

RETHINKING GENTRIFICATION IN İSTANBUL
THROUGH PLANETARY URBANIZATION

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THROUGH PLANETARY URBANIZATION**

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ABSTRACT

RETHINKING GENTRIFICATION IN İSTANBUL THROUGH PLANETARY URBANIZATION

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Drawing on an emerging epistemological stance that reworks Henri Lefebvre's notion of planetary urbanization, this dissertation responds to recent calls for the examination of the geography of gentrification. It does so through the case of the Airport and Airport City Project, which have been constructed on an erstwhile rural settlement, forest, and mining area along the northern coast of İstanbul. On this basis, this study aims to reveal the complex relations hidden behind the concrete abstraction in order to understand the nuanced way of gentrification in Turkey, which is thought to be dialectically enmeshed within the broader totality.

The dissertation begins by offering a process-oriented epistemological framework that explodes the inherent binaries (periphery/center, rural/urban) in the analysis of gentrification, building on the planetary urbanization thesis. Through this epistemological stance, the study builds its own research methodology, drawing on Lefebvre's social levels of G, M, and P and his notion of concrete abstraction. In this way, it extends the planetary urbanization thesis through an inextricable engagement with struggle and everyday life. Furthermore, the integration of the notion of concrete abstraction as an analytical category allows this study to examine the thing/process dialectic on different scales.

Mediating between theory and concrete research, the dissertation goes on to examine the operationalization of abstract conceptualization in response to the place-specific trajectory of the gentrification process in Turkey. Through re-scaling its research methodology, the dissertation provides empirical evidence from the Third Airport and Airport City Project in İstanbul. In so doing, it aims at recasting gentrification as being intrinsic to planetary urbanization rather than a detached concept that exists in only some neighborhoods.

Keywords: Gentrification, Planetary Urbanization, Henri Lefebvre, Third Airport Project

ÖZ

İSTANBUL'DA SOYLULAŞTIRMA SÜRECİNİ GEZEGENSEL KENTLEŞME KAVRAMI ÜZERİNDE YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK

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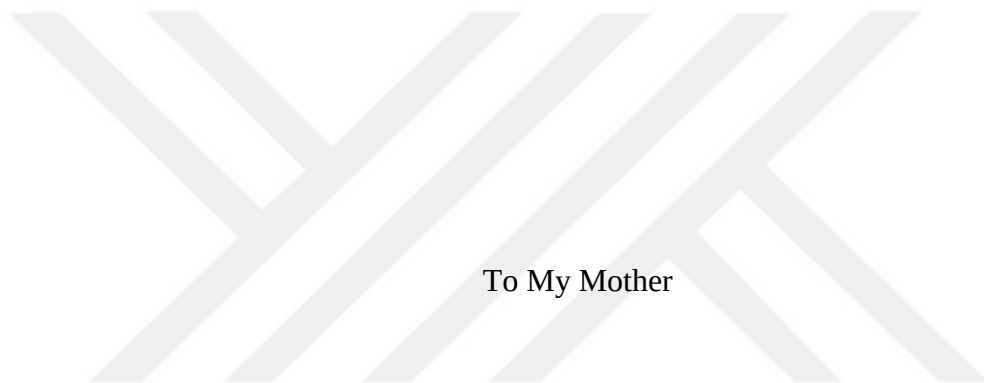
Mart 2020, 307 sayfa

Bu tez, Henri Lefebvre'in gezegensel kentleşme kavramını temel alarak oluşturulan bir epistemolojik çerçeve aracılığıyla İstanbul'da yaşanan soylulaştırma sürecini incelemektedir. Çalışma, gezegenel kentleşme tezinden faydalanarak geliştirilen ve geleneksel ikiliklere (merkez/çeper, kentsel/kırsal) dayanmayan süreç odaklı bir epistemolojik çerçeve önerisiyle başlamaktadır. Bu çerçeve aracılığıyla tez, Henri Lefebvre'in 'sosyal düzeyler' ve 'somut soyutlama' kavramlarından yararlanarak özgün araştırma metodolojisini geliştirmektedir. Böylelikle, gündelik yaşam ve mücadele kavramlarını gezegensel kentleşme tezinin ayrılmaz parçaları haline getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, somut soyutlama kavramını analitik bir kategori olarak metodolojiye ekleyerek 'şey/süreç' diyalektiğini her düzeyde ve ölçekte analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır.

Teori ve uygulama arasında diyalektik bir ilişki kuran bu metodoloji aracılığıyla soyut kavramsallaştırmanın Türkiye'ye özgü soylulaştırma süreci karşısında işleyişi analiz edilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bunun için tez, özgün araştırma metodolojisini yeniden ölçeklendirmek suretiyle İstanbul'un Kuzey kıyılarında yer alan ve daha önceleri orman alanlarının, su havzalarının ve maden sahalarının bulunduğu bölgeye inşa edilen havalimanı projesini incelemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, araştırma 'somut soyutlama' olarak kavramsallaştırılan proje aracılığıyla

Türkiye'ye özgü özelliklerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu veriler ışığında çalışma, soylulaştırmanın bazı semtlerde ortaya çıkan müstakil bir fenomenden öte kapitalist kentleşmeye içkin bir süreç olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Soylulaştırma, Gezegensel Kentleşme, Henri Lefebvre, Üçüncü Havalimanı Projesi



To My Mother

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I have read an article by Hande Özdinler, Professor of Neurology, in which she describes the transmission of mitochondria from the mother. She notes that all cells in the body have mitochondria inherited from the mother, which generate the energy to run the cells for breathing, moving, seeing, hearing, and doing. A mother might pass away, but she is still embodied in the creation of energy in her child's cells. So, first of all, my gratitude is to my mother, not only for providing me unconditional love and support throughout her life but also for the energy inherited from her that made this dissertation possible. This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Selma Eken.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of the Problem

The term “gentrification” was coined in the 1960s and led to several conceptual arguments along with heated debates for more than fifty years. However, although the term itself has traveled heavily into the research of several countries outside the Global North, its theoretical contribution through place-specific trajectories is still limited. This, in turn, restricts the critical dialogue that lies behind wider and deeper resistance.

Although there were relatively limited voices regarding the recognition of local context or, in David Ley’s words, the “geography of gentrification” in the first decade of the 2000s, recent years have seen an ever-increasing interest in understanding the experiences of gentrification outside the Western heartland. Numerous studies from all over the world have examined the place-specific trajectory of gentrification with the aim of emancipating the concept from mainstream narratives (Janoschka et al., 2014; Jou et al., 2016). Furthermore, Lees *et al.* (2015) introduced a collection of case studies from cities in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Southern Europe and beyond to interrogate the conceptualization of gentrification theory outside of its place of birth.

In a parallel effort, several original insights from Turkey, including place-specific forms of state-led gentrification and resistance, appropriation of assemblage in gentrification, insertion of temporality into displacement, and the rethinking of the borders between gentrifier and gentrified, have contributed to the variegated geography of gentrification in the last few years (İslam, 2010; Kayaşü and Yetişkul, 2013; Lagendijk et al., 2014; Sakızlıoğlu, 2015; İslam and Sakızlıoğlu, 2015; Varlı Gürk and Rittersberger Tılıç, 2016).

This dissertation also contributes to the recent calls to go beyond “imitative urbanism” through the recognition of local context.¹ It employs the term as a general and abstract concept by using its core components common in capitalist urbanization in order to nuance, refine, and theorize back the theory that is thought of as reflexive and transformable. In doing so, it aims at contributing to the development of open and relational concept-building that serves for the creation of new tactics for wider resistance.

Building on the planetary urbanization thesis, this dissertation embraces a process-oriented epistemological position that not only shifts the object of analysis from any bounded spatial unit to the process but also explodes the traditional binaries and types (urban/rural, core/periphery-singular centrality, city/countryside) in gentrification research. Through this epistemological stance, this dissertation aims at recasting gentrification as being intrinsic to planetary urbanization rather than a detached concept that exists in some neighborhoods. This kind of position offers a deeper understanding of contemporary urbanization in which urban forms are “constantly changing and new urban configurations are frequently evolving” and also provides more space for a fresh interpretive perspective in the analysis of contextually embedded gentrification processes in Turkey (Schmid et al., 2018, p. 19).

Through mediating between theory and concrete research, this dissertation provides empirical evidence from one of the “mega projects” declared for İstanbul: the Third Airport and Airport City. The area intended for the Third Airport and Airport City falls within the Northern Forests of İstanbul on the European part of the Black Sea. Although widely seen as a transportation project, the Airport City part of the project is, indeed, also a real estate project including the construction of residences, hotels,

¹ Imitative urbanism refers to “the idea that gentrification in the Global North has travelled to and been copied in the Global South” (Lees, 2012). For further reading see Lees (2012).

and luxurious retail and commercial office spaces.² The construction has taken place on an area of 7,659 hectares, 6,172 of which are located within forested land, between the villages of Yeniköy and Akpınar. The project area, which extends along the Black Sea in the European part of İstanbul, includes woods, forestlands, lakes, ponds, brooks, and sand fields and also 1,180 ha of mining fields, 236 ha of pasture, and 60 ha of agricultural areas (AK-TEL Engineering, 2013). There were also rural settlements—the villages of İmrahor, Tayakadın, Yeniköy, Ağaçalı, Akpınar, and İhsaniye—which were subjected to expropriation.

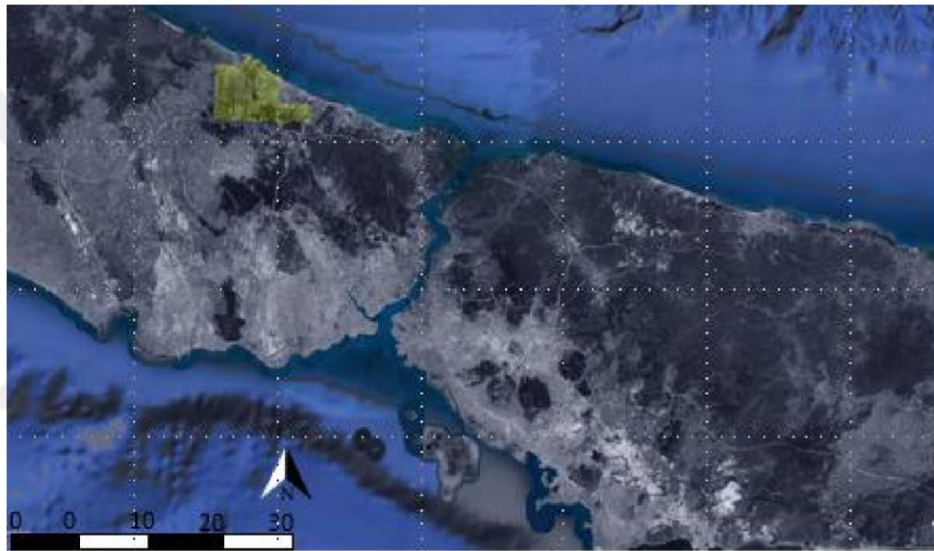


Figure 1.1. Location of the Third Airport and Airport City Project in İstanbul.(Basemap: Google Earth)

On this basis, this study suggests that the contemporary form of gentrification in Turkey, which subsumes a distinct form of fetishism attached to the built environment, ambitious urban policies shaped by subjectivities, network formations consolidating “fixed” holding companies, extreme cost savings made from living labor to operate a

² The emphasis on the mixed-use part of the project is in particular important for theoretical coherence as development-led displacement and gentrification simultaneously occur in this instance (see Lees *et al.*, 2016).

massive switch of capital from the primary circuit to the secondary circuit, and the creation of legal and extra-legal displacement mechanisms, provides fertile grounds for the conceptual refinement of the concept “as a dimension of planetary urbanization” (Wyly, 2015).

On the other hand, this dissertation argues that the dialectic of concentrated and extended urbanization also creates new terrains, battlefronts, and tactics for the struggle against gentrification. The explosion of traditional binaries not only serves for capitalist urbanization but has also given way to the explosions of struggle by creating encounters between diverse groups once separated (see Brenner and Schmid, 2015; also Arboleda, 2015a). Accordingly, this study suggests that the contextually specific form of struggle against contemporary gentrification in Turkey subsumes (1) ecological struggles across Anatolia; (2) absolute objections of professional chambers, scholars, and scientists; (3) reinforced solidarity as a reaction to top-down policies; and (4) the participation of urbanites, peasants, and workers along with their emerging broadening and reflexive place-specific tactics.

The following sections address how these hypotheses have been examined. Section 1.2 introduces the objectives and research questions. Section 1.3 presents the conceptual framework along with the original epistemological framework and research methodology, which is produced by the dissertation to decenter the focus of analysis in gentrification research from the neighborhood scale to planetary urbanization as well as from form to process. Finally, the last part introduces the structure of the thesis.

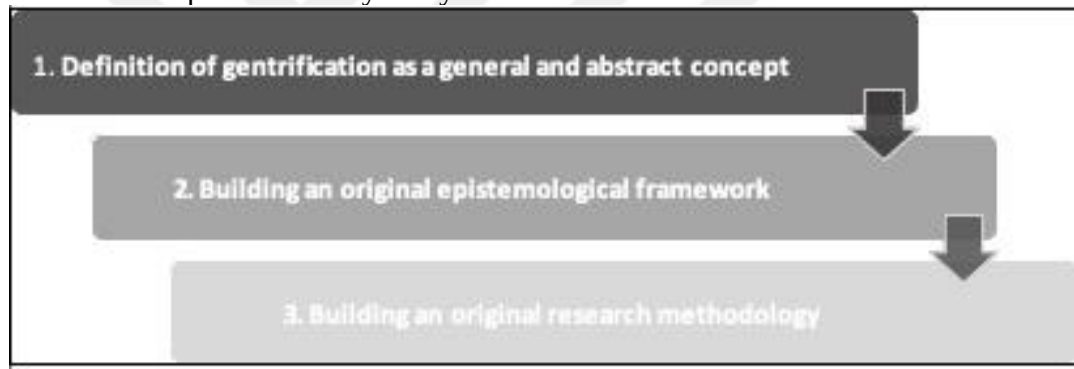
1.2. Objectives and Research Questions

This dissertation aims at contributing to the theory-building of contemporary gentrification, which is thought of as “tentative and evolving” (Lees, Shin, and Morales, 2016, p. 25). Here, I build on my study with the understanding of theory as “radically reflexive, revisable and transformatory,” as the approach of this study is

“looking back to theory” rather than “finding similarities and differences” through a case study (Brenner, 2015b; Lees, Shin, and Morales, 2016, p. 25).

In this vein, Table 1.1. indicates three basic steps that have been followed to construct this experimentation: (1) defining gentrification as a general and abstract concept, or an umbrella term (Which gentrification?); (2) defining an epistemological position to contribute to the theory-building of gentrification (What kind of epistemological position has the capacity to contribute to the refinement of gentrification theory?); and (3) building an original research methodology within the defined epistemological stance (What kind of research methodology has the capacity for the efficient operationalization of the epistemological framework?).

Table 1.1. Steps followed by study



Through these steps, in broad terms, this dissertation aims at answering the following main research question:

Why can the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey be recast as a process that is immanent to planetary urbanization? Or, conversely:

How can the notion of planetary urbanization explain the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey within the broader totality?

The following section provides an introduction to the three steps used to address these research questions. For the sake of clarity, this section follows the sequence of the steps under the title of a conceptual framework since the intention is to simultaneously introduce the structure of the dissertation: the definition of gentrification as a general

and abstract concept, the building of an epistemological framework, and the building of the research methodology.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

1.3.1. Definition of Gentrification

Although several scholars assert that gentrification had already emerged before the coinage of the term itself, there is agreement that the word “gentrification” was first used in 1964 by British sociologist Ruth Glass in her book *London: Aspects of Change*.³ Her famous passage involving the most accepted elements of gentrification became *sine qua non* for gentrification studies:

One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle-classes upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages two rooms up and two down have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupations, have been upgraded once again. Once this process of 'gentrification' starts

³ Neil Smith, for example, argued that gentrification was rooted in the Haussmannization of Paris. Eric Clark also put Haussmannization forward as an early form of gentrification. Further reading: Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 34-40, and Eric Clark, “The order and simplicity of gentrification: A political challenge” in Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge (eds.), *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 260

in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed. (Glass, 1974, pp. xviii-xix)

It seems that the main elements in Glass's definition of gentrification—namely class transformation and physical upgrading—have long been valid in the literature. Several scholars, in line with Glass's definition, have put class transformation at the center of their definitions. Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly have defined gentrification as the “transformation of a working-class or vacant area of a city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use” (Lees, Slater, and Wyly, 2008). Forty years after Glass's coinage of the term, Jason Hackworth defined it simply in the same direction as “the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users” (Hackworth, 2002, p. 815). Neil Smith has also primarily focused on class transformation in his definition:

Gentrification is the process, I would begin, by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner city are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle-class homebuyers and renters—neighborhoods that had previously experienced disinvestment and a middle-class exodus. (Smith, 1996, p.32).

Kennedy and Leonard also emphasized both the class transformation and physical upgrading and formulated their definition as:

Under our definition, gentrification has three specific conditions which all must be met: displacement of original residents, physical upgrading of the neighborhood, particularly of housing stock; and change in neighborhood character (Kennedy and Leonard, 2001, p.6).

The early 2000s have seen considerable mutation and expansion of the term. The emergence of the new forms has challenged the traditional definitions and scholars have introduced new definitions and modifiers such as “new-build,” “super,” “state-led,” and so on. Hackworth and Smith (2001), for example, have put forward “state-led gentrification,” wherein national and local government become the actors of the process. Davidson and Lees (2005) have introduced “new-build gentrification,” which refers to the construction of new projects for high income groups on vacant/demolished land in the city center. Butler and Lees (2006) have defined “super gentrification,” which refers to the inclusion of the inner city by super-wealthy professionals. In other words, scholars have found common grounds for exploring the mutation of gentrification in a global context.

As mentioned above, although there were relatively few voices regarding the recognition of local context in the first decade of the 2000s, more recent years have seen an increasing interest in emphasizing the geographically and historically specific driving agents and effects of gentrification. In this vein, Lees’s call to researchers of countries beyond the “usual suspects” attracted a great deal of interest (Lees, 2012). Several scholars responded directly to her call for the “geography of gentrification” with an endeavor to emancipate the concept from the dominant narratives of the Anglo-American literature (Jou *et al.*, 2014; Janoschka *et al.*, 2014; Lagendijck *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, Lees, Shin, and Morales introduced two collections focusing on the gentrification trajectory of countries other than those “usual suspects,” including cities in Asia, Latin America, Africa, Southern Europe, and beyond (Lees, Shin, and Morales, 2015, 2016).

However, stretching the concept of gentrification into such different contexts has raised criticism of the instrumentality of the term itself. Maloutas, for example, has criticized the conceptual overstretching of the term, which, in his view, leads to displacement of “emphasis from causal mechanisms to similarities in outcomes across contexts” (Maloutas, 2012). Hence, employing the term outside of the Anglo-American core, according to him, not only results in overlooking the contextually

specific causes but is also mostly irrelevant to local contexts. Schmid *et al.* have also noted that although “gentrification” is a well-established and clearly defined process-based concept, it is restricted and limited for analyzing the variegated forms of urbanization all over the planet (Schmid *et al.*, 2018).

On the other hand, Lees *et al.* (2015, p. 31) have argued that the term “gentrification” will help “consolidate and articulate empirical regularities from a distinct number of different cases.” They contend that without an umbrella term, discussions revolving around redevelopment-led displacements in different contexts could be rendered invisible. Tim Butler also argues that the term retains its importance in the analysis of class change, noting that gentrification can serve as a mid-range theory since it can featly insert itself between globalization and the local context (Butler, 2009 cited in Lees *et al.*, 2015).

This study also argues that the term “gentrification” can serve as a common ground to discuss historically evolving and place-specific forms of urban restructuring that have led to direct or indirect displacement. To use a well-established term as an abstract concept enhances the critical reflexivity to grasp the broader configuration. In this vein, this study suggests that, in Clark’s words (2005, p. 258), an “elastic yet targeted” definition of gentrification can act as a powerful abstraction to grasp the contextually specific forms of class-led urban restructuring. Lees, Slater, and Wyly have defined gentrification in this manner as the “transformation of a working-class or vacant area of a city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use” (Lees, Slater, and Wyly, 2008). Accordingly, Lees *et al.* (2016) defined the necessary conditions for gentrification as follows:

- (1) class polarization that lies beneath the gentrified scene;
- (2) a noticeable increase in investment put into the secondary circuit; and

(3) different forms of displacement, such as direct, indirect, exclusionary, pressure, and so on (Lees *et al.*, 2016, p. 33).⁴

This study argues that those necessary conditions are also common concerns to be discussed in recasting gentrification as a dimension of planetary urbanization. Thus, this inquiry follows those conditions in the appropriation of the term as a general and an abstract concept.

1.3.2. Rationale and Building an Epistemological Framework

In the first year of my PhD studies, I attended the course “Social and Cultural Themes in Urban Architecture” taught by Professor Güven Arif Sargın. Lefebvre’s *Urban*

⁴ Here it is worth defining different forms of displacement. Like several scholars (Marcuse, 1986; Davidson, 2009; Davidson and Lees, 2010; Atkinson, 2015; Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees, 2019), this dissertation rejects the narrow definition of displacement, which refers to the direct displacement of last-remaining residents. Rather, this study adopts Marcuse’s (1986) conceptualization of displacement, which distinguishes four different types: (1) Direct displacement: The last resident gets displaced due to physical or economic reasons. (2) Direct chain displacement: The previous household has already been displaced before the last resident. (3) Exclusionary displacement: The residents cannot access housing that they previously could, because it is gentrified, abandoned, or not available for different reasons that cannot be prevented by the household. (4) Displacement pressure: This refers to the alienation of residents due to changing neighborhood and public services, the departure of friends, the closing of familiar stores, and so on.

