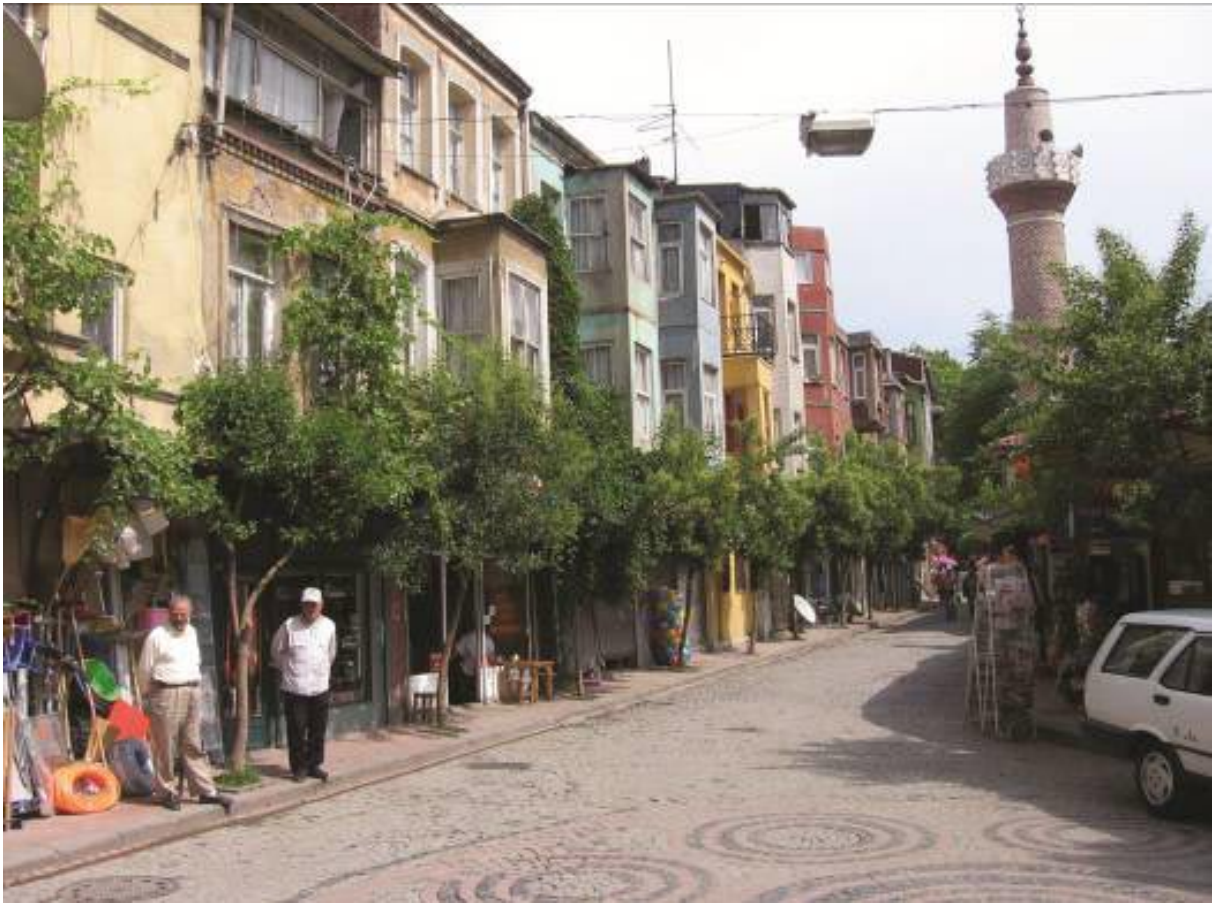


Figure 43: Vodina Street to be torn down within the planned renewal project, Source: Seda Duzcu

The case of Fener and Balat²⁴¹ is the fourth and last case of this study. As in the case of Tarlabası, this case comprises an urban renewal project that is being executed according to law no. 5366, which also means it should be implemented in pursuit of the protection of cultural and historical assets. So far, no implementation has been taking place. Like in Tarlabası, the GAP Construction Company, part of Çalic Holding, is the private partner of the municipality and the developer in this project. The urban renewal project that is going to be carried out in the area comprises about 240.000m² that is 59 blocks, 909 parcels.

Fener and Balat were subject to a rehabilitation program carried out by the European Union and the District of Fatih between 2003 and 2008. With a budget of about €7 million, more than 300 houses have been rehabilitated in Fener and Balat. In the next section, I give a brief overview of this earlier EU project to introduce a possible project of comparison. Furthermore, 33 buildings of the EU project will be affected by the renewal project of the GAP Construction Company, which might be of legal relevance for the evaluation of the project.

Fener and Balat are originally also neighbourhoods of non-Muslim minorities like Tarlabası. In the last few years, the neighbourhoods experienced a massive exchange in its population, as is further explained. The quarter is less marginalised than Tarlabası and Sulukule in terms of education and income. Neither is it a Gecekondu, an originally informal settlement with an unclear extra-legal land tenure

²⁴¹ Ayvansaray is the third neighbourhood affected by the renewal project, according to law no. 5366. I do refer to Fener and Balat in the first place because of three reasons: First, the main part of the renewal area will be located in Balat, of which Fener is a part. (Fener is a historical neighbourhood always mentioned in the interviews. Actually it was incorporated to Balat due to administrative reforms, so that today only the district of Balat exists officially.) Secondly, the neighbourhood association I investigate is located in Fener and Balat, and thirdly, the data sources available to me concerning Ayvansaray were very few. Ayvansaray has a slightly bigger population than Balat, is situated to the north of Balat towards the historic city wall and is relatively little affected by the project in respect to the total area of the neighbourhood.

situation. However, the described urban renewal project poses a threat to the existing historical building stock as well as the existing socio-economical networks and the residents of the neighbourhoods.

Even though an actively involved neighbourhood association has been founded to prevent the expropriation of the homeowners in the affected area, the residents in the project area who I interviewed in March 2011 did not yet fully realise the possible threat of losing their houses and socio-economic ties in the neighbourhood.

5.5.1 Introduction

Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray are three neighbourhoods located on the historic peninsula in Istanbul in the district of Fatih on the southern side of the Golden Horn. Fener and Balat²⁴² have 17,000 residents while Ayvansaray is slightly more populated with about 20,000 residents.²⁴³ Ayvansaray is bordered to the north and west by the historic city wall²⁴⁴ and to the east by Ayvansaray Street, which parallels the Golden Horn. To the south, Ayvansaray is bordered by Dervişali and Balat. Balat is situated to the south and is a direct neighbourhood of Ayvansaray, also bordered along the Golden Horn by a prolongation of Ayvansaray Street called Mürsel Paşa Street. In the west, Balat is bordered by the neighbourhoods of Dervişali and Atikali and to the south by the neighbourhood of Yavuz Sultan Selim.

²⁴² There is a smaller subdivision between the district (Belediye) and the neighborhood (mahalle) in the district of Fatih. In Balat, there are other administrative areas, which I did not find in Beyoglu, for example.

²⁴³ TURKSTAT 2011.

²⁴⁴ Theodosian Wall.

History and Migration

The districts of Fener and Balat used to be predominantly populated by non-Muslim minorities in the Byzantine and Ottoman periods until the 19th century. In Fener, the Greek minority was predominant, whereas Balat had been a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood since the Byzantine period. Due to the location of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople²⁴⁵ in Fener, the representative and spiritual centre of Orthodox Christianity, the neighbourhood is of special importance to the Orthodox Christian world, especially to the Greeks. In the 17th century especially, Fener became home to the upper and middle classes, predominantly the Greek, well-educated and multilingual population that worked for governmental organisations and in diplomatic contexts, as in Tarlabası. When we look at the building stock, it gives us a reason to suspect a wealthier original population than in Tarlabası, where the houses are more densely packed and the streets are narrower. In the described period, aristocratic Greek families started building their domiciles around the area of the patriarchate and started building bourgeois villas. The urban fabric of Fener began to change when families that were important to the neighbourhood started to move out to (at that time) villages along the Bosphorus such as Tarabaya, Kuruçeşme and Arnavutköy, more bourgeois neighbourhoods such as the Princess Islands in the Marmara Sea as well as Kadıköy and Şişli. However, Fener remained a Greek neighbourhood until the climate for non-Muslim minorities and especially for Greeks became very hostile at the end of the 1960s, when most Greeks left the neighbourhood (See also the case of Tarlabası). Today, many buildings stand in ruins that belonged either to a former property owner (individual or foundation) of a

²⁴⁵ In Turkish: Rum Ortodox Patrikhanesi (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate), headed currently by Bartholomew I.

non-Muslim minority such as the Greek, Armenian or Jewish minority, which were facing significant restraints²⁴⁶ concerning property rights, as explained in section 5.4. This led, in the end, to the decay of these buildings. This dilapidated state, which downgrades whole streets in Fener and Balat, is used consequently as today's argument for the expropriation of the neighbouring homeowners, as I explain in the next chapter.

Going back to the migration history of Balat, the Jewish population left mostly in the period after the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. During the following years, about one-fourth of the population left the neighbourhood. Before the described exodus, the population of Balat also consisted to a much smaller extent of other non-Muslim minorities, such as Venetians, Genoese and Armenians. The socio-economic profile of Balat was, in contrast to Fener, determined by more basic activities such as fishing, small trading and port management. Following the 1894 earthquake, the most affluent, predominantly Jewish population of Balat moved to the other side of the Golden Horn, to Pera and especially to the Galata region, where today's most important Jewish institutions are to be found.

The explained social dynamics had led to an already significant shift in the socio-economic climate of the neighbourhoods by the middle of the 20th century, which was characterised by empty buildings and an air of decay. This shift was additionally fortified by the implementation of Henri Prost's master plan starting in 1939, which

²⁴⁶ Non-Muslim minority property owners first had to pay a high tax on their property, were later not allowed to gain money from it by renting it out and again later were not allowed to renovate it; in many cases, they had to move out (See section 5.4) .

foresaw the establishment of new industries on the shores of the Golden Horn leading to the erection of warehouses, factories, plants and shipyards (see Figure 44). The described socio-economic shift in Fener and Balat resulted in empty living space, coupled with decreasing rents (Pusch 2005, p. 141). This attracted the influx of new rural-to-urban migrants, initially mainly from the Black Sea region,²⁴⁷ in search of job opportunities that were to be found in the newly established industries. The newly established industries also lead to a heavy contamination of the seashore and the Golden Horn, which had negative impacts on the health situation of the adjacent population. Wastewater was directly pumped into the Golden Horn and the two inflowing rivers, Alibey Deresi and Kagithane Deresi. The Golden Horn, and with it the region of Fener and Balat, soon became known for its unbearable stench. This development again fortified the downfall of the area and led to a massive shift in the area's profile into a dilapidated, lower working-class neighbourhood prone to health risks for the local population, where an economically vulnerable population was less and less capable of the maintenance of the historical building stock.

²⁴⁷ Especially from Kastamonu , Duzcu 2006 puts as reference (Fatih Municipality,. et. al., 1998: 24)



Figure 44: Former industries on the shores of the Golden Horn opposite of Fener and Balat in 1966²⁴⁸

During the next wave of immigration in the 1990s, in the aftermath of the Kurdish conflict (as explained in the other cases) many Kurdish people who had already had to leave everything behind came from the southeast of Anatolia to the already dilapidated and cheap inner-city neighbourhoods of Fener Balat and further contributed to the explained dynamic. The Golden Horn and its shores underwent a major remake in 1984–1987 and again in 1997. The first period, which included a comprehensive program for the redevelopment of the shore of the Golden Horn, was implemented during the term of the mayor Bedrettin Dalan, who had also implemented Tarlabaşı Boulevard. The shores of the Golden Horn became “restored” by the massive demolition of old warehouses, many 18th-century stone buildings and the Balat Dock. These “restorations” were made possible by massive expropriation of the lands by the shore where new recreational and transport facilities were realised: a seaside promenade and park with sports facilities and new roads.

²⁴⁸ <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>.



Figure 45: Green spaces along the Golden Horn after demolition of industrial facilities.²⁴⁹

Another rehabilitation project of the Golden Horn was initiated by the Water and Canalisation Administration of Istanbul in 1997, a year which was declared the year of the Golden Horn. Within 18 months, about five million tons of contaminated sludge were removed and the stench disappeared (Pusch 2005, p. 141).

Migration Background Today

To sum up the migratory history of Fener and Balat, it can be said that the originally Greek upper-middle-class neighbourhood of Fener and the Jewish middle-class neighbourhood of Balat have changed their socio-economic profile within the last 60 years to a Turko-Kurdish lower-middle-class area, of which the economic profile has further worsened since the removal of the naval industries from the Golden Horn to Tuzla, 35 kilometres east. Today, the population of Fener Balat that originated from

²⁴⁹ Duzcu 2006, p. 88 from Resource: The Greater Municipality of Istanbul Archive.

the Black Sea region amounts to 30%. Most of them are third-generation inhabitants and were born in Istanbul. The largest population group (about 50%) originates from the Marmara region that includes Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne and Tekirdag. The third-largest population group arrived since the 1980s and in even greater numbers since the 1990s and stemmed from the southeast of Anatolia, from cities like Batman, Siirt and Diyarbakir. This group constitutes about 13% of the inhabitants of Fener Balat. They are first-generation immigrants from Kurdistan (Lopez 2009-2010, p. 102). People speak of the Kurdish minority in the neighbourhood.

Physical Characteristics

The districts of Fener and Balat have a characteristic city grid plan, which was introduced, as in other parts of the city, on the historical peninsula whenever a fire had cleared areas in the city. In the case of Fener and Balat, the grid plan was introduced after the big fires in the 19th century.²⁵⁰ Subsequently, fire regulations were enacted to lessen the impact of future disasters; houses were rebuilt as row houses with fireproof partition walls on narrow lots. Subsequently, the civil architecture in the neighbourhood stems mainly from the 19th century, with the exception of churches, mosques and the bazaar in Leblebiciler and Lavanta Street that probably originate from the 17th century.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ 500 buildings were destroyed by a fire in Balat in 1866 Tekeli 1994, p. 11.

²⁵¹ According to Emrah Ünlü, p. 23.



Figure 46: Merdivenli Street (“Ladder” Street) is a well-known yet exceptional street for the neighbourhood. Source: Google Maps 2011

Due to the different street grid, the layout of the quarter is very different than from Tarlabası, for example, which has a more organic street grid. The area ascends to the south to an altitude of about 30 meters. This ascent starts slowly, though. In most of the district, the streets affected by the renewal project, especially Vodina Street and Yıldırım Street are situated in a plain, whereas in the southern part of the neighbourhood some characteristic, relatively steep inclined streets are to be found. The street width is bigger in Fener-Balat in comparison to Tarlabası, for example: In Fener-Balat, the street width is from about 4.5 to 6 meters, whereas the street width in Tarlabasi is about 3.5 to 5.5 meters.



Figure 47: Vodina Street: a typical street view of Fener-Balat. The houses to the left will be demolished in the cause of the renewal project. Source: Google Maps 2011

Additionally, the average height of buildings in Fener-Balat is two to three stories , whereas in Tarlabası buildings are usually three to four stories and higher. The pavement in the street usually consists of cobblestones, whereas in Tarlabası the streets are tarred and the surface is badly serviced. Many buildings in Fener-Balat are in a ruined condition due to different reasons; because of a fire in the 1980s, many houses burned down, especially in Vodina Street and Yildirim Street. Many of these houses have still not been rebuilt.

Education and Livelihood

As already indicated above, the neighbourhoods of Fener Balat are working-class areas with both quite a low income and education level. According to the 2010

census,²⁵² only 24% of the population has an educational level higher than the 9th grade. The illiteracy rate has been estimated in the same census at 5%. Together with the residents whose literacy level remains unknown, potentially 12% of the population could be illiterate.

According to a survey report from 2004 carried out by the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (Foundation for the Support of Women's Work 2004, p. 13) 78% of the interviewees stated that their monthly income was below 400 TL, which equals 400 YTL (about €160).²⁵³ 4% of the residents interviewed indicated that they had no income at all and were depending on aid and debt. In the same study, 78% of the interviewees indicated that they had no social security.

The residents interviewed in this study worked mainly as paper collectors, lathe operators, tea makers, textile workers, watchmen, drivers or were self-employed (with seasonal work). 85% stated that only one family member worked. In 11% of the interviewed families, the women and children also contributed to the monthly income of the family and in 4% of the families none of the family members worked during the time of study. From observations made during the study, some families shared their three-floor narrow houses (where normally one family is supposed to live) with one bathroom and kitchen (Foundation for the Support of Women's Work 2004, p. 22).

This coincides with my interview data:

[...] there are lots of families. In one house, there are three floors, three families are living there, but they have one kitchen. They have one bathroom, but they live together. The elder people, the son and bride and the children. There are three different generations. They are

²⁵² See Annex: Data from TURKSTAT 2010.

²⁵³ The conversion as calculated on 30 December 2011 (1 TL = 0.4 €).

living together. And they are having from the same meal. So, if you break this system of the people [...] than these people are not able to live here as three families together. They need to leave. One of them or two of them has to go. So what happens: When they go out for rent they cannot live, because they don't have that money. Or they cannot have another kitchen, another laundry, another dishwasher, they cannot!²⁵⁴

In regards to the quoted statement, the “normal” condition is described, to my understanding. In the study quoted above, it was also described that these extended families living under one roof also restrict their living space even more by subletting their house to others.

Land Tenure Situation

The land tenure situation is similar to the one in Tarlabası: The majority of the residents are renters. The data provided here was collected 15 years ago by a survey carried out in September 1997 on 2,578 houses in the districts of Fener and Balat.²⁵⁵ Triangulated with the outcome of my interviews from March 2011, the outcomes correlate qualitatively. In addition, according to the conducted interviews, the renters are in the majority. According to the mentioned survey, 60% were depicted as renters and 39% were property owners. A minority of 1% was living in property belonging to associations or foundations.²⁵⁶ A majority of property owners own the whole building they are living in. 15% share the ownership with family members. 12% are the owners only of the flat they are living in. 3% owned several different buildings. Only 25% inherited property. In the study mentioned above from 1997, 40% reported that they owned their property for more than 20 years. About one-third reported to have

²⁵⁴ Interview with expert informant 2, a conservation architect in the EU Rehabilitation Project in Fener-Balat (2003 – 2008), 18 March 2011.