Recent years have seen further attempts to nuance and refine the conceptualization of indirect displacement. Davidson (2009), for example, challenged the interpretation of displacement “as movements of individuals across absolute space” in the gentrification literature; rather, he argued for the examination of lived displacement. Parallel to Marcuse’s concept of displacement pressure, Atkinson (2015) put forward that displacement is a complex process of un-homing that is deeply associated with alienation as well as a feeling of isolation. Foregrounding phenomenological attachments to place and home, Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees (2019) argued that even when displaced residents receive market value for their property, they lose their home and their lifestyle composed of original “experiential, financial, social, familial and ecological” layers.

Revolution was the main book we discussed, but our discussions were “with and beyond” Lefebvre as Professor Sargin encouraged and expected us to appropriate the heart of his ideas for the examination of the recent urbanization process in Turkey. As mentioned by Schmid (2014), although Lefebvre’s theory was considered inaccessible and extremely difficult for empirical research, we employed his core agenda in numerous lively discussions in Turkey to open new horizons in critical thinking.

Throughout the course, these exercises were accompanied and reinforced by metatheoretical thinking on the role and position of the architect and architecture in resistance to exclusion, injustice, and exploitation. We posed questions regarding not only the role of the architect in ensuring the reproduction of social relations of capitalism but also the potential role in emancipatory praxis. These discussions raised fundamental questions about whether an architect might act against capitalism or whether architecture might be a tool for an alternative future (Sargin, 2014, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017, 2018; Batuman and Sargin, 2015). Furthermore, they provoked our thinking about the exploitation of architecture by capitalism and the subsequent alienation of architects through the transformation of their labor power into a commodity (Sargin, 2017). Eventually, this interrogation led me to better consider the role of an architect as a “social agent who values the process and runs it with a social and political program, beyond the thing-oriented production” (Sargin, 2015).

The definition of architect as social agent necessitated the examination of the architect’s role as a mediator between the macro-order and the micro-level, and thus a theoretical perspective. An architect indeed becomes a political agent who should critically interrogate the epistemology, concepts, and methods of the discipline of architecture. This, in turn, necessitated a further discussion of the “internal” tools of architecture along with their capacity to extend, broaden, and deepen the critical theory (Sargin, 2016a).

In the same year, while I was in the midst of those intellectual exercises, 301 mine workers were killed in an underground explosion in the Soma district of Manisa on 13

May 2014. The Soma tragedy revealed the geographically complex relationship between the exploitation of living labor and capitalist urbanization. Following the explosion, the dramatically poor working conditions and low wages of mine workers were brought to the media's attention through personal interviews. The mine was operated by a private company that had purchased the operation following its privatization in the 1990s. The owner of the mine company mentioned that his company had reduced the cost of coal production from \$140 to \$23.8 per ton since leasing the mine from the state-owned Turkish Coal Enterprises in 2000 (Munyar, 2012). The same company has also been operating in the construction sector since 2010. It built the multimillion-dollar 56-floor Spine Tower in Maslak, one of the main business districts of İstanbul. In other words, it seems that the extreme cost savings obtained from the living labor of Anatolian workers were realized in the spatial fix in İstanbul.

The Soma Mine Disaster became the final trigger of the aspiration of this study to understand and critically interrogate the new forms of capitalist urbanization in a process-oriented theoretical framework that goes beyond the urban/non-urban divide to simply reveal the role of the “outside” trajectories that support capitalist urbanization. This, in turn, called for a new perspective that: (1) sees capitalist exploitation and class dynamics as the underlying essence of urbanization; (2) therefore, interprets the built environment as a concrete abstraction; (3) analytically links the agglomeration “in the city” with the “outside”; (4) thus, goes beyond the traditional concepts building on the idea of the city as a bounded, fixed spatial unit as well as associated divisions and binaries; and (5) addresses not only urban forms but also multiscalar and geographically complex urbanization processes. As the following section presents in detail, these core requirements have been matched with the agenda of the planetary urbanization thesis (see also Keskinok 1998, 2018; Tekeli, 2016).

Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid have reengaged Lefebvre's thesis of complete urbanization through the concept of “planetary urbanization,” which they borrowed from “Dissolving city, planetary metamorphosis” written by Henri Lefebvre

(Lefebvre, 1989; Brenner and Schmid, 2014; Brenner and Schmid, 2015). In a parallel effort, Merrifield also proposed a shift from the notion of “the city” towards the urban society as a new theoretical and virtual object building on Lefebvre’s planetary urbanization (Merrifield, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). In recent years, these provocations have received a very rapidly growing interest, and sometimes polemical debates and lively discussions (see Walker, 2015; Davidson and Iveson, 2015; Ruddick, 2015; Goonewardena, 2018; Khatam and Haas, 2018; Brenner, 2018; Schmid, 2018). It is safe to claim that planetary urbanization became one of the most influential concepts in urban studies that proposes a new understanding of urbanization in order to understand evolving landscape in the 21st century. The gentrification literature has also embraced the concept; Lees *et al.*, for example, borrowed it for the title of their edited volume *Planetary Gentrification*, and Slater also employed the concept in the discussion of contemporary rent gaps in “Planetary rent gaps” (Slater, 2015; Wyly, 2015; Lees *et al.*, 2016).

Drawing on a critique of the “new urban age” thesis for its limited city-centric, empiricist approach implicit in the cliché of the “50 per cent threshold of world population now living in cities,” Brenner and Schmid have called for a new urban epistemology by challenging the inherited concepts and representations of the urban. These authors have contended that the “inherited analytical vocabularies and cartographic methods do not adequately capture the changing nature of urbanization processes” and therefore emergent patterns “require the development of new analytical approaches, methods and concepts, including experimental and speculative ones, as well as new visualizations ... a new lexicon of urbanization processes and forms of territorial differentiation” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, pp. 21-22).

This critique of empiricism, city-centrism/methodological cityism, is the pivotal component of the planetary urbanization thesis. The authors have argued that these approaches result in the homogenizing and universalizing tendency in urban theories. In order to transcend that limited understanding of the urban, the planetary urbanization thesis suggests decentering the focus of studies from the thing to the

process and thus from “the city” to “urbanization.” Therefore, scholars have suggested a different way of analyzing urban building within a tripartite framework that focuses simultaneously on processes of concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization.

Brenner and Schmid (2015) have defined concentrated urbanization as a moment in urbanization that involves agglomeration, spatial clustering of populations, means of production, governmental apparatuses, activities, investments, infrastructures, and metabolic consumption of energies as well as raw materials. This moment of “concentrated urbanization is inextricably connected to extended urbanization,” which implies the activation and transformation of landscapes in relation to agglomeration processes. Extended urbanization involves the landscapes beyond the agglomeration zones that it is constructed to support, or as a consequence of the everyday activities and socioeconomic dynamics of urban life. The concentrated and extended moments of urbanization are again “inextricably intertwined” with a third moment, differential urbanization. Brenner and Schmid (2015, p. 168) define differential urbanization as the creative destruction of inherited geographies “in relation to the broader developmental dynamics and crisis-tendencies of modern capitalism.”

As mentioned, Brenner and Schmid’s planetary urbanization thesis has received very rapidly growing interest, generating both lively discussions and a significant degree of critical commentary. Walker and Shaw, for example, have argued that there is nothing original in Brenner and Schmid’s work (Walker, 2015; Shaw, 2015). Walker’s commentary has also included calls to be “more materialist” and “more dialectical” as well as objections to the use of “sociological tables,” along with suggestions to conduct concrete research rather than the “philosophy of social science.” Scott and Storper saw the danger of theoretical loss due to the replacement of “the city” with other concepts (Scott and Storper, 2016). Davidson and Iveson (2015) have argued that planetary urbanization runs the risk of removing the city/urbanization dialectic, which is crucial for critical urban studies to contribute to emancipatory politics. A similar line of inquiry around the persistence of “the city” as an analytical category is also pursued by Khatam and Haas (Khatam and Haas, 2018), who have called attention to the

importance of the city as a political entity for urban struggle by drawing on their research projects in Tehran and Rawabi. Planetary urbanization has also met a significant degree of critical commentary from feminist, queer, and postcolonial perspectives. Postcolonial scholars Leitner and Sheppard have raised concerns about the universalization tendency of the thesis (Leitner and Sheppard, 2016). Foregrounding the undecidability of the urban, Roy has challenged the exemplifying of Global North cities for conceptualization and suggested that the urban be read from the standpoint of absence rather than the Global North (Roy, 2015). Oswin has objected to the privileging of capitalist exploitation and class dynamics as the focus of urban research and she has argued that planetary urbanization excludes other critical approaches “such as queer, feminist, postcolonial and critical race theories” (Oswin, 2018). McLean has also contended that planetary urbanization is “partial, limited and limiting” since “it privileges a lineage of particular white, male, European Marxist and neo-Marxist political economists” while excluding the feminist and queer contributions to this sub-field (McLean, 2018). Derickson has also noted the absence of engagement with feminist and queer theory in planetary urbanization (Derickson, 2018). Buckley and Strauss’s contribution has further demonstrated the feminist critiques, which also challenged the normative categories and binaries in urban theory but were ignored in the body of work on planetary urbanization (Buckley and Strauss, 2016). Ruddick *et al.* (2018) have argued that the planetary urbanization thesis bypassed Lefebvre’s central concept of the everyday life. Rather than theoretical abstraction, they suggested the capacity of social ontology, the pivotal role of praxis, and everyday life as a site for knowledge production (Ruddick *et al.*, 2018).⁵

This dissertation also argues that planetary urbanization thesis might deeper engage with Lefebvre’s P (private) level concerns including difference, struggle, habitation, and everyday life. However, these are neither completely absent nor in a contradictory

⁵ See also special issue *Society and Space* 36(3) for further comments.

position; rather, they are underdeveloped (Kipfer, 2018). Thus, rather than ignoring the core epistemological agenda, it is more productive to engage with these issues in the investigation of planetary urbanization. However, this dissertation argues that the core epistemological orientations of planetary urbanization are profoundly useful in thinking about the dialectical movement of the urban and non-urban. Shifting the analytical perspective from the bounded city-center (or relational spatial units) to the wider urbanization process provides deeper insight in the analysis of contemporary urbanization in İstanbul. Therefore, the rationale at the heart of the dissertation is compatible with the core of planetary urbanization.

In this vein, this study produced its epistemological framework by drawing heavily on the planetary urbanization thesis, but it also aimed at extending planetary urbanization through an immanent engagement with difference, struggle, and everyday life through Lefebvre's social levels.⁶ It is worth mentioning that this framework is an encapsulation of discussions in Chapter 2 that elaborate on the seven theses of planetary urbanization as one by drawing on previous critical urban studies as well as further third-wave Lefebvrian works and finally providing the interpretations of this dissertation. To that extent, the main epistemological stance of this inquiry is presented below along with a discussion on the points of agreement with and departure from the planetary urbanization thesis.

1- “Urban and urbanization are theoretical categories, not empirical objects.”

In line with planetary urbanization, the basic stance of this study is that “the urban, and the closely associated concept of urbanization, must be understood as theoretical abstractions; they can only be defined through the labor of conceptualization” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 163).

⁶ Chapter 2 provides a discussion of planetary urbanization drawing on both the previous discussions in traditional critical urban studies and the interpretations of the present dissertation.

On this basis, this study understands the urban as a concrete abstraction constituted and embedded by social, economic, political, and cultural relations (see Stanek, 2008). This, in turn, evokes an approach that sees the urban as a theoretical category rather than an empirical object as well as an abstract conceptualization, as a legitimate and essential means of analysis, in particular for the comparison of similar uneven developments on the planetary scale (Schmid, 2018).

Since “things lie” and “objects hide,” in line with the planetary urbanization thesis, this study argues that even the most sophisticated, nuanced, descriptive concrete investigations presuppose many pre-empirical assumptions (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 80; Brenner and Schmid, 2015). In this sense, this dissertation understands the reflexive approach as a necessary moment in urban research as well as a starting point and suggests concrete research mediated through abstract conceptualization and interpretations. This necessitates a strategy that starts with neither concrete research nor abstract concepts, but “applies a ‘transductive’ strategy maintaining a dialectical relationship between theory and empirical research” (Schmid *et al.*, 2018, p. 30). The dialectical relationship between theory and practice are thus essential; theory should be advanced through concrete research, which in turn paves the way for the refinement of the conceptual assumptions.

2- Urbanization processes exceeded any fixed things such as “cities” or any settlement type and so the focus of the urban question should be decentered, engaging with the process more than the thing.

As per Brenner and Schmid’s core agenda, the contemporary urbanization process has exceeded any fixed, bounded spatial unit such as the city. Any city-centric, thing-oriented epistemological position limits and even obscures the ability to grasp the contemporary urbanizing world. Therefore, the essential task of this study is to focus on historically and geographically specific processes (urbanization) as the object of analysis rather than the thing (city). This, in turn, necessitates the abandonment of assuming a position related to a bounded unit (city, neighborhood, metropolis,

territory) or building upon the inherited, implied binaries (urban/rural, center/periphery, city/countryside) imposed by the city.

3- The relationship between “the city” and urbanization is dialectical.

This study demarcates its position from the planetary urbanization thesis through its explicit emphasis on the persistence of the place of “the city” as “thing” or form and thus the built environment in the dialectic (see Davidson and Iveson, 2015; Khatam and Haas, 2018). This study argues that city/urbanization and thus the thing/process dialectic is crucial for critical urban theory and the city maintains its position as a terrain for urban struggles. Besides, the “thing” is not immovable and unreactive; rather, it interacts with the process and transforms it.

4- “Urbanization involves three mutually constitutive moments—concentrated urbanization, extended urbanization, and differential urbanization.”

As the planetary urbanization thesis suggests, the process-oriented approach to the urban requires a compatible analytical framework that distinguishes three dialectically related processes: (i) concentrated urbanization, (ii) extended urbanization, and (iii) differential urbanization. The Lefebvrian dialectic is the core of this framework since these are not interconnected moments, or none of them is a synthesis; rather, the dialectical movement and its heart -contradiction- is the key to the analytical focus.

5- Contextual particularities must be understood in relation to the “context of context”; specificity does not refer to the demarcation of a different ontology. The capitalist world system is the underlying essence of the “context of context,” in which difference is relationally and dialectically situated.

Urbanization is a historically and geographically variegated process marked by the uneven development of capitalism. Concrete research reveals the place-specific determinations of the urbanization process in order to grasp the complexity of planetary urbanization. In other words, this study argues that specificity is best understood as “a relational, dialectical concept, one that presupposes a broader totality,

rather than as a demarcation of ontological singularity” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 161). Here, totality is also understood as a relational, dialectical, and historically evolving concept rather than a fixed form (Goonewardena, 2018). Hence, this effort to grasp the totality and the rejection of different ontologies is the key theoretical difference between planetary urbanization (as well as this study) and postcolonial urban studies.

6- Totality is the key tool to enhance the issues of difference and everyday life in planetary urbanization.

As Kanishka Goonewardena (2018) suggests, Lefebvre’s concept of totality provides space for planetary urbanization to grasp difference and everyday life, issues that are underdeveloped in the original formulation. In order to grasp the broader totality, this study draws on Lefebvre’s three levels, G (global, meaning general), M (mixed, urban), and P (private, everyday), which will be employed as analytical devices to understand contextually specific trajectories, difference, and everyday life in relation to totality. The designed methodology will be discussed in the following section.

7- Dialectically interconnected concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization has valuable potential in terms of creating new terrains, battlefronts, and tactics for struggle. On the other hand, “the city” maintains its political significance as a terrain for struggle.

In the era of planetary urbanization, new forms of resistance have emerged not only from urbanites but also peasants, workers, indigenous people, and other displaced populations impacted by the destruction. In this regard, the dialectic of concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization produces new centralities, assembling different actors from urbanites to peasants for the struggle. However, this study distinguishes its position from the planetary urbanization thesis through its explicit emphasis on the maintenance of “the city” as a significant terrain for urban struggles (Davidson and Iveson, 2015; Batuman, 2015b; Khatam and Haas, 2018). This study argues that “the city” as “thing” cannot become obsolete in the analysis of urban struggles.

The process-oriented epistemological position of this study, which rejects the idea of the city as a bounded unit along with the associated empirically oriented research, not only poses a methodological challenge but also needs to prove its value through “the confrontation with practical reality” (Schmid, 2018, p. 598). On this basis, Schmid *et al.* (2014) summarize the challenge as follows: “to do empirical research with this theory: to use it, make sense of it, to realize it and develop it beyond the formulation of its author” (p. 21).

Here, before the introduction of this confrontation with practical reality, it is worth mentioning a detail about my relationship with the planetary urbanization thesis. When I first read Brenner and Schmid’s article “Towards a New Epistemology of the Urban”, I did not have positive feelings towards the work as I asked myself if it was really necessary to extract Lefebvre’s core thinking in this way. However, after further reading, I realized that those relatively strict guidelines extracted from Lefebvre’s theory were enriching my critical reflexivity as this systematization significantly pushes my thinking, acting as technical and rigid tools for my Lefebvrian work

More specifically, it expanded my thinking on blurring the binaries of urban/non-urban in the power relations of the actors, and the role of the non-urban in capital accumulation and struggle, which goes beyond the traditional binaries as well as all types of spatial units. I organized my thinking, questions, and fieldwork with this persistent orientation. It provided “totality” and, therefore, enhanced the systematization of my study. In other words, the totality provided space for my study to examine not only the global abstract concepts, structures, and power relations but also everyday life and resistance as being regardless of the predefined spatial units.

1.3.3. Building a Research Methodology

The final step of the conceptual framework is to produce an original research methodology that embraces the persistent epistemological framework. In 2013, I wrote a short essay entitled “Habitation as an Obstrucater,” once again for the course “Social and Cultural Themes in Urban Architecture.” Here, I used Lefebvre’s social levels of

G, M, and P to discuss the Sulukule Renewal Project and examined how the G level attacked not only the residence but a form of everyday life, an authentic habitation. This appropriation of social levels in concrete research and Lefebvre's diachronic and synchronic analysis was later introduced in my thesis proposal defense in 2015.

The thinking of this dissertation was later enhanced by the works of third-wave Lefebvrian works that also harbor the planetary urbanization thesis. Conversely, the planetary urbanization thesis is a part of an intellectual effort, which falls within the third wave of Lefebvre-inspired works, undertaken by several scholars: not only the introducers but also Andy Merrifield in political economy, Stefan Kipfer and Kanishka Goonewardena in postcolonial interpretation, Stuart Elden in philosophical excavation, and Lukazs Stanek and Richard Milgrom in the contextual (architecture) appreciation of Lefebvrian concepts, among others. In this regard, it is impossible to productively and insightfully employ the epistemological framework of the planetary urbanization thesis by building only on the recent works of Brenner and Schmid.

As the basic principle, this study employs the dialectic between theory and practice through the appropriation of abstract conceptualization as the mediator of the research. In other words, the access of this study to the real is mediated through theory (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 5; Schmid *et al.*, 2018). It starts with neither abstraction nor concrete research, but rather their mutual interaction. Therefore, in line with the epistemological position, the challenge is building a methodology that is not only capable of examining the value of theory in practice but is also open to improvement and transformation. It should guide the study to be "a critique of the concepts through practice, a critique of practice through concepts" (Schmid, 2014, p. 53; see also Brenner, 2018).

As Schmid *et al.* (2014, p. 17) noted, Lefebvre employed the terms *demarche*, or procedure to indicate openness of his analytical categories. His concepts are not "technical, well-defined and rigid tools ready to be implemented, but a general orientation to grasp the totality of a process" (Schmid *et al.*, 2014, p. 34). Here, as

Goonewardena (2018) suggests, the concept of the totality is the key tool to enhance the reflexivity of planetary urbanization towards the issues of difference, struggle, and everyday life.

On this basis, Lefebvre provided the necessary tools in the “Levels and Dimensions” chapter of *Urban Revolution*.⁷ Here, he assumed that society operates on three sociospatial levels: G (global, general), M (mixed, urban), and P (private, everyday). These levels do not constitute a strict schema; instead, they are methodological tools for grasping social totality. They are not autonomous, rather attached, but all have their own spatial scales.

Level G consists of state and capitalism, wherein power is exercised. Lefebvre identifies the global level as “the realm of the most abstract relations such as capital markets and the politics of space” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 79). At this level, politicians promote “their ideologically justified political conception of space,” which conforms to the logic of capital (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 79).

Level P is the level of the “habiter” and expresses “only the built domain as large apartment buildings, private homes both large and small, campgrounds, shantytowns” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 75). At this level, Lefebvre introduces the distinction between habiting and habitat, explaining that habiting has been reduced to the habitat and the human being to the functional acts. While the habitat is the imposition of authority and a device of capitalist rationality, habiting is the complex lived experience and an invention of the individual (Lefebvre, 2003). Accordingly, this level is associated with everyday life, which is thought of as an absolute terrain for struggle.

Level M is the level of the urban, namely streets, squares, and avenues, wherein the two other levels of society are mediated. Level M is the site and terrain “for defense or attack, for struggle” between global and private (Lefebvre, 2003, pp. 89-91). In his

⁷ Lefebvre had developed his social levels and multilayered totality previously throughout the three volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life* (2008 [1947, 1961, 1981]).

formulation, Lefebvre gave the urban a decisive function; it is the “mediating” level between the abstract forces and everyday life, connecting global and private. The crucial role that Lefebvre gave the M (urban) is its twofold mediation. The urban does not only transmit the impositions of the global to everyday life; it also acts and the perceptions of the private can be reflected to the Global through the mediator Urban. This dissertation makes the twofold mediation function of the urban the focus of the analysis. Furthermore, the methodology aims at equalizing the gravity of difference, centrality, struggle, and everyday life in the planetary urbanization thesis through the appropriation of the P level.

As Kipfer *et al.* (2008, p. 14) put forward, this analytical device integrates urban level into other levels of totality: “the macro-order of society and the micro-realities of everyday life.” In this regard, the ultimate aim of the research methodology is achieving totality. This is the distinctive part of this study as it endeavors to understand urbanization within the totality rather than focusing on power relations or resistance. Its utmost focus is contradiction, tension, reaction, movement, and being.