²⁵⁵ Duzcu 2006, p. 98

²⁵⁶ Duzcu 2006 puts as reference (Fatih Municipality,. et. al., 1998: 44)

bought their property after 1990. The following quote illuminates the socio-economic circumstances that are closely related to the land tenure situation:

[...] in Fener, people are not poor. They are extended families living in these buildings. This is how they survive. They own this. So they don't pay any rent. They sometimes have a shop on the ground floor which they rent out or maybe use themselves, which is an income. Or the old lady lives there and her children with the family also live in the same building. There is a support system. So if you take these people out and make them pay some loans, or make them pay some rents or lose their rent, this means the family will be destroyed. They cannot survive. Otherwise, they have a decent life. Not too bad and not too good maybe. But it is a decent life. And the thing they also say is we have been here for so long and these places were really bad before. You know, The Golden Horn was horrible. I remember that. You couldn't get there because of the horrible stench. You couldn't approach it. So after its cleaning it is a favourable place. They say, we have been through all those bad times and now it is becoming something and we want to carry on living here and take whatever benefits will come from that. So this is the main principle which we are really against and what makes it a total gentrification and a rant [speculation] project.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ Interview with expert informant 1, 15 March 2011.

5.5.2 Urban Transformation and the Emergence of Civil Society Actors

Fener and Balat are also quarters where an urban renewal project according to law no. 5366 is going to be implemented. As was already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the GAP Construction Company is developing this project in a public-private partnership with the municipality of Fatih in this case. As has been shown above, Fener and Balat are like quarters in Tarlabası where the non-Muslim minority population was predominant and culturally formative. In addition, as in Tarlabası, these minorities left the quarters due to the multiple reasons explained.

The urban renewal process in Fener Balat is, concerning its general framework, similar to Tarlabası, yet in conducting the field research I came across significant differences:

The urban renewal project to be carried out in Fener Balat comprises an area 10 times greater than the area of the project in Tarlabası: about 28 hectares, or 279,345 sqm²⁵⁸. Much of this area is constituted by a green strip along the Golden Horn, which is between 100 and 200 meters wide. Yet the project area spans, along the Golden Horn, a length of about 1.5 kilometres. The whole project can be seen as a harbour front development in this respect, which makes it potentially valuable, especially in connection with the green areas along the Golden Horn.

“[...] And during our project, even before it was finished, this urban renewal thing came onto the same area as we had worked and they of course choose the most favourable parts for such projects. And in Fener and Balat they choose the part closest to the water front. The strip that goes along and the rest of the neighbourhood is beyond that so it is a thin strip that goes

²⁵⁸ From www.gapinsaat.com/en/URBalat.aspx as visited on 11 January 2012; a similar area is indicated on the interactive map provided by the municipality of Fatih: <http://88.255.77.38/webgis/?caid=1014>.

all the way from Fener to Ayvansaray because those buildings have a view and those buildings are visible from the outside. They really started that in 2007 after the law came out in 2005. They made a tender together with Tarlabası and both of them are now being done by this GAP Construction Company of Çalık Holding.”²⁵⁹

The renewal area was adopted by the council of ministers on 13 September 2006,²⁶⁰ seven months after the adoption of the Tarlabası renewal project area. In the conducted interviews, the members of the local neighbourhood association said that they became aware of the project in July 2009, whereas the neighbourhood association of Febayder was founded²⁶¹ on 4 August 2009. In comparison with Tarlabası, the information policy of the municipality of Fatih has been quite different than that from Beyoğlu. In Tarlabası there were frequent consultations with the property owners of the renewal area already from the start, even though the information given to the homeowners was misleading. One probable reason for the difference between Fener Balat and Tarlabası in this initial project phase concerning the public might have been the fact that in Fener-Balat an EU-founded rehabilitation program was still under way.

EU Rehabilitation Program

The said program had its roots in the UN Habitat summit in 1996 in Istanbul, where Fener and Balat were proposed as a rehabilitation project. In 2003, the project finally started as a joint program of the European Union and the municipality of Fatih. (Sarioğlu 2009) The project comprised the restoration of 121 buildings within the deteriorated Fener and Balat neighbourhoods as well as the historical market of Balat and the implementation of two social centres along with a new solid waste

²⁵⁹ Interview with Expert informant 1, EU Rehabilitation Project Leader, 15 March 2011.

²⁶⁰ www.febayder.com posted November 2009, as visited on 19 January 2012.

²⁶¹ Interview with NHA informant 9, cofounder and general secretary of Febayder, 18 March 2011.

management concept and campaign for the area. This was done with a budget of €7 million in the space of five and a half years. The Fatih share of the budget was provided indirectly through investment in infrastructure. In 2004, the Pekerler Construction Company was awarded the tender for the rehabilitation program (Sarioğlu 2009). The last phase was completed in June 2008. The rehabilitation program comprised the renovation of buildings with different degrees of renovation: from soft interventions such as roof repairs and the reconstruction of facades and the removal of extensions up to structural enhancements and earthquake retrofitting with carbon fibres. The goal was to maintain as much original building stock as possible while taking the degree of deterioration into account. The rehabilitation program was implemented without any financial contribution from the respective owners. These owners had to sign a protocol beforehand stating that they would neither sell their houses within the next five years nor raise the rent of their tenants.²⁶² The newspaper *Today's Zaman* quoted the Mayor of Fatih, Mustafa Demir, as follows on 15 June 2008:

"The Fener and Balat districts have their unique characteristics. This project is of immense importance because it has been embraced by the locals. We have completed a perfect job in terms of cultural, social, economic and environmental revival. It will be very useful in conveying historical consciousness to younger generations."²⁶³

With the new renewal project 33 buildings out of 121 will be potentially demolished in Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray. The social centre established during the rehabilitation project is today partly rented out to a private entrepreneur by the municipality.²⁶⁴

²⁶² According to interviews conducted expert informant 1 and 2.

²⁶³ Çimen 2008.

²⁶⁴ According to interview with expert informant 1.

“The municipality didn’t really sustain what we have done: for example, the social centre was turned into a place where school children come and take some courses after school and it is mostly for relatively successful students, which should be the opposite. And no women really come. There is nothing for them. We have made a crash, everything was arranged for that.

And this one with the garden, the garden they gave the lease to some tea art cafe people, so they are running a tea place there. So that was not the idea either. We had designed a park in that area and gave the project to the municipality because we couldn’t implement the whole park. We did the walls around it needed a lot of strengthening. So the municipality went in a totally different way.”



Figure 48: Renovated social centres implemented and funded by EU rehabilitation programme.
Source: Expert informant 2



Figure 49: Renovated social centres implemented and funded by EU rehabilitation programme.
Source: Expert informant 2

Urban Renewal Project

The renewal project comprises basically two streets that run along the Golden Horn, as mentioned above. In Fener they are called Yıldırım Sokak and Vodina Sokak and span from Fener to Ayvansaray. About 2,000 people and 900 families will be affected in around 500 houses, of which 300 are historical buildings.²⁶⁵ According to the homepage of the GAP project developer, the project comprises 59 plots, including 909 parcels.



Figure 50: Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray renewal project area²⁶⁶

The new project will eradicate the existing building stock of Fener and Balat in the areas affected, presumably completely. According to the plans that I could access, some outer walls and facades will be potentially kept, but when I looked at some computer renderings of the new project, it seems likely that the envisioned architecture will exchange the existing building stock as with Tarlabaşı.

²⁶⁵ According to interview conducted with NHA informant 9, general secretary of Febayder, on 13 March 2011.

²⁶⁶ Source: Fatih municipality <http://88.255.77.38/webgis/?caid=1014> as visited 20 January 2012. See also Annex.



Figure 51: New Fener Balat Ayvansaray development ²⁶⁷

This is indicated by the following evidence: Besides the visual impressions provided by the computer animations of the new project, only some structures resemble the original buildings. Also, these more original structured houses will be very likely entirely remade. Furthermore, the fact that the courtyards will be connected and that inner block spaces will emerge gives some indication for the replacement of the existing building stock. Lastly, the fact that the new development will be widely equipped with underground parking facilities can only lead to the conclusion that an entire replacement is underway.

²⁶⁷ Source: <http://www.fatihhaber.com/GAPINSAAT.htm> as visited 19 January 2012.

It is notable that the public presence of the project and the private developer is far less than in the case of Tarlabası. In Tarlabası there is an onsite project office, large-scale models of the planned renewal project and widespread computer renderings of the new development, whereas in the case of the project in Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray this does not exist, even though it started at the same time and comprises a project area that is 10 times bigger. There is no project office comparable to Tarlabası, where plans, models and renderings of the new development are exposed, nor is there a website as in the case of Tarlabası where detailed information about the new development is given to my knowledge. The municipality of Fatih did not answer my repeated questions concerning this aspect. Neither did they provide me with any project documentation or plans whatsoever.

Civil Society Actors in the Neighbourhood

In the cause of the urban renewal project, a new neighbourhood association was founded on 4 August 2009, one month after the planned renewal project was made public. According to the general secretary of the association, Cigdem Sahin, the experience of the renewal projects in Sulukule and Tarlabasi made them react quickly. The association is called the Febayder, Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Property Owners and Tenants Association for Rights Protection and Social Assistance.²⁶⁸ Even though it is called an “owners and tenants association,” as in the case of Tarlabası and also in Başbüyük, tenants remain mainly inactive in the association. The renters in the area stem mainly from the south-eastern part of the country and thus have a Kurdish background. They are mainly in economically vulnerable conditions and are dependent on the charity provided by the Fatih municipality, which is given to them in

²⁶⁸ Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Mülk Sahiplerinin ve Kiracıların Haklarını Koruma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (FEBAYDER), from www.febayder.com as visited 22 January 2012.

the form of e.g., food and heating materials. As it was reported to me during my interviews, there is little commitment, therefore, from the said tenants to engage in the struggle against the urban transformation project because the tenants fear the withdrawal of the said charity. Furthermore, there is either very little or no compensation to be expected for the tenants in the case of urban renewal, so there is no reason to bargain. Additionally, the AKP Major of Fatih municipality, Mustafa Demir, also stems from the southeast of Turkey, and thus renters tend to trust him as a fellow countryman.

Some food, coal. He still gives them the support of basic needs. Because they want to take their vote. And usually Kurdish people support the municipality. This is why: because they are dependent on the municipality. They are very poor. Most of them are unemployed. And they need that food or coal. If they show reaction they are afraid of the municipality to cut their aid. That is why they are not members [of the association]. If they become our member they are afraid of the municipality.²⁶⁹

The association members predominantly consist of homeowners originally stemming from the Black Sea region.²⁷⁰ These homeowners are often retired people. Some “newcomers”²⁷¹ who are directly affected by the renewal project are also part of the association, middle-class people who started to buy properties in the area in recent years. The quoted general secretary Cigdem Sahin²⁷² is also a newcomer; she bought her house in the area in 2007. These so-called newcomers, according to the conducted interviews, generally do not support the association and are in favour of

²⁶⁹ Interview with NHA informant 9, 18 March 2011.

²⁷⁰ As stated above the majority (27% of the population group) stems from the town of Kastamonu.

²⁷¹ Interview with NHA , 18 March 2011.

²⁷² Sahin was general secretary from 4 August 2009 until 30 October 2011. Today, she is still a member of the NHA FEBAYDER, but is active in more city-wide mobilisation of civil society organisations against urban transformation.

the renewal project because they expect the value of their properties to rise as a result. Besides its members, the association has a number of experts within reach from which it can get advice. These experts came into contact with the association through different channels, for example, the chamber of architects that provides the association's lawyer. Another collaborating expert is an architect who was in charge of the Fener Balat joint EU Fatih Municipality Rehabilitation Program and provides expertise for press statements, etc.

The neighbourhood association was founded with the aim to protect the members' houses and living space. The organised homeowners do not want to sell their buildings, do not want to carry out necessary renovations themselves and do not want to leave their homes and their neighbourhood. Furthermore, they are afraid of losing their cultural identity through the implementation of the urban renewal project: the socio-economic networks of small traders and craftsmen and historic buildings. To achieve their goal, the association carried out a set of communicative measures, both directed to the outside and to the inside:

First, the association acquired the plans for the project site, which were not easy to get, according to the conducted interviews. In public meetings and one-on-one talks, the association clarified matters concerning the renewal project under way.

Furthermore, they informed the association members, many of whom are elderly and retired people, not to go into one-on-one negotiations with the municipality without a lawyer, if possible, or at least not without an accompanying, experienced advisor knowledgeable in the matter of urban renewal.

The association set up a rather professional web site where it informs about the up-to-date development of the association as well as about the renewal project. Even though the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood website was also in English, the resources

provided on Febayder's website are the most comprehensive within the study. The website also serves for the circulation of press releases, as well as other resources such as photographs, television news features and project plans, for example.

Febayder organised three protest meetings in public, once in front of the municipality where more than 100 people attended. The second protest meeting took place in front of the association headquarters in the area under threat of urban renewal while the third protest meeting²⁷³ was organized in the neighbourhood for a press conference with CNN Turk.²⁷⁴

In addition, the association launched a poster campaign with signs stating "Hands off My House!"²⁷⁵ that association members posted on the insides of their windows, after a bigger poster was repeatedly removed by municipal officials.



Figure 52: CNN Turk news feature and "Hands Off My House..!" campaign

Furthermore, the association filed three court cases that are being negotiated before the first, second and fifth administrative courts of Istanbul. These court cases concern three different types of houses potentially affected by the renewal project underway: One court case regards non-historic buildings, one regards historic buildings and one the restored historic buildings of the EU rehabilitation project. In the first case the

²⁷³ Last status: March 2011.

²⁷⁴ See: <http://istanbul-urban-research.blogspot.com/2011/05/fener-balat-ayvansaray-on-cnn-turk.html>.

²⁷⁵ „Evime Dokun Ma..!“ (See above).

concerned court remained inactive for a long time and finally handed the case over to another court. This second court is now waiting for the answer of some question of the initial court regarding the case. In the second case over historic or listed buildings while an opinion in favour of the NHA was handed in it is still not concluded and will be assessed by the same evaluation panel like the court case for Tarlabası, as mentioned above. Concerning the third court case regarding the affected houses that where renovated with EU funding the suit was declined and the neighbourhood association is appealing now. Additionally, the chamber of architects has filed a court case against the whole transformation project based on the assumption that law no. 5366 and subsequently all applications of this law are against the Turkish constitution.²⁷⁶

Connection with Other Civil Society Actors

Febayder seems well connected with other players in the field. This connection is, again, widely dependent on the personal relations of single association members. Besides the already-mentioned frequent contacts to external experts, there is direct and frequent contact to the civic platform IMECE and other, different neighbourhood associations and chambers, especially the chamber of architects. There has been contact with international institutions such as UNCESO and ICOMOS. The connection seems to be unilaterally dependent on the former general secretary, since she seems charismatic and eloquent and can speak English. How well she is routed within the association is hard to say: There are several features that make her outstanding as mentioned above. She has a different political affiliation than the majority of the members, is secular-minded and female, which are underrepresented

²⁷⁶ Lawyer in the chamber of Architects in Istanbul and both the attorney of Febayder and the chamber of architects in Fener and Balat, nominated law no. 5366 as violating articles 35, 46, 5 and 63.

in the association taking my observations during field research and the CNN news feature into account. Febayder is, furthermore, through the former general secretary, connected to a countrywide email group on urban transformation that is constantly circulating knowledge and information concerning urban transformation. I followed the newsgroup for nine months and received about 2,000 email messages.²⁷⁷

Outcome of the Struggle

By March 2011, it seemed as if not many homeowners had sold their property yet, which can be seen first, as an indicator for the progress of the renewal project and how close to implementation the project actually is and second, an indicator for the potential effects of the neighbourhood association for the coherence of the residents in the neighbourhood. Yet, according to 10 interview samples conducted in the vicinity of Vodina and Yildirim Streets, it seemed that those interviewees were neither aware of the fact that there was a neighbourhood association in existence nor of the immediate threat of losing their properties. So there is some doubt about the broadness of mobilisation of the neighbourhood association. By March 2012 the Febayder assured that the process is still open, and that they are continuing the struggle to prevent the project from being implemented.

²⁷⁷ Last status 23 January 2012.

5.5.3 Conclusion

In the case of Fener Balat and Ayvansaray, the urban renewal project applying law no. 5366 has not yet been implemented. Despite various rumours in the beginning of 2012, no implementation had started by March 2012 and no concrete date is provided by the project implementers so far. In contrast, the renewal project in Tarlabası has proceeded much further and implementation started already in early 2011, even though the project was announced only seven months earlier than in Fener Balat. The reasons for this difference in project implementation can only be speculated upon. There are many similarities between both projects in terms of time frames, applied laws, inner-city locations and especially the same involved private developer.

A crucial difference between the cases of Fener, Balat, Ayvansaray and Tarlabası is the overlay of the renewal project carried out by the GAP Construction Company with the joint EU Rehabilitation Project and Fatih municipality, which has been explained earlier. The municipality and especially the private developer are deploying a significantly different information policy in the case of Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray. As described above, there is no project website, no onsite project office and very limited accessible information material describing the project, which comprises 10 times the area of the Tarlabası renewal project. The association told me that it was indeed very hard to acquire any planning material from both the local authority and the private developer. This different information policy might be attributable to the fact that the EU rehabilitation program was still under way, while the renewal area, which certainly affects the rehabilitated houses, was adopted by the council of ministers and declared a transformation area by the municipality of Fatih.

Whether the delay in implementation is due to the actions of the neighbourhood association cannot be precisely answered. The law cases filed by Febayder were in fact fewer than the ones filed by the Tarlabaşı association. There has also been an overall court case filed by the chamber of architects, which is either still pending or in appeal.

Wide-spread mobilisation in the whole quarter was not perceivable. Instead, a rather well-organised and well-managed initiative by some local homeowners was observed. As in Tarlabaşı, only very few of the renters were engaged in the association. Furthermore, peoples' reactions, when they were interviewed in the shops and cafes in the affected area, showed that they had little knowledge and interest in the forthcoming urban renewal project as explained earlier, which could have led to the conclusion of the narrow yet deep-rootedness of the neighbourhood association. In both cases in Tarlabaşı and Fener and Balat, individual, charismatic personalities led to the linking of their organisations with other civil society actors opposing the current urban transformation policies. If and in what way the different socio-economic situation in Fener Balat in comparison to Tarlabaşı plays in the absence of project implementation is difficult to be certain about. In the conducted interviews, it was frequently pointed out that people in Fener and Balat have better educational and economic resources and therefore a better chance and potentially more resources to defend their rights. In comparison to the Tarlabaşı case, in Fener and Balat a more locally situated if not more broadly connected neighbourhood association can be observed, which has probably a deeper self-interest in the matter than in Tarlabaşı, where both the founder and former charismatic chairmen of the neighbourhood association are in fact neighbourhood outsiders, which will be in the end not directly affected by their living situation.

Interestingly, to my knowledge, no civil platform has been directly active in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray, whereas in Tarlabası, Solidarity Studio was active in the process. Furthermore, the amount of media attention was, in my evaluation, even higher in the case of Tarlabası, which would weaken the argument that the neighbourhood association in Fener Balat and Ayvansaray built up more public awareness and subsequent pressure than in the case of Tarlabası, which would have led to a slowing down of the urban renewal project implementation. As in Tarlabası but also as in the cases of Başbüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu, few or no renters were committed to the neighbourhood association. In the case of Fener Balat, the often socio-economically weak population of the renters is additionally dependent on charity provided by the municipality, so that they try to avoid confrontation with the municipality. It will be crucial to what extent the neighbourhood association of Febayder will be able to activate the local population if implementation is approaching. To my understanding, the horizontal networking depends very much on a few persons within the neighbourhood association. Unity within the organisation will again play a pivotal role regarding the successful mobilisation within the neighbourhood.

5.6 Strategies of Erosion of Social Coherence

In the case study, besides the mobilisation and organisation patterns of the observed neighbourhood associations and the dynamics of the urban transformation process, another aspect turned out to be essential. During the interviews, the interviewees repeatedly referred to something that could be interpreted as a set of different strategies and tactics employed by the urban renewal project partners (municipalities, private developers and the Mass Housing Authority), which directly or indirectly aim to diminish resistance against the urban transformation projects and to discredit the respective neighbourhoods and their associations to maximise the profit of the project implementers. Even though I cannot evaluate how far these depicted dynamics with their specific, destabilising effects on local communities are deliberately and strategically used by the project implementers, in the following I try to systematise and inventory the depicted dynamics at work. The extent of the real, strategic dimension of the depicted dynamics would be a worthwhile endeavour for further research.

Separate and Manage (Divide and Rule)

In the conducted interviews, as well as in the cases analysed, one strategy was constantly directly or indirectly referred to: the strategy of separating groups and organisations and the subsequent managing or better controlling of them. This strategy can also be referred to as the “divide and rule” strategy.²⁷⁸ In the analysed cases, this divide and rule strategy was carried out in different ways to provoke disagreement and distrust among inhabitants of the areas under the potential threat

²⁷⁸ This refers to the Latin expression “Divide et Impera,” describing a widely known strategy of destabilising groups in order to take over power in the respective field such as a city, state and the like. These strategies have been mentioned by different authors. One is Niccolò Machiavelli, who analyses these strategies, obviously in a different context, in his work “Discourses” in Book II, 26 and Book III, 6 and 27 Machiavelli 2004.

of urban transformation. One-on-one negotiations, whenever possible trying to bypass the neighbourhood associations with the different homeowners of these neighbourhoods, seemed the prevalent form of application and due to their spontaneous nature, can be called tactics.

[...] but the problem is the authority tries to separate every individual person. They negotiate one by one. So first we tried to stop this. But this [law suit against the Tarlabası UTP by the Chamber of Architects] is the first step. [In] the second step everybody would better sue one by one, that's also right. *Expert informant 5, Lawyer of Chamber of Architects*

The implementation of a pilot project in the case of Başibüyük as a more long-term strategic application proved to be a very successful tool to split the opposition of inhabitants, who were initially very organised and unified. This kind of procedure might be not always possible due to missing presuppositions. In the case of Başibüyük, the existence of a central plot of land with a very limited amount of homeowners to be compensated proved to be very effective and relatively cheap to set an example with full compensation for the affected inhabitants.

At the beginning, after the resistance, just four people agreed with the project. So, afterwards, they made these six buildings to show the people how it is going to be, to convince people.

Interviewer: And now, as we learned, it seems that most of the people are in favour of the project, so your strategy was successful?"

I am going to tell you why this is: The once who agreed, at the beginning of the project, four people, totally nine apartments, they started with this. For instance, Hassan Kemer, at the beginning of the project: He got four apartments. In this case, if you just consider, we are paying the cost of the values of the houses of the local, e.g., they are getting 60.000 TL and selling it for 120.000. So there is a huge profit. So the others, the rest of the neighbourhood started to understand this reality, they started to come closer to the project, started to accept the project. He [Hasan Kemer] showed that the transformation process changed his life [That is also the headline

of a newspaper article (see Figure 53)]. *Interview with branch manager of Mass Housing Authority TOKİ, Istanbul, state agency informant 1*



Figure 53: Headline “Urban Transformation Changed His Life”; to the right: Kemer’s full tapu deed;
Source: Pro UTP NHA

Another aspect of the applied pilot project in Başibüyük is that about half of the 300 built units were offered to and purchased by mainly policemen, AKP supporters and people from the ministry of health. This influences the mix of residents, creating a potentially more state-friendly climate and, at the same time, potentially intimidating the local population. This can be seen as a more indirect facet of the described divide and rule strategy.

Interviewer: Who lives in the new flats?

Interviewee: The policemen that have beaten us up in the '70s are now living there.²⁷⁹ Seventy flats were offered to policemen. Most of them are already selling and profiting from it. [...] There are also 70 flats that were bought by AKP supporters. Another 20 flats were offered and supposedly bought by people from the ministry of health. Only four flats were sold to people affected by natural disasters. *NHA informant 4, former leader and co-founder of the ANTI UTP Neighbourhood Association in Başbüyük*

Another facet of the divide and rule strategy is the division into different levels of “legality” of home ownership into “legal” and illegal, according to the authorities. By dividing the population into these subgroups, the first crucial step towards deeply rooted fragmentation is achieved. This is further elaborated in section 6.7. Further mechanisms based on the deprivation of an economic basis, which caused a division amongst renters and landlords who are homeowners, is described in the following paragraph.

Strategy of Calculated Deterioration

Besides the depicted divide and rule strategy, which was widely visible in all analysed areas, another strategy became visible predominantly in the case of Tarlabası. I will call it the “strategy of calculated deterioration,” which indicates that the neighbourhood was deliberately exposed to dilapidation by a set of actions, or better, omissions that initiated a process of advancing deterioration of the neighbourhood. These consisted of the following: first, bad servicing of the neighbourhood by an irregular or low frequency of solid waste collection, no adequate maintenance of infrastructure, such as street lighting, which led to a depraved and unsafe appearance and to a potentially more unsafe situation; second, repeated requests for

²⁷⁹ I cannot specify which conflict the interviewee refers to.

restoration or repair of their own houses by local landlords were either not answered, declined or even fined.

If one writes to the municipality with the request for the renovation [of one's own house] it does not get accepted because it does not fit into the overall project according to the notification of the municipality. [...] In the beginning, we sent about 200 letters to the administration. [...] We claimed to renovate our own houses or make a 50/50 deal. But they did not react to it at all. The competent body did not react to it. Imagine that, that the municipality does not answer a formal letter. This has been one and a half years ago. [...] The municipality itself is responsible for the decay of the houses. [...] The local residents received fines of about 3000 TL when they painted the façades.

NHA informant 7, Chairman of the Anti-UTP NHA in Tarlabası, Interview 17 March 2011

I cannot prove the aspect of the deliberate exposition towards decay by the concerted actions described above, besides the repeated references by various interview partners from the site of the anti-UTP neighbourhood association. The accumulation of these phenomena causing obvious decay in the neighbourhood at least suggests a strategic motive on the side of the project implementers, which would weaken the neighbourhood's reputation even further (see section 5. 4) in the eyes of the public opinion and provide potential sympathy for large-scale intervention. There was another typical dynamic that was reported to me²⁸⁰ during field research, causing deterioration more indirectly. The announcement of an upcoming urban transformation project or only the rumour about an upcoming project can instigate the following dynamic: It can lead to people stopping maintaining their houses, which in consequence causes the local craftsmen to lose their income and thus the ones who are the first to sell their houses in the cause of the urban transformation project; this starts a breaking-up of the local homeowners who might have tried to fight for their rights.

²⁸⁰ From interview with Zafer Biçen, an activist filmmaker, on 22 March 2011 (maker of "İstanbul Çıplak, İstanbul is Naked," <http://vimeo.com/12443250> as visited 15 April 2012).

Deprivation of Economic Basis

Another strategy destabilising the local community is the deprivation of an economic basis through setting up legal obstacles before the implementation of the urban transformation project. In the case of Tarlabası, the former leader of the neighbourhood association described his experience:

[..] For example it was not possible to acquire a business license from the local municipality so that no trade or business could be opened up. The municipality threatened already existing businesses not to prolong their license. *NHA informant 8, interview 19.03.2011*

Adding to this, there was another strategy directed at the deprivation of the economic basis of the local homeowners, which can also be described as a divide and rule tactic in the case of Tarlabası. This tactic aims to persuade renters to move out of houses that are sold to the private investors implementing the urban renewal project. In the case that the renters move out, they do not have to pay any pending rent, which seems to be a frequent scenario. If they move out on their own account, they lose at the same time all rights for later compensation such as the provision with a flat to buy in a public housing development for a relatively moderate price and interest rate.²⁸¹ In the case that the renters do not move out and the houses are not yet demolished in the cause of the urban renewal project, the renters do not have to pay rent until they have to leave due to the start of the building process. In general, the actual start of implementation can take some years in urban transformation projects; more precisely, urban renewal projects. This indirect compensation for renters leads to: first renters not being in solidarity with the local homeowners, who are struggling for their rights to remain in the neighbourhood; second it potentially leads to renters not paying rent because once the land lord has sold the house, they

²⁸¹ This “compensation” possible for renters, which only consists of a somehow privileged treatment of the affected renters, is usually still far too high for the former renters of Tarlabası.

will not have to pay to the new owner especially when they move out on their own account; and third to pressure the landlord also directly to sell his or her property, so the renters do not have to pay rent until the renewal process starts. So this last dynamic can also be seen as a divide and rule strategy.

Misinformation and Bad Communication

An important and widespread feature of the strategies of erosion of social coherence described above, which was repeatedly hinted at during the conducted interviews influencing the whole process of urban transformation, is the method of communication of the project implementers. Three different kinds of *bad communications* are described in the following: Misinformation, the withholding of information and no communication in the sense of sitting out a situation by not responding. For each of the mentioned kinds, I give an example. The following quotes illustrate the phenomenon of *misinformation*:

So that was a big, big rumour and gossip, more than gossip because it is written everywhere. It is like a discussion. It is more like a discussion. Six years ago. And people thought first they will restore and then they will take the houses away. It didn't happen, of course. And some of them they trusted us, but with one to one relations. It didn't happen like that." *NHA informant 9, general secretary of the neighbourhood association of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray (Febayder)*

"[...] through that period there were a lot of radical Islamic administrations on the municipality. So they also made propaganda against this project, because they are Greek and Jewish areas originally. But since 70-80 years they have changed hands and now the people living there are the owners and inhabitants of that place. So there is very little Jewish or Greek population there. [...] This propaganda said that [...] the EU is giving money [and] they will take the houses and give them back to the Greeks and Jews, which is ridiculous. It was very, very difficult to convince people that something like that cannot happen really. If you have a title deed (tapu), they cannot get your building. If something like that happens, a much larger thing should be happening in the country. To push people out of their houses. This was very difficult. *Expert informant 1, project*

The rumour described in the statement above was, according to the quoted statements, placed deliberately by members of the municipality. It becomes clear that these kinds of rumours can play an important role in the dynamics of urban transformation, often causing further distrust and thus softening or breaking resistance and unity amongst the people affected.

Second, the *withholding of information* is illustrated through the following quotes:

You know, the main thing about this renewal project is it is supposedly giving some options to the property owners, but in fact it is not. Because they are doing all the projects without letting anyone know even. You know, after several years, they started to call people in to the municipality and tell them something will happen and they will negotiate about the property transfer, how much percentage will they take or how what they will do; still, they didn't see any project. This NHA where Cigdem is, was set up by some house owners and Cigdem is there also. They forced the municipality to get the project. And quite reluctantly, they gave the avant project [feasibility analysis], the first concept project. So people if you have a property there you don't know what's happening and someone is making some designs about your building without any notice. You don't know anything about what's happening. *Expert informant 1, project leader of EU Rehabilitation Project in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray*

The local people, the homeowners, they should make the decision by themselves. The project was drawn by companies, but without asking anybody, telling nobody about the project. The local people don't know what is going to be there: A hotel, or a shopping mall, or whatever.

M: Cigdem told us, I think they know, but...

Some, yes, but they always are saying something. In the parliament [city council] meeting they [the CHP Party] tried to get information, some details, but it was very hard, to get some information. What they got, is also what Cigdem got. But very hardly they could get the plans that were hanged in the associations on the walls. *Local politician informant 1, CHP Party of Fatih, Istanbul*

As can be seen, in the abovementioned quote, in the case of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray especially and also in the other projects like Başibüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu, the acquisition of information about the planned project by the neighbourhood initiatives was very difficult and the information was only handed over hesitatingly. In this aspect, Tarlabası seems very different, because no means was left unexplored to show and explain the project to be implemented.

The third variety of the found phenomenon described as *no communication* (in the sense of sitting out a situation by not responding) is illustrated by the following quote:

In the beginning we sent about 200 letters to the administration. [...] We claimed to renovate our own houses or make a 50/50 deal. But they did not react to it at all. The competent body did not react to it. Imagine that, that the municipality does not answer a formal letter. This has been one and a half year ago. *NHA informant 7, chairman of the anti-UTP NHA in Tarlabası, Interview 17 March 2011*

The last quote I want to show more generally illustrates the problem of a bad provision of information concerning urban transformation:

The true cause is that information on urban transformation areas is not provided by a single source. All the information is dispersed in a way of Chinese whispers: I make an inquiry and tell you, you learn from me and pass it on to a third person. Our lawyers, for example, misadvised us in the beginning of the process. Because of that we made strategic mistakes. [...] If we would have had more information at hand, we wouldn't have attended the meetings with the municipality. Information is as important. *NHA informant 8, former chairman of the Tarlabası anti UTP Neighbourhood Association.*

This last quote shows how information becomes a vital, strategic resource for all parties, which is important to attain on time to be able to effectively secure one's own interests. The depicted kinds of control of information show examples of how the project implementers, in the case of urban transformation in Istanbul, potentially try to

monopolise information for their own gain and for to weaken the mobilisation of civil society.

Constant Changing of Projects and Laws

Besides the monopolisation of information, another closely connected strategy became clear. In the cause of all the court cases that the civil society initiatives could decide for themselves and that would have caused the stopping of the implementation of the urban transformation process under way, the implementing authorities changed the project plans slightly and continued their implementation. This was the case in Başibüyük and in Tarlabası. From this, a pattern or strategy of “constant changing of projects and laws” can be seen.

In the case of Başibüyük, the 5th administrative court of Istanbul (case no. 2007/1203) ordered the urban transformation project to be stopped because it was violating the public good, principles of urban planning and rules of democratic governance (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 10). According to the neighbourhood association that was against the urban transformation project, the municipality continued implementation and changed district laws so that the court order ceased. In the case of Tarlabası, the case that was filed by the chamber of architects against the urban transformation project as such was dismissed and is now in an appeal process. When I asked the chairmen of the Tarlabası neighbourhood association about the case, he said:

First the chamber of architects went to court. Yes, in the proceedings initiated by the chamber we also participated as the plaintiff. If they would have won the case the entrusted developer could have easily changed the project. Will the chamber suit them every time again? These actors are huge enterprises. They know this field 100%. They will find the appropriate ploy. *NHA informant 4, chairman of the anti-UTP NHA in Tarlabası, interview 17 March 2011*

This last statement shows that it seems to be an open secret how developers tamper with court cases: They change the plans to make the court case meaningless because of a changed subject, even though they may basically proceed with the same project. This constant changing of both urban transformation projects and laws affecting the said transformation makes it even more difficult for the affected population and their advocates to react to the urban transformation process.

Foundation of Pro-UTP Associations

The foundation of “counter” associations to the neighbourhood associations that formed in the first place that were resisting the planned urban transformation projects was reported to me during field research and was depicted as an active strategy employed by the municipalities to weaken the resistance to the planned urban transformation or urban renewal projects. I encountered these statements in all four neighbourhoods of the case study. Even though it was possible to get into direct contact with a pro-urban transformation association only in Başbüyük, counter associations to the ones existing in the first place were repeatedly hinted at. I cannot give further evidence of the existence and level of involvement of municipalities with pro-urban transformation neighbourhood associations, but members of civil platforms assured me the same. Therefore, I want to provide some quotations illustrating the phenomenon, emphasising that further research on this is necessary.

There are subversive neighbourhood associations. In each transformation area, the municipality founds associations that support the municipality. *NHA informant 8, former chairman of the Tarlaş anti UTP neighbourhood association.*

Because you know, the municipality normally uses some strategy: For example, if there is an association they form another association. They try to divide the people; they try to weaken the associations.

Interviewer Is this other association openly founded by the municipality?

Interviewee: People realise that they are on the municipality's side. *NHA informant 9, Febayder*

In the beginning everybody was with them (the anti-UTP association). It was very interesting. I was there in the first days of the local opposition and all the people were supporting Adem. However it was very clever of the municipality and they made it in many places: They formed another association, which is in favour of the project. They did that in Sulukule, in Tarlabası.

Interviewer: I heard that they said it even officially?

Interviewee: Yes, it is not a secret. *Civil platform informant 2, DA*

Sadaqa (Charity from Municipality for Marginalised Population Groups)

Another factor that may lead to fragmentation amongst residents of a neighbourhood and especially between renters and homeowners here is the traditional concept of charity. It is called Sadaqa and was described to me especially in the neighbourhoods of Fener and Balat, where many poor people from south-eastern Turkey reside and who are dependent on the said charity:

[...] our municipality mayor is from the Southern East also. He gives them to the renters: Sadaqa, regular charity. They get some food, coal. Still he [the mayor of Fatih] gives them [mostly Kurdish renters in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray] for the support of some basic needs. Yeah, yeah... because they want to take their votes. And usually Kurdish people support the municipality. This is why. Because they are dependent on the municipality. They are very poor. Most of them are unemployed. And they need that food or coal. If they show reaction they are afraid of the municipality to cut their aid. That is why they are not our members. If they become our members they are afraid of the municipality. *NHA informant 9, Fener Balat*

This kind of patronising charity creates ties that make marginalised residents dependent on the benevolence of the local administration and thus again more vulnerable to urban transformation. This seems to be a well-established snare that is hard to escape from without any structural change.

State Violence

Besides the numerous strategies of erosion depicted so far, one obvious and one not yet mentioned strategy is open state violence used to break resistance against urban transformation and guarantee project implementation. During the field research, none of these open conflicts occurred and only in the case of Başibüyük have large-scale police operations taken place: In 2007, during an 89-day period with a police force of 10,000 policemen, according to the neighbourhood association and again in 2008 with 3,000 riot policemen. In Başibüyük, the clashes demarcated the peak of the resistance movement and, at the same time, they coincided with the turning point during which negotiations started and the start of the erosion of solidarity amongst residents. Nevertheless, clashes like these took place in many other neighbourhoods in Istanbul and can be described as well-known phenomena within the implementation of urban transformation. Tuna Kuyucu puts it like this: “The open and frequent use of state violence cripples mobilisation and generates an unequal bargaining structure, one we call ‘bargaining under the shadow of violence,’ which seriously weakens the position of the residents.” (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 14)

5.7 The Repertoire of Resistance of Grassroots Organisations

While depicting dynamics able to potentially split up and weaken the oppositional formations of civil society organisations, this section also sums up the variety of actions employed by the grassroots organisations examined in the case study that form their repertoire of resistance. These actions are distinguished by their direction in internal and external actions.