As Schmid *et al.* (2018, p. 31) note, despite methods that allow the gaining of increasingly detailed data, the “mapping of a spatial phenomenon and distribution can only create an illusion of exactness.” Therefore, the application of Lefebvre’s synchronic levels requires an intellectual operation in line with the focus of the study. Accordingly, this work adopts Lefebvre’s synchronic levels in the discussion of national and local actors who are involved in the gentrification process in Turkey. It aims at examining how different actors from all social levels interact, cooperate, and simultaneously compete with one another in the gentrification process in a given moment.

On the other hand, as mentioned before, one of the main departure points of this study from the planetary urbanization thesis is its implicit emphasis on the defense of the thing/process dialectic as an analytical category in urban research. For this aim, this study further expands its methodology through the integration of Lefebvre’s notion of

concrete abstraction to the social levels. This is a tactic of the study to elaborate architecture in the urbanization process and to make a transdisciplinary contribution to the third-wave Lefebvrian works, but from the discipline of architecture through its internal tools (see Sargin, 2016a; Batuman, 2018).⁸

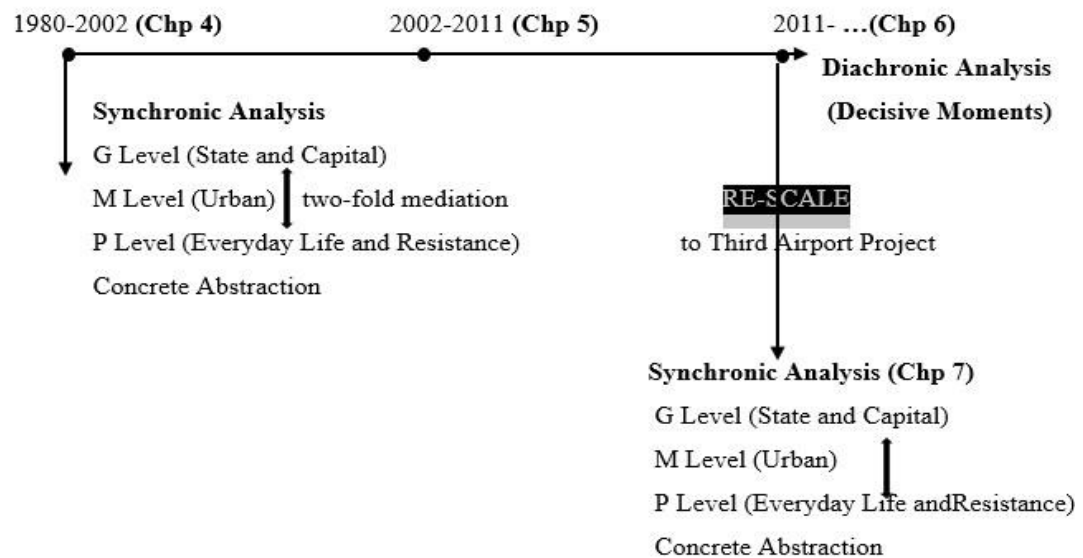
Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) argues that abstract social relations such as economic or legal forms are projected onto the urban, making urban phenomena concrete abstractions. As Stanek (2008, p. 62) explains, Lefebvre's concept of space as concrete abstraction is an interpretation of Marx's definition of concrete abstraction as an "abstraction which became true in practice". In this regard, Marx's analysis of concrete abstraction as "form" allows us to understand Lefebvre's thesis on the dialectical form of space (Stanek, 2008). Accordingly, this inquiry appropriates the term "concrete abstraction" to refer to the urban form, or, in other words, it understands the urban form as a "concrete abstraction" constituted and embedded by social, economic, political, and cultural relations (see Stanek, 2008).

The final procedure of the research methodology is scaling. As Kipfer (2009) mentions, Lefebvre's social levels are more about the distinction between the macro- and micro-aspects of life than the notion of level in geographical space. Brenner (2000, p. 368), on the other hand, points out that while level indicates the different aspects of social reality in capitalist modernity, scale "captures the notion of scale in its customary, territorial sense." Building on these interpretations, this dissertation re-scales the components of the research methodology for concrete research. Similarly to Lefebvre's social levels, this dissertation also scales the notion of concrete abstraction and thus urban form to the Third Airport and Airport City architectural forms for concrete research.

⁸ The examination of relationship between urbanization and built environment within the context of Islamic politics is an original strand of contribution from Turkey to the thing/process dialectic, see Sargin, 2004; Batuman, 2018.

In this regard, as the first step, this study builds the synchronic components of its research framework. As the second step, drawing on Lefebvre's schema in *Urban Revolution*, the study integrates diachronic analysis into synchronic analysis. This historical analysis is not simply the explanation of the history of changing landscape; rather, it is intended to “identify the defining moments that have inscribed themselves into the territory as well as into the collective memory” (Schmid *et al.*, 2018, p. 31). Thus, the diachronic analysis excavates the “decisive lines” of the production of space that reflects itself at the present. In this vein, each chapter discusses decisive moments of contemporary gentrification.

Table 1.2. Analytical Device of the Study



The third step of the study is to rethink gentrification through the findings of the research. Here, it is worth mentioning that this is not a strict third step as all the procedures have been produced by focusing on the detailed examination of the

necessary conditions of gentrification discussed in the first part: class polarization, the switch of capital to the secondary circuit, and direct/indirect displacement. Hence, although all the steps are intellectually immanent, this part endeavors to systematize the framework for the sake of clarity. In this regard, in the third step, the dissertation examines the place-specific characteristics of gentrification.

Building on these principles, the actual research begins with a critical review of the literature focused on the recent theoretical conceptualizations of gentrification. It then goes on to a critical review of the literature with a focus on the actors—from G level to P level—that played key roles in the urbanization process in İstanbul during the 1980s. The epistemological stance of the study (i.e., the seven principles introduced in the first part) acts as a persistent orientation throughout the research and interpretation, from the selection of the referred notions and quotes to the sequence of discussions. Here, while the chapters analytically separate level G and level P, level M is not separated. Rather, it is introduced with its function as a mediator through levels G and P, as this study did not interpret Lefebvre's M level as "form" but rather as a context for the tension between macro-order and micro-realities. In this regard, as explained in detail, the notion of concrete abstraction is appropriated for the discussion of form or built environment but always referring dialectical relationship.

This study followed the same path in the analysis of the Third Airport and Airport City Project but it re-scaled the research methodology. Following the synchronic analysis of the involved actors, the fieldwork began with the site observation. The data of the dissertation were acquired through the use of qualitative techniques including semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observations, and attendance of meetings, demonstrations, documentary screenings, and other events related to the Third Airport Project. The bulk of the research process consisted of semi-structured/unstructured interviews with several actors and stakeholders from G level to P level involved in different stages of the gentrification process. In this way, the dissertation intends to reveal different views, objectives, and meanings attached to the project.

Fieldwork

Before the fieldwork began, in an effort to designate the interviewees, I conducted desk-based research beginning from 2016. First, I compiled written and visual materials from websites and social media. Among these sources, three internet websites prepared by non-governmental organizations—megaprojeleristanbul.com (Mega Projects İstanbul), mulksuzlestirme.org (Networks of Dispossession), and kuzeyormanlari.org (Northern Forests)—substantially guided my way. Furthermore, the websites of two architectural platforms, Arkitera and Mimdap, provided updated information and professional interpretations. I checked these websites daily and followed them via social media. I also checked more than fifty relevant social media accounts on a daily basis, including the accounts of professional chambers, NGOs, environmental activists, local organizations, and labor unions. I watched numerous TV shows, interviews, and documentaries on the project and project area, and I read both governmental and non-governmental research reports and followed official websites. Among these, the environmental assessment impact (EIA) report prepared by AK-TEL Engineering for the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning and the Northern Forest Defense Third Airport report prepared by several scholars and scientists were specifically oriented towards my research plan.

The objective of the fieldwork was not to accomplish a specific number of interviews but rather to gain essential insight to interpret the movement of urbanization. At the end of nearly 3 years of desk-based research, initially, I envisaged that ten key respondents would be adequate for this purpose. On the other hand, I was anxious about contacting both inhabitants and government authorities due to the political context of Turkey, which is introduced in Chapter 6. I saw a danger of being taken into custody or at least receiving “scolding” and “complaints” from the inhabitants of the villages.

Nevertheless, by the end of the fieldwork, I had gathered the impressions of more than fifty people, including some that I could not record for various reasons. I used only the

interpretations of the interviewees who consented to being recorded, but the other informants also helped to guide and orient my questions, behaviors, and plans during the fieldwork. Accordingly, the following section will introduce the criteria for data collection, the type of data collected, and the designated interviewees in an integrated way based on the social levels G and P.

G Level –state and capital-

From the beginning of the research, I presumed that contacting the G level informants would be the most challenging part of the study due to the political environment in Turkey. On 15 July 2016, the political and social climate was worsened even further when a terrorist group within the military attempted to unseat the President and killed 251 people on the streets. The government immediately declared a state of emergency and announced that this attempt had been conducted by a parallel state. Based on this assumption, thousands of civil servants were fired and arrested. As will be discussed in detail, the groups that interrogate mega projects have also been labeled as members of a parallel state, traitors, or German agents.

All in all, in such an atmosphere, it is difficult to contact government authorities for interviews on the Third Airport Project. More importantly, the statements of any authority are problematical regarding their objectivity in such a climate. Nevertheless, I attempted to contact authorities from the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, which is charged for the project, via requests placed through the Presidency's Communication Center (CİMER).⁹ They did not reply to my requests for face-to-face interviews but did reply to my questions in written form. The answers were stereotypical replies that could be found in the official documents.

On the other hand, there is a fair amount of TV programs, parliamentary speeches, and official documents on the Third Airport that reflect the vision of the G level state in

⁹ See Apeendix A.

depth. Here, it is worth mentioning that although desk-based research was conducted with multiple sources before the fieldwork, only primary sources were used for analysis. In this regard, the documents used to examine the G level are as follows:

- Election manifesto and official party programs between 2011-2019
- Official websites of Ministries and Governmental Institutions
- Lawsuits petitions in 2014 (plea of defense prepared by government authorities, shared by an interviewee)
- Responses of Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (Public Private Partnership Department) to my questions given through CIMER in 2019
- Application contract (2013) of the project (shared by an interviewee)
- Speeches of authorities during party/parliamentary meetings, ceremonies and Television show (2011-2019)

The other component of the G level is capital. Following a tender, the consortium of five winning companies founded a new company under the name of Company X in 2013. Company X will complete the construction and operate the İstanbul Airport for 25 years. Contacting the contractor firm was also problematical. It is safe to say that these holdings have been the most debated and protested companies -against ecological destruction and uneven urbanization- across the country. in Turkey In a parallel vein, the most debated part of the project has been the absence of not only participation but also information, such as the EIA report, which included only the preliminary project, and limited architectural renderings shared with the public. Accordingly, this privacy has been one of the most debated issues of the project.

Nevertheless, I managed to contact the firm through a friend of a friend who was a very close relative of one of the owners of the holding company. I conducted semi-structured interviews with four directors from different departments. The meetings were held at the main office of Company X, which is located in the main terminal

building. Before the interviews, I informed all interviewees about my research and asked for their permission to record the interviews. All respondents agreed. During the meetings, two of the directors, who were architects, introduced their views via AutoCAD drawings and further presentations. Although I had sent an e-mail including my questions before the meetings, the interviews did not all follow the exact same paths, with some specific questions emerging during some interviews. Table 1.4 indicates the titles of the interviewees and the documents used in the examination of capital, G level.

Table 1.3. Interviews and documents used in analysis of G Level –capital-

Interviewees	Document Analysis
Director of Environment and Sustainability Director of Architectural Design -Architect- Director of Real-Estate Development -Architect- Director of Corporate Communication	- Plans and reports from official website of company - Presentations including first design principles and design process shared during interviews - Presentation of the final real estate development strategies shared during interviews - Social sustainability reports and presentations shared after the interview

P Level: Everyday Life and Resistance

Following the desk-based research, initially, I planned to include in the research all of the villages that are subjected to expropriation. However, following a trip to the site in 2019, I realized that this would not be possible. Accordingly, I selected Ağaçlı village as only Ağaçlı has inhabitants who will be directly displaced from their homes through the expropriation. There are nearly 50 families subject to direct displacement in the village of Ağaçlı. I conducted several trips to Ağaçlı for walking around, taking photos and interviews during 2019 and early 2020.



Figure 1.2. Location of Ağaçlı Village (Basemap: Google Earth)

As mentioned, I initially planned to conduct interviews with only key people, not inhabitants, due to safety reasons. The insights that I gathered from the websites, social media discussions, and my first interviews with activists supported my decision. The village has seen several protests and the Northern Forest Defense (NFD; *Kuzey Ormanları Savunması*) was particularly active in the beginning. As discussed in Chapter 7, the NFD was established after the Gezi Resistance in pursuit of park forums. In this sense, the inhabitants have kept them at a distance due to sociocultural differences and a climate of fear.¹⁰ In short, the inhabitants were tired, distrustful, and anxious.

I drove to the village in order to interview only the (former) muhtar, the elected village head. The village is nearly 40 minutes by car from Beşiktaş and located in a very

¹⁰ This will be elaborated on in Chapter 7.

isolated place. I met with the (former) muhtar early in the morning.¹¹ I introduced myself, explained my research objective, and asked for his permission to record our conversation. He took it very well and even offered to give me a tour by car while we talked. His guidance helped me substantially since the topography of the village is difficult, with considerable distance between Yukarı Ağa lı and A ağı Ağa lı villages. Furthermore, the villagers mentioned that local animals could attack strangers.

As the muhtar has been living in the village for more than forty years, he explained ‘every corner’ of the village in detail with narratives and memories for more than six hours. He also introduced me to his wife and some of his friends, which substantially eased my work in following trips. As mentioned, I had originally planned to interview only the muhtar, as a key person, due to safety reasons. However, my mind was changed after this trip as the muhtar offered to put me in touch with villagers who would be evicted through expropriation. However, in the sociocultural context of the village, he thought that it would be better for me to visit those houses with his wife. Accordingly, his wife and I visited seven households that were to be evicted in the second phase of the project. Although I planned to conduct semi-structured interviews and had prepared my questions, it was challenging to manage the dialogues and the interviews became unstructured or loosely semi-structured. I endeavored to get the interpretations of the interviewees on displacement, everyday life, and future projections as well as their information levels about the project. I refer to the respondents in the thesis by their initials; however, considering the low population of Ağa lı, I used random initials as further precaution to protect the privacy of the respondents.¹²

¹¹ The mukhtar changed after the 2019 local election. However, former mukhtar was in charge during the construction, eviction decisions and also protests.

¹². Although the population of the village is 979 (AK-TEL, 2014), there is a relatively small number of families living in the village and the identity of respondents could thus be understood from the initials of their surnames.

The second part of the interviews includes the actors of resistance other than existing inhabitants. Four citizens, on behalf of themselves, opened a case against the Third Airport Project before the construction began. While several cases were returned from the chambers with the decision of rejection of venue in the same period, this individual case was granted a suspension of execution. The case is a rare example in Turkey, opened by individuals who are not direct ‘victims’ of the mega projects but have claimed a right to the city. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, this citizen case is significant in many respects, but most importantly, it opened new channels for resistance and generated experiences that are now benefiting ecology cases, mostly in the Black Sea Region of Turkey. Furthermore, it has opened up new discussions on legal arrangements regarding municipal boundaries and boundaries for resistance. Lawyer Alp Tekin Ocak shared all the documents about the case.

Another key person was Akif Burak Atlar, head of the İstanbul Branch of the Chamber of City Planners. He was also a representative in the press briefing on the cases opened by other professional chambers. He shared the insights of the Chamber of City Planners about the project and also the trajectory of cases opened against the project, along with their future projections.

Although there are several NGOs that have touched on the Third Airport Project, the NFD is the most active organization in the area and on social media. Furthermore, they have prepared a detailed report including concrete evidence about the project’s dramatic ecological destruction with the contributions of several scientists and scholars. In this vein, I conducted an interview with the head of the NFD, focusing on not only their actions on these mega projects but also their other struggles against energy and resource extraction projects across Anatolia.

The second NGO I selected was *Mekanda Adalet*, or the Center for Spatial Justice. The lawyer of the aforementioned citizen case was also among the founding members of this association. The Center for Spatial Justice will be publishing a book focusing on the court case opened against the Third Airport Project, so they have detailed

knowledge about the legal process as well as an information network. Their aim, which focuses on including the masses in the legal struggle through visualization of technical legal procedures, has been valuable for the epistemological orientation of this study, which sees new centralities of diverse groups as promising resistance against planetary urbanization. Accordingly, I interviewed Barış İne, the member responsible for the book's publication, to get deeper insights.

Finally, I conducted an interview with the head of the only local association, called the Ağaçlı Village Beautification and Improvement Association. In the course of a three-hour interview, he explained the changes in the everyday life of Ağaçlı and the trajectory of their struggle. He also shared his personal photographs taken in Ağaçlı before the construction began.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

As this thesis is a theoretically driven study that incorporates empirical research, the chapters are organized in line with the intention of the study rather than the typical “theoretical framework-methodology-case study” structure. In this vein, there are two modules that address the conceptual framework and the contextual framework, respectively. The first module, comprising Chapters 1, 2, and 3, provides a foundation for addressing the main research questions: Why can the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey be recast as a process immanent to planetary urbanization? Or, conversely, how can the notion of planetary urbanization explain the contextually specific gentrification trajectory in Turkey within the broader totality?

The second module focuses on the operationalization of the framework while developing a particular dimension of the analysis. Each chapter in the second module represents a decisive moment in the trajectory of contemporary gentrification. The research methodology of the thesis is used throughout those chapters to provide snapshots of those decisive moments. Each chapter addresses not only a decisive moment but also a vantage point of its own within the gentrification literature, which is ultimately connected to the recasting of “gentrification as a dimension of planetary

urbanization” (Wyly, 2015). The last chapter, furthermore, re-scales the methodological framework to the Airport and Airport City Project while integrating the layers of empirical research.

More specifically, Chapter 1 addresses the outline of the dissertation through three steps: (1) the definition of gentrification as a general and abstract concept, (2) the building of an original epistemological framework, (3) and the building of an original research methodology. In addressing the first step, the thesis frames gentrification as a general abstract concept underlined by investment in the secondary circuit, class polarization, and displacement. It then goes on to introduce the process-oriented epistemological framework of the study, which has been designed to explore a nuanced way of gentrification on fertile ground. Finally, it provides the sketch of the intellectual operations behind the research methodology.

Chapter 2 presents the concepts that constituted the “general orientation” of the study. It begins with a discussion of Lefebvre’s concepts that are utilized as theoretical tools throughout the thesis. The second part speculates on how the planetary urbanization thesis can contribute to a better understanding of gentrification in Turkey. The demarcation line between this study and the planetary urbanization thesis is outlined in the final part of Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion on the relationship between the ontology and epistemology of gentrification in Turkey. The literature review on gentrification in Turkey traces the answers for the main research question that have been provided so far. It begins with the conceptualization of the term in Anglo-American urban theory to provide a basis for the examination of the literature in Turkey in relation to the broader perspective. It then goes on to discuss the studies in Turkey that have used either the term “gentrification” or a component of the definition. In doing so, it introduces the original contributions to the conceptualization so far.

Chapter 4 moves from the conceptual framework to the contextual framework. More specifically, it addresses the sub-question of whether the current process of urban development in İstanbul is a part of a historical continuum of gentrification. This chapter is the beginning of the operationalization of the abstract conceptualization in response to the specific questions. In an effort to move beyond the linear conceptualization of gentrification copied from Anglo-American urban theory, this part demonstrates the ontological presence of gentrification not only in classical form but in many others since as early as the 1980s. This chapter concludes that the place-specific trajectory of gentrification in İstanbul has been only partly valued in the literature because of the adaptation of Anglo-American linear schemas

Chapter 5 addresses the question of the political, social, and economic dynamics behind the changing urban policy that promotes mega projects. This chapter reflects on the changes on both macro- and micro-levels after the 2002 general elections, which configured an important part of the current phase of gentrification in Turkey. The chapter concludes that gentrification acted as an interface between the first and second circuits of capital in the first decade of the 2000s, which made it a decisive moment for contemporary gentrification.

Chapter 6 acts as a transition chapter. It discusses the recent decisive moment of the mega projects from a broader perspective. It focuses on the changes in all levels of society following the 2010 referendum and then the 2011 general elections, which are also thought of as the milestones for the trajectory of contemporary gentrification.

Chapter 7 focuses on the Third Airport and Airport City Project in the same decisive moment. It re-scales the methodological framework and zooms in on the Third Airport Project. Here, the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observations are used to “test” the validity of the abstract conceptualization within the local context. This chapter concludes that contemporary gentrification in Turkey results in a shift in the analytical category of urbanization from extended to concentrated. This thesis uses the adjective “metamorphic” to refer to this

transformation of the land from forests and coal mining (extended urbanization) to the mega-scale airport and mixed-use development (concentrated urbanization).





CHAPTER 2

PLANETARY URBANIZATION

Social space can never escape its basic duality, even though triadic determining factors may sometimes override and incorporate its binary or dual nature, for the way in which it presents itself and the way in which it is represented are different. Is not social space always, and simultaneously, both a field of action (offering its extension to the deployment of projects and practical intentions) and a basis of action (a set of places whence energies derive and whither energies are directed)? Is it not at once actual (given) and potential (locus of possibilities)? Is it not at once quantitative (measurable by means of units of measurement) and qualitative (as concrete extension where unreplen-ished energies run out, where distance is measured in terms of fatigue or in terms of time needed for activity)? And is it not at once a collection of materials (objects, things) and an ensemble of matériel (tools — and the procedures necessary to make efficient use of tools and of things in general)? (Lefebvre, (1991 [1974]), p.191).

Although Lefebvre's works have long been an inspiration in Anglo-American literature, the application and mobilization of his theories into empirical research occurred relatively late (Stanek, Schmid, and Moravánszky, 2014). As Schmid has pointed out, his theory was regarded as “almost inaccessible, extremely difficult to apply for empirical research” (Schmid, 2014, p. 44). Concentrating on theoretical questions, by the late 1990s, Anglo-American Lefebvrian works were stuck between two antagonistic poles: the political economic conceptualizations of David Harvey and the postmodern appropriations led by Edward Soja (Kipfer *et al.*, 2012).