Internal Actions

The first actions of the analysed grassroots organisations were directed towards the neighbourhood and thus were internal: The repeatedly mentioned purpose of the grassroots organisations in the first place was to acquire information regarding urban transformation to come in the respective neighbourhood, to interpret this information with the help of external experts and then to spread the interpreted information back to the local communities. Understanding more about the legal and spatial nature of the planned urban transformation projects, the local grassroots organisation provided their community with legal and behavioural advice, for example, by insisting that the community not go into one-on-one negotiations with the municipality without legal assistance in the case of Fener and Balat. Another vital part of the grassroots organisations' activity was the subsequent spreading of information and the mobilisation of the local population against the threat posed by the UTPs towards their neighbourhoods, including instigating horizontal networks with other civil society actors in the field such as civil platforms, professional chambers and unions. This mobilisation is facing numerous obstacles, as has been described above, and is synthesised in chapter six. Reviewing the described actions, the underlying strategy of the grassroots organisations could be depicted as informing, forming, networking

and finally mobilising the local community. These strategies were seldom expressed directly and are the interpretation of the enumerated actions.

We had [...] [a] main aim: [...] To establish a functioning flow of information. Every window, every house should receive the information about what is going on. Everybody should by their property have the right to vote and decide about their own future.[...] Neighbourhood organisations should come together and bundle their forces in order to really develop a healthy project. *NHA informant 1, GÜLDAM neighbourhood association of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, 16.03.2011*

External Actions

Next to the internal actions aiming at the mobilisation of the local communities and the forging and further development of organisational structures and thus the creation of a possible framework for more concerted action, a wide set of outwards-directed or external actions were carried out by the grassroots organisations in question. Within these actions, I distinguish four fields of activity: symbolic actions, street actions, legal actions and networking, both horizontally on the city level and vertically on the international level. Here again, the underlying strategies can only be interpreted because they were not openly stated. The underlying reason for this might be because the actions described so far and below are, to a great extent, collective actions that developed organically and not fully systematically. Speaking of a “strategy” is difficult and might even be misleading. Nevertheless, I try to deduct inherent strategies from the forms of resistance to describe more general patterns of resistance.

Symbolic Actions

A widespread activity that followed the early formation against urban transformation was the signing of petitions, which was carried out in all neighbourhoods and was

accompanied with the collection of signatures. These forms of collective protest were generally accompanied by a concerted drafting of individual letters addressed to the municipalities asking for more information or stating the author's discontent with the planned urban development. Next to this direct contact to the project implementers, in this case the municipalities in question, the expressed opinions were further circulated by the drafting of press statements and the installation of blogs and homepages informing readers about the local situation of urban transformation and the responding opinions, actions and forms of organisation of the local grassroots organisations. The use of online tools was less frequent in the former Gecekondu areas of Gülsuyu/Gülensu and Başbüyük, even though the former is well-connected to other civil society players in the city. The Gülsuyu/Gülensu neighbourhood association of Güldam is maintaining a blog that serves as a collective tool for different neighbourhoods. In this sense, the neighbourhood association serves as a multiplier.

Street Actions

Another outward-directed form of action of the grassroots organisations is the street protest. Several forms were mentioned during the interviews: Demonstrations by protesters in front of municipalities who were holding banners and giving speeches and reading press statements out loud was the most frequently mentioned form of protest, accompanied with demonstrations in the neighbourhood to raise the internal awareness of the developments under way. In this context, this latter form of street protest can be classified as an internal action. Another form of street protest reported was the taking part in other demonstrations in squares and big events showing solidarity with other movements and at the same time trying to raise awareness for the protestors' own case. In the case of Başbüyük, the protesters erected tents to

consolidate their presence in the face of a massive police operation during the first phase of the local urban transformation project at the construction site in their neighbourhood. Another form of local street protest visible in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray occurred when members of the local grassroots organisation in Febayder put up large billboards stating their cause next to a highly frequented street passing by their neighbourhood. This big billboard was instantly taken down by anonymous men hired by the municipality. The neighbourhood organisation continued their actions, putting up posters on the inside of their windows stating, "Hands off My House!" In the case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, it was reported that a long and violent experience with street fights in the late 1970s and early 1980s within the neighbourhood poses an unspoken threat against the project implementers.

The authorities do not have the courage to put these high-rises here. If they would do so it would lead to civil war. Because the municipality sees neighbourhoods such as Başibüyük as weak and unorganised they started there to build the first phase. *NHA informant 1, GÜLDAM neighbourhood association of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, 16 March 2011*

Legal Actions

Legal actions, including filing law suits both collectively as an association, as plaintiffs and individually, form one of the most important fields of actions of the analysed grassroots organisations. These legal actions are backed up by voluntary legal organisations and by professional chambers, such the chamber of architects also giving legal advice. The legal court cases are brought to many levels of jurisdiction up to the European Court for Human Rights, where the neighbourhood association of Tarlabası has a case pending. Some legal battles were won so far, which sometimes led to the delay of the urban transformation projects to be implemented. Many cases are in appeal. Since legal battles take a long time; however, it is impossible to assess at this point the effectiveness of the side of grassroots and other civil society

organisations. Even though it remains difficult for affected citizens to defend their rights within the legal framework in Turkey because the system reproduces continual constraints in terms of freedom of speech and human rights, producing recurrent repressions against ethnic, religious and sexual minorities,²⁸² all of which are represented within the analysed neighbourhoods, the constant legal fight has already produced some outcomes and is probably one of the more sustainable forms of protest because it creates precedents and promotes public visibility.

With the organisation we slowed down the process. If we wouldn't have mobilised the inhabitants the process would be long be finished, since 2008 probably. [...] We could only convince 40% of the homeowners. At least we could slow down the process for three years.

Now it is still 40% of the inhabitants that do not want to sell. *NHA informant 7, Chairman of NHA in Tarlabası*

Networking

Besides the already-mentioned forms of resistance, networking was mentioned as an important field of activity of the grassroots organisation. Even though networking might not be a primary form of resistance, nevertheless the connection to relevant players in the field, especially international ones, forms a vital component of campaigning, bringing the local topic to public awareness first at a city-wide level and further more on an international one. In the neighbourhoods observed, the connection to UNESCO and Amnesty International (in the case of Tarlabası), the EU (in the case of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray/Ayvansaray) and international universities (in the case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu) played an important role in the gaining of international and thereby also national attention. Besides gaining attention, international networks are also important channels for exchanging knowledge and thus amplifying the repertoires of resistance. (See section 2.2.)

²⁸² Amnesty International Germany, December 2010 #155}.

5.8 Conclusion

In the four cases, the considered grassroots organisations were neighbourhood associations that were committed to claim-making and the rejection of the existing plans and implementations of urban transformation projects in their respective neighbourhoods. The activity was directed towards the municipal bodies and respective further project implementers, which were in two cases²⁸³ the same private real estate developer²⁸⁴ and in the other two cases the Mass Housing Authority, TOKİ.²⁸⁵ In the neighbourhood of Gülsuyu Gülsu, a clear tendency towards a self-determined solution approach through the long-lasting cooperation with the civil platform Solidarity Studio was prevalent but recently abandoned by the pausing of the collaboration.

All neighbourhood associations were mainly homeowner associations that did not manage to involve a considerable amount of local renters in the long run. In the beginning of the respective urban transformation processes, it can be argued that the associations mainly departed on a “right to housing” agenda. In the course of events, most dramatically perceivable in Başbüyük, this agenda changed towards a bargaining for compensations and property rights and thus turned less collective and became more private-gain oriented, which led subsequently to an erosion of social coherence. In the two neighbourhoods in which implementation has not yet taken place, this development is not obvious so far. In Gülsuyu/Gülsu, unity in being anti-

²⁸³ Tarlabası and Fener/Balat/Ayvansary.

²⁸⁴ GAP İNŞAAT (a daughter firm of the well-known Çalık Holding).

²⁸⁵ Başbüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülsu.

urban transformation and pro “a collective right to housing” agenda is most prevalent, while there is disagreement in which way to take facing urban development.

Within the case study, a wide range of dynamics has been described that was potentially used by the project implementers to further fragmentation within the neighbourhoods and its organisations. How strategically these dynamics were used would provide fertile ground for further research.

The four cases show specific characteristics due to their location: The first two, Tarlabası and Fener, Balat, Ayvansaray, are located in central inner-city quarters, while the other two, Başbüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu are located in more peripheral areas on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, which by now are infrastructurally well-connected and located in attractive areas. The first two cases are located in former, mainly non-Muslim neighbourhoods, which attracted rural-to-urban migrants in different waves. Both inner-city neighbourhoods faced deprivation due to either industrial developments or big infrastructural interventions, which led to a certain state of decay over time. Land tenure security is no problem in these neighbourhoods, because most people are legal title deed holders. Nevertheless, they have been already expropriated by the state and practically by a private developer in the case of Tarlabası. In the post-Gecekondu neighbourhoods, due to the urbanisation process, the ambiguous land tenure situation is one of the most prevailing problems substantially weakening the situation of the local population and endangering their lifelong achievements of developing the formerly underserviced lands.

Considering the socio-economic structures the neighbourhoods can be roughly structured as follows: They range from lower-working-class (Tarlabası) to a working-class population (Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray and former Gecekondu neighbourhoods).

Bearing in mind the profound changes of working conditions within the last 50 years, the differentiations between classes may seem obsolete to some extent. Instead, the distinction within the socio-economic milieus dominating each neighbourhood might be more correctly referred to as very marginalised (Tarlabaşı) to less-marginalised population groups (Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray). The former Gecekondu neighbourhoods of Başibüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu are less marginalised than the inner-city area of Tarlabaşı, due to the fact that even though the population is also vulnerable in socio-economic terms and has substandard education and little job security, the existence of social networks and forms of subsistence are potentially more intact than elsewhere. Concerning the urban transformation projects, they can be divided into those where law no. 5366 is applied, so-called urban renewal projects in the inner-city historic neighbourhoods, and those where law no. 5393 is applied, which are the more peripheral neighbourhoods that are prone to natural disasters, according to the understanding of the project implementers. In the case of the urban renewal projects, it can be said that the aim of preserving the existing historical building stock is not at all met. The only thing that will be preserved is the urban layout; all buildings, including facades, will be torn down and entirely replaced. All social measures do not work, to my understanding, as there is little, if any participatory element involved in the planning process.

In the case of the application of law no. 5393, the urban transformation projects, the restructuring of the existing neighbourhoods is even more profound. In an entire build-and-rebuild process, the entire neighbourhoods are going to be torn down, the urban layout will be dramatically changed and the urban density will be multiplied. In both cases, the urban intervention will lead to a very high probability of the exchange of the entire local population. Some inhabitants get compensation payments that are far below the realised market price. As an example, in Başibüyük, this compensation

amounted only to one-thirtieth of the market price per square meter. In other cases, the homeowners are offered flats in the new developments, the area of which does not even correspond to the area of the ground floor in their former multi-story houses where they lived with their extended family.

In the face of these developments, networking between the different neighbourhood organisations facing urban transformation is an important means of exchanging knowledge and showing solidarity. Besides these horizontal networks, the collaboration with other civil society actors, such as the explained civil platforms, can be seen as a potential for strengthening the local grassroots mobilisation in gaining important forms of advocacy. This can only be done effectively if collective values and self-esteem can be developed that are able to overcome to some extent the various divisions of a political and religious nature. Furthermore, a pragmatic approach is needed that ensures a constructive and long-term collaboration of the different actors involved.

6 Chapter: Conclusions

In this concluding chapter, I summarise the main lines of argumentation and the main findings and give an outlook on important issues for further research that came up during this study. I also describe possible future perspectives.

In the pursuit of understanding the nature of Istanbul's newly evolving landscape of civil society actors in the field of urban development that are closely connected to claims for civil rights, this study undertook a thorough review of civil society development since the foundation of the Turkish Republic (see section 4) coupled with the close analysis of the main urbanisation patterns at work in the city (see section 3). Departing from the notion of Istanbul turning from a mega city into a global one (section 3.3) this study tries to put the prevalent phenomenon of urban transformation into a global perspective. Urban transformation, as the main reason for the formation of resistance movements, is discussed in section 3.3. Urban transformation, as a new urban regime, restructures the land markets by commodifying low-income housing areas in Istanbul on a large scale by turning them from grey, not fully functional land markets due to various legal ambiguities and clientelist relations into regular land markets by the unprecedented cooperation of local and national state actors along with private-sector entrepreneurs. This results in the systematic divide between new urban middle classes and marginalised population groups in terms of access to basic resources such as tenure security, information, education and legal rights, thus furthering urban segregation. In practice, this means nothing less than the large-scale expropriation of both *de jure* and *de facto* home owners, forced evictions and the demolition of entire quarters, destroying the inhabitants' close socio-economic networks and profoundly endangering their livelihoods. Renters, the majority of people living in the affected areas, usually do not

receive any compensation at all and are as much hit by urban transformation; they face even bigger threats of losing their livelihoods and social networks, leading to greater poverty and marginality. In this paradigm shift from a populist urban regime to a neo-liberal regime (Candan, Kolluoğlu 2008; Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010), a wide range of civil society actors are forming something that can be described as a multi-actor environment. These newly forming actors apply a wide range of strategies and tactics of resistance in trying to find ways to fight the “multi-levelled social exclusion” (Keyder 2005, p. 133) that this new urban regime is introducing. The most prominent actors in this landscape are the growing number of neighbourhood associations and what I call civil platforms. The latter are organised platforms of mostly academics and professionals applying different strategies to form support networks to undermine urban transformation projects and to some extent come up with alternative solutions. In this, two major strategies became visible that can be described as a claim-making approach and a “self-determined solution” approach.²⁸⁶ (See section 2.2.)

²⁸⁶ Both concepts are introduced by Diana Mitlin in the context of development NGOs Mitlin, Satterthwaite 2004.

6.1 The Formation of Grassroots Organisations

Coming back to the initial research question of this study about the nature of the emergence of grassroots organisations in quarters affected by urban transformation in Istanbul and their way of organising and interacting with other civil society actors depicted in the field, the following main findings can be identified:

6.1.1 Responsive Formation

Besides the description of the differences within the four cases in section 5.7, it can be summarised that the unifying feature within the mobilisation of all four grassroots organisations was of a reflexive nature towards the announced UTP in the first place. The four community-based organisations were founded and started mobilisation on account of a more or less acute threat of losing their livelihoods, socio-economic networks and houses. The impending urban transformation projects were usually announced through rumours or a nontransparent and contradictory information policy of the official authorities regarding planned projects. All grassroots organisations, with the exception of the case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, were newly founded to resist the urban transformation projects to be implemented. Hence, these grassroots organisations can be characterised as single-issue organisations (see section 2.2). In Gülsuyu/Gülensu, a spontaneous coalition of the local village headmen (muhtar) and a local development association, the already existing beautification organisation, as well as local individuals of high social rank, kanaat önderi,²⁸⁷ took the first steps within the mobilisation against the project. The exception in the case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu might be explained by the fact that Gülsuyu/Gülensu was the first neighbourhood in the case study that had already initiated mobilisation against the announced urban transformation projects starting in 2004. In consequence, that

²⁸⁷ Traditional concept of rural governance: something like a council of elders.

means that there was so far little experience with the new urban transformation paradigm and, as mentioned in section 5.1, little time to take action because information on the project from local authorities was delayed. Also, by 2004, the new laws, no. 5393 and no. 5366, which finally initiated the described process of urban transformation, had not yet been adopted.

6.1.2 Importance of Local Initiators

The investigated grassroots organisations have all been initiated by local homeowners, with the exception of the founder in Tarlabası, who never lived in the area and had bought the five houses he owns in the neighbourhood some 22 years ago for investment purposes. Therefore, this homeowner can hardly be described as a local citizen. This point gains importance when answering the question according to the met obstacles within the mobilisation process and will be relevant for the internal solidarity of the associations. The case of Tarlabası is somehow also special in regards to their leadership structure, which was at first very focused on its initial founder and later on was handed over to a charismatic “community organiser” (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010) who was also not initially living in the neighbourhood. In the other cases, the associations were founded by groups of local homeowners. In the cases of Başbüyük and Gülsuyu/Gülensu, the Gecekondu quarters, the homeowners were to a great extent not de jure homeowners; this plays a decisive role in the sustainability of mobilisation and solidarity against the urban transformation project, which differs to a great extent in both neighbourhoods. What became obvious regarding the initiation and running of the observed grassroots organisations was the importance of local charismatic individuals functioning as connectors and motors behind the grassroots organisations and especially the linkages to other grassroots organisations and, increasingly, third parties such as the chamber of architects.

6.1.3 Networks of Grassroots and other Civil Society Actors

Concerning the research subquestion of the nature of connections between grassroots organisations and other civil society actors, a variety of network relations became visible. These were multiple and sometimes consolidated but still very dynamic in their configuration. Within this network landscape, I basically distinguish between three different kinds of networks: First, horizontal networks amongst grassroots organisations were important connections to exchange knowledge and experience and to potentially establish an increasing impetus through unifying resources and increased solidarity. These networks exist between single associations in usually neighbouring areas but have also been initiated at a city-wide level that led to a first glance of unified action within the IMDP, the Istanbul Neighbourhoods Association Platform, but at the same time encountered widespread difficulties such as geographical distance, different problematic, little organisational experience, different values and so forth (see section 4.2.2). The second type of network I derive from the NGO world as described in section 2.2. This kind of network is described as a support network and includes basically all actors active in the realm of urban transformation as depicted in the diagram in Figure 4 thus resulting in very large and heterogeneous networks. Here the actors potentially most actively interacting can be found between the civil platforms and grassroots organisations that form occasionally solid network ties, working together on local claim-making, empowerment and solution strategies. Depending on the civil platform involved, the strategies and repertoires of resistance differ to a great extent. Through these wide-ranging support networks, direct contacts between local grassroots initiatives and international experts are increasingly forged, resulting in more and more direct connections of the grassroots organisations with other relevant actors. This reduces

grassroots organisations' dependency on civil society platforms, which depend to a great extent on the local capacity and will for networking and the commitment to potentially wider reaching involvement than within the neighbourhood. The empowerment of grassroots organisations in Istanbul lies in the interest of the civil platforms, given their very limited resource. The described support networks are directed towards local grassroots organisations, which are in acute need of support and under acute threat of expropriation, resettlement and demolition.

In contrast to the two described network types, a third type of network is currently emerging. As described in the case of the IMDP, which was already an attempt to form a city-wide neighbourhood associations network, now there are new networks forming: These go beyond the grassroots associations level and fight for a common goal that supersedes or add on to the struggles within the respective neighbourhoods, thus potentially including more civil society actors for a longer period of time. One of these networks can be seen in the third-bridge platform²⁸⁸ that, locally routed and issue based, managed to gather a wide range of organisations and people from the different strata of civil society described. This initially local issue, regarding the third Bosphorus Bridge, is proving to be of city-wide importance and facilitates sustained mobilisation, which is often not reached by smaller, more local issues. Another of this city-wide, maybe even wider ranging, networks has been newly founded and had its first demonstration at the end of January 2012:

"Neighbourhoods get together and Istanbul claims its right to the city"²⁸⁹ is the English name of this new platform or network that seems to be basically a right to the city movement in Istanbul that is trying to gather a wide range of civil society actors to

²⁸⁸ Köprü yerine YAŞAM platform: Life instead of a third bridge platform.

²⁸⁹ MAHALLELER BİRLEŞİYOR İSTANBUL 'KENT HAKKI' NA SAHİP ÇIKIYOR! (Turkish name)

mobilise for an political idea that goes beyond a single issue. This programmatically different approach can be seen in the conception of the grassroots organisations as a multi-issue or perhaps meta-issue network and potentially allows for a more sustained mobilisation and more widespread intervention, because this network or platform or movement will not be automatically connected to a certain subject but can open up a wider area of negotiation.²⁹⁰ The potential flaw is that these kinds of networks split up due to ideological reasons because the point of departure is, on a conceptual level, a more theoretical one.

²⁹⁰ See Annex F.

6.1.4 Repertoires of Resistance

The different grassroots organisations observed basically employ similar repertoires of resistance, as described in section 5.6 in detail. This is also, to a certain extent, obvious because the different neighbourhood associations have learned from each other; the process of their formation was incremental and even though urban transformation projects are applied throughout the city at many places at the same time, the described horizontal and the support networks allowed for quick exchanges and learning. Also, because the civil platforms described in section 4.2.3 are active in different neighbourhoods, this exchange is furthered. Nevertheless, the fact that these different neighbourhoods get into this kind of close communication is a new quality in civil society mobilisation, in my experience. As described in section 4.1, because the tradition of civil society is not especially strong in Turkey, and the potential fault lines along which insuperable conflicts rumble on are prevalent, this kind of horizontal dynamic amongst the different actors depicted indicated a potentially profound shift within the inner dynamics of civil society, at least in Istanbul.

A new toolbox, which is not that new anymore, and which nevertheless should neither be overestimated nor underestimated, is the use of digital information technology. It is used for internal linkage through newsgroups, which makes it very easy to communicate content to a wide range of people with little effort and in no time. At the same time, because media in Turkey has limited freedom and independence, weblogs and the like are of great importance, taking the role of mainstream media in reporting on activities of both oppositional actors and urban transformation implementers.

Interviewer: What kind of media is especially useful for you?

Interviewee: Newspapers. Cumhuriyet, most known, Birgün is another newspaper.[But] it was more spread through the internet, online newspapers and blogspots.”²⁹¹

Furthermore, connections to international organisations are perhaps as important as the connection to an international oppositional movement, which in the light of neo-liberal politics becomes more and more important. Because the efficiency of international organisations intervening in local conflict in Turkey is very limited and largely confined to press statements and reports, nevertheless long-term attention and perhaps the pressure of an international audience might have impacts. The fact that in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray the same private developer as in Tarlabaşı still did not carry out any phase of the project might indicate, that the collision of the UTP with an earlier implemented EU funded urban rehabilitation program is not that easy to neglect for the implementing actors, considering that the projects started in the same year. This might further explain the greatly differing information strategies applied in the cases of Tarlabasi and Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray/Ayvansaray.

²⁹¹ Interview with civil platform informant 1, 23 March 2011, Istanbul.

6.1.5 Influence on Local Policies

The influence on local policies of the observed grassroots associations is hard to grasp because the developments researched are still under way; at the same time, urban transformation is a rather slow process. Besides many legal battles, which in the end did not lead to any substantial change in any urban transformation projects to be implemented and the ever-changing legal regulations continue favouring the project implementers, the continuous legal opposition of the transformation processes, especially in international courts, might instigate a new dynamic towards a more just application of the law. Nevertheless, one example of direct impacts to local politics rather than policies can be seen in the case of Başbüyük (also see section 5.3): In this predominantly traditional-minded, usually pro-state and pro-JDP²⁹² (AKP) neighbourhood, the great majority of the local population voted against the so-far popular JDP mayor of Maltepe, Fikri Köse, who was elected with a solid majority in 2004 but who lost 20% of votes in the following elections in 2009 after the escalation of the building site of the first construction phase of the planned urban transformation project. Eighty-nine days of demonstrations, blockade and clashes with police forces were the peak of the resistance against urban transformation. As a consequence, the JDP lost its majority in the neighbourhood, and in the end Mustafar Zengin of the oppositional CHP party won the elections and became the new mayor of Maltepe. Subsequently, the former chairman of the anti-UTP neighbourhood association, Adem Kaya, became a member of the city council and thus became embedded in local politics. Here the grassroots mobilisation could initiate political change. Unfortunately, the new party in power was not necessarily against the project finally, and thus the implementation of the urban transformation project is

²⁹² Justice and Development Party of current Prime Minister R. Erdoğan.

carried on. The aspirations of the former chairman of the contra-UTP association in Başibüyük were not achieved: first, stopping the implementation of the project and second, developing an alternative plan for an in-situ upgrading of the existing structures and thus maintaining the socio-economic networks in the neighbourhood. In fact, the mobilisation of people stopped once the new party was in power and the chairman of the neighbourhood association took part in negotiations from within.

My membership in the city council did not help. The presidency is owned by government supporters. I promised the inhabitants. I couldn't keep my word. I made it a bit difficult for the city council but that was it.²⁹³

At the same time, even though the CHP government slowed down the implementation, it turned out that the CHP was finally either in favour of the urban transformation project or was not powerful enough to stand against it. In fact, today the resistance to the project has widely diminished, and the majority of the inhabitants of Başibüyük are in favour of the new transformation project because most of them see their own private gain. Here the divide and rule tactics of the municipality and the Mass Housing Authority became very effective (see section 5.6).

This is one example of how the initial civil society mobilisation within an affected neighbourhood was almost entirely turned around.

Other neighbourhood organisations such as those in Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray do cooperate with the CHP, for example, on the basis of an exchange of information. Nevertheless, the association is eager to stay autonomous and not become involved with only one party. Other neighbourhoods do not cooperate at all with political parties and remain strictly extra-parliamentary, so to speak.

²⁹³ Telephone interview with local politician informant 2, 29 October 2011.

Another outcome of grassroots mobilisation influencing local politics can be seen in the increasing prevalence of terms promoting participation and the integration of local population within urban transformation processes, as in the case of Tarlabası. Also, the idea of job creation programs is heard repeatedly. Nevertheless, even though the rhetoric might be changing, there is no change in the way UTPs are planned, carried out and implemented so far.

They want to be politically correct. They realise that sending people 41 kilometres away and destroying all the houses, I mean, it is not a clever strategy. They plans do still continue. They demolish, they want new constructions because the whole economy of Turkey is depending on the construction sector in the last five or six years let's say. So that is why they don't want to make little restorations. They demolish even registered or listed buildings. They rebuild it again and again. So they rebuild it but now they say OK, we are not building people away, because they have been criticised and we are going to accommodate in their own neighbourhood or we are joint to move them to a close by area and we said that we have to find new jobs for this people. Because in the Sulukule case they put them away and they cannot really come to the city centre and play for the tourists, or sell sea shells or whatever. So, they learned that they have to make some job opportunities as well and we said as you demolish a neighbourhood, you demolish the solidarity relations and all the networks. So they are trying to make some social projects. They learn, but I mean, I can't really show a good example of it.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ Civil platform informant 2, 30 March 2011

6.1.6 Authorities' Reactions to Grassroots Mobilisation

According to the conducted research and the reviewed literature, it can be said that the authorities implementing urban transformation projects make use of the full range of state powers to answer oppositional movements fighting urban transformation projects. These state powers include a wide collection of separate and manage tactics (see section 5.6) applied in the respective neighbourhoods to systematic defamations of the said neighbourhoods as places of “terror, drugs, psychological negativity, health problems and oppositional views.”²⁹⁵ Furthermore, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called the Gecekondu area tumours on the fringes of the city that need to be eradicated, in a speech held at the mass housing authority in 2006²⁹⁶ (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 6). The constant change of legal presuppositions, together with ever-changing master and project plans and the simultaneous formation of super-institutions like the Mass Housing Authority, which has immense power in its hands (see section 3.3) furthers the marginalisation and segregation of the affected population groups and the shift of their property towards more powerful urban entrepreneurs such as the Mass Housing Authority and private developers (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 17).

²⁹⁵ “Today, the Gecekondu is one of the most important two or three problems that Turkey faces. It is a well-known fact that irregular Gecekondu areas are the source of such problems as terror, drugs, psychological negativity, health problems and oppositional views. For this reason, a Turkey that wants to integrate with the world, that wants to join the European Union must rid itself of illegal dwellings that are also highly risky due to the expected earthquake. Turkey cannot speak of development without solving the Gecekondu problem.” Erdoğan Bayraktar (2007), former executive director of the MHA and current minister of environment and urban planning, as quoted in Kuyucu 2009b, p. 88.

²⁹⁶ “One is asking how can we get rid of them, how can we demolish them. All have been demolished. That means if you remain strong in your belief, you will tear them all down. To destroy the Gecekondus that surrounded our cities like tumours was our biggest aim. We can claim this a success.” Başbakan Erdoğan: Herkes ev sahibi olacak 2006

6.1.7 Dividing Forces within Grassroots Organisations

As already pointed out in section 6.1.5, there are many dividing forces encountered by grassroots organisations in the field of urban transformation. In this section, I focus on the most prevalent dividing forces identified during the field research and literature analysis. Initially, it has to be stressed that the described dynamics are to be found within most civil society organisations around the world. Nevertheless, the composition and intensity of the described forces is specific. The main dividing forces that grassroots organisations in Turkey experience, especially in the field of urban transformation, can be identified first by external forces such as the prevalent tactics of erosion of civil society movements of the urban transformation implementers, both state actors and private developers, and more openly, state violence through aggressive police operations. Important internal dividing forces can be identified as self-interest closely connected to mistrust, partly instigated through the described external forces and followed by the ambivalence of tenure status, a lack of movement-building experience and lastly profound ideological political, ethnic and religious conflicts.

The dividing force referred to in section 6.5 can be described as self-interest or the “appetite for private gain” (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 16) that urban transformation projects frequently bring about, like the one described in the case of Başibüyük. It is difficult to separate the different, identified dividing forces because they are closely linked to each other. The multiple tactics of erosion such as the separate and manage²⁹⁷ tactics of the project implementers (see section 5.6) systematically instigate self-interest at the cost of solidarity, as in the example of Başibüyük where

²⁹⁷ Also “Divide and Rule” or “Divide et Impera” see Machiavelli 2010.

the Mass Housing Authority and the municipality set up a pilot project in which the homeowners affected were getting exemplary compensations: full title deeds and full compensation of floor space within the new development. As described in section 6.5 in the pilot project, only one homeowner needed to be compensated. Due to the anti-UTP association, this kind of compensation will not be guaranteed in any further construction phases of the project. Nevertheless, the effect on the solidarity within the neighbourhood mobilisation is devastating. In this respect, the pilot project was highly effective in terms of dividing the grassroots mobilisation within the neighbourhood.

Furthermore, self-interest has to be seen in close connection to distrust in both in the constitutional state as much as amongst citizens because nobody knows if the other does not sell his or her property and if the acquisition of any appropriate compensation would at all be possible. That means that distrust is becoming a major dividing force as much it was seen earlier as a necessary presupposition for the existence of a civil society and social capital (see section 2.2).

Especially in the former Gecekondu areas, the status of land tenure becomes a further main dividing force within grassroots mobilisation. As described in detail in chapter 3, the nature of this ambiguous tenure structure has long been tolerated and at the same time produced by local and national state authorities that now play this legal vagueness against the still more marginalised population groups that are the target group of clientelistic politics. Their place has been taken by an emerging globalising middle class and transnational entrepreneurs, or as Keyder puts it:

As the old laws which considered maintenance of public land to be foundational to the legitimacy of populist government have been relaxed, new demands from the capitalist sector have come to the forefront. Formerly populist politicians now respond to these market-mediated demands rather than to a potential constituency of new immigrants. They have

shifted their allegiances from populist developmentalism to neighbourhoods upgrading under capitalist logic.(Keyder 2005, p. 130)

While in Gecekondur neighbourhoods the fault line runs between legal land title holders and allocation deed holders or squatters (see section 3.2) in the cases of the investigated inner-city formerly non-Muslim neighbourhoods, ambiguous or weak tenure status is produced first through various persons sharing one full title deed, but because the ownership is split among many, this fact results in a weak bargaining position with the project implementers because not all title holders can be located at times and conflict within the title holders' group results in a frail position.

They couldn't bring all the shareholders in the house. Because three generations had passed since they got these buildings mostly, there are a lot of house owners in Fener and Balat, but for example their uncle is somewhere in their village, someone else is in Germany, so they couldn't have everyone agree to sign it.²⁹⁸

Also, to a smaller extent, the ambiguous land tenure status results from squatting, which was partly possible because former landlords were not allowed to sell their property and had to leave the country (see section 5.3). It can be argued that this pervasive ambivalence of tenure status was in fact produced by the state in the first place through political decisions taken in the course of time and then further tolerated and not corrected later on.

The lack of movement-building experience can become a dividing force when the last identified dividing force above comes into play: ideological conflicts concerning political, ethnic and religious affiliations. In the case study, these conflicts, according to the interviewees, have not been prevalent, yet this can hardly be assumed because ideological conflicts between political, ethnic and religious groups in Turkey

²⁹⁸ Experts informant 1, project leader EU rehabilitation project, 15 March 2011

are persistent, multiple and profound (see section 4.1). It might be the case that in the observed neighbourhood associations, a post-ideological working basis has been found that accentuates the common ground of the affected population group facing the same problem.

[...] There is no real problem between the people, local people. There are cultural differences. Black Sea people are very very traditional people. Kurdish people are always a little distant to people from Turkey. This is not a special character of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray. Usually Kurdish people, they feel a little closer to each other. They feel independent from Turkey or from other people. But Black Sea people are very nationalist people. They support the state. Usually. But in this situation differently. Because the state is threatening their life space and their houses. This is why this position is very strange for them. You know, I am socialist and I always oppose the government. But this people always support the state. Because nationalistic people and conservative people are disappointed. Because their government treats them like that. Because they always supported the state and the government and now the government opposes them and they are really disappointed.²⁹⁹

With the exception of Tarlabaşı, the neighbourhoods investigated turned out not to be very heterogeneous in terms of political, ethnic and religious affiliations concerning the homeowners, who appeared to be the prevalent actors in grassroots organisations. Another facet of ideological conflict could be observed in Gülsuyu/Gülensu, where the grassroots organisations did not split up into pro- and contra-UTP organisations but into something possibly identifiable as moderate, more radical and leftist radical organisations. In Gülsuyu/Gülensu, a profound dissent about the tactics and strategies to be employed to answer the planned urban transformation project developed between a more moderate attitude, which is

²⁹⁹ NHA informant 9, 18 March 2011

promoted by the newly founded neighbourhood association GÜLDAM,³⁰⁰ for example, and more radical leftist organisations that sympathise with a potentially more violent approach, including street blockages, etc. So far, the moderate movements seem to be more influential.

In the last case, it cannot be a lack of movement-building experience, because the neighbourhood has a strong tradition in grassroots mobilisation. In contrast, in the first scenario of ideological conflicts between different groups within one community, a certain degree of movement-building experience could at least avoid some conflicts or find structures and procedures to cope with them more productively.

³⁰⁰ They promote the idea of non-violent resistance forming a city-wide coalition of a broad range of civil society actors, including the development of their own solution towards the transformation of the neighbourhood.

6.1.8 Common Grounds for Sustained Civil Society Mobilisation

After having reviewed some major dividing forces in the surveyed cases, this section deals with the possibility of finding common grounds and modes for the sustained mobilisation and collective action for grassroots associations and also for the wider range of civil society actors discussed.

As an outcome of this study, there are four main points that I see as being vital in this respect. First is the provision and spreading of knowledge. That is, on the one hand, the knowledge of planned processes underway. It turned out that the planned urban transformation projects in all four areas of the case study were poorly and contradictorily communicated by municipalities and other project implementers, which seems to a certain extent tactics to minimise resistance. On the other hand, the knowledge about citizens' rights, about adequate compensation and the like is at the core of sustained mobilisation and needs to be provided. Because these rights are not very present in people's minds, it is hard to collectively defend them.

There was always a suspicion. That's of course you also have to understand our Turkishness, the Turkish psyche. [...] Most of the things happen by gossip. People are not used to getting organised for a public cause. [...] They are not used to a total benefit, they think of their own immediate profit out of this [...]. I am saying these things out of five and a half years living together with them. You know at the beginning you say: Oh, we are doing this for the people. How nice everything is. But the people are not always so nice. You have to know about that. You can't be too romantic about these things. [...] Only when they went through this process they understood there is no harm in this. It only happened afterwards. Maybe we should have done more of a pilot project.³⁰¹

³⁰¹ Experts informant 1, project leader EU rehabilitation project, 15 March 2011

The second basic presupposition for successful civil society mobilisation is trust. Whereas distrust is, as described above, a potential dividing force, trust is in comparison, a potential uniting force. More specifically: trust in state institutions, legal apparatuses and in common values of fellow citizens. This trust can also be called social capital, as described in chapter 2.

Social capital is defined by the OECD as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups.' [...] Put together, these networks and understandings engender trust and so enable people to work together. (Keeley 2007, p. 103)

I see the third presupposition or common ground for sustained grassroots mobilisation in the democratisation of local organisations, which includes the involvement of women and young people as much as a transparent structure within decision making that is both internal and external. Moreover, mechanisms of democratic representation of potentially all people in a community are needed. This kind of democratisation would increase the accountability and support of local people and potentially further trust and common values. Basic mechanisms like these have already been introduced by the civil platform Solidarity Studio, for example:

So, you just have to make it one of the local people to be the leader. In all neighbourhoods, that is the first thing we told them. We said we need a representative of each street. And we need not only the men, but also the women and the young people, please. Because if we go to an association you see some men, mainly 40 or 50 years old, with moustache and beard, and with big belly and they sit and they make politics and all the rest of the neighbourhood is leaving there. So we said, if you want to work with us, let's agree on this. We need representatives from each street. Who are really representative, everybody knows them, and everybody is supporting them. They should be an elected street representative. And there should be at least a quarter of women. Because otherwise they wouldn't let the women come to the meeting even.