Inspired by Lefebvre's writings, David Harvey has developed an analysis of the relationship between urbanization and capital accumulation since the publication of his classic *Social Justice and the City* in 1973. However, as Kipfer *et al.* (2008) have argued, Harvey's interpretation of Lefebvre was dominated by the political-economic parameters of a neoclassical Marxism rather than the profound core of his theory, including everyday life and difference. In the 1990s, under the influence of the cultural turn, a second wave of Lefebvre-inspired works emerged that shifted his works from political economy to broader debates. However, those postmodern interpretations not only fell away from Lefebvre's theoretical core by reducing his complex formulation of production of space to separated spatial ontology, but they also heavily contributed to the confusion related to his three-dimensional dialectic (Schmid, 2008).

In this regard, Elden (2004) has contended that Edward Soja gathered Lefebvre's lived space or third term as a critique of modernism's dichotomies. Thereby, Soja developed his notion of Thirdspace, which breaks the dualities and incorporates them as well as transcending both (Elden, 2004). Drawing on Bhabha's Third Space, Soja defines a Thirdspace where "everything comes together: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined..." (Soja, 1996, p. 57). However, Elden (2004) has argued that Lefebvre's lived space was neither the result of dialectic nor the culmination, as Soja claimed. Instead, Lefebvre envisaged three spaces affecting each other simultaneously, not prioritizing one term over another (Elden, 2004, p. 37). In a similar vein, Schmid (2008) criticized the postulation of the autonomous existence of three spaces: a first physical space, a second mental space, and a third social space. Schmid has suggested that there is no separated third space, nor a first or second space; instead, there are "three dialectically interconnected processes of production" (Schmid, 2008, p. 42). However, Schmid argued that Elden's interpretation of Lefebvre's dialectic is questionable since his dialectic is not simply the reaction ability of the third term and mutual interactions. Schmid argued that "dialectical thinking is fundamentally based on the dynamic of contradictions." (Schmid, 2008, p.42-43).

In this vein, recent years have seen an intellectual endeavor that aims at broader appropriation of Lefebvre's metaphilosophy and an open-minded integration of his core agenda to contemporary urban conditions. Drawing on Kipfer *et al.* (2008), Schmid *et al.* (2014) and Schmid (2014), it can be said that there are at least six common characteristics of these third-wave engagements.

First, these interpretations are open-minded readings of Lefebvre while neither making an effort to demarcate their epistemology from Lefebvre nor engaging his "concepts into a specific theoretical approach" (Schmid, 2014, p. 45). Second, the studies of the third wave seem overwhelmingly transdisciplinary, involving the works of sociologists, geographers, and also architects and planners in line with Lefebvre's metaphilosophy that rejects the fragmentation of science. Third, they consider Lefebvre's theory as a point of departure. In doing so, they make an effort to think with and beyond his texts in order to make them "fruitful for further reflections and analysis" (Schmid, 2014, p. 45). Furthermore, they endeavor to combine his notions with other approaches to open new horizons that reach beyond Lefebvre himself (Schmid, 2014, p. 45). Fourth, these works aim at linking a specific case study to the whole, thus deploying empirical research to grasp the totality. These works do not cite his texts to decorate a study; rather, they integrate his theory as the heart of the investigation (Schmid *et al.*, 2014). Finally, most of these studies interpret Lefebvre's production of space as the three dialectical moments rather than a schematic triad, synthesis, or culmination.

This dissertation also aims at contributing to the third wave of Lefebvre-inspired works through the investigation of gentrification in Turkey. In an effort to incorporate Lefebvre's theory in the heart of this study, this part begins with the core of his notions, which are treated as a "general orientation" throughout the study (see Schmid *et al.*, 2014, p. 34). This part is descriptive, partial, and selective in order to reveal the direct connection of his concepts with this study. In doing so, it provides a basis for the epistemological guidelines of the study, which build on an emerging strand of third-wave Lefebvrian works that reinterprets his notion of planetary urbanization. Thus, as

the second step, this part provides a discussion of the planetary urbanization thesis along with critical comments and it concludes by offering a general framework for understanding contemporary gentrification in Turkey.

Complete Urbanization

2.1 As Elden (2004) has stated, Lefebvre's use of dialectic and his embracing of Marx through Hegel is the central theme in his work. Lefebvre constructed his theories through his three-dimensional dialectic—in Schmid's words, an "unusual dialectic"—which set Lefebvre apart from many of his contemporaries (Schmid, 2014, p. 50). Lefebvre's original dialectic rests on movement. For Lefebvre, three terms affect each other simultaneously; they are not constant, but in a continual movement driven by contradiction, able to react with each other. The whole experience or each moment reflects not only this movement and interaction but also contradiction.

In this vein, Lefebvre's spatiotemporal axis can be used as a fruitful terrain to grasp the key concepts directly related to the three-dimensional dialectic. In *Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre introduced his spatiotemporal axis by looking at the history of space as it proceeded from pure nature to complete urbanization (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]). Historically, Lefebvre located the political city, a city-state like the Greek polis and Roman city, at the point of origin. In this period, the city was isolated from the core of production, only providing "non-productive functions - military, administrative, political." The political city was followed by the mercantile city, where political functions were still preserved but markets and merchants were also integrated.

Lefebvre noted that it was only with the advent of capitalism that "the city supplants the countryside in respect of productive work" (Lefebvre, 2003, [1970], p. 27). He argued that the industrial city laid the ground for the critical zone in which urbanization is "something more than a superstructure," whereas the critical phase is the predecessor of the planetary society and world town. Lefebvre borrowed a metaphor from nuclear physics to describe the dialectic in the critical zone as the "the tremendous concentration (of people, activities, wealth, goods, objects, instruments,

means, and thought) of urban reality and the immense explosion, the projection of numerous, disjunct fragments (peripheries, suburbs, vacation homes, satellite towns) into space” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 14). He argued that the dialectic of implosion and explosion, and their simultaneous movement, “are most fully felt in the critical zone” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 14). At the end of the continuum is there is complete urbanization and the accompanying urban society.

Lefebvre complicated this linear axis in the “Levels and Dimensions” chapter of *Urban Revolution*. Here, he assumed that society operates on three sociospatial levels: G (global, general), M (mixed, urban), and P (private, everyday). These levels do not constitute a strict schema; rather, they are methodological tools to grasp social totality. They are not autonomous but rather attached. All of these levels have their own spatial scales. Level G consists of state and capitalism, wherein power is exercised. Level G projects itself into the built domain as monuments and large-scale urban projects, as well as into the unbuilt domain as highways, transport organization, or neutral spaces such as “nature preserve sites.” Within this level, politicians promote “their ideologically justified political conception of space,” which conforms to the logic of capital (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 79). Level M is the level of the urban, namely streets, squares, and avenues, wherein the two other levels of society are mediated. Level M is the site and terrain “for defense or attack, for struggle” between global and private (Lefebvre, 2003, pp. 89-91). Finally, P (the private level) is the level of “habiter” and expresses “only the built domain as large apartment buildings, private homes both large and small, campgrounds, shantytowns” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 75). In this level, Lefebvre introduces the distinction between habiting and habitat, explaining that habiting has been reduced to the habitat and human being to the functional acts. While the habitat is the imposition of authority and a device of capitalist rationality, habiting is the complex lived experience and an invention of the individual.

As Neil Smith noted in the foreword of *Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre maintained his spatiotemporal axis in his seminal book *The Production of Space* through the postulation of a historical transition from absolute space to abstract and ultimately

differential space (Smith, 2003). Lefebvre's axis begins with absolute space as the space of ancient civilizations, which emerges from the "fragments of nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities," such as caves, mountains, and springs (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 234). These locations were selected by architecture because of their natural features and then transformed into a political realm through symbolic buildings. Sites that had significance due to their natural features then became politically significant places.

The suppression of absolute space by abstract space in historical evolution can be appraised in line with the submission of private property and exchange value over use value and the domination of nature instead of appropriation. Through this historical movement from absolute to abstract, use value was reduced to exchange value and space itself became a commodity that has exchange value.

Lefebvre describes abstract space as "a product of violence and war; it is political; instituted by a state, it is institutional" and it appears to be homogeneous (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 285). This homogeneity, in turn, paved the way for the tendency towards the identification of social and family relationships and the elimination of existing differences and peculiarities.

However, for Lefebvre, abstract space is not homogeneous, although its goal is homogeneity. In a similar vein, it has not eliminated absolute space; rather, absolute space has been incorporated into abstract space. Thus, abstract space comprises the contradictions of quantity/quality, use/exchange value, appropriation/domination, and isotopia/heterotopia.

Lefebvre mentions that despite the dominant tendency towards the quantitative (geometrical space) in abstract space, in moments of departure such as holidays, people move towards qualitative space and look for the appropriation of space; they seek sun, sea, snow (Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre also argues for the dialectical movement of exchange and use value even though they begin as a simple contrast. He notes that use value "re-emerges sharply at odds with exchange in space" since the

more space is functionalized, the more it loses its appropriation as it is removed from lived time. Ironically, a buyer looks for a time to purchase a space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 356).

For Lefebvre, the contradictions in abstract space inherently give rise to a new type of space, which he calls “differential space.” While abstract space aims at homogeneity, differential space is produced through the accentuation of differences. Differential space can be interpreted as post-capitalist space, which privileges use value and appropriation, “celebrates the bodily and experiential particularity as well as the nonnegotiable ‘right to difference’” (Merrifield, 2013, p. 113). Lefebvre contends that class struggle gives rise to differential space since class struggle alone “prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 55). In *Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre links differential space with his concept of utopia, which he sees “as necessary as isotopy and heterotopy. It is everywhere and nowhere. The transcendence of desire and power, the immanence of people, the omnipresence of symbolism, and the imaginary, the rational, and dreamlike version of centrality... (imagined and real)” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 130). Thus, the most salient significance of Lefebvre’s thesis lies in its bold prediction that transformation will not stem from industrialization but rather the contradictions of urban space. The resistance is not embedded in the industrial context; rather, it is in the urban experience.

Lefebvre put forward the end product of his spatiotemporal axis, namely urban society and complete urbanization, as virtual, which will become real in the future. His provocative thesis implied the superseding of industrialization by urbanization while defining urbanization as the process of creating the conditions for capitalism rather than the mere superstructure. As outlined by Merrifield, “urbanization is not a highly developed manifestation of industrialization, but – and this is the startling thing about Lefebvre’s ‘urban revolution’ thesis – industrialization all along has been a special sort of urbanization all along” (Merrifield, 2013, p. 911).

Schmid *et al.* (2014) argue that while Lefebvre's complete urbanization thesis is an arrival point for the existing knowledge, it is also a starting point for fresh studies and projects. In this vein, Brenner and Schmid suggest Lefebvre's complete urbanization thesis as a starting point for a new epistemology of urban (Brenner, 2014; Brenner and Schmid, 2014, 2015).

This section has examined Lefebvre's account of the history of space along with his innovative concepts as a prelude to the recent epistemological positions. In this vein, the following section introduces speculations on the "unseen" part of his axis, or, more specifically, the planetary urbanization thesis, which builds upon Lefebvre's complete urbanization thesis.

2.2. With and Beyond Planetary Urbanization

Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid have suggested a new epistemology of urban, building on Lefebvre's thesis of complete urbanization. They borrowed the term "planetary urbanization" from a text called "Dissolving city, planetary metamorphosis," written by Henri Lefebvre in 1989. In a parallel effort, Merrifield has also proposed a shift from the notion of "the city" towards urban society as a new theoretical and virtual object, building on Lefebvre's planetary urbanization (Merrifield, 2013, 2014). As mentioned in Chapter 1, these provocations have received very rapidly growing interest, sometimes generating polemical debates and lively discussions. It is safe to claim that planetary urbanization became one of the most influential concepts in urban studies seeking a new vocabulary of urbanization in order to grasp the constantly changing environment of the 21st century.

Lefebvre used the metaphor of implosion/explosion in *Urban Revolution*, borrowed from nuclear physics, to describe capitalist urbanization as "the tremendous concentration (of people, activities, wealth, goods, objects, instruments, means, and thought) of urban reality and the immense explosion, the projection of numerous, distinct fragments (peripheries, suburbs, vacation homes, satellite towns) into space" (Lefebvre, 2003, p.13). Building on this concept, the planetary urbanization thesis puts

forward urbanization as a dialectic relationship between implosion and explosion. Implosion and explosion are not separated and distinct formations; they represent the “moments” in Lefebvrian dialectic, “mutually interdependent yet intensely conflictual dimensions of a historically constituted, discontinuously evolving totality” (Brenner, 2014a, p. 21). Therefore, at the heart of this dissertation is Lefebvre’s three-dimensional dialectic, wherein urbanization is the continual transformation, the movement and the contradiction between implosion and explosion rather than a synthesis or culmination.

The book edited by Neil Brenner, *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, has a cover image of the huge and desolate Tar Sands in Alberta, Canada, which is a zone of resource extraction supporting fossil fuel-based urbanization (Brenner, 2014a). The image illustrates the stimulating thesis of planetary urbanization as why this area has been rendered invisible in urban studies while urbanization is first and foremost responsible for its destruction. In this vein, Brenner has urged scholars to shift the focus from cities and boundaries to their extended “operational landscapes,” thus moving towards an urban theory “without an outside” (Brenner, 2014a). Engaging Lefebvre’s three-dimensional dialectic, for Brenner, the notion of implosion and explosion connotes “the production and continual transformation of an industrialized urban fabric in which centers of agglomeration and their operational landscapes are woven together in mutually transformative ways while being co-articulated into a worldwide capitalist system” (Brenner, 2014a, p. 1819).

Accordingly, drawing on a critique of the “new urban age” thesis for its limited city-centric, empiricist approach implicit in the cliché of the “50 per cent threshold of world population now living in cities,” Brenner and Schmid have called for a new urban epistemology by challenging the inherited concepts and representations of the urban (Brenner and Schmid, 2014, 2015). They contend that the “inherited analytical vocabularies and cartographic methods do not adequately capture the changing nature of urbanization processes,” and, therefore, emergent patterns “require the development of new analytical approaches ... including experimental and speculative ones ... new

visualizations ... a new lexicon of urbanization processes and forms of territorial differentiation” (Brenner and Schmid, 2014, p. 751). In this vein, Brenner and Schmid (2015) have argued that there are at least three recent macro-trends that have transformed the environment and the nature of the urban through contextually specific trajectories:

(1) The emergence of new geographies of uneven spatial development through “a contradictory interplay between rapid explosive processes of urbanization and various forms of stagnation, shrinkage, and marginalization,” which cannot be grasped through inherent binaries between urban/rural, metropole/colony, First/Second/Third World, North/South, East/West, and so forth: capitalist urbanization manifested at all spatial scales from neighborhood to the planetary.

(2) The creation of new scales of urbanization: Large-scale megacities, polynucleated metropolitan regions, inter-metropolitan networks requiring mega-scale infrastructural investments stretching even to the atmospheric environment, the restructuring and repositioning of hinterlands, large-scale territories devoted to supporting capitalist urbanization such as resource extraction or water and waste management, and the profound transformation of rural and the operationalization (end) of wilderness.

(3) The mutations in the regulatory geographies of urbanization: The emergence of variegated, polarized, multiscale, and uncoordinated governance instead of singular, territorial state power.

In calling for a new approach, Brenner and Schmid have engaged postcolonial urban studies as the key perspective to decenter the naturalized Euro-American frameworks and they have introduced their common concerns as epistemological reflexivity and conceptual reinvention. On the other hand, they draw a strict demarcation between postcolonial studies and planetary urbanization in terms of their ontological assumptions. Against the insistence of postcolonial studies on provincialization, and particularly specificity, distinctiveness, and thus plural ontologies, Brenner and Schmid have argued that specificity should be understood as a relational, dialectical

concept within the “context of context,” which includes “worldwide capitalist restructuring, dispossession, and uneven spatial development” (Brenner, 2013, p. 93; Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 161).¹³

These scholars have linked this focus of postcolonial research on specificity to the treatment of the city as privileged terrain, which is also interpreted as a form of “methodological cityism.” They have found it problematic that the bulk of postcolonial research has focused on “cities, tout court.” However, most of the same literature is “attuned to the multiple sociospatial configurations in which agglomerations are crystallizing under contemporary capitalism” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 162). Therefore, Brenner and Schmid (2015) have suggested locating landscapes of extended urbanization centrally in urban studies as concentrated urbanization for an adequate understanding of contemporary urbanization.

Taking these arguments as their basic principles, Brenner and Schmid propose a general epistemological framework, including seven theses.¹⁴ The following text discusses each of these theses together with the critical commentaries they have attracted.

“Thesis 1: the urban and urbanization are theoretical categories, not empirical objects”

The first thesis challenges the very notion of the urban as an empirical object, and it argues that urban is a theoretical category and “its demarcation as a zone of thought, representation, imagination or action can only occur through a process of theoretical abstraction” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 163). The planetary urbanization thesis has put forward that access to the real is mediated through abstract conceptualizations

¹³ For further reading on “context of context”, see Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, 2010 and Wachsmuth, Madden, and Brenner 2011.

¹⁴ They make a series of propositions – what the authors call “epistemological guidelines” in their first airing in Brenner and Schmid (2014). These are developed further in an article into seven theses in Brenner and Schmid, (2015)

and theory, which have major consequences for understanding, for research, and for action (Brenner, 2015, p. 598).

This call of the authors for abstract conceptualization and rejection of the urban as an empirical object attracted a significant degree of critical commentary and concerns. Richard Walker, for example, has argued that urban and urbanization are empirical objects even if their boundaries are difficult to define in time and space (Walker, 2015). He further asserts that the planetary urbanization thesis is confounding epistemology with ontology since urban space is a real thing, an object to research, and abstract concepts do not entirely correspond to reality. He has called planetary urbanization “more materialistic” and has argued that the essential problem is “bridging the gap between theorization and empirical verification” (Walker, 2015, p. 185). In concluding words, Walker has urged social scientists to leave philosophy to the philosophers and instead do their hard work of concrete, empirical research.

The focus on the epistemological position in urban studies is also tackled by Ruddick *et al.* (2018) from a different vantage point. Through a symptomatic reading a la Althusser, they pay attention to the “points of occlusion” regarding “the urban as the grounds for difference, centrality and the everyday; the omission of subjects of and occlusion of subjectivity; and the occlusion of a constitutive outside and its political capacities to remake the urban” (Ruddick *et al.*, 2018, p. 387). The authors argue that Brenner and Schmid’s emphasis on theoretical abstraction as the prior site at the expense of social ontology limits their epistemology. Rather, Ruddick *et al.* (2018) put forward the capacity of social ontology, the pivotal role of praxis, and everyday life as a site for knowledge production in order to shift the terrain of urban theory.

Schmid (2018), in his recent article, clarifies those questions regarding the role of theory in relation to urban practice and urban research. He argues that theory is inevitably practical since it has to prove its value in practice, and he states that the relationship between theory and practice is dialectical “as theory is advancing through the confrontation with practical reality” (Schmid, 2018, p. 598).

For Schmid, theory is a “practical, powerful and joyful instrument” to apply in activism and there is nothing radical in dismissing this opportunity (Schmid, 2018). In the same text, Schmid also replies to the critical comments regarding the nonmaterialist approach of planetary urbanization, drawing directly on Marx's phrases in the *Grundrisse*.¹⁵ He argues that "to start an analysis with an apparently concrete, empirically given category, such as that of the population (for instance, of a country) because it seems to be more 'real' is actually based on a wrong assumption" since this seemingly concrete parameter is also an abstraction as well as problematic, —in Marx's words a "chaotic conception of the whole" (Schmid, 2018, p.598). In a similar vein, Brenner rejects the call of Walker to leave the philosophy to the philosophers, and he argues that urban theorists should engage with epistemology. The theoretical abstraction is essential for their position as it enables researchers to update and reinvent the conceptualizations (Brenner, 2018).

This study argues that Lefebvre's concept of concrete abstraction is a key tool to understand the epistemological position of planetary urbanization. Lefebvre contended that space is a concrete abstraction that has a social existence but also needs content in order to exist socially. As Stanek (2011) mentions, for Lefebvre the space of capitalism is an abstraction that "became true" in social, economic, political, and cultural practice. Things lie, says Lefebvre, "objects hide something in their origin, namely social labor, they set themselves up as absolutes" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.81). Building on Lefebvre's words, it can be said that planetary urbanization assertively emphasizes theoretical abstraction since the things lie, empirical evidence hides.

Merrifield has also defined the urban as a concrete abstraction “illuminating virtuality” in Lefebvre's words (Merrifield, 2002, p. 17). Merrifield borrowed Marx's theme of fetishism to remark on the social relations hidden behind the urban form, thus

¹⁵ Karl Marx, *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*. (London: Penguin, 1973) in Schmid, 2018, p.598

embarking on a theoretical abstraction to reveal how uneven development is hidden across the global urban space. He described spatial fetishism, which shades the social relations embedded within buildings, public spaces, or urban infrastructures. In other words, he argued that just as we learn “nothing, from the commodity, about productive relations between workers and owners, between minimum wage toilers and rich bosses, between factory hands and corporate CEOs, between Nike sole-makers in Vietnam and stockbrokers on Wall Street,” we learn nothing from the buildings (Merrifield, 2019).

“Thesis 2: the urban is a process, not a universal form, settlement type or bounded unit”

Brenner and Schmid (2015, p. 165) have argued that urban sites are merely the “temporary materialization of ongoing urbanization process”; thus, the urban is not a fixed form but a “dynamic, historically evolving and variegated” process. Hence, there is no universal and singular form, but many processes materialized in different contexts. The urban is not a settlement type and so the classification of so-called settlement types as cities, towns, suburbs, etc. is not useful anymore since urban configurations are not static units but dynamic, relationally evolving processes bearing the historical sociospatial frameworks “in and through which future urban pathways and potentials are produced” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 165). The inherited discourses that approach city as a bounded spatial unit, which also are apparent in the discourses of international organizations, conceal the uneven implosions and explosions of capitalist urbanization (Brenner and Schmid, 2015).