How do they react?

They don't like it. They say that they don't understand. We ask them and they didn't come. Or, they bring the women, but the women serve tea. But you can still find some women, like Cigdem or whatever. And they are also very much politically oriented. To make the local people and the youngsters come work something for their neighbourhood is very difficult.³⁰²

Lastly, I want to introduce a fourth presupposition that to my understanding can be a vital component in the development of a sustained civil society mobilisation. A new narrative is needed that is strong enough to unite the different groups affected by urban transformation: a narrative that is to some extent post-ideological and yet political enough to provide the anti-urban transformation movement with a meta message that is able to unite the different mobilisations, struggles and actions in the different neighbourhoods at a city-wide if not wider level. As pointed out above, there are two directions that are visible at the moment: either the connection towards movements around subjects with city-wide importance, such as the Third Bridge or Taksim Square, or the formation of a "right to the city" movement that has just started. No clear-cut differentiation is really possible between the different movements and initiatives mentioned here because they are overlapping to a great extent in terms of people, organisations and times of emergence.

As has been shown in section 4.2, there have already been different attempts to found this city-wide coalition earlier. Whether the creation of a city-wide movement, coalition or platform is possible in a sustained way will remain to be seen. What can be said is that the newly evolving civil society actors in the field of urban transformation in Istanbul show a strong will and the power to organise, struggle and mobilise against the unjust policies and projects that have been and will be implemented. In the case of conflicts, besides eroding tendencies also remarkable

³⁰² Civil platform informant 2, 30 March 2011

sense of pragmatism has been shown, so that coalitions on the neighbourhood level between different actors remained largely operational even though the process of city-wide networking at times remained stagnant.

6.2 Vulnerability towards Urban Transformation

After having elaborated on the main findings of this study in terms of the formation of grassroots organisations in Istanbul, I now revisit the initially posed hypotheses and comment on their validity as far as possible after the conducted research. The initial working hypotheses tried to assess the connection of rural-to-urban migrants, their vulnerability towards urban transformation and the specific factors that could enhance this vulnerability.

Hypothesis I

The first working hypothesis consisted of the assumption that neighbourhoods affected by urban transformation are mainly inhabited by originally rural-to-urban migrants who originally squatted on state-owned land or took over already-marginalised³⁰³ inner-city areas. After the conducted case study, it can be considered that in all four cases the inhabitants of the affected neighbourhoods are generally living in their respective neighbourhoods not longer than 50 years and that they are rural-to-urban migrants or descendants of these migrants that came to the city initially in the context of increasing industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture. Furthermore, the reviewed population of the neighbourhoods can be characterised by a particular socio-economic vulnerability. What did not prove to be the case was the assumption that most homeowners affected are holding *de jure* land titles. In fact, the homeowners affected by urban transformation in the Gecekondur neighbourhoods

³⁰³ Marginalised areas in terms of the local socioeconomic structure due to an already started dynamic of decay initiated by the abandonment of the initial homeowners, with a resulting deterioration of the built environment. This deterioration was furthered by hazards such as fire, nearby polluting industries (Fener/Balat) or large-scale infrastructural projects physically disconnecting the respective neighbourhood (Tarlabası). Finally, the weak socio-economic situation of the new homeowners did not improve the situation. In some cases this marginalised situation led to the squatting of the abandoned houses by the new population. Most important, the areas received a negative stigmatisation that usually became transferred to its local population.

generally hold ambiguous land titles, often either a title deed or no title allocation deeds providing them with no legal security, while the ones affected in the inner city neighbourhoods mainly have de jure title deeds. Nevertheless, this superior legal situation of the inner-city dwellers does not necessarily help the homeowners to secure their rights. In the case of Tarlabası, where implementation of the urban renewal project is relatively advanced, homeowners are equally facing forced evictions and compulsory expropriation. In this respect, it can be argued that the ambivalence of tenure turns rather into an internal aspect potentially dividing the local population instead of affecting the possibilities of securing their rights.

Hypothesis II

The second working hypothesis assumed that the rural-to-urban migrants have a largely rather conservative and apolitical mind-set due to their widespread status as homeowners and their continuous affiliation with a certain hometown or village identity, which is rooted in a more religious and less secular tradition than in the big cities, especially Istanbul. Because of this feature, the mobilisation of people to take up collective interests and show solidarity was assumed to be rather difficult. This proves to be partly correct in the case of Başibüyük. However, it remains unclear and doubtful that the made connections are correct in the sense that a more conservative and more religious population group is less solidary and mobilised. In the beginning of the implementation phase of the urban transformation project in Başibüyük, there was great solidarity and unity within the population and not only in the directly affected parts of the neighbourhood. The loss of solidarity and unity between de jure and de facto homeowners started to gain ground after separate and manage strategies hit. It would be highly interesting to see whether a less conservative population would be more resistant to the described dynamics that led to widespread

focus on private gain in favour of collective goals. Perhaps the initially observable collectiveness was not that collective. Nevertheless, in comparison to neighbouring Gülsuyu/Gülensu, it might be correct that the tradition of being persecuted by the state authorities created a subsequent need for internal organisation in the case of Gülsuyu/Gülensu, which led in that particular neighbourhood to a more profound organisation-building experience; people are more used to fighting for their rights and taking up collective action in this politically more left community. In this case study, the latter community seems to be the most successful community fighting urban transformation so far. If this is the case cannot be finally concluded, because the dynamic of implementation has not been yet experienced in Gülsuyu/Gülensu. At the same time, no attempt from the side of the state authorities to further the urban transformation was made, which could be partly interpreted as an achievement of the local grassroots organisations. That means that based on the conducted case study, this hypothesis cannot be finally validated. However, there is some evidence that the hypothesis can be partly correct.

Hypothesis III

The third working hypothesis is based on the statement of Kuyuku and Ünsal (Kuyucu, Ünsal 2010, p. 3), which assumes that the form and strength of resistance would be largely influenced by the existing tenure situation in the respective neighbourhoods. They observe a much stronger and unified front of urban resistance in Tarlabası than in Başbüyük, which leads to an at least temporary hold-up of the implementation of the UTP, whereas the Başbüyük resistance has fallen apart due to a bargaining process for personal gains. Kuyuku and Ünsal thus conclude that the informal nature of tenure in the former Gecekondu quarter of Başbüyük led to less unified resistance. Starting from the case study conducted, this third hypothesis

cannot be verified. Based on the conducted research, no direct connection between the tenure situation and the strength of resistance according to Kuyuku and Ünsal can be made in the case of Tarlabası and Başibüyük. In my experience, bargaining processes were equally strong and dividing in both Tarlabası and Başibüyük because the alternative to not selling is the expropriation by the state in both cases.

I was never a homeowner. I was a renter. Within the organisation there was a problem. A real problem: One year ago there was a discussion amongst the members. Some wanted to raise the value of their real estates. It was so profitable. I had never an idea for myself. The principles of the neighbourhood association were different in the beginning. One cannot distinguish once own property from that of the others, by valuing once own higher than that of the others. All are equally valuable and important for the association.³⁰⁴

In fact, the implementation of the urban transformation, respectively urban renewal, is more advanced in the case of Tarlabası at the moment. Furthermore, the more heterogeneous social structure and the leader of the neighbourhood organisation being an outsider to the community in the case of Tarlabası further weakened the unity or at least did not create the kind of movement that would have been able to make a change. Thus, a weaker tenure situation furthers the possibilities of the project implementers, yet the potential for mobilisation might lie more within the capacity for collective action of the respective grassroots organisation that can be enhanced by the political affiliation, the organisation-building experience and very importantly, the connection to other actors within civil society such as civil platforms and other neighbourhood associations that open up resources of know-how in organisation building, principles of democratic representation, solidarity and publicity.

³⁰⁴ NHA informant 8, former chairman of anti-UTP association Tarlabası, 19 March 2011

Furthermore, individual leadership seems important, since certain “hero” activists seem to fulfil important unifying functions.

Hypothesis IV

The fourth working hypothesis assumed that, due to urban transformation and the exerted pressure on so far rather apolitical homeowners and population groups, a new, more self-aware, more politicised and more organised civil society emerges. The anticipated dynamic becomes partly visible but yet not necessarily sustainable. The politicisation of the affected, socio-economical vulnerable population groups results from an immediate threat and develops in a responsive, usually not sustained way. Therefore, it is a mobilisation instead of a politicisation. Nevertheless, the increased pressure, produced segregation and inequality lead to the formation of a more differentiated civil society landscape with different actors that are partly highly politicised. These actors organise in a more and more sustained way and build networks with each other and the neighbourhoods directly affected. It was repeatedly reported that it is becoming important for the locally evolving and already existing organisations to create local ideas, a local vision, rather than merely rejecting urban transformation. This would allow for a more sustained mobilisation of the local population. It turned out that within urban transformation processes that take a long time, it is very difficult to maintain mobilisation only out of the rejection of these processes.

The organisation in itself is not enough. It is not enough to fight these projects. If the inhabitants do not feel connected to the organisation, if they do not join the association regularly, if the association does only identify with the transformation projects, all efforts will be in vain. The neighbourhood association must care for all deficits [within the neighbourhood], with local life, for the cultural and social matters.

The members need to have a local identity. It needs to be well-structured; we have to

agree on what we do once the threat has been eliminated. The organisation should not only fight the transformation projects, but deal with the everyday life of the neighbourhood. Because of that there is a problem between the local people and the association.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ *NHA informant 1, board member of Güldam, anti-UTP NHA in Gülsuyu/Gülensu, 16 March 2011*

6.3 Future Perspectives

Istanbul is turning from a mega city into a global city. In doing this, it not only adapts to global standards of capital and lifestyle; it also furthers an urban divide that is becoming visible around the globe.

In some of these cities, the urban divide between “haves” and “have nots” opens up a gap—if not, in occasion, a chasm, an open wound—which can produce social instability or at least generate high social and economic costs not only for the urban poor, but for society at large. (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2010, p. VIII)

This urban divide is becoming more and more visible in Istanbul, which is becoming a segregated city where detached islands of up-market developments become fragments of a globalised city, build on former neighbourhoods of the lower and middle classes. Dieter Läßle calls this rather new development strategy a *“developer-driven urbanism with an exclusive urban structure, highly dependent car ownership with a simulated cityness [...], a fragmented low developed social capital and actually all those things we want to overcome in the cities of the north.”* (Läßle 5/11/2009) As seen within the present study, this developer-driven urbanism potentially destroying the local social capital is getting stronger in a close alliance with the state and local governments. To overcome the urban divide as described above, a profound paradigm shift within the current development paradigm is needed. It is needed to avoid making the mistakes of the past that *“we had in the north: That tabula rasa, the clearance of the old structure, destroying social capital but really take it serious.”* (Läßle 5/11/2009) In this context, it is important to acknowledge that Gecekondus, for example, are not tumours on the fringes of the

city, but rather examples of best practices of how to develop a city incrementally, community-based, and bottom up in a resilient way. Doubtless, in-situ upgrading of existing structures to minimise risk for the local population while maintaining existing network ties will often become necessary. A new planning paradigm has to step back from strengthening already strong urban actors such as developers, municipalities, state institutions and new emerging middle and upper classes but must also appreciate and empower local communities. The further development of social capital and grassroots mobilisation that is inherent within the neighbourhoods is important to enhance because *“[...] improvements in social inclusiveness are closely associated with the political role of non-governmental organisations advocating stronger political commitment by government, along with freedom of expression and other human rights.”* (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2010, p. XVII).

At the same time, a redevelopment on an incremental basis, including local civil society actors, needs to implement basic democratic mechanisms on both sides: on the side of the municipalities and other implementing project partners as well as on the side of the civil society actors. Regarding grassroots organisations, it has to be kept in mind though that there is a thin line between formalising informal organisational patterns for increased transparency and accountability on the one hand and on the other hand maintaining the informal nature of the organisation that is potentially more flexible and effective, more capable of acting. *“Civil society must [...] explore new frontiers if it is effectively to support the institutional strengthening required to promote equality, political rights and civil liberties.”* (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2010, p. XVII)

A new planning paradigm needs to step back from large-scale, uniform developments with unspecific solutions. Site-specific plans need to be carried out and potentially interim solutions need to be implemented such as the retrofitting of existing buildings

with easy-to-implement protective measures against earthquakes, for example. Local modes of livelihood and lifestyles need to be respected and incorporated, urban gardening and the like, making local populations less vulnerable to poverty.

Transparency within the planning and implementation process needs to be guaranteed, such as an installed, clearly defined flow of information. A decentralisation of powers of the Mass Housing Authority (TOKI) through a transparent process is imperative. A structural disruption of the ever-repeating circuit of every new politically power installing its own elites is needed.

Looking at the potential strategies of the erosion of social coherence depicted in section 5.6, practical ways to avoid these dynamics need to be found. For example, the changing of a project or plan must not easily cause the invalidity of a verdict directed against the initial plan or project. Furthermore, an independent clearing house committed to the communication between citizens and project implementers granting the flux of information, and that is able to penalise in case of bad communication would be a possibility to improve the process.

In the aftermath of the earthquake in the city of Van in October 2011, there is upcoming legislation that is very likely to extend the powers of the project implementers even more and at the same time further diminish the possibilities of local communities and other civil society actors. Therefore, the proposed paradigm shift is not likely to occur in the mid-term. Nevertheless, it remains relevant to carefully observe the depicted phenomena.

Recommendations for Civil Society

Besides the development of autonomous visions for the respective neighbourhoods, it is becoming important to build networks and thus come up with city-wide visions and overcome local divides and animosities. Furthermore, the creation of sustainable

organisational structures based on democratic principles is needed and should be implemented and experimented with. As pointed out above, the formalisation of grassroots organisations does not lead automatically to more transparent and more accountable organisational structures and thus to potentially more involvement of the local residents. The potential of internal conflicts might even rise in the beginning. Therefore, the creation of common values and visions is just as important.

The different approaches of grassroots organisations mentioned in section 2.2 of claim-making and self-determined solution approaches might help as a reference to understand one's own undertaking. Nevertheless, claim-making is a basic prerequisite of all grassroots mobilisation, whether an alternative solution is presented or not. The "right to the city" idea can be a potential vision able to unify the many.

More than a new legalistic device, the right of the city is the expression of the deep yearnings of urban dwellers for effective recognition of their various human rights.
(United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2010, p. XV)

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

In the wake of this study, certain fields have necessarily remained under-explored and theorised. These include, for example, the dynamic in which the different networks of the identified civil society actors form and support each other productively or not productively. The role of international organisations and actors could not be sufficiently accessed, for example. Further research could estimate the importance of international cooperation for local, i.e., Istanbul-based civil platforms and grassroots organisations. Furthermore, the role of civil platforms and the dynamics at work within the formation of those actors would be of great interest, especially as they have been depicted as important multipliers and knowledge provides for local grassroots organisations. The question of how the precarious funding situation of these organisations allows them to continue long-term engagement and advocacy, maintaining maximum independence from donors, would be of great importance to answer. Furthermore, the question of how this emerging environment of civil platforms could turn into something like an NGO environment comparable to other countries and what the subsequent consequences would be is additionally interesting.

Another very important field of further research would be a more systematical analysis of what I called strategies of erosion of social coherence. As stated above, the present data only allowed for the assumption of the strategic use of the described dynamics. In what way and in how far that is really the case and who is the motor behind that would be truly elucidating. Furthermore, the depicted dividing forces within grassroots organisations would be important to analyse more in depth. The question if a less conservative population would be more resistant to the described

dynamics that led to widespread focus on private gain in favour of collective goals still needs a conclusive answer.

Finally, a less organisation-based research focus towards a more actors-centred one would be very promising because the personal role of the different players involved did only emerge occasionally and little systematic in this study. I am convinced that individual charismatic activists are crucial to the well-functioning of local and city-wide mobilisation processes.

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8 Annexes

8.1 Annex A: List of Informants and Interviews

List of informants

Neighborhood Associations and NHA Platforms and Intermediary Organization

No.	Organisation	Abbreviation	Neighbourhood	Interview Partner	Date
1	Gülsuyu Gülenso Yaşam ve Dayanışma Merkezi (Gülsuyu Gülenso Life and Solidarity Centre)	Güldam	Gülsuyu/Gülenso	Co-Founder	16.03.2011
2	Gülsuyu/Gülenso Mahalle Güzelleştirme Derneği (Gülsuyu/Gülenso Beautification Association)	contra UTP NHA	Gülsuyu/Gülenso	Member	20.03.2011
3	Gülsuyu/Gülenso Mahalle Güzelleştirme Derneği (Gülsuyu/Gülenso Beautification Association)	contra UTP NHA	Gülsuyu/Gülenso	Member	06.06.2011
4	Başıbüyük mahallesi, çevreyi güzelleştirme ve düzenleme ve Tabiatı koruma derneği (Environmental Beautification and Regulation and Nature Conservation Association)	contra UTP NHA	Başıbüyük	Co-Founder	20.03.2011
5	Başıbüyük Güzelleştirme ve Kalkındırma Derneği (Başıbüyük Beautification and Development Association)	pro UTP NHA	Başıbüyük	Chairman	23.03.2011
6	Başıbüyük Kentsel Dönüşüm Komisyonu (Urban Transformation Commission)	Urban Transformation Commission	Başıbüyük	Chairman	23.03.2011
7	Tarlabaşı Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (Property Owners and Social Development and Tenant Aid Association of Tarlabaşı)	contra UTP NHA	Tarlabaşı	Chairman and Founder	17.03.2011
8	Tarlabaşı Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (Property Owners and Social Development and Tenant Aid Association of Tarlabaşı)	contra UTP NHA	Tarlabaşı	Former Chairman	19.03.2011
9	Fener Balat Ayvansaray Mülk Sahiplerinin ve Kiracılarını Haklarını Koruma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (Fener Balat Ayvansaray Property Owners and Tenants Rights Protection and Social Solidarity Association)	FEBAYDER (contra UTP NHA)	Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray	General Secretary	18.03.2011
10	İstanbul Mahalle Dernekler Platformu (İstanbul Neighbourhood Associations Platform)	IMDP		Spokesperson	16.03.2011 20.03.2011

Residents

No.	Type	Neighbourhood	Date
1	Resident	Tarlabası	21.03.2011
2	Resident	Tarlabası	21.03.2011
3	Resident	Tarlabası	21.03.2011
4	Resident	Fener/Balat	18.03.2011
5	Resident	Fener/Balat	18.03.2011
6	Resident	Fener/Balat	18.03.2011
7	Resident	Fener/Balat	18.03.2011
8	Resident	Fener/Balat	18.03.2011
9	Resident	Fener/Balat	18.03.2011
10	Resident	Basıbüyük	06.06.2011
11	Resident	Basıbüyük	06.06.2011
12	Resident	Basıbüyük	06.06.2011
13	Resident	Basıbüyük	06.06.2011
14	Resident	Basıbüyük	06.06.2011
15	Resident	Basıbüyük	06.06.2011
16	Resident	Gülsüyu/Gulensu	06.06.2011
17	Resident	Gülsüyu/Gulensu	06.06.2011
18	Resident	Gülsüyu/Gulensu	06.06.2011
19	Resident	Gülsüyu/Gulensu	06.06.2011

Civil Platforms

No.	Organisation	Abbreviation	Interview Partner	Date
1	IMECE	IMECE	Member	23.03.2011
2	Dayanismaçiatolye (Solidary Studio)	DA	Co-Founder	30.03.2011
3	Sulukule Platform		Member	22.03.2011
4	Sulukule Platform		Member	14.04.2008
5	Sulukule Platform		Co-Founder	16.04.2008
6	Human Settlement Association	IYD	Chairman	25.03.2011

State Agency

1	Mass Housing Authority	MHA (TOKI)	Branch Manager Istanbul	24.03.2011
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Local Government

1	Beyoğlu Municipality		Town Planning Department	15.03.2011
2	Beyoğlu Municipality		Mediator between Residents and GAP hired by Municipality	21.03.2011
3	Maltepe Municipality		Town Planning Department	23.03.2011

Local Politicians

1	CHP Fatih		City Council Member, CHP, Group Vice President	19.03.2011
2	CHP Maltepe		City Council Member, CHP	20.03.2011

Private Sector

1	GAP İNŞAAT	GAP	Project Leader, Tarlabası Renewal Project	21.03.2011
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Experts

No.	Organisation/ Profession	Interview Partner	Date
1	Conservation Architect	EU Rehabilitation Project Leader	15.03.2011
2	Conservation Architect	EU Rehabilitation Project Manager	18.03.2011
3	University Strasbourg, Urban Observatory Istanbul	Urban Researcher	21.03.2011
4	Goethe Institute	Deputy Director	24.03.2011
5	Chamber of Architects	Lawyer	17.03.2011

8.2 Annex B: Interview Guidelines

		Residents
Interview Guidelines		
Subject	Question	Probes
Personal	Since when do you live here?	Origin, Family (wife/husband, children...), Profession, Source of income,
Tenure Security	Do you feel safe here?	Renter, Homeowner, affected by transformation process, since when did the insecurity start? How?
CBO	Do you feel represented by the neighborhood association?	Wish for the neighborhood? for your living conditions , for your business , what should be better, has that changed?
	Are you an active member in the association? Why?	Why not anymore? What could you do?
Actors	Who are the most important persons and institution in the process?	
Observation Triangulation	What about the renovated houses?	
General	Anything else to add?	

		RESIDENT EXPERTS
Interview Guidelines		
Subject	Question	Probes
Organizational Origins	Year of foundation? Who founded it? Why?	year? What happened, Who started it?
	What is the leadership structure? How many members vs. residents?	What kind of memebers? Home owners, renters?
	How many people are home owners, renters. What kind of homeownership?	
	Is there any funding and do people pay contribution?	
Organizational Activities	What activities completed and are under way? Did they start it?	
	How where these activities planned and implemented?	
	What problems has the organization chosen not to confront?	
Relationship to other associations and networks		First blank paper, than show own actors analysis, add on.
	Has the organization ever worked in collaboration with other organizations in same neighborhood?	
	Is the organization part of a larger city wide, regional or national network?	IMECE, DA, IMOP, Sulukule Platform, Chamber of Architects, Planners
	How is the relationship of your organization and other local organization?	
Relationship to City government	Does the your organization have any relationship with any specific officials or offices in city government?	
	Is the relationship formal or informal?	
	Has this relationship been productive?	
	Has the city government hindered the emergences of community organizations. How?	
Outcomes	Has the city made any structural changes in its own organization to be more supportive and competent with respect to neighborhood preservation and revitalization goals generally?	
	What tangible evidence of neighborhood improvement through the organization has there been?	
	Has there been any evidence of the organization having blocked or prevented of some change in the physical condition in the neighborhood?	
Residents' Perception	What do residents feel about the neighbourhood organization?	
	Do residents feel that target organization has addressed the neighborhoods problems?	
	Have activities of the target organization resulted in increased activity of the people?	
Race and Social Justice	How have problems of race or ethnic division arisen in the target organization?	
	Is there increased unity or fragmentation in the neighborhood since the founding of the organization?	
	Is there anything else you would like to ad?	
Do you have any records or documents, newspaper ... for us?		
Who else should we talk to?		
Urban Transformation	What is the urban transformation problematic in your neighborhoods? What is happening at the moment?	What law, Since when, Who initiated the process why? Did they go to court?

		MUNICIPALITY
Interview Guidelines		
Subject	Question	Probes
Urban Transformation	What kind of process is happening?	Urban Conservation, Earthquake Protection, ... Which law is applied?
	Who started the process?	
	What is your role in the process?	
	What is good in the process?	
	What is bad in it?	
	What shall the process enhance? For whome?	
Actors	Which actors are involved?	first alone verbal, than clear tabel, than filled in table
Civil Society	What role do civil society actors play in the transformation process?	
	How do you see the role of neighborhood assiciations in the process?	
	Do you work together with Neighborhood Asc.	
	What works well, bad, why?	

8.3 Annex C: Statistical Data on Observed Neighbourhoods

[illegible]

Table 6: Statistics provided by TurkStat 2011 revealing the education situation in the observed neighborhoods. The data is partly questionable like in the neighbourhood of Şehir Muhtar, where more people have higher than primary education. Because of this I used this data only for a very rough estimate.

ADDRESS BASED POPULATION REGISTRATION SYSTEM (ABPRS) RESULTS, 2010																		
PROVINCE	DISTRICT	NEIGHBORHOOD	AGE GROUP													Total		
			0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64		65+	
ISTANBUL	FATİH	AYVANSARAY	1480	1518	1672	1534	1534	1851	1831	1672					926	687	1382	20098
ISTANBUL	FATİH	BALAT	1357	1402	1495	1423	1363	1551	1484	1363					679	481	1070	16807
ISTANBUL	MALTEPE	BASIBUYUK	1751	1700	1772	1546	1841	1870	2031	1825					678	475	636	19250
ISTANBUL	MALTEPE	GULENSU	1284	1038	1293	1384	1506	1806	1887	1528					705	740	712	16848
ISTANBUL	MALTEPE	GULSUYU	1214	1225	1403	1318	1388	1582	1711	1621					647	491	867	16487
																	Total	33335
																	Gülsuyu/Güvensu	

Table 7: Population of the neighborhoods observed. Gülsuyu and Güleusu are seen as one entity and therefor a total number is generated.

[illegible]

Table 8: Population of the official neighborhoods that constitute the area of Tarlabası that is one of the neighborhoods of the case study.

8.4 Annex D: Urban Transformation Project Başibüyük

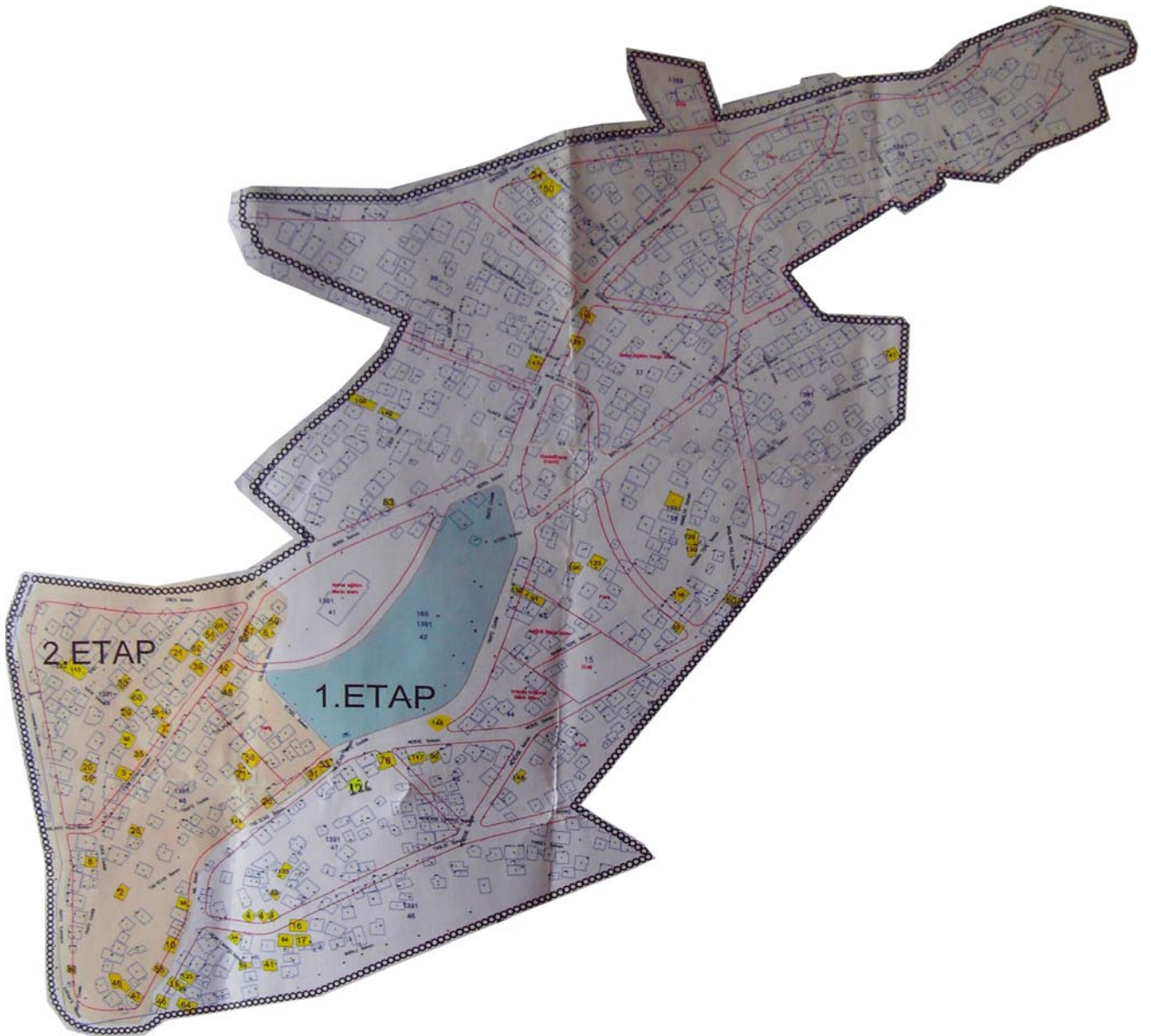


Figure 54: Area of urban transformation project (houses in yellow are the ones that were already measured for the owners to receive compensation). Source: Pro UTP NHA Başibüyük





ANA GAYRİMENKULÜN	İli	İSTANBUL -		 TAPU SENEDİ			
	İlçesi	MALTEPE					
	Mahallesi	BAŞIBÜYÜK					
	Köyü						
	Sokağı						
	Mevkii						
Pafta No.	Ada No.	Parsel No.	Niteliği	Yüzölçümü			
			ARSA	ha	m²	dm²	18.710,97 m²
Sınırı	Planındadır						Zemin Sistem No :
KAT MÜLKİYETİ <input type="checkbox"/>			KAT İRTİFAKİ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			DEVRE MÜLK <input type="checkbox"/>	
Satış Bedeli		Niteliği		Arsa Payı	Blok No.	Kat No.	Bağımsız Blm. No.
		Mesken				8.	
BAĞIMSIZ BÖLÜM	Edinme Sebebi						
	Sahibi	HASAN KEMER : CAFER Oğlu Tam					
Geldisi	Yevmiye No.	Cilt No.	Sahife No.	Sıra No.	Tarihi	Gittisi	
Cilt No.					20/03/2009	Cilt No.	
Sahife No.	 NOT: * Mülkiyetin gayri ayni tasarrufla devri, tapu sicli ile tasdik edilir. ** Tebliğat Kanunu Hükmüne Göre, Tapu Sicli Müdürlüğüne bildirilecektir.					Sahife No.	
Sıra No.						Sıra No.	
Tarih						Tarih	
ATILIM A.Ş. 2008 Döner Sermaye İşletmesi tarafından bastırılmıştır. Stok No 199							

Figure 55: Title deed of Hassan Kemer

T.C.
TOPLU KONUT İDARESİ BAŞKANLIĞI
MALTEPE BELEDİYE BAŞKANLIĞI
BAŞİBÜYÜK MAHALLESİ
HAK SAHİPLİĞİ DEĞERLENDİRME FORMU

Analiz No: _____

Malik Adı: _____		Baba Adı: _____		Doğum Yeri / Tarihi: _____		Açıklamalar: _____		Adres: _____	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tapu Tahs.		<input type="checkbox"/> Eml. Verg. Bey.		<input type="checkbox"/> Ecrmsl Mak.		<input type="checkbox"/> Eik. Mak.		<input type="checkbox"/> Su Mak.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tif. Mak.		T.C. KİM NO: _____		Parsel Alanı (m2): 772,800.00		İşgal Alanı: 400.00			
İli: İstanbul		İlçe: Maltepe		Ada No: _____		Parsel No: _____			
Mah./Köy: B. Büyük		Mevki: _____							

Sınıfı - Category / Yapı Türü (Cins)	Kat / NUMBER OF STORIES	Bağımsız / INDEPENDENT	Kullanım / USE	İnşaat / SURFACE (m2)	2010 yılı YBM / Tamamlanma %	2010 yılı YBM / Birim Fiyat	COST / Maliyet (TL)	AGE / Yaş (Yıl)	LOSS RATE / Aşınma oranı	WEAROUT / Aşınma Tutarı (TL)	AMOUNT / Tutarı (TL)
B.A.K.	4	ZEMİN	KONUT	116.92	100	448.00	52,380.16	14	15	7,857.02	44,523.1
		1. KAT	KONUT	116.92	100	448.00	52,380.16	14	15	7,857.02	44,523.1
		2. KAT	KONUT	116.92	100	448.00	52,380.16	14	15	7,857.02	44,523.1
		3. KAT	KONUT	165.61	100	448.00	74,193.28	14	15	11,128.99	63,064.2
B.A.K.	3	ZEMİN	KONUT	96.38	100	448.00	43,178.24	14	15	6,476.74	36,701.5
		1. KAT	KONUT	96.38	100	448.00	43,178.24	14	15	6,476.74	36,701.5
		2. KAT	KONUT	70.55	100	448.00	31,606.40	14	15	4,740.96	26,865.4
			ODUNLUK	6.25	100	73.00	456.25	14	25	114.06	342.1
			ODUNLUK	9.00	100	73.00	657.00	14	25	164.25	492.7
			ODUNLUK	16.00	100	73.00	1,168.00	14	25	292.00	876.0
			İSTİFAT DUVARI	108.37	100	73.00	7,911.01	14	25	1,977.75	5,933.2
			BETON AVLU	60.00	100	73.00	4,380.00	14	25	1,095.00	3,285.0
		KUYU	H:30	30.00	100	626.34	18,790.20	14	25	4,697.55	14,092.6
TOTAL											321,923.9

TYPE OF TREE / Ağaç Cinsi	AMOUNT / Adet	AGE / Yaş (Yıl)	PRICE / Fiyat (TL)	TOTAL PRICE / Tutarı (TL)
VIŞNE / CHERRY	2	8	106.00	212.00
INCİR / FIG	1	5	30.00	30.00
GÜL / ROSE	3	5	10.00	30.00
NAR / POMEGRANATE	1	10	130.00	130.00
HURMA / DATE	1	10	68.00	68.00
ÜZÜM / GRAPE	3	10	40.00	120.00
FINDIK / HAZELNUT	1	7	95.00	95.00
ERİK / PLUM	6	8	68.00	408.00
MANDALINA / TANGERINE	1	7	110.00	110.00
AYVA / QUINCE	1	10	70.00	70.00
KARA ERİK	1	8	68.00	68.00
DUT / MULBERRY	1	37	106.00	106.00
CEVİZ / WALNUT	1	37	631.00	631.00
İĞDE / BUCKTHORN	5	17	84.00	420.00
Ağaç Genel Toplam (TL) :				2,498.00

Bina Bedeli (TL):	AMOUNT	321,923.99
Ağaç Bedeli (TL):	VALUE OF PLANTS	2,498.00
Enkaz Bedeli (TL) : (Bina bedeli x %10)	DEMOLITION VALUE	32,192.40
Mukdesat (toplam) Bedel (TL):	TOTAL VALUE	324,421.99
Fark Bedeli (TL): (Toplam Bedel + Şerefiye Bedeli) - Enkaz Bedeli	COST DIFFERENCE: (TOTAL VALUE + GOODWILL COSTS) - DEMOLITION VALUE	332,229.59

24/02/2006 TARİHLİ MALTEPE KENTSEL YENİLEME PROJESİNE İLİŞKİN PROTOKOLÜN 8.MD'NE İSTİNADEN TAPU TAHSİS BELGELERİNİ İBRAZ EDİP GEÇERLİLİĞİ ONAYLANAN HAK SAHİPLERİNE, TAPU TAHSİS BELGESİ ŞEREFIYE BEDELİ OLARAK 40.000.00-TL UYGUN MÜTALAA EDİLMİŞTİR.