In his recent article, presenting a reflection on the debates around planetary urbanization, Brenner argues that thesis 2 is building strongly upon the works of David Harvey (Brenner, 2018). Brenner has already included Harvey’s “Cities or urbanization?” in *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* as a background text, which suggests a radical break from late nineteenth century thinking while defending a process-based theorization of urbanization. Here, Harvey

has argued that the “thing” we call a “city” is the outcome of a “process” that we call “urbanization.” Accordingly, he has examined the relationship between the city and urbanization:

Urbanization must then be understood not in terms of some socio-organizational entity called ‘the city’ (the theoretical object that so many geographers, demographers, and sociologists erroneously presume) but as the production of specific and quite heterogeneous spatiotemporal forms embedded within different kinds of social action (Harvey, 1996, p. 52).

Merrifield has also defended a shift in the object of analysis in urban research. He interpreted this moving away as a paradigm shift, like a shift from Newtonian to Einsteinian, from absolute to relative. Drawing on Lefebvre, he stressed that the urban is nothing but “dynamic social relations” and “a coming together of people”. In this vein, he mobilized Lefebvre’s definition of the city in *Urban Revolution*:

pure form: a place of encounter, assembly, simultaneity. This form has no specific content, but is a centre of attraction and life. It is an abstraction, but unlike a metaphysical entity, the urban is a concrete abstraction, associated with practice. Living creatures, the products of industry, technology and wealth, works of culture, ways of living, situations, the modulations and ruptures of the everyday—the urban accumulates all content. But it is more than and different from accumulation. Its content (things, objects, people, situations) are mutually exclusive because they are diverse, but inclusive because they are brought

together and imply their mutual presence. The urban is both form and receptacle, void and plenitude, superobject and nonobject, superconconsciousness and the totality of consciousness (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 118-119).

In a similar vein, Angelo and Wachsmuth (2015) have claimed that urban political ecology mostly remains within the traditional, bounded city as the research object, or what they call “methodological cityism.” They argue that a Lefebvrian process-oriented theoretical framework provides fertile grounds to overcome the limitations of the “city lens.” Building on Lefebvre’s contention that “the city no longer corresponds to a real social object,” the authors urge scholars to shift the focus from the city to urban society in the analysis of contemporary urbanization (Angelo and Wachsmuth, 2015). On the other hand, while criticizing the city fetishism in urban research, Wachsmuth (2014) has objected to the abandonment of the concept altogether since the traditional city still holds its position in the everyday consciousness of urbanization, the cognitive maps of new urban spaces. For this reason, he has suggested treating the city as a “category of practice” rather than a “category of analysis. Wachsmuth contends that this understanding of the city as an ideology is a way to reconcile the tension between the explosions of city form and the tenacity of city concept (Wachsmuth, 2014).

On the other hand, it seems that the planetary urbanization thesis also seeks to move beyond these recent studies, also preoccupied with the rethinking of the city, such as actor-network and assemblage theories. For Brenner and Schmid (2015), while these postcolonial theories also challenge the thinking of the city as a bounded spatial unit and focus on the relational processes, they still employ the city as a research object, as a thing for research. On the other hand, the planetary urbanization thesis advocates a process-oriented framework and asks the following question: “is there—could there be—a new epistemology of the urban that might illuminate the emergent conditions,

processes, and transformations associated with a world of generalized urbanization?” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 155).

On the basis of this question, Davidson and Iveson (2015) have asserted that the strong version of the planetary urbanization thesis implies a displacement of the concept of “the city” from urban research while suggesting the appropriation of “concentrated urbanization and agglomeration” instead. They argue that this epistemological assumption differs from Harvey’s approach, upon which the planetary urbanization claimed to built. They contend that while planetary urbanization suggested the exclusion of the city as a concept, Harvey adopted dialectical thinking in the examination of the relationship between the city and urbanization. Davidson and Iveson argue that the replacement of city by urbanization process means the oversimplifying of the city, which is a significant “analytical and political category” as well as a central concept within urban theory. In this vein, they have argued that replacing the city as an anchor for urban studies paves the way for the loss of conceptual clarity and political efficacy (Davidson and Iveson, 2015).

In a similar vein, Richard Walker (2015) argued that complete rejection of the city as a form results in the loss of materialism and dialectic. He contends that the urban is both a process and an object, arguing that urban includes “intransigent materialities” that resist “fluxing,” such as the sun, rivers, or bodies. These objects, structures, or things can change in time, but they always have a bounded definition. At this point, Davidson and Iveson concur with Walker to the extent that the urban is both a thing and process; thus, the planetary urbanization thesis demands a reexamination of the dialectic between thing (city) and process (urbanization) (Davidson and Iveson, 2015).

“Thesis 3: Urbanization involves three mutually constitutive moments— concentrated urbanization, extended urbanization and differential urbanization”

“Thesis 4: The fabric of urbanization is multidimensional”

Brenner and Schmid introduced the concepts of thesis 3 and thesis 4 in an integrated way, drawing on Lefebvre’s three-dimensional space conceptualization. Here, Brenner

and Schmid assert that urbanization involves three dialectically interconnected and mutually constitutive moments: concentrated urbanization, extended urbanization, and differential urbanization. Lefebvre's three dimensions of spatial practices, territorial regulation, and everyday life co-constitute these three moments, and they "together produce the unevenly woven, restlessly mutating urban fabric of the contemporary world" (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 170).

The moment of concentrated urbanization involves agglomeration, spatial clustering of populations, means of production, governmental apparatuses, activities, investments, and infrastructures; in other words, it is an inherited "city" concept. While the authors have argued that agglomerations remain the central analytical, representational, and political focus, they reject the epistemology that represents agglomeration as the privileged or exclusive site for urban research. In this vein, they object to city-centric urban theory and suggest an epistemology that seeks to understand the simultaneous "processes of concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization" (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Brenner, 2018; Schmid, 2018).

The moment of concentrated urbanization is "inextricably" connected to that of extended urbanization. The moment of extended urbanization connotes the activation and transformation of landscapes in relation to agglomeration processes. Extended urbanization involves an operational landscape beyond the agglomeration zones that is constructed to support, or as a consequence of, the everyday activities and socioeconomic dynamics of urban life. Brenner refers to these sites as "operational landscape," and they include sites for waste management, energy, tourism, telecommunication, and transportation infrastructures, as well as privatized, profit-oriented resource extraction areas, due to their strategic role in supporting concentrated urbanization.

Concentrated and extended urbanization are inextricably intertwined with the process of differential urbanization, in which inherited geographies of agglomeration and operational landscapes are creatively destroyed in relation to capitalism. Brenner and

Schmid have stressed that they employ Lefebvre's "implosion-explosion" metaphor to demarcate this third moment rather than equating concentrated urbanization with implosion and extended urbanization. For Brenner and Schmid, this differential moment of urbanization:

puts into relief the intense, perpetual dynamism of capitalist forms of urbanization, in which sociospatial configurations are tendentially established, only to be rendered obsolete and eventually superseded through the relentless forward motion of the accumulation process and industrial development (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p.168).

It seems that the differential moment of urbanization also attempts to engage the utopian dimension of Lefebvre's conceptualization of space that is "differential space." Brenner and Schmid have suggested that differential urbanization is the result of various forms of urban struggle and bears the potential for radical social and political transformations that are suppressed through capitalist industrial development. Therefore, the conceptualization of differential urbanization builds upon creative destruction and the associated urban struggles.

"Thesis 5: urbanization has become planetary"

Brenner and Schmid argue that the post-1980s patterns of urban restructuring established the necessary conditions for the current planetary extension of the urban fabric during the last two decades. The changes in financial and regulatory systems, territorial regulation, and the technological revolution and associated changes in production systems have paved the way for speculative investment not only within the built environments of major cities but also in the landscapes of infrastructures, resource extraction, agriculture, and transportation.

For Brenner and Schmid, Lefebvre's hypothesis of the complete urbanization of society refers to this worldwide condition in which the uneven implosions and explosions of capitalist urbanization have blurred the geographical divisions of city and countryside, urban and rural, society and nature, North and South, East and West. They point out that this kind of urban analysis, based on sociospatial borders and oppositions, has increasingly become an obfuscator in efforts to understand contemporary urbanization. The urban is not defined in opposition to an ontological "Other" located beyond or outside it, and the rural is not the "elsewhere" or "constitutive outside," but it is in the very core of the urbanization process.

Ruddick *et al.* (2018) have criticized the planetary urbanization thesis's ontological construction of the non-urban, which renders distinctive categories such as "rural, countryside, agricultural lands, hinterlands, deserts, forests, mountains, the wilderness, seas and oceans, unceded territories, and indigenous lands" under the same title. According to these scholars, this approach paves the way for a chaotic concept while universalizing the non-urban. They note that while they argue against Brenner and Schmid's contention that the rural is not outside the urban and rural production is mainly for the global capitalist market, they also insist that inside and outside are not blurred; they are "still being produced and reproduced through the social division of labor of specific localities in ways that are connected to extra-localities" (Ruddick *et al.*, 2018).

Another contribution by Roy (2015) questions the validity of the displacement of the dominant categories in the Global South. She argues that some towns in the Global South cannot be understood in line with the geographies of urbanization or urban politics that have been discussed in critical urban theory. For Roy, these towns can be seen as a governmental category since they are urban only because the state decided so: "they are examples of urban government without geographies of urbanization or urban politics" (Roy, 2018, p. 5). Drawing on Indian cities, Roy defends the maintenance of the demarcation between urban and rural in terms of the governmental category; she notes that even though they are not depictions of actually existing

sociospatial process, it is still important to understand “why these categories matter and how they are deployed in the repetitious work of government” (Roy, 2015, p. 10).

A further inquiry into the object of analysis is pursued by Azam Khatam and Oded Haas. In their discussion of Iran and Palestine/Israel, they argue that “the city” prevails as a political entity as the site of struggle. Therefore, the demarcation between sociospatial configurations diminishes their roles as the site of struggle while rendering a range of distinct sociospatial configurations under concentrated and extended urbanization.

“Thesis 6: urbanization unfolds through variegated patterns and pathways of uneven spatial development”

Brenner and Schmid have stressed that planetary urbanization does not involve homogenization and uniformity; it does not give rise to the spread of a single form across the entire planet. On the contrary, they have argued that it is a path-dependent, geographically variegated process, with historically and geographically specific urban configurations but “marked by the uneven development of capitalism as well as by manifold, specific social and political determinations.”

Despite the core agenda that opposes the universalizing, homogenizing, North-centric conceptualizations as well as the backgrounds of authors who have long engaged with Lefebvrian urban theory, planetary urbanization has been accused of being “totalizing” and “universalizing” by several scholars from feminist, Marxist, and postcolonial fields of scholarship (Goonewardena, 2018). These contributions mostly address the “overlooked” concerns in planetary urbanization regarding difference, everyday life, situated production of knowledge,

On this basis, Goonewardena (2018) has proposed the Lefebvrian conceptualization of “totality” as a key tool to enhance the openness of planetary urbanization to other perspectives. Drawing on Sartre’s definition, he emphasizes the distinction between “totality” and “totalization” as follows: “Totalization, then, is the name for the process—subjective and objective, historical and social—of the production of a

totality, i.e. the way in which a totality becomes a totality” (Goonewardena, 2018, p. 462).¹⁶ He mentions that totality is inherently dynamic since it always makes another totality. The purpose of the totalization is thus to grasp the actually existing and evolving totality in praxis (Goonewardena, 2018).

Like the concept of concrete abstraction, totality is also an essential tool for grasping Lefebvre’s oeuvre on state, urban, and everyday life, all of which he sees as concrete abstractions in a broader totality. Accordingly, this dissertation reinterprets gentrification in Turkey in its totality. Rather than assuming a different singular ontology, the aim here is to analyze gentrification in Turkey within a broader totality, which is interpreted as not a fixed form but a relational, dialectical, and historically evolving concept. In this vein, this dissertation employs Lefebvre’s three levels of G (global, general), M (mixed, urban), and P (private, everyday) as an analytical device to understand the contextually specific process of gentrification in Turkey in relation to “totality.”

“Thesis 7: the urban is a collective project in which the potentials generated through urbanization are appropriated and contested.”

Thesis 7 introduces the political implications of the planetary urbanization thesis by building on differential urbanization, which involves not only the relentless creative destruction under capitalism but also the associated transformative potential. In line with Thesis 2, Brenner and Schmid have argued that struggles over the right to the city must be reframed since the classical city can no longer serve as the primary reference

¹⁶ Goonewardena (2018) quotes Sartre’s definition: “A totality is defined as a being which, while radically distinct from the sum of its parts, is present in its entirety, in one form or another, in each of these parts, and which relates to itself either through its relation to one or more of its parts or through its relation to the relations between all or some of them.” From Jean Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Vol 1*, (SheridanSmith. London: Verso, 1976/1960)

for urban struggles. In the era of planetary urbanization, struggles are produced in diverse places; therefore, new forms of resistance emerge not only from the urbanites but also the peasants, workers, indigenous peoples, and other displaced populations who are impacted by the destruction.

In a similar vein, Merrifield has argued that the urban is a “place, a site for action, not an actor itself; to see the urban as an actor is to fetishize the urban, is to fetishize space” (Merrifield, 2013, p. 916). With the examples of the recent uprisings in Tunis, Cairo, Athens, Madrid, and Manhattan, Merrifield argues that protest is not about the city itself; rather, it is a much simpler claim of democracy in conditions of capitalist crisis. Demand is not the city but rather centrality, which is not the geographical center but rather “a locus of actions that attract and repel, that structure and organize a social space, that define the urban” (Merrifield, 2013, p. 918).

On the other hand, Davidson and Iveson (2015) have insisted that “the city” is a privileged space of political struggle and they challenged the planetary urbanization thesis in terms of its oversimplified approach to “the city.” They argue that the “potential for politics is therefore timeless and placeless, but the emergence of politics is always contextual and situated” (Davidson and Iveson, 2015, p. 659). They suggest understanding the city/urban relationship as dialectical and addressing “when, where and how ‘the city’ does emerge as a site of political action” (Davidson and Iveson, 2015, p. 659).

Ruddick *et al.* (2018) also suggest that the planetary urbanization thesis bypassed Lefebvre’s notion of the urban as grounds of difference, centrality, and everyday life. They argue that Brenner and Schmid have overlooked Lefebvre’s central ontological concept, everyday life, as the “shifting terrain” from which new alternative politics might arise. They further state that the planetary urbanization thesis has insufficiently developed the political dimensions of the everyday, which is “rooted in a praxis of autogestion and a mondialization of politics” in Lefebvre’s works (Ruddick *et al.*, 2018, p. 9).

2.3. Epilogue

The conclusion of this chapter, indeed, takes part in the introduction, where the epistemological guidelines were introduced. Accordingly, this section elaborates on the distinguishing features of this study's epistemological stance in place of a traditional epilogue to avoid repetition.

The urban consolidates, Lefebvre says, "as a form, the urban transforms what it brings together (concentrates)...as a transforming form, the urban destructures and restructures its elements" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 174). It seems that the planetary urbanization thesis reconstructs Lefebvre's phrase to propose that the dialectic of concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization consolidates everything and transforms its elements. This study argues that urban politics through dialectically interconnected concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization have valuable potential in terms of creating new terrains, battlefronts, and tactics for the struggle. It is evident that this dialectic produces new centralities, assembling different actors from urbanites to peasants to resist capitalist urbanization.

In this vein, this study interprets the suggestion of Brenner and Schmid as a challenge to the idea of "the city" as a singular, universal, fixed, bounded spatial unit along with the associated epistemological assumptions and methodologies in urban research rather than the complete displacement of "the city." This study also challenges the city-centric/city-dominant epistemologies and embraces the ontological inextricability of the urban/non-urban in urban research, during intellectual operations, and it responds to the calls for urban research that is more engaged with urbanization as a process that exceeds the city.

On the other hand, even though the textual evidence supports this kind of interpretation, it is also apparent that the planetary urbanization thesis introduces its agenda through a complete process-oriented analytical device (dialectic between concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization). This, in turn, evokes questions on the place of "the city" as an analytical category in urban research. Here, this study

demarcates its position in relation to the planetary urbanization thesis through its explicit emphasis on the persistence of the place of the city in the dialectic. As was clearly seen in the recent uprisings across the world, the city is still a significant site for political struggles, which in turn necessitates its political and theoretical position for critical urban theory.

Merrifield argues that the urban is a “place, a site for action, not an actor itself; to see the urban as an actor is to fetishize the urban, is to fetishize space” (Merrifield, 2013, p. 916). As the heart of Lefebvre’s three-dimensional dialectic is the movement of the three terms as well as their capability to react with each other, Merrifield’s arguments can even be interpreted as the displacement of the city as form/thing from the dialectic since it has no ability to react, it is not an actor. Merrifield notes that even though all of these encounters in Tunis, Cairo, Athens, Madrid, and Manhattan occurred in the heart of the city, they were not about claiming the absolute center. His emphasis here raises the question of, if the city is not an actor, if it “creates nothing, is nothing, serves no purpose,” why the heart of the city always becomes the site for the action (Merrifield, 2013, p. 916).

A similar vagueness is also apparent in the planetary urbanization thesis and so several scholars have interpreted the theory as such and have defended its place in the dialectic (see Davidson and Iveson, 2015; Khatam and Haas, 2018). On this basis, Brenner and Schmid have used Harvey’s phrase in *Rebel Cities: From Right to the City to Urban Revolution* to support their argument that “to claim the right to the city is, in effect, to claim a right to something that no longer exists” (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 177). However, Harvey also noted that:

Is the city (or a system of cities) merely a passive site (or pre-existing network)-the place of appearance-where deeper currents of political struggle are expressed? On the surface it might seem so. Yet it is also clear that certain urban environmental characteristics are more conducive to

rebellious protests than others...The actual site characteristics are important, and the physical and social reengineering and territorial organization of these sites is a weapon in political struggles. (Harvey, 2012, p.117)

It seems that the planetary urbanization thesis is not clear about if “the city” as a thing deserves a place in the dialectic. It is not surprising that authors who insist on the place of the city in critical urban theory exemplify its role in urban struggles, and particularly in the Middle East. In this vein, as the author of this dissertation is a Turkish citizen, it is easier to contend that urban struggles are not only the terrain for the defense of the place of the city in the dialectic, but the city or even the morphology of the built environment aggressively interacts with urbanization and deserves a place in the dialectic.

CHAPTER 3

GENTRIFICATION and GENTRIFICATION IN TURKEY

This chapter is the second section of the conceptual module of the dissertation, which essentially consists of two theories: planetary urbanization and gentrification. In line with the path of the study, the present conceptual module begins with a critical interrogation of the concepts and methods used in gentrification research in Turkey. This, in turn, reveals the motivations, concerns, and ideas behind the epistemological and methodological framework of this dissertation.

To the extent that the aim of this dissertation hinges upon the epistemological and ontological commitments of place-specific contemporary gentrification, this chapter aims at understanding the transfer/travel of the theory away from its place of birth to Turkey and specifically to İstanbul. In doing so, it introduces the trigger of this study's conceptual axis from which the following main research question has been produced: Why can the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey be recast as a process that is immanent to planetary urbanization?

In an effort to examine the transferability of the concept from the Global North, this part begins with a straightforward, chronological, and selective review on gentrification in the Anglo-American literature, focusing on the theories that are predominantly copied/adopted in Turkey. It then goes on to introduce a critical review of research on gentrification in Turkey with a focus on contributions to conceptual refinement. Finally, Section 2.3. introduces the key distinctions between the debates in Turkey and the mainstream in order to identify the analytical plain established so far. In doing so, it outlines the necessary concerns in the construction of a research framework that has the capacity to tackle the main research question.

Gentrification in Mainstream

Since Ruth Glass's seminal text, gentrification represents, in Hamnett's words, one of the "key theoretical and ideological battlegrounds" in the literature, attracting great
3.1 interest from different academic disciplines (Hamnett, 1991, p. 174). This battleground accommodates both the core debates and major shifts in urban theory, including structure vs. agency, production vs. consumption, and economic vs. cultural along with "synthesis" and "complementary." The following section provides an overview of different theoretical perspectives in the gentrification literature for more than four decades (Table 3.1).

Shortly before the term "gentrification" was adopted, in the mid-1960s, a major shift known as the "theoretical and quantitative revolution" occurred in the field of human geography (Johnston, 2006). Rooted in logical positivism, there were two main themes at the core of this revolution: a search for order in the landscape and spatially expressed aspects of human behavior "through application of the hypothetic deductive 'scientific method' and the use of mathematical reasoning and statistical analysis in this search for order" (Johnston, 2006, p. 7). Hubbard *et al.* (2002) mention that this "scientific method" attracted many researchers who regarded regional geography as "banal and descriptive"; thus, human geography was to become a spatial science.

By the early 1970s, a series of reactions emerged against the positivist models of spatial science (Johnston, 2006). Several researchers claimed that spatial science had been limiting human research and was irrelevant to major concerns of the field (Johnston, 2006). Hence, new directions, including important actors of the gentrification debate, appeared: structuralism associated with radical revolution and a humanistic perspective associated with the cultural turn.

Table 3.1. Theoretical perspectives in gentrification literature.

Decade	Problem Definition	Theoretical Perspectives	Related Shift in Urban Theory
1970s-80s	Driving agent of gentrification	Marxism vs Humanistic (structure vs agency; economic vs cultural; production vs consumption; supply vs demand)	Radical Revolution and Cultural Turn
1990s	Call for synthesis/complementary approaches	Post-Marxism/NeoMarxism	Postmodern Turn
2000s	The relationship between gentrification and globalization; Emergence of new forms in global context	Neo-Marxism; PostMarxism	—
2010s	Epistemology vs Ontology; Geography of Gentrification; Contextual Diversity	Neo-Marxism; PostMarxism	New Urbanism/Postcolonial Research: (assemblage, comparative, ANT, policy mobilities)

Accordingly, a decade after the coinage of “gentrification,” a fruitful debate emerged between the Marxist economic and humanistic approaches concerning the main driving force of gentrification. Hamnett (1991) listed some of the related dichotomies in the gentrification literature in the 1980s: structure and agency, production and consumption, capital and culture, and supply and demand. These two opposing sides also constituted the two major explanations of gentrification: the rent gap and production of the new middle class.¹⁷

¹⁷ As Tom Slater (2006) argued, the divisions between those two different arguments have been overdrawn in the literature. However, this overview is constructed to provide a basis to understand the travel of the theories from the mainstream to Turkey and, as the next part shows, it is more productive to introduce those arguments in such a way as to clarify their place in the Turkish literature.

The first argument was put forward by Neil Smith in his landmark article “Toward a Theory of Gentrification A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People” in 1979. Smith explained the process as a consequence of the uneven investment of capital and identified the driving agents as the investors who moved their money into old neglected cores for profit. His theory is dominated by the rent gap thesis, which refers to the measure of the difference between “the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a ‘higher and better’ use” (Smith, 1987, p. 462). Hence, Smith produced the most influential theory in this tradition and several scholars worked to obtain evidence of a rent gap in gentrified neighborhoods (e.g., Clark, 1988; Badcock, 1989).

The second argument is called the “cultural argument” or “consumption side,” which focuses on the formation of the new middle class, suggesting that the primary agent of gentrification is people more than capital. David Ley has been particularly influential in this theory, beginning with the article “Liberal Ideology and the Postindustrial City” published in 1980. In this and subsequent articles, Ley linked gentrification to the emergence of postindustrial society and the changing consumption preferences of the “new middle class.” Since the theory introduced a new middle class as the driving agent of the process, following Ley several scholars focused on the factors that make the new middle class prefer the inner city (see Mills, 1988; Caulfield, 1989)

In the 1990s, following the postmodernist notion that no form of knowledge is superior or dominant to another, researchers began to deal with the integration of the two approaches in explaining the initiation of gentrification. Several scholars questioned the debate over theorizing gentrification and called for a synthesis or complementary perspective for two dominant explanations in the gentrification literature. Hamnett (1991), for example, argued that both of the two leading theoretical perspectives on gentrification are parts of the whole process and are “equally crucial” elements. Hence, he argued that an “integrated explanation for gentrification must involve both explanation of production of devalued areas and the production of gentrifiers and their

specific consumption and reproduction pattern” (Hamnett, 1991, p. 173). Lees (1994), on the other hand, called for moving beyond the dichotomies through a “complementary” approach. Here, she suggested utilizing a productive tension between the two rather than Hamnett’s suggestion for synthesis (Lees, 1994).

By the 2000s, scholars seemed to have given up dealing with dualisms along with the attempts to reconcile them. Regardless of all the distinct theories, they found common grounds to explore gentrification in the global context. The studies on gentrification looked for links between globalization and gentrification, mostly through the discussion of neoliberal urban policies and global capital. Hence, new labels were produced to highlight this relationship, such as “gentrification generalized,” “gentrification as global urban strategy,” or “gentrification blueprint.” Neil Smith (2002) put forward the idea of gentrification generalized, which means that it is no longer isolated to Europe or North America, but now spans the globe and has become a “global urban strategy.” Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees similarly defined “gentrification blueprint,” which refers to a process “mass produced, mass consumed and mass marketed around the world” (Davidson and Lees, 2005, p. 1166). Butler and Lees (2006) introduced “super gentrification,” which refers to the utilizing of the inner city by super-wealthy professionals. Hackworth and Smith (2001) defined “state-led gentrification,” where national and local governments become the actors of the process. In the same decade, these new definitions, which were produced in the Anglo-American literature, also traveled to academic works outside Global North (see Shenjing, 2007; İslam, 2009).

Although there were relatively few voices regarding the “geography of gentrification” in the first decade of the 2000s, recent years have seen a great resurgence of interest in the subject, specifically emphasizing the geographically and historically specific driving agents and effects of gentrification. Following Ley (1996), Lees’s (2012) call for researchers of countries outside of the Global North attracted a great deal of interest. Several scholars responded to the call under the theory of gentrification but also with the aim of moving beyond imitations of the Anglo-American

conceptualization. This effort, in turn, triggered conceptual discussions of the term itself. The researchers required a general and abstract definition of gentrification to be used as an umbrella term while explaining common concerns for inner cities from London to Mumbai or New York to Turkey. Accordingly, recent years have seen increasing efforts to include new urban epistemologies ranging from postcolonial to planetary urbanization in gentrification research to construct an “analytical plain” wherein place-specificities are used to refine theory (Lees *et al.* 2015; 2016).

3.2. Gentrification Theory in Turkey

Although a large number of scholars have contributed to gentrification literature from all over the world, contextual literature reviews in gentrification studies barely exist despite the heated debates regarding the epistemology of the term (see Janoschka *et al.*, 2014). In a similar vein, there exists no research providing a comparative review of gentrification studies in Turkey despite increasing scholarly attention to the process. Even though gentrification studies in Turkey introduce the distinctive characteristics of the process through neighborhood trajectories, certain evidence suggests that scholars tend to borrow the conceptualization of Anglo-American urban theory for their studies. This, in turn, limits the inventions in the conceptualization of the term, thus also critical dialogue with the mainstream literature.

This literature review is mainly based on a study of the peer-reviewed journals in English and Turkish that appear in Google Scholar. Additional research on book contributions, conference papers, and both PhD and master theses was also conducted. Here, two steps have been followed. First, the works that simultaneously make use of the term “gentrification” and refer to a neighborhood or city in Turkey were considered. Second, historical and contemporary concepts produced in the mainstream literature were listed and publications in the Turkish context were matched to those mainstream concepts. Inclusion criteria were then set, including publication time (i.e., if it is the very first discussion on a particular dimension of concept) and framework (i.e., if it substantially focuses on the definition/mutation/extension of gentrification

or attempts to provide an original contribution to the conceptualization of the term itself).

Table 3.2 presents the selected gentrification texts and their main focuses within the gentrification framework. To the extent that this chapter hinges upon the epistemological and ontological commitments of gentrification, the notes in the table are not only extracted but also particularly selected. These publications are classified both diachronically, in order to examine the evolution of the term in Turkey, and synchronically (in the conclusion part), in order to explore the contribution of the local context to the mainstream and provide a comparison of discussions between Turkey and the Global North.

Table 3.2. Theoretical perspectives in mainstream and Turkish literature

Year and Authors	Concepts/ Discussions	City and Neighborhoods	(Predominantly) Referred Theoretical Perspectives
Uzun (2001)	Globalization Driving agents of gentrification - People/new middle class and Rent Gap	İstanbul: Kuzguncuk, Asmalimescit	Classical Gentrification Economic Argument Cultural Argument
Ergun (2004)	Geographical pattern of gentrification Driving agents of gentrification -People/Artists	İstanbul: Kuzguncuk, Ortaköy, Beyoğlu, Tünel, Cihangir, Galata, Balat	Classical Gentrification Humanistic (Cultural Argument)
İslam (2005)	Globalization Geographical pattern of gentrification Driving agents of gentrification -Formation of new middle class	İstanbul: Kuzguncuk, Arnavutköy, Ortaköy, Cihangir, Galata, Asmalimescit, Fener, Balat	Classical Gentrification Humanistic (Cultural Argument)
Diñer and Diñer(2005)	Rural Gentrification	Bolu: Mudurnu and Samsun: Doğanbey, ¹	Classical Gentrification Rural Gentrification
Behar and İslam eds. (2006)	Definition and appropriation of the term gentrification Geographical pattern of gentrification Driving agents of gentrification	İstanbul: Kuzguncuk, Arnavutköy, Ortaköy Cihangir, Galata, Asmalimescit Fener,Balat	Classical Gentrification
Sakızlıoğlu (2007)	Neoliberalism State-Led Gentrification -Institutionalization of gentrification -Gentrification Discourse -Legal Arrangements	İstanbul: Tarlabaşı	Contemporary/State -Led Gentrification
Güzey (2009)	Government-Assisted Gentrification Driving Agents of Gentrification	Ankara : Koza and Küpeli Streets	Contemporary/State -Led Gentrification -Classical Gentrification

Table 3.2. (cont'd) Theoretical perspectives in mainstream and Turkish literature

Year and Authors	Concepts/ Discussions	City and Neighborhoods	(Predominantly) Referred Theoretical Perspectives
İslam (2009)	State-Led Gentrification -Institutionalization of Gentrification -Gentrification Discourse -Legal Arrangements	İstanbul: Sulukule	Contemporary/State-Led Gentrification Neoliberal Politics of Gentrification
Bıçkıcı and Özgökçeler (2012)	Displacement	Bursa: Tophane	Classical Gentrification
Karaman and İslam (2012)	State-led Ethnic dimension of gentrification Attack to everyday life	İstanbul: Sulukule	Neoliberal Politics of Gentrification
Kayasü and Yetişkul (2013)	Assemblage Theory ANT	İstanbul Cihangir	Geography of Gentrification
Sakizlioglu and Uitermark (2014)	Symbolic Politics of Gentrification Resistance to Gentrification Comparative Approaches to Gentrification	İstanbul: Tarlabası Amsterdam: Ceramplein and the Van der Pek Blocks,	Contemporary/State-Led Gentrification Geographies of Gentrification Comparative Urbanism
Lagendijk et al. (2014)	Assemblage Theory Comparative Approaches to Gentrification	Arnhem, İstanbul, Vienna, Zurich	Geographies of Gentrification Comparative Urbanism
Sakizlioglu (2014)	State-Led Gentrification Resistance to Gentrification Displacement as process	İstanbul: Tarlabası	Contemporary/State-Led Gentrification Geographies of Gentrification Resistance to Gentrification
Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2014)	Resistance to Gentrification Blurring borders	İstanbul	Contemporary/State-Led Gentrification Resistance to Gentrification

Table 3.2. (cont'd) Theoretical perspectives in mainstream and Turkish literature

Year Authors and Texts	Concepts/ Discussions	City and Neighborhoods	(Predominantly)Ref erred Theoretical Perspectives
İslam and Sakızlıoğlu (2015)	State-Led Gentrification Resistance to Gentrification	İstanbul: Tarlabaşı, Sulukule	Contemporary/State- Led Gentrification Geographies of Gentrification Comparative Urbanism Resistance to Gentrification
Varlı Görk and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2016)□	State-Led Gentrification Displacement as process	Ankara: Koza Street	Neoliberal Politics of Gentrification Geographies of Gentrification
Kural (2016)	Rural Gentrification	İzmir: Alaçatı	Rural Gentrification

Although there were a few earlier texts in which the term “gentrification” was used, Nil Uzun’s “İstanbul: A Diagnostic Study” may be regarded as the first extensive research on gentrification in Turkey (Uzun, 2011).¹⁸ Here, focusing on two neighborhoods in İstanbul, Cihangir and Kuzguncuk, Uzun examined the demographic and economic profiles of the newcomers/gentrifiers along with their lifestyles through detailed questionnaires. Therefore, she dealt more with people in gentrified areas than capital. The study drew on the works of David Ley, the leading proponent of demand-side arguments in the 1980s, and borrowed both methodology and concepts. Ley

¹⁸ For earlier usage, see Çağlar Keyder, “A tale of two neighborhoods,” in Çağlar Keyder (ed.), *İstanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, p. 181 (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

suggested that gentrification has been associated with the rise of a new elite of professional, technical, and administrative workers and grounded his theory with a variety of data sources (Ley, 1996). Therefore, he employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide evidence for the existence of this new middle class. In a similar vein, Uzun examined the demographic and economic profile of the newcomers/gentrifiers through detailed questionnaires. The field survey found that newcomers differed from the inhabitants of the adjacent neighborhoods, particularly concerning their sociocultural level and lifestyles. Although the author mostly drew on the work of David Ley, she also referred to Neil Smith's "rent gap theory," which she saw relevant in the case of Cihangir.

Beginning in 2004, gentrification in Turkey has been the subject of increasing interest among scholars from different disciplines. Nilgün Ergün's article "Gentrification in Istanbul" is the earliest international journal which introduced a composite sketch of the gentrification in İstanbul through the examination of several neighborhoods including Kuzguncuk, Ortaköy, Beyoğlu, Tünel, Cihangir, Galata, and Balat (Ergün, 2004).

Following Ergün, Tolga İslam (2005) elaborated on that sketch by offering a classification based on geographical regions in his "Outside the Core: Gentrification in Istanbul," published in one of the most cited books in the gentrification literature: *Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*, edited by Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge. Here, İslam introduced the evolving history of gentrification in İstanbul and defined three waves. The first wave was seen in the inner-city neighborhoods around the coasts of the Bosphorus, namely Kuzguncuk, Arnavutköy, and Ortaköy; the second wave began in the late 1980s in Beyoğlu, in the historic center and most notably in Cihangir, Galata, and Asmalımescit; and the third wave began in the late 1990s, in the Fener and Balat districts of the Golden Horn. Building on the suggestion of Beauregard (1986), İslam also examined both the creation of "gentrifiable housing" and the "new gentry" in İstanbul. Like Uzun, İslam draws on the work of David Ley and introduces statistical data in order to ground the formation of a new middle class in Turkey.

In 2006, a book entitled *İstanbul'da Soylulaştırma: Eski Kentin Yeni Sahipleri* [*Gentrification in İstanbul: New Owners of the Old City*] introduced fourteen papers presented at a symposium called “Tarihî ve Merkezi Semtlerin Dönüşümleri: Gentrification Kuramlarının İstanbul’a Uygulanabilirliği” [“Transformation of Historic City Centres: The applicability of gentrification theories to İstanbul”]. The contributors to this book, which was the first-ever edited book collection on gentrification in Turkey, not only assisted in the introduction of an unfamiliar term into another language but also worked to analyze the process in İstanbul through the existing gentrification theories produced in the Anglo-American literature.

In the same years, mainstream scholarly attention seemed to shift from the investigation of the driving agents to the evolution and expansion of the term. Regardless of all the distinct theories (economic vs. cultural), scholars found common grounds to explore gentrification in the global context. Studies on gentrification looked for the links between globalization and gentrification, mostly through the discussion of neoliberal urban policies and global capital. Hence, new labels were produced to highlight this relationship, such as “gentrification generalized,” “gentrification as a global urban strategy,” or “gentrification blueprint” (see Smith, 2002; Davidson and Lees, 2005). Furthermore, the emergence of new forms challenged the traditional definitions and scholars introduced new prefixes such as “state-led,” “new-build,” or “super” (see Hackworth and Smith, 2001; Davidson and Lees, 2005; Butler and Lees, 2006).

Although this section mostly focuses on peer-reviewed articles and PhD dissertations, Bahar Sakızlıoğlu’s master thesis, “Impacts of Urban Renewal Policies: The Case of Tarlabası-İstanbul” is also worth mentioning as her study was one of the earliest substantial works to transfer a daily conceptualization of the term to the gentrification literature in Turkey: state-led gentrification (Sakızlıoğlu, 2007). In this vein, her study can be regarded as one of the earliest attempts to detach the gentrification discourse in Turkey from the zeitgeist of the 1980s and the discussion of driving agents. Sakızlıoğlu examined the rise of new urban policies and discourses in the 2000s in Turkey, shaped

by neoliberalization. She also provided evidence in her study to suggest that gentrification is “organized, driven and promoted by local government” through an examination of the Tarlabası Renewal Project (Sakızlıoğlu, 2007, p. 242).

In a similar vein, Özlem Güzey has also suggested that urban regeneration can be defined as government-assisted gentrification, which is a product of neoliberal urban policies. Her study is particularly worth mentioning regarding its focus on the role of the government in gentrification in Ankara, in contrast to İstanbul, the latter having been in the spotlight since the very beginning of gentrification debates in Turkey (Güzey, 2009). Güzey used the term “gentrification” to discuss the transformation of squatter housing in Ankara through the urban regeneration project called “Konutlara Yerinde Islah Projesi” [“From Squatter Housing to Modern Residences Rehabilitation Project”]. She investigated two well-known streets in Ankara, Koza and Küpeli Streets, where gecekondu and upscale apartments were located side by side. Güzey developed a complementary framework to analyze the gentrification of the area, including not only demand and supply-side arguments but also the role of local government.

Tolga İslam (2009), in his PhD dissertation, also used the concept of “state-led gentrification” for the examination of the Neslişah and Hatice Sultan neighborhoods. İslam applied Hackworth and Smith’s conceptualization of “third-wave gentrification” to the explanation of contemporary gentrification in İstanbul (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). Hackworth and Smith (2001) described four features of the third wave of gentrification distinct from earlier phases. First, it began to occur in remote neighborhoods rather than city cores. Second, gentrification shows the increasing globalization of the real estate sector, and this made larger developers become actors in the process. Third, anti-gentrification movements have declined because of the morphing of the most militant anti-gentrification groups into housing service providers. Finally, the state is more involved in the process in comparison with the first and second waves. In this vein, İslam observed five features of contemporary gentrification in İstanbul, drawing on Hackworth and Smith’s gentrification schema:

(1) movement towards risky areas, (2) involvement of new actors, (3) unprecedented speed and scale, (4) support of social policies, and (5) existence of anti-gentrification movements. Therefore, besides the similarities, İslam has pointed out that in contrast to Hackworth and Smith's definition, anti-gentrification movements in Turkey gained acceleration in the third wave of gentrification based on the context (İslam, 2009, pp. 37-48).

Furthermore, İslam borrowed Davidson and Lees's (2005) identification of four characteristics of gentrification: the reinvestment of capital, social upgrading of the locale by incoming high-income groups, landscape change, and direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups, in order to investigate the perceptions regarding the gentrification process (İslam, 2009). In this way, he has also examined the relationship between policy discourse and the material expression of gentrification. Although he adopted several theories produced in the Anglo-American literature, it seems that his study, mainly through semi-structured interviews, introduced the diverse products of the local context of the phenomena.

İslam's work is an example of comprehensive and critical documentation of gentrification in Turkey. The study particularly had substantial potential to reveal contextual diversities due its site selection, Sulukule. Therefore, it is apparent that although İslam borrowed the Anglo-American conceptualization of the term, his work along with that of the aforementioned scholars contributed to not only the studies of the geography of gentrification but also to the closure of the temporal gap between literatures.

The aggressive form of displacement and peripheralization of the urban poor are the key issues of the recent urban transformation campaign in Turkey, among others, which have substantial potential to reveal the contextual embeddedness of the phenomena in Turkey. While almost all scholars have mentioned the replacement of the urban poor to the periphery of the city and noted the related legal and institutional arrangements, it seems that the attack of capitalist urbanization on the everyday life of

low-income groups has required more elaboration. In this regard, Ozan Karaman and Tolga İslam's (2012) work deserves particular attention. Here, the authors describe the attack on unique everyday life of Sulukule residents and the spatial configuration that comes from the living necessities and lifestyle of the settled people. The authors explained how the 'differences' of original residents ranging from this authentic everyday life to ethnicity were employed to produce exclusionary discourse.

Recent years have seen a growing literature in the mainstream conceptualizing mobility and assemblages of urban policies within themes such as "the city as assemblage," "actor network theory/ANT," "policy mobilities," and "new comparative urbanism" (Latour, 2005; Farias and Bender, eds., 2012; McCann and Ward, 2010; McFarlane, 2011). Based on the recent theories, Lees criticized the conceptualization of gentrification through the lens of Anglo-American urban theory and called for scholars to draw on the mobilities and assemblages of urban policies in order to explore how gentrification "travels, transforms and diffuses" (Lees, 2012, p. 161).

The earliest response to her call from Turkey was Kayasü and Yetişkul's (2013) work, which aimed at the integration of new urbanism into gentrification research. Their study was a part of a research project conducted by Arnoud Lagendijk, Rianne Van Melik, Freek De Haan, Huib Ernste, Huub Ploegmakers, and Serap Kayasü, which compared the gentrification processes of different European cities. In this vein, Lagendijk *et al.* employed new comparative urbanism in gentrification research through the examination of processes in four European cities: Arnhem, İstanbul, Vienna, and Zurich (Lagendijk *et al.*, 2014). This study is further distinguished on the basis of its research framework, which draws on assemblage and ANT theories. Here, as the scholars mentioned, their framework has not been framed through the "dichotomies of production versus consumption, causes versus consequences, unwanted displacement versus urban renaissance" (Lagendijk *et al.*, 2014, p. 360). Rather, it has been aimed to understand "complexities associated with gentrification,

stemming from concrete practices and interpretations evolving in particular spatial contexts” (p. 360).

Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark also contributed to the literature through comparative urbanism. The authors compared the modalities and practices of state-sponsored gentrification in İstanbul and Amsterdam (Sakizlioglu and Uitermark, 2014). Despite radically different contexts, the authors found that both governments used “divide and rule” strategies as they achieved several kinds of stigmatization, such as territorial, ethnic, and class, between the residents and acted dependently.

İslam and Sakızlıoğlu (2015) also contributed to the calls for the geography of gentrification with a chapter called “The making of, and resistance to, state-led gentrification in Istanbul, Turkey” in the collection edited by Lees *et al.* entitled *Global Gentrifications: Uneven Development and Displacement*. Here, the authors compared two projects, Sulukule and Tarlabası, in the same city and introduced how the making of and resistance to gentrification have differed even within the same city. The authors argued that the gentrification process in Turkey may be “more violent and harsh” and that to comprehend gentrification in Turkey “it is important to understand power relations” (p. 364).

The trajectory of displacement, and in particular empirical research on displaced residents, is one of the under-examined points in gentrification literature, not only in the emerging Global South but also in the mainstream. In this regard, Bahar Sakızlıoğlu’s “Inserting Temporality into the Analysis of Displacement: Living Under the Threat of Displacement” contributed to the literature by examining how the residents of Tarlabası have “lived under the threat of displacement” (Sakizlioglu, 2014). She approached displacement as a process and inserted temporality into the analysis of displacement. Here, Sakızlıoğlu has provided an analysis of displacement by examining the experiences of existing/existed inhabitants during sociospatial change rather than taking a snapshot at one point in time. This kind of analysis also

allowed the author to introduce the contextually specific interactions that played a role in the gentrification process.