Maltepe Belediyesi		TOKİ
Melih SUBAŞI Harita Müh.	Alparslan NUHOĞLU İnşaat Müh.	Banu TANTAN Y. Şehir Plancısı

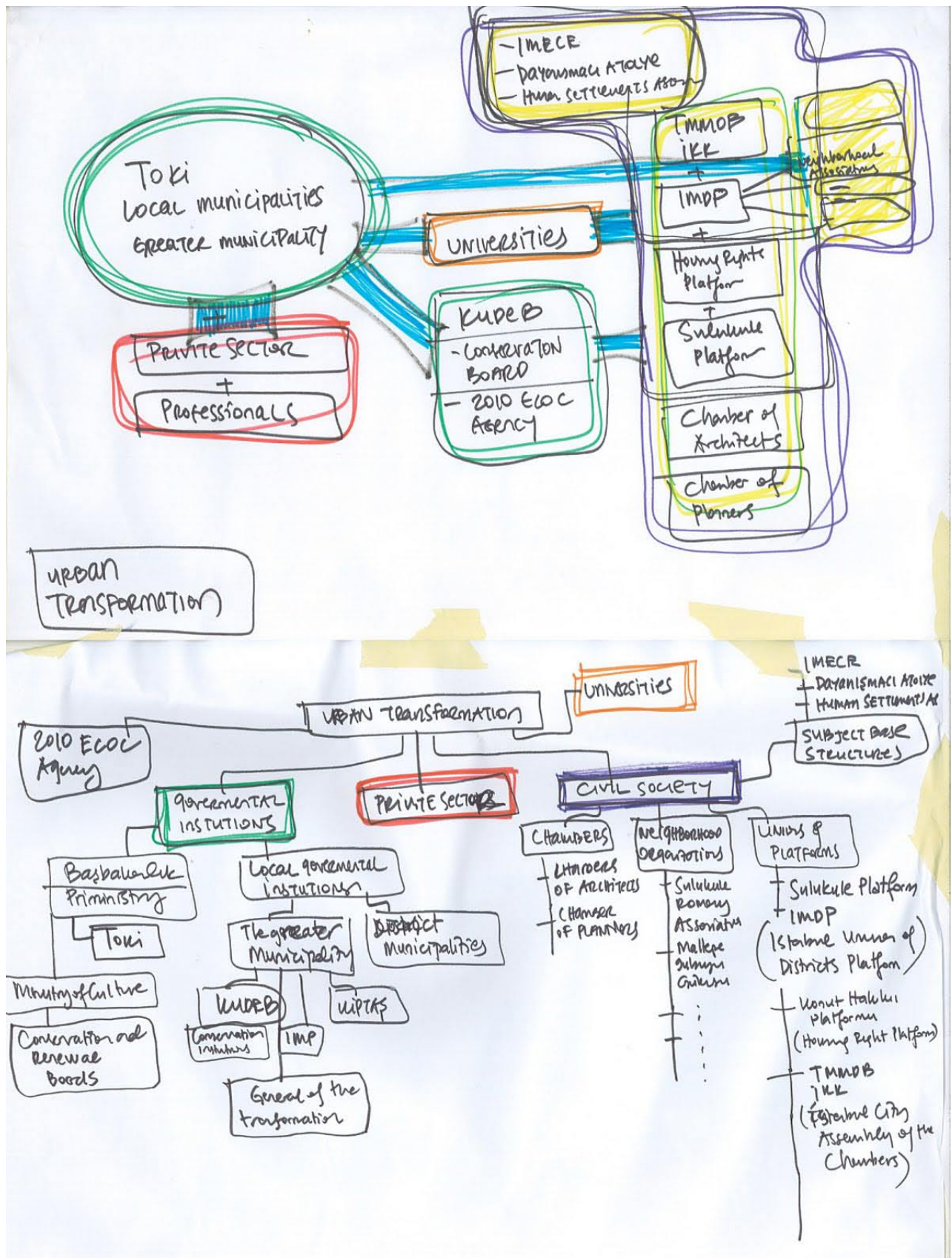
Figure 56: Compensation Assessment List

8.5 Annex E: Urban Renewal Project Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray



Figure 59: Urban Renewal Area of Fener/Balat/Ayvansaray Project, Source: Expert informant 2

8.6 Annex F: Documents Civil Society Actors



IMECE'S PRINCIPLES

1. Urban planning is the organization of social, physical and economic space. For this reason, it implicates a field in which all of the people participate.
2. The movement is independent from all political, professional and civil organizations. It is open to all based on its principles.
3. The movement participates actively in all of the struggles against the attacks on the city; its objective is to constitute the agency which operates as a ground that unites various struggles.
4. Cities do not belong to a group of capitalist but to all of the people regardless of differences of race, religion, language, gender and status.
5. Planning is a process that every individual must participate equally, it can not be delegated solely to the experts. Cities are shaped by their residents according to their needs. Any plan that does not consider public good is rejected fully regardless of who does it.
6. This movement considers not only the common spaces of utility but the totality of the natural and artificial environment as public sphere. In the pursuit of developing society's capacity of decision making, it seeks the enlargement of public sphere that has been invaded by economic rationality and power.
7. Urban and rural problems are the consequences of deliberate policies developed for political and economic interests. These structural problems can not be solved by projects grounded upon the same political conceptions.
8. Cities and natural environments are not commodities; they can not be marketed. It is not the exchange value but the use value of the space that is fundamental.
9. The movement is against all the attacks to the natural and cultural values which identifies the spaces.
10. Identities of the cities can not be designated from top-down. Relations of production, its development in the historical process and its natural structure give spaces their meanings. Cities can not be competed with each other based on artificial identities, they rather complement each other based on their self-identities.
11. The rights to shelter, labour and living are fundamental. The movement refuses the class discrimination of these rights caused by property relations.
12. The movement refuses all local and national administrative mentalities which consider citizens as clients. The delivery of public services can not be passed on to private sector.
13. The movement refuses the academic and institutional possession of knowledge. Its aim is that knowledge as a social phenomenon should be produced and shared with the society.

14. The movement supports to use a vivid and lively language rather than one full of academic terms that are cumbersome and foreign to the society.
15. The movement aims to be a self-constitutive and inclusive alternative as opposed to being defensive against the system.
16. In line with the overall framework and grounding ideas, these principles can be improved, changed and supplemented with new ones in time.

Come together . . .

When we were starting off, we have mentioned about our living spaces being transformed into "something" and our voice and brath being taken away. Our main question was how can we reestablish our cities that are being turned into race horses and of course our lives "in an egalitarian and soladaristic way".

And this question becomes more torrid day by day.

Today as we are all exiled from city centers, the rights to shelter and labour, public services and public spaces; it is so vital to build an alternative that is not only defensive against the system but also constitutive and inclusive.

We want to come together for not getting to watch only the jauntily destruction of the society, our collective living spaces and nature; and we want to participate and change.

Now we are understanding this better that we need to stick together with along knowledge, nature, society and solidarity to defend our right to live humanely and to hope for another life.

If you too are keeping on saying "No More" to the attacks to you and your city,

Let's come together to change it...



To defend our living spaces; to improve a solidarist, hopeful, collectivist and inclusive alternative; to be there on the streets along with the people despite the ones who consider our every kind of humane rights, natural sources as a resource of money.

To constitute our collective living spaces let's get together!

TOPLUMUN
ŞEHİRCİLİK
HAREKETİ
İMECE

Contact:

Web: www.toplumunsehircilikhareketi.org
E-mail: toplumunsehircilikhareketi@gmail.com

TOPLUMUN
ŞEHİRCİLİK
HAREKETİ

İMECE

TOPLUMUNŞEHİRCİLİKHAREKETİ

{ www.toplumunsehircilikhareketi.org }

Kentler Bizimdir...

We have meetings every Monday at 19.00 in İMECE's place.

Adress: Şair Nefîm Cad. Çatal Çeşme Sk.
No:10/A Beşiktaş



Ortak yaşam alanlarımızı üretebilmek için buluşalım!

TOPLUMUN
ŞEHİRCİLİK
HAREKETİ
İMECE

Contact:

Web: www.toplumunsehircilikhareketi.org
E-mail: toplumunsehircilikhareketi@gmail.com

WHY?

İMECE is set out for the reason that as our cities today are being shaped by the capitalist mentality, our living spaces are shrinking day by day. In this period of time when everybody, but especially the poor, the ignorant, the proletarian, are being drifted into a desperate situation; İMECE has arisen from the torrid need to a common platform that is independent but enriched by its solidarist action, learning, growing, and still arising. And it's continuing its practices to set a common platform for a voice, action and urbanism policy which are to be generated together, side by side with the society. It's trying to form the basis of a movement that doesn't put itself on top of the society, does generate our information and knowledge about the city along with the society in a mutual way and shares it with the society.

We put the necessity of the idea that planning is a process which every individual should participate equally, that it can not be passed on to specialists, and that cities should be formed according to the needs of the citizens, along with the citizens and especially based on the terms of value in use and right to live. This situation is actually an inconvenience that can generate policies on different unique circumstances without skipping them, has the ability to collectivize them, that can force to collective thinking, and that can be sharing from producing ideas to the burdens of the actions.

We adore inconveniences...

TO Start With...

Urban planning is the organization of social, physical and economic space. For this reason, it implicates a field in which all of the people participate.

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The movement participates actively in all of the struggles against the attacks on the city. Its objective is to constitute the agency which operates as a ground that unites various struggles.

Cities do not belong to a group of capitalist but to all of the people regardless of differences of race, religion, language, gender and status.

Planning is a process that every individual must participate actually. It can not be delegated solely to the experts. Cities are shaped by their residents according to their needs. Any plan that does not consider public good is rejected fully regardless of who does it.

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Urban and rural problems are the consequences of deliberate policies developed for political and economic interests. These structural problems can not be solved by projects grounded upon the same political conceptions.

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The movement refuses all local and national administrative mentalities which consider citizen's as clients. The delivery of public services can not be passed on to private sector.

The movement refuses the academic and institutional possession of knowledge. Its aim is that knowledge as a social phenomenon should be produced and shared with the society.

The movement supports to use a vivid and lively language rather than one full of academic terms that are cumbersome and foreign to the society.

The movement aims to be a self-constitutive and inclusive alternative as opposed to being defensive against the system.

In line with the overall framework and grounding ideas, these principles can be improved, changed and supplemented with new ones in time.

URBAN MOVEMENTS FORUM MANIFESTO 26-27 JUNE 2010

Posted on [July 7, 2010](#)

1. We stand against the marketing of our cities to capital via urban transformation/renewal projects based on change value and profit; we are against the appropriation of our cities which are our living spaces complete with their neighborhoods, public spaces, schools, hospitals, parks, shores, natural, historical and cultural heritage.
2. We demand foremost our right to shelter, in other words our right to adequate housing as stipulated in international law and independent of property. We believe that right to housing should be under legal guarantee regardless of income level or access to economic resources.
3. We demand from the government not only housing, infrastructure, access to work, transportation, education and other such social and economic rights, but also the right to modify/shape our living spaces and the city. Against all the urban transformation/renewal projects that are forced upon us and shaped by the interests of transnational capital, we are determined to continue our struggle for the right to shape our city according to our way of life and our desires. As such, our goal is to spread our right to the city beyond shelter and access to urban facilities, to the whole of the city. Defending the right of the residents of Tarlabası to stay put in their neighbourhood, defending Hasankeyf, and Emek theatre, while at the same time opposing the 3. bridge and hydroelectric power stations, struggling against the marketing of our schools and hospital to capital are all parts of this whole.
4. With the passage of consecutive laws on urban transformation/renewal, the government uses the law as a tool to further its interests. Thus the need to take the struggle to the streets along side the legal struggle is apparent. In its demand for social and economic rights from the government, this movement may utilize mass demonstrations as well as creative public actions. It does not regard legal recourse as and limited to a defense of personal rights. It makes a new legal ethic and practice in life part of the struggle.
5. Theory and practice, ideal and reality may differ. It may be unfair to expect a holistic perspective from local struggles. However if we give up on our ideals, we may never get another chance to realize them. Local struggles have their own reality, nevertheless it is important to seek ways for a united struggle and to try to sustain them both. In this regard, local initiatives and neighbourhood associations have important responsibilities.
6. We have to project local issues to the entire city making sure that Başibüyük residents come to protest the 3. bridge, those struggling for the Ataköy shore-line come to the defense of Tozkoparan.
7. Our struggle has to be united. In order to act together, we have to meet at the widest common ground and only in doing so can we carry the struggle into the future. We have to be flexible with one another. We also need to be inclusive in our communication with other movements, trade associations and unions. As the participants of the Urban Movements Forum, we regard this manifesto as a work in progress, as a first step in this process. The incomplete discussions on procedural suggestions, principles and other issues are topics to be covered in the future. Nevertheless we can also say that the most basic topic the forum agreed on was acting together on urgent agendas and generating common actions and practices.

The concrete suggestions that were discussed in the forum can be summarized as follows:

- A periodical to create and enhance interaction between neighborhoods.

- A legal commission for urgent intervention and consultation.
- An urban resource and consultation center for defending our neighborhoods and our city.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединённых Наций
по вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للترقية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Culture Sector

Mr. Baris Kaska
Kaşka Hukuk Bürosu
Atatürk Cad. No: 210 K: 5 Alsancak
İZMİR
Turkey

Ref.: WHC/74/3138/TR/LS/JSW

24 September 2010

Subject: **Tarlabaşı Urban Renewal Project, Istanbul (Turkey)**

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your mail regarding the urban renewal project in the Tarlabaşı district of Istanbul, Turkey, and the recent actions taken by the "Association of Cooperation and Improvement Tarlabaşı Property Owners Tenants".

For your information, the Tarlabaşı district is not located within the World Heritage property of "Historical Areas of Istanbul". However, we are well aware of Law 5366 for the "Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalisation of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties", which has been of concern for the World Heritage Committee and therefore discussed at its 32nd, 33rd, and 34th sessions, as well as by the recent reactive monitoring missions to Istanbul, requested by this Committee.

We therefore share your concern on the possible adverse impacts of this law on the conservation of historic heritage. Therefore, we are transferring your letter to the relevant national authorities, in particular to the Permanent Delegation of Turkey to UNESCO, for their consideration as well as to the Advisory Body of the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS International, for information.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your support in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*.

Yours sincerely,

Mechtild Rössler
Chief, Europe and North America
World Heritage Centre

Cc: Permanent Delegation of Turkey to UNESCO
National Commission of Turkey for UNESCO
Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
Site Manager
ICOMOS International / ICCROM

7, place de Fontenay
75362 Paris 07 SP, France
Tel : +33 (0)1 45 68 14 40
Fax : +33 (0)1 45 68 55 70

www.unesco.org



NEIGHBOURHOODS GET TOGETHER and

ISTANBUL CLAIMS ITS RIGHT TO THE CITY

We, as NGOs, neighbourhood associations, grassroots, urban movements and platforms plus academicians, activists, architects, planners, legal consultants, documentarists, artists, labourers, deputies... from differing political backgrounds, ideologies, and occupations;

We, as the signatories to this call, would like to announce our commitment henceforth to pursue an organized resistance against urban renewal, gentrification and transformation projects, aiming to turn İstanbul into a brand city catering to global capital and property markets but not to the needs of its citizens.

Namely;

Against mega projects like the 3rd Bridge and Crazy Canale which aim for profit and rent rather than public good,

Projects which will endanger the natural resources and cultural and historical wealth of the city,

Projects, which, by demolishing our neighbourhoods, and causing forced evictions and displacement, not only ruin our living spaces but also our lives and habitats together with the decades old social networks and solidarity bonds we have built through years.

Projects which present no alternative to displaced communities other than relocation to dismal Mass-Housing (TOKİ) Blocks in the periphery, to the human disposal silos of TOKİ, giving rise to a myriad of economic, social and cultural human rights violations plus psychological traumas.

Projects which also violate the housing rights of the most vulnerable groups of transformation areas, namely those of the renters, by leaving them to streets.

Together with renewal projects, the privatizations of state schools, state hospitals and public spaces for flagship projects of the brand city, make it impossible for us to survive in the city. The gates are shown to us.

We will be expelled and excluded forever while public spaces and buildings and also those of common memory, and even open spaces reserved for earthquake emergency tents plus the shores, city parks and historical buildings and even cinemas are either transformed or put on the agenda to be transformed into 5-star hotels, malls, luxurious residences and so forth..

This city, starting to turn into a brickhell, will no longer be able to breathe !

What is more, this split city with the wealthy in the center and poor at the peripheries, will no longer be safe and secure.

Organized and mobilized under the banner of Urban Movements against all these violations, we henceforth claim our Right to the City, that is, our right to construct and transform the city according to our own desires and needs.

THE STAGE IS YOURS ISTANBUL/ SPEAK UP FOR THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

JOIN US:

JANUARY 29, 2012 SUNDAY, 11:00 am

GEZI PARK (where all the trees are red crossed to be cut for a mall project) TAKSIM SQUARE

THE PROGRAMME:

Jan.28th Saturday:

14:00-16:00

Meeting with reps. from grassroots, associations and urban movements at Bedreddin Neighbourhood, Kasimpasa.

Welcome Speech by Suleyman Songur (Chairperson of Bedreddin Neighbourhood Association)

Lectures on Zero Evictions Campaign (ZEC) and Forced Evictions by:

Cesare Ottolini-Chairperson of International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI)

Prof. Yves Cabannes- Chair of Development Planning, Development Planning Unit, University College London, and Chair of UN-Habitat AGFE (2004-10)

16:00-17:00

Discussions

Jan. 29th Sunday:

11.00 am-14:00 pm Gezi Park Taksim

The Event:

'Neighbourhoods Get Together/Istanbul Claims its Right to the City'

11:00 am-11:45 am

Opening Speech:

Omer Kiris: Neighbourhood Associations Platform:

Solidarity Speeches:

Prof. Yves Cabannes-UCL/Cesare Ottolini-IAI

Main Speakers representing:

-Gecekondü Areas

-Historical Neighbourhoods

-Platform Against the 3rd Bridge

-Struggle for Beyoğlu

11:45 am-12:30 pm

- A performance by Public Arts Lab. (an activist artists group) :The theme is on solidarity,

-Small concert by Bandista, Gunes and other bands

12:30 pm-14:00 pm.

Open Pulpit:

Neighbourhoods Speak up for the Right to the City

Atakoy Part I Neighbourhood Association
Ataşehir Neighbourhood Association
Ayaspasa Neighbourhood Association
Ayazma Tenant Families
Basibuyuk Neighbourhood Association
Bedreddin Neighbourhood Association
Beyoglu için Mucadele-Struggle for Beyoglu
CİFTDER Ciftehavuzlar-Esenler Neighbourhood Association
Dayanışmacı Atölye -Solidarity Studio
Doğal ve Kültürel Çevre için Yaşam Girişimi-Life Initiative for Natural and Cultural Environment
FEBAYDER- Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Neighbourhood Association
Gençler Meydana-Youth on the Squares
GULDAM-Gülsuyu-Gülensu Neighbourhood Association
İMECE-People's Urban Movement
İstanbul SOS
Kamusal Sanat Laboratuvarı: Public Arts Lab.
Kocatas Neighbourhood
Konut Hakkı Koordinasyonu- Housing Right Coordination
Maden Neighbourhood
Sarıyer Neighbourhood Associations Platform
Sarıyer Halkevleri: Sarıyer People's Houses
Seyrantepe Neighbourhood
Sulukule Platform
Sosyal Haklar Derneği -Social Rights Association
Tarlabaşı Toplumu Dayanışma Derneği-Association for Support of Tarlabasi Society
Toz-Der-Tozkoparan Neighbourhood Association
Yenisehir Neighbourhood Association