A further original contribution to the issue of displacement and temporality is the work of Varlı Görk and Rittersberger Tılıç (2016) entitled “An Example of a Gentrification: Unintended Consequences of an in Situ Rehabilitation Project in Ankara.” The authors examined the gentrification trajectory of Koza Street in Ankara. Besides being a remarkable example in terms of its methodological approach to include temporality, with an examination spanning 18 years, the findings of the study also provided an original contribution to the classical hegemonic discourse regarding the role of gentrifiers and gentrified in the mainstream. The study proved that “the borders between gentrifiers and gentrified became blurred and both have been looking for a similar profit from the capitalist urbanization” (Varlı Görk and Rittersberger Tılıç, 2016).

Recent years have also seen a significant increase in gentrification studies about smaller towns in Turkey. Although the theoretical framework of those studies may not be defined as substantial, the authors’ attempts to use the term “gentrification” in the investigation of relatively small towns is worth mentioning. Yüksel Dinçer and İclal Dinçer, for example, discussed the social and spatial transformation in Mudurnu (Bolu) and Doğanbey (Samsun) within the scope of rural gentrification (Dinçer and Dinçer, 2005). Doğan Bıçkıcı and Serhat Özgökçeler introduced the perspective of residents in Tophane district after renewal in Bursa through open-ended questions (Bıçkıcı and Özgökçeler, 2012). Melis Kural analyzed the transformation of Alaçatı from a small tobacco village into a trendy vacation destination within the framework of rural gentrification (Kural, 2016).

At this point, it is also worth considering the reflections in the literature about the term’s ontological presence through an examination of studies that deal with displacement. To a large extent, those studies focus on the gecekondu transformation areas declared in the first decade of the 2000s. Although the conceptualization of those

projects as gentrification is problematic to an extent since their initial declared target was the construction of earthquake-resistant houses for the “rights owners,” the result was still the eviction of tenants and other “occupiers” or the replacement of the urban poor. Accordingly, those studies provide insight regarding resistance against displacement, which is an inherent component of the definition of gentrification.

Ozan Karaman’s PhD dissertation, “Remaking Space for Globalization: Dispossession through Urban Renewal in Istanbul,” embraced the term “dispossession” to examine the urban renewal projects conducted in the Başibüyük and Sulukule neighborhoods that led to displacement (Karaman, 2010). Here, Karaman introduced an original coupling, which he called the Neoliberal-Islamic assemblage, and its unique capacity for achieving a rapid phase of neoliberal reforms. Here, Karaman discussed the dynamics behind resistance/submission to dispossession in İstanbul through place-specific networks. He asked the striking question of how the ruling government received the majority of the votes even from the existing residents who were planned to be evicted. This question allowed the study to discuss the distinctive place-specific assemblage that produced urban space in İstanbul.

Tuna Kuyucu and Özlem Ünsal used the term “displacement” to address the consequences of recent large-scale urban transformation projects, which is identified as the product of the shift from populist mode to a neoliberal mode (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010). Based on empirical records, the authors compared the resistance movements in two neighborhoods, Tarlabası and Başibüyük, which gradually evolved into bargaining. Similarly, John Lovering and Hade Türkmen used the term “displacement” to indicate the results of recent urban regeneration projects, noting the impacts of local dynamics on resistance with the comparison of three different cases: Ayazma, Başibüyük, and Gülsuyu (Lovering and Türkmen, 2011). The authors concluded that the property/tenure structure of the neighborhoods has had the most crucial role in determining the form and effectiveness of grassroots movements against urban transformation projects. As a part of this debate, Ozan Karaman made a sophisticated contribution to the dynamics of grassroots movements by discussing several factors

including solidarity networks, levels of participation and trust in local neighborhood associations, the strength of neighborhood identity, extra-local support, and the traditions and channels of negotiation with state actors. These investigations of the trajectory of local resistance allowed the introduction of significant place specificities including institutional frameworks, legal arrangements, policies, and struggles (Karaman, 2014).

Considering the recent discussions of planetary urbanization and the focal point of this dissertation, Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç's work is particularly worth mentioning. Foregrounding Lefebvre's notion of the "right to the city," these scholars' research can be regarded as one of the earliest studies to particularly emphasize the cross-border, blurring binaries in resistance. Rather than focusing on a case study, the authors reflected on the characteristics of urban movements against state-led gentrification projects in İstanbul. While various studies are focusing on differences and similarities in recent urban movements, this particular work gives gravity to the annihilation of borders in resistance, which is strongly reflected in one of the subtitles, "The Right to the City in/for/beyond İstanbul" (Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2014).

3.3. Epilogue

This review of gentrification studies in Turkey not only provides a deeper understanding of the variegated geographies of gentrification but has also acted as a first step in developing a critical dialogue with the mainstream literature. In this regard, it is worth presenting the key distinctions between the debates in Turkey and the mainstream to elaborate this dialogue. Table 3.3. outlines this comparison of discussions in Turkey and the mainstream.

Table 3.3 Comparison of the debates in Turkey and mainstream

Years	Debates in Turkey	Main Debates in Mainstream
1970-1980	-	Driving Agent of Gentrification: Rent Gap
1980-1990	-	Driving Agent of Gentrification: Rent Gap vs New Middle Class
1990-2000	-	Calls for complementary approaches
2000-2007	Driving Agent of Gentrification: New Middle Class Rent Gap	Global Gentrification State-Led Gentrification Super Gentrification New Build Gentrification Geography of Gentrification Gentrification Discourse (Social Mix) New Urbanism (comparative, mobilities, assemblage)
2007-	State-Led Gentrification -Peripherilisation of urban poor -Extra-Legal Arrangements -Attacks to lifestyle and life necessities -Gentrification Discourse (global city, earthquakes, wealthy image) Resistance to Gentrification -Internal Conflicts -Strategies of Government -Assemblages and Networks -Blurring binaries, cross-border Geography of Gentrification New Urbanism (comparative, mobilities, assemblage)	

First of all, it is seen that the literature in Turkey experienced a time delay in the introduction of the term. Furthermore, early studies strictly adopted the mainstream conceptualization to find similarities, which in turn limited the grasping of contextual particularities. In the early 2000s, discussions were stuck in the spontaneous gentrification of the inner-city neighborhoods in İstanbul along with the new middle class labeled as gentrifiers. The early research mostly drew on consumption-side arguments that originated in the Global North, which emphasized the role of culture, desire, consumer demand, and the new middle class. However, focusing on the adaptation of the argument about the new middle class has resulted in overlooking fruitful and original debates stemming from the local context in this period. For

example, demolition of Tarlabası and the Golden Horn in İstanbul may be the focal point of state-led gentrification and commercial displacement discussions as early as the beginning of the 2000s.

It was only after the mid-2000s that recent mainstream conceptualizations of the term traveled to Turkey. This engagement of the term with the local context produced original contributions to the geographies of gentrification. In comparison with the previous generation of studies, the scholarly literature became richer with significant contributions to gentrification trajectories. For the sake of clarity, these contributions will be elaborated categorically according to state-led gentrification and resistance to gentrification.

The early 2000s have seen an increasing interest in the relationship between gentrification and neoliberal policy in the mainstream literature. In a similar vein, the mid-2000s have also seen considerable scholarly attention in Turkey to the government's involvement in the class transformation of inner-city neighborhoods. It can be said that, amongst others, the institutionalization of pushing the urban poor to the outskirts, extra-legal arrangements to revoke existing residents' rights and double-edged attacks on their lifestyles, and habiting and distinctive discourses building upon the wealthy global city and the cleaning of the city have provided new insights.

A further focal point of the studies in Turkey is resistance to gentrification. It is safe to claim that gentrification research on resistance in Turkey has played a much more dominant role in the literature in comparison with the mainstream.¹⁹ This tendency is not surprising for Turkey, where aggressive state-led gentrification has been fully experienced, considering the gentrification discourse in the Global North that revolves around social mix policies. Several fresh issues, including internal conflicts of

¹⁹ See Janoschka *et al.* (2014) for a similar Latin American experience.

residents during the resistance, the impact of the Neoliberal-Islamic assemblage on those conflicts, the dynamics behind the resistance, and the strategies of the government, ranging from forced eviction to subtle tactics, have provided new insights into the geography of gentrification. Furthermore, they opened new horizons on emerging centralities that involve diverse actors and struggles that are beyond the traditional borders of urban and rural. In this regard, these studies have considerable potential not only to contribute to the geography of gentrification but also to transcend the Anglo-American conceptualization.

This literature review has attempted to enrich the academic dialogue between the mainstream and Turkey. It has been suggested that empirical accounts of gentrification contribute to the broader conceptualization of the term, which, in turn, increases the capacity of resistance.

CHAPTER 4

GENTRIFICATION IN TIME DILATION: RISE OF NEOLIBERAL URBANIZATION IN İSTANBUL (1980-2002)

This chapter is the first part of the second module of the dissertation. It is also the first chapter that employs the original research framework of the dissertation through a critical review of the existing literature. In this regard, this chapter selects, sorts, and interprets a wide range of scholarly studies from different disciplines to recast the gentrification process in totality. More specifically, this part examines the first decisive moment of contemporary gentrification in İstanbul, which is identified as the post-1980s period when the neoliberal adjustment program began to be applied. Accordingly, this chapter begins with a discussion of why early gentrification studies in Turkey introduced a limited interpretation of gentrification in Turkey. It then goes on to apply the original research framework in order to address those gaps in the literature.

The gentrification literature in Turkey has provided valuable insights regarding the analysis of sociospatial change in İstanbul, mostly through the existing theories produced in the Anglo-American literature. As discussed in Chapter 3, early gentrification studies in Turkey focused on classical gentrification while overlooking the other place-specific forms of the phenomenon. More specifically, the first studies attempted to examine gentrification through consumption-side arguments that originated in the Global North, which, in turn, limited the interpretation of the concept.

It was only after the mid-2000s that scholarly attention shifted to the recent discussions in the mainstream, such as neoliberal urban policies, government involvement, and resistance. Although these studies have considerable potential to

contribute to the geography of gentrification, it seems that the employment of the term “gentrification” as the keyword along with the related conceptual repertoire also limited the space to introduce a nuanced way of process in Turkey to an extent.

This limitation can be traced through the discussions on the “waves of gentrification” in İstanbul. Hackworth and Smith’s (2001) landmark article, “The Changing State of Gentrification,” introduced three waves of gentrification. The first wave, which began in the late 1960s in western Europe and the eastern USA, was sporadic and confined to small neighborhoods within major cities. The first wave of gentrification was funded by governments and legitimized with the “discourse of ameliorating urban decline” (Hackworth and Smith, 2001, p. 465). The second wave came with the revival of depressed markets in the late 1970s. The authors called this wave the “anchoring” of gentrification since new neighborhoods were converted into real estate “frontiers.” It was deeper and more widespread than the first wave, and its distinguishing characteristic was the “integration of gentrification into a wider range of economic and cultural processes at the global and national scales” (Hackworth and Smith, 2001, p. 466). Finally, the third wave began in the early 1990s more comprehensively, and the process was linked to large-scale capital more than ever “as large developers rework entire neighborhoods, often with state support” (Hackworth and Smith, 2001, p. 468).

Tolga İslam (2005) was the first scholar to employ the wave metaphor for the gentrification process in İstanbul. He classified the waves of gentrification in İstanbul based on neighborhoods’ locations. According to him, the first wave was seen in the inner-city neighborhoods along the coasts of the Bosphorus. The second wave began in Beyoğlu, the historic social center, and finally the waterfront districts of the Golden Horn experienced the third wave (see also Ergün, 2006; Uysal, 2006).

İslam elaborated this scheme in his doctoral dissertation, drawing on Hackworth and Smith’s model. Here, he argued that the gentrification process of İstanbul before 2002 was compatible with the pattern of classic gentrification, whereas it

transformed into a state-led process after 2005. He argued that the third wave was initiated through the new legal arrangements regarding the urban transformation. Eken (2010) also used a wave metaphor, drawing on Hackworth and Smith's schema, and classified the waves of gentrification in İstanbul on the basis of the initiating actors. Accordingly, she defined the classical form of gentrification in Kuzguncuk, Ortaköy, Cihangir, Asmalımescit, and Galata as the first wave; the UNESCO-associated Fener-Balat Neighborhoods Rehabilitation Program as the second wave; and finally the state-led Sulukule, Tarlabası, and Fener-Ayvansaray regeneration projects as the third wave. Sakizlioğlu (2014) also embraced a similar perspective.

In one form or another, the adoption of a linear timeline of gentrification along with the same focused neighborhoods has been the defining feature of the gentrification literature in Turkey. This approach is associated with the different temporalities of the processes to a certain extent. However, the fruitful and original discussions pertaining to the first era of neoliberal urbanization in İstanbul were wasted for the sake of examining classical gentrification. More interestingly, the scholars who embraced a broad definition of gentrification in their studies and designated the recent urban transformation projects as state-led gentrification employed this perspective only for that last period. Like the earlier studies, those more recent works also embraced an empiricist and neighborhood-bounded approach that situated a settlement type within another bounded settlement type—the city—which experiences gentrification according to the linear timeline of the Anglo-American conceptualization, starting from classical gentrification and going on to state-led.

This chapter embraces one further basic approach to tackle this contradiction: the abandonment of the linear understanding of time and the search for the elements of the broad definition of gentrification in the neoliberal urban restructuring era. Rather than waves succeeding each other, this dissertation interprets the process as moving both linear and cyclical.

This intertwined cyclical and linear perspective of time provides more potential to understand the actually existing gentrification since it rejects the disconnected understanding of the process that has likely arisen from copying the Western conceptualization of the term.²⁰

In this sense, this dissertation follows how the components of gentrification, as discussed in the introduction—namely class polarization, investment in fixed capital, and displacement—occupied the cyclical timeline while becoming bolder in the linear timeline. This kind of shift from the mainstream schema requires an interpretation of gentrification as an open-ended process wherein all levels of society are dialectically related.

4.1.G Level

4.1.1.State

In an effort to analyze the role of the G level, this section focuses on the shift towards neoliberal urbanization and the accompanying change in the involved actors in urban land development. More specifically, this section briefly touches upon the neoliberalization and globalization policies adopted in the 1980s, wherein making İstanbul a central arena to facilitate Turkey's integration into global capitalism was a primary concern (Keyder and Öncü, 1993).

Initially, through the military coup of 1980 and then through the policies of the Motherland Party (MP) elected in 1983, a new structural adjustment program towards financial liberalization was introduced.²¹ Turgut Özal, as the leader of the

²⁰ In this sense, Lefebvre's concept of "rhythm analysis" is a source of inspiration to shift from the linear timeline as well as a fragmented mode of thinking in the examination of the trajectory of gentrification in Turkey (Lefebvre, 2004). Lefebvre derived rhythm as a mode of analysis from the interplay of his twofold understanding of time as linear and circular.

²¹ Well documented by Arıcanlı and Rodrik (1990).

MP, played a crucial role in the implementation of the new policy model that relied on free trade, flexible exchange rates, export subsidies, outward orientation, and privatization (Boratav, 1990, 1991).

This post-1980 adjustment program applied the stabilization policies counseled by IMF with the aim of legitimatizing neoliberal orthodoxy and was supported by generous structural adjustment loans, debt relief, and technical aid (Boratav, 1990; 1991). These policies were mainly aimed at replacing the import-substituting strategies of the past by the outward-oriented development with export promotion (Çeçen, Doğruel and Doğruel, 1994). This kind of adjustment path led to the increasing dependence of the economy on continuous external capital, as a matter of course, increasing hegemony of the international capital on the Turkish economy (Boratav, 1990, 1991).

In this period, Özal managed the transition towards a market-oriented economy through the constitution of an ideology “combining elements of liberalism, conservatism with strong Islamist connotations, nationalism and welfarism” (Öniş, 2004). This political discourse of Özal was predominantly inspired by his contemporaries, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, who were seen as the representatives of a new right ideology (Delibaş, 2011). By taking advantage of a populist discourse that appealed to large parts of the population, Özal rapidly implemented market-liberalizing policies in compliance with the neoliberal agenda of the IMF. As Öniş (2004) argued, Turgut Özal’s style fit with neoliberal populism, which centers a charismatic leader applying a top-down, state-centered strategy to impose and legitimize neoliberal policy reforms. A key part of Özal’s neo-populism was to gain mass support from unorganized people in informal groups while eliminating the demands of the political class (Öniş, 2004). On the one hand, the ruling party was firmly confronting the labor unions and organized class-based wage claims, while, on the other hand, the same party was developing an urban rent strategy for the urban poor including gecekondu amnesties and reconstruction permits in order to “satisfy” those low-income groups without burdening the private

sector (Boratav, 1991). In other words, the discovery of urban populism allowed the MP government to compensate the economic costs for the urban poor, who had suffered the most from the worsening income distribution.

In this context, the post-1980 period emerged as another turning point in İstanbul's historical development. The combined forces of neoliberalization and globalization brought İstanbul to the fore as an arena not only for sustaining the adjustment program but also for the materialization of capital accumulation. Bedrettin Dalan, also a member of the MP and İstanbul's mayor at the time, played a crucial role in the emergence of entrepreneurial local government seeking to attract national/international capital (Keyder, 1999). Dalan, as a former businessman, "proved to be a man with a mission" (Keyder and Öncü, 1993, p. 28). The mayor implemented numerous urban transformation projects including the demolition of hundreds of nineteenth-century buildings in Tarlabası, the pedestrianization of the main street in Beyoğlu, and the relocation of the industrial zone on the Haliç shores to the periphery and the construction of large boulevards in their place. His ambitious interventions, known as the "Dalan Operations," dramatically changed the urban landscape and transformed İstanbul into a "consumption spectacle" (Bartu, 2000).

Seen from a broader perspective, as mentioned by Keyder and Öncü (1993), the MP government adopted three major policy measures, which were also directly linked to the dramatic landscape change in İstanbul. The first change in the legal framework of urban policymaking was the restructuring of the allocation of authority among different governmental levels. By the early 1980s, increasing international economic integration, capital mobility, and emerging communication and transportation technologies challenged the functioning of the nation-state. In line with the global trends, Turkey also reconstituted the power dynamics between central and local governments and brought decentralization to the agenda (Keyder and Öncü, 1993).

With the enactment of Law No. 3030 on Amending and Adopting the Decree-Law on the Administration of Metropolitan Municipalities in 1984, the government

instituted a new two-tiered metropolitan municipality system by structuring a metropolitan council at the upper level and district councils at the lower level for the three largest cities of İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir (Keyder and Öncü, 1993). With this law, metropolitan municipalities were granted authority for the preparation, approval, and implementation of master plans along with the approval and auditing of implementation plans of district municipalities (Keyder and Öncü, 1993).

The second arrangement concerned the reallocation of financial resources among different governmental levels. Beginning from 1983, the MP government steadily increased the revenues channeled from the central budget to municipal administrations. In this regard, Law No. 3004, passed in 1984, increased the share allotted to municipalities from the national revenues to 10.30% from 5%, and then reduced it to 9.25% in 1985 (Ersoy, 1999). The metropolitan municipalities also received an additional 3% of the taxes collected in the city (Ersoy, 1999). Additionally, in the same year, the tariffs mentioned in Law No. 2464 on Municipal Revenues were increased by about tenfold, and municipalities were granted the authority to collect real estate tax revenues within their boundaries in order to increase locally generated resources (Ersoy, 1999). In a nutshell, this increased financial autonomy accompanied by new urban planning powers was a radical step towards decentralization from the strong central state.

Accordingly, it is seen that the total municipal income had increased by 86% in 1986 compared to 1984 (Ersoy, 1999). However, this dramatic rise in municipal revenue still fell short for the basic service and public transportation demands of the steadily increasing population. Nevertheless, as explained in detail in the following sections, the mayor of the period generally pursued ambitious mega projects to achieve his vision of İstanbul as a global city rather than improvements for basic service demands (Keyder and Öncü, 1993).

As mentioned by Keyder and Öncü (1993), a further policy change in order to channel public resources into urbanization was the establishment of the Mass

Housing Fund under the Mass Housing Administration (MHA) in 1984 for the purpose of subsidizing low- and middle-income housing. According to Law No. 2985, the Mass Housing Fund would be used for housing credit subsidies; provision of loans to the mass housing projects; research, tourism, and residential infrastructure; educational, religious, health, and sports facilities; and so on. In this respect, the MHA provided credits for more than one million residents and produced 43,145 new residents, including those transferred to Emlak Bank between the years 1984 and 2002 (www.toki.gov.tr). While the MHA originally aimed at benefitting low- and middle-income groups, large contractors attracted by state subsidies and the provision of cheap land became the major beneficiaries in the end. After the 2002 elections, the new ruling government both legally and institutionally restructured the MHA, which will be discussed in further detail, and designated it as the largest real estate actor in Turkey.

The 1994 local elections were widely seen as a critical turning point for İstanbul's trajectory in becoming a global city (Bora, 2000; Bali, 2002). The rise of political Islam and the promising chance of the Islamic Welfare Party (WP) had triggered an anxiety among city elite (Bali, 2002). On the other hand, the mainstream parties fully embraced the global city project as well as the discourse of the interest groups at the expense of losing their ideological character. The Social Democrat Party (SDP) that held the metropolitan municipality discarded its present mayor, who was disliked by the city's elite, and instead nominated a famous artist whose image was well-educated, contemporary, and urbane. His campaign slogan also reflected the globalization-oriented attitude: "Let's build İstanbul anew. Let them say: New York is out, İstanbul is in!" (Bali, 2002, p. 196). The center-right parties also transferred, in Coşkun's words, "stars" as candidates who focused on the project of İstanbul as global city (Coşkun, 1994).

However, the candidate of the Islamic WP (currently the President of the Republic) put a distance between himself and the global city ideal, instead running a campaign that revolved around the necessities of the urban poor, which also included face-to-face meetings and the distribution of basic daily needs such as coal and food (Coşkun, 1994; Bora, 2000). Thus, the campaign was particularly addressing the *gecekondu* neighborhoods on the urban periphery, whose residents were the apparent losers of the global city project (Bora, 2000). As Bora (2000) noted, the candidate himself was also from a working-class family living in a *gecekondu* neighborhood, and his profile engendered sympathy from low-income groups while complementing the WP's political discourse. As a result, the WP won the mayorship of İstanbul, and the party's campaign thrived in general as the WP won the control of six out of 15 metropolitan municipalities, including İstanbul and Ankara, while increasing its national vote from 9.8% to 19.4%.

The victory of the WP generated the popular discourse of İstanbul's "second conquest" and also "Fatih's İstanbul" (Çınar, 2001). Since the WP first came to power, the 29th of May (the conquest of İstanbul in 1453) has been celebrated publicly with festivities and concerts. These celebrations have also been a declaration of the Islamist alternative "founding moment" as the conquest of İstanbul in 1453 instead of the proclamation of the secular Republic on the 29th of October (Çınar, 2001). Furthermore, the Islamic WP municipality produced urban spectacles by organizing Ramadan festivals in historic public spaces surrounding the Blue Mosque (Karaman, 2010). The new mayor also declared his idea of building a grandiose mosque and Islamic Culture Center in Taksim Square in an effort to manifest İstanbul as a Muslim city. The proposal was indeed a political gesture as Taksim Square was selected to symbolically surpass the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) located there, a symbol of Republican ideology, as well as the Greek Orthodox Church (Bora, 1999). Those controversial declarations were accompanied by attempts to ban bars, taverns, and restaurants from putting tables on the streets in Beyoğlu with the underlying aim of banning alcohol consumption in public.

However, neither of those projects were realized due to the large-scale opposition of secular groups including intellectuals and the state bureaucracy (Bali, 2002).

Nevertheless, towards the end of the decade, the WP abandoned its opposing position against the global city project in line with the rising demands of global capital and the growing Islamic bourgeoisie. While the WP opposed the application for EU membership, which its leader called a “Christian Club,” it envisaged an alternative East-oriented globalizing project (Geniş, 2004).

However, as will be discussed in the following sections, the former İstanbul mayor and current President won the 2002 general elections with an entirely new discourse promising the implementation of the requirements for EU membership. Accordingly, the ruling government adhered to the IMF-supervised program that had begun in April 2001 and abandoned the rhetoric of Muslim unity against Christianity. Hence, the evolution of the discourse of Islamic public actors began from stiff resistance to globalization/global economy, proceeded to the defense of an Islamic global economy, and finally ended with the IMF-led reform program.

4.1.2. Capital

As Buğra (1998) argued, the specific type of private sector formation in Turkey can hardly be understood with reference to mainstream bourgeois studies. These private sector actors and their associations do not only represent economic interest groups, but also, they represent different identity claims (Buğra, 1998). Hence, a discussion on private sector actors allows this study to explore not only the relationship between capital accumulation and the state but also these groups’ political roles in social relations, which is particularly important for contemporary gentrification in İstanbul.

As the previous part described, the second half of the 1980s saw enormous efforts to attract investments in line with the agenda of neoliberal orthodoxy. Through such efforts, the private sector emerged as a significant actor in managing not only the shift in economic policies but also urban entrepreneurial activity in İstanbul. As

Buğra (1995) argued, the newly established Republic made an effort to constitute an entrepreneur class, and this top-down formation of the Turkish bourgeoisie manifested itself with hesitance in playing a role in the policymaking process. As has been well documented by scholars, the most explicit demonstration of the change in this attitude was the significant role of a private sector association, TÜSİAD, in the process of overthrowing the government in 1979 (Buğra, 1995).

The role of the private sector further increased with the MP coming to power in 1983, and the mid-1990s particularly saw a bourgeois class that was much more eager to be involved in the national policymaking process (Buğra, 1995; Bali, 2002). Through the promotion of disparate G level policies, two salient private sector associations emerged as different sides of the conflict between the dominant Republican state ideology and others who defined themselves based on an Islamic identity: TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD. In this sense, as Buğra points out, their roles went far beyond the representation of sectorial interests (Buğra, 1995).

The Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) was founded in 1971 by the twelve leading industrialists of Turkey (Buğra, 1995). Its reputation increased over the years and there were 473 large-scale firms listed in the TÜSİAD Member Company Profiles in 1989 (Buğra, 1995). In parallel to this growing reputation, the association became a significant figure in the vocal criticism of the government policies with the rise of a new generation of businessmen in the 1990s (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2012). The new-generation members were predominantly well-educated people who had graduated from university and knew at least one foreign language. Thus, it is safe to claim that the members of TÜSİAD constituted an elite group, not only by owning large-scale enterprises but also due to their sociocultural level (Buğra, 1995; Buğra and Savaşkan, 2012).

In pursuing the objective of creating a business-friendly environment, the association advocated a European model of economic and social development (Koyuncu, 2006). This strategic vision led to a pro-European policy orientation accompanied by the

demands of political reforms necessary for Turkey's membership in the Customs Union as the first phase and accession to the European Union as the ultimate goal (Koyuncu, 2006).²²

In line with its Western-oriented vision, TÜSİAD designated its position as the proponent of a global city project in the field of urban policymaking. Members of the association became significant figures in the urban restructuring process, not only as the owners of large-scale construction firms but also in the creation of perception and discourse regarding the necessity of a global city. As Bezmez (2008) outlined, this involvement of the national bourgeoisie was two-dimensional: the first dimension was the contractor firms' direct impact on the built environment through the construction of new shopping malls, residences, gated communities, business centers, and office towers and the second was the creation of symbolic coding for cultural capital, such as the organization of art and cultural festivals addressing the ideal of İstanbul as a global city.

The Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD), which was founded in 1990, became the opposing side of the battle with its Eastern and Islamic orientation. At this point, the comparison between TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD gives an idea regarding the competing projects of two different capitalists of the period. This, in turn, provides a basis for understanding how those two competing visions evolved, intersected, and merged for the sake of capital accumulation.

MÜSİAD has represented a larger group than TÜSİAD on the basis of both diversity of scale and geographic location (Buğra, 1998). Although the largest part of MÜSİAD companies are based in İstanbul, a significant number of member firms are also located in Anatolian cities such as Konya, Kayseri, Denizli, Gaziantep, and

²² Öniş and Türem (2004) contend that MÜSİAD adopted a positive attitude towards Turkey's EU membership in the post-1997 period, which can be seen via MÜSİAD's own declarations supporting Turkey's EU membership.

Urfa. This characteristic of the association is visible in the organizational structure that consists of head offices located in seventeen provinces, whereas TÜSİAD has one head office in İstanbul and liaison offices in Ankara and Brussels (Buğra, 1998).

Challenging the secular and Western-oriented Turkish state, MÜSİAD advocated an alternative model drawing on the East Asian model of development, which envisaged the “strategic fit between the traditional institutions that regulate social relations and the requirements of global markets” (Buğra, 1998, p. 528). In line with the association’s perspective, its members demonstrated an open antagonism towards Turkey’s possible accession to the European Union in the early 1990s. On the other hand, they embraced a form of globalization situated in Islamic discourse; in other words, they promoted the assemblage of Islamic culture and social relations with the demands of economic globalization.

Nevertheless, this perspective of MÜSİAD changed after the banning of the WP in 1998 (Öniş and Türem, 2004; Koyuncu, 2006). Towards the new millennium, MÜSİAD’s discourse shifted from the adoption of the East Asian model to a pro-European stance since EU countries provided a significant export market for the members of MÜSİAD (Lorasdağı Koyuncu, 2010).

Seen from a broader perspective, increasing foreign companies also emerged as a further salient actor in the private sector. The shift from state-led developmentalism to market-driven economy manifested itself in the amount of foreign direct investment, which increased 870 times, totaling 3 billion dollars (2001) within the two decades (Geniş, 2004). Accordingly, the number of foreign firms operating in Turkey increased 75 times from 78 in 1980 to 5,841 in 2001 (Geniş, 2004). İstanbul was well ahead in the attraction of this investment. As of 1999, İstanbul attracted 60% of foreign investors in the service sector and more than 90% of banking and other financial services (Özdemir, 2002). As Keyder and Öncü (1999) mentioned, those newly arrived foreign banks, along with the new generation of domestic “trade

finance” banks, became the symbol of the integration of İstanbul into global capitalism.

This increasing integration into global capital also manifested itself in the retail industry. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the global companies including restaurants and dress shops entered the market (Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1998). The following section will discuss the changing consumption patterns in line with the new retail sector, a topic that has a significant place in the gentrification literature.

4.2. P Level

The economic liberalization, adjustment policies, and integration with global capital were also linked to demographic changes in İstanbul in the post-1980 period. Scholars interpreted those changes as the emergence of a new cosmopolitanism (Aksoy and Robins, 1994). The duality representing that cosmopolitanism was predominantly described through different depictions such as “yuppies and arabesque” or even with the names of neighborhoods, “Zekeriyaköy and Sultanbeyli.” In this vein, early gentrification studies also focused on a dimension of duality, which is interpreted as “gentrifiers and displaced” in the literature.

In line with the aim of moving beyond imitative urbanism, this section abstains from underlining this kind of overly culturist duality. Rather, in line with the focus of the study, this section briefly introduces the new middle class of the post-1980s as the “gentrifiers” of the period on the one hand and decisive actors of the recent urban struggle on the other. It then goes on to discuss residents of *gecekondu* neighborhoods along with the users of decayed inner-city buildings as the “displaced” of not only that period but also the successive decisive moment.

The post-1980 neoliberal turn paved the way for the rise of a new middle class, which is distinguished from the traditional middle class of the bureaucratic, state-driven economic policies. The rapid change in the private sector resulted in the emergence of this new group of well-educated professionals who were employed in growing

service sectors such as finance, insurance, real estate, media, and advertising (Aksoy and Robins, 1994). Those highly paid professionals and managers brought neoliberal rationality into their everyday lives through distinctive cultural and consumption patterns (Aksoy and Robins, 1994; Bali, 2002). They endeavored to become involved with cultural symbols that resonated with global life style through their choices ranging from residential location to restaurants.

Rıfat Bali's well-known book *Tarz-ı Hayattan Life Style'a* [*From Way of Life to Lifestyle*] introduces those new desires, consumption patterns, and changing lifestyles in the post-1980 period through media content analysis. Bali (2002) touches upon several issues ranging from the emerging habit of "drinking wine" or changing preferences of car brands to the impacts of newly rising TV and radio broadcastings as well as international festivals of film, theater, jazz, and art. While discussing the shift towards global lifestyles, he also emphasizes the alienation of the others, namely "outsiders, migrants, provincials, black Turks," in the discourse of "İstanbulites," which refers to a group of journalists, artists, and writers who had "anxiety for the invasion" of their city by those former groups (Bali, 2002).

This "İstanbulite"-like group also took the leading role in the gentrification literature that focused on the 1990s. Tolga İslam, for example, outlined the gentrifiers in Galata as belonging to a highly educated, cultural middle class and emphasized the similarity with the new middle class described in the North American literature (İslam, 2005). Based on empirical evidence, İslam (2005) argued that the foremost reasons for the selection of this neighborhood by the new middle class were cultural factors rather than economic. Nil Uzun also highlighted the similarity between the demographic structure and consumption patterns of the new middle class in Turkey and their counterparts in the West (Uzun, 2001).

Besides being gentrifiers of historic neighborhoods, this new middle class was also among the actors of the opposition against the entrepreneurial urban policies of the local government. In this regard, beautification associations deserve particular

attention, which were mostly established in historic city centers that have seen the classical form of gentrification. Cihangir, Kuzguncuk, Galata, and Arnavutköy were among those gentrified historic neighborhoods that hosted neighborhood associations. As Ünsal (2013) mentions, those associations focused on the preservation of authenticity in their neighborhoods and, thus, resistance against the “external forces.” Ünsal (2013) argued that those external forces refer not only to the projects of local and central governments but also the ideological aspects of the Islamic WP, which was then in power in local government.

A further component of the opposition in that period was the professional chambers. The Chamber of Architects struggled against several projects such as the Tarlabası Project, Park Otel, and Gökkafes not only via lawsuits but also through the formation of public opinion. Furthermore, the chamber supported inhabitants in Arnavutköy, Gazhane, Gayrettepe, Beşiktaş, and Moda in order to create awareness about urbanization for sustainable development (Önal, 2004).

The other side of the coin was the low-income inhabitants, who were predominantly migrants from the rural parts of Turkey. On this basis, several scholars emphasized the rising social polarization and accompanying marginalization of those low-income groups (Aksoy and Robins, 1994; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2005). Apart from the cultural perspective, the urban policies of the 1980s and particularly gecekondu laws complicated the class structure.

Işık and Pınarcıoğlu’s work *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk (Poverty In Turn)* is one of the earliest studies that introduced the different economic segments within the urban “other” and the changing characteristics of poverty. As these scholars argued, the former migrants developed strong strategies to improve their living conditions, such as enhancing their social solidarity networks and benefitting from the informal labor and squatter housing markets generated by neoliberal populist policies (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2005). That urban poor eventually had the chance to transfer their poverty to the new migrants, which is defined as “poverty in turn” by the authors.

Those newly arrived migrants were mostly the victims of forced migration from East and Southeast Anatolia in the 1990s, who experienced a disparate break from their place of origin as well as traumatic memories (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2005). They mostly attached themselves to empty buildings in inner-city historical neighborhoods as they could not build *gecekondu*s. The new inhabitants of those dilapidated historic buildings also became the focal point of gentrification studies as the victims of displacement in the urban transformation projects implemented in the mid-2000s.

In 1984, the liberal-conservative MP government passed the *Gecekondu Amnesty Law* and following enactments as a part of a strategy aimed at compensating the economic cost of neoliberal policies for the urban poor in order to retain their votes (Boratav, 1991). The law permitted the distribution of title deeds to *gecekondu* residents who had built on public lands under the condition that they would pay for the land they had already used and they did not have more than one plot or house within the border of the municipality. Apart from the previous amnesty laws, those arrangements allowed the construction of four-story apartment buildings in *gecekondu* neighborhoods. Accordingly, *gecekondu* owners were allowed to give their land away for the transformation in exchange for apartments (Demirtaş, 2009).

As Tahire Erman (2004) mentioned, the generation of urban rent-seeking paved the way for the emergence of an anti-*gecekondu* discourse. The inhabitants of *gecekondus* were defined as “people after quick money,” “millionaire peasants,” “the *gecekondu* mafia,” and “the landlords” by the media and other groups (Erman, 2004). Even the empathy in academic discourse for the urban poor was narrowed and the terminology of “illegal construction” replaced “*gecekondu*” in order to emphasize the passing beyond basic shelter needs (Geniş, 2004).

During the 1990s, a new term, “*varoş*,” began to be used instead of “*gecekondu*.” Geniş (2004) argued that the term “*varoş*” represented illegality, crime, aggression, and violence, whereas “*gecekondu*” evoked tradition, conservative values, acceptance of social order (“*tevekkül*”), and modesty (“*kanaat*”). Bartu and Candan

(2008) also mentioned that new waves of Kurdish migrants in the 1990s paved the way for the more profound marginalization of the urban poor, who found themselves in places marked as “varoş.”

This shift in discourse indeed shaded the uneven development produced by the government and private sector in the 1990s by attracting attention to the urban poor as actors of illegality. On this basis, Geniş (2004) mentioned that the new housing developments in the city center or the peripheral coastal lands were justified on two grounds. First, they were not only solving the distorted urbanization problem by displacing the *gecekondu*s but also upgraded the physical and social infrastructure. Second, they were preventing the further invasion of migrants by constructing middle- and upper-class housing in the peripheral lands (Geniş, 2004). This justification, in turn, paved the way for the legitimization of spatial exclusion, which is still a decisive component of the gentrification mechanism in Turkey.

4.3. Concrete Abstraction

The previous sections focused on the way in which neoliberalization and globalization formulated new forms of policies, capital accumulation, and also everyday life within the local context. This section goes on to discuss the spatial manifestation of this contested and complex interaction between the emergent neoliberal restructuring and the inherited landscape in İstanbul. It is revealed that İstanbul experienced a profound sociospatial change that encompassed multiple dimensions and types of gentrification in the 1990s. In this regard, this section provides a brief discussion of commercial, tourism-led, and residential developments in İstanbul along with their interpretations in the gentrification literature.

In pursuit of the shift from manufacturing to finance and service, İstanbul emerged as an arena for the efforts to integrate with the global economy. In this line, the very activity of place-marketing to attract investment became the dominant part of the urban strategy. This, in turn, bolstered the construction of upscale office buildings, trade centers, luxury hotels, and bank headquarters to rebuild the city’s image. Here,

one of the key legal tools was the “Tourism Encouragement Law,” enacted in 1982, which gave authority to the central government for the determination of “tourism centers” while reducing the requirements.

Through the efforts and pressures of the five largest companies, the Levent-Maslak axis emerged as the new international business district in İstanbul based on the Tourism Encouragement Law despite the area’s irrelevance for tourism (see Taşan-Kök, 2015). Accordingly, beginning from the late 1980s, numerous banks, financial companies, and headquarters of national and international firms proliferated along the Levent-Maslak axis (see Tekeli, 2011b). The construction of the second bridge over the Bosphorus in 1988, which improved accessibility, also contributed to the expansion of the district. Eventually, this axis became the new international business district in İstanbul with a landscape of skyscrapers (Öktem, 2011).

Further beneficiaries of the tourism encouragement arrangements were the luxury hotels that were constructed on locations overlooking the Bosphorus with special permissions. The Cırağan Palace Kempinski, Swissotel Dolmabahçe, Ritz-Carlton, Conrad İstanbul, Mövenpick, and Hyatt Regency were the significant newcomers of the 1990s. While only four buildings had more than 20 stories before the 1980s, more than 20 new high-rise buildings—hotels and offices—were added in only one decade (Enlil, 2011). By the 2000s, the number had more than doubled again (Enlil, 2011).

As discussed in earlier sections, neoliberal restructuring policy reforms, along with a set of legal arrangements regarding the structure of metropolitan governance, resulted in the emergence of “entrepreneurial local government, acting as a market facilitator” (Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). The ambitious mayor of the period, Bedrettin Dalan, with his newly acquired power, initiated a dramatic transformation through Haussmannian projects (Keyder and Öncü, 1993; Enlil, 2011).

One of the most significant projects of this entrepreneurial mayor was the widening of Tarlabası Boulevard to improve the transportation infrastructure for the new Levent-Maslak business district and the connection of the neighborhood to this new

axis in 1986. Tarlabası is located within the administrative boundaries of Beyoğlu district, which is the social and cultural heart of the city. The houses of the neighborhood mostly dated back to the 19th century and minority groups inhabited them in that period (Sakizlioğlu, 2014). As the minorities left the neighborhood in the 1940s because of a series of political events, including wealth tax, the demographic structure changed drastically, and poor immigrant groups started to move into the abandoned buildings (Sakizlioğlu, 2014). In the 1980s, this housing stock was interpreted as the worthless shelters of “Jewish and Greek” people who did not represent Turkish culture, and the neighborhood was imaged as a place of prostitutes and drug dealers in public and political discourses (Ekinci, 1993). Therefore, “to clean the area” became a legitimate aim for the demolition of 386 buildings, including 168 registered cultural and historical assets (Ekinci, 1993).



Figure 4.1. Demolishment day in Tarlabası: a musical band and dialogue between the inhabitants and an officer (Source: Print screen from the documentary by Hilmi Etikan, Tarlabası, 1989).²³

In keeping with the mayor's entrepreneurial approach and his vision of the global city, the transformation of the inner-city waterfront area, the Golden Horn, also became a priority during the 1980s. He demolished some 30,000 dilapidated buildings, including historical buildings dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and evicted more than 600 small manufacturing establishments. The

²³ This short documentary won the UPIAV (Union patronale des ingénieurs et architectes vaudois) prize in 1989.

already poor conditions of the neighborhoods were worsened after the eviction of those small manufacturing establishments (Keyder and Öncü, 1993; Bezmez, 2008).

A further trigger of the spatial transformation in İstanbul was linked to the shift in the role of the central government in the housing sector from being a regulator to a credit lender and direct investor (Baharoğlu, 1996). As discussed in the previous section, the establishment of the Mass Housing Fund in 1982 and the MHA in 1984 reconfigured housing production. The MHA provided credits for the production of nearly one million residents in ten years, most of which were organized by cooperatives. Those cooperatives accelerated the decentralization process through their preference for cheap land on the periphery of the city (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2005). Through the construction of standardized, high-rise apartment blocks the MHA paved the way for the displacement of lower- and middle-income groups from the city center while creating socially homogeneous residential areas in İstanbul's peripheral areas.

On the other hand, the Gecekondu Amnesty Law, enacted in 1984, accomplished the housing policy of the state for low-income groups. The set of arrangements enacted in the mid-1980s commercialized the squatter housing stock and transformed the squatter neighborhoods into apartment blocks (Şenyapılı, 2004).

A further salient spatial manifestation of the neoliberal restructuring was the mushrooming of gated communities, in line with the global trends since the 1990s. The changes in development plans and legal arrangements that opened suburban land near forests and lakes to construction, the emergence of large-scale companies embarking on high profits, the construction of the second bridge on the Bosphorus, the development of the new business center district, and the accompanying new flow of capital along with the rise of a new middle-upper class embracing global consumption patterns paved the way for the proliferation of gated communities.

Regarding gated communities, a large portion of the literature in Turkey has examined the role of new elites seeking a new lifestyle and distance from the urban

poor in this flood of gated communities (see Kurtuluş, 2011). As Şenyapılı (2004) argued, gated communities emerged in spatial correspondence to the top of the new class pyramid occupied by new rising white-collar administrators, managers, and professionals. The marketing practices of these new housing projects clearly revealed a new code of social distinction, which submitted separation and isolation as status symbols. Accordingly, several researchers analyzed the advertisements of the high-end gated communities, highlighting privilege, isolation, homogeneity, escape from the city and lifestyle (Aksoy and Robins, 1996; Öncü, 1999; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2004; Perouse and Danış, 2005). In providing the promises of the advertisements, construction companies enjoyed the benefits of using forestry lands, which were opened to construction as a result of the relaxation of development plans in the mid-1980s. In this period, the Northern Forest lands of İstanbul, known as the “lungs” of the city, also became a construction site for numerous upper-class gated communities.²⁴

In the same decades, İstanbul experienced classic gentrification as a further component of the spatial manifestation of social levels. The dilapidated inner-city neighborhoods had seen an increasing invasion of the new middle class, predominantly initiated by artists and intellectuals. Those neighborhoods had experienced a common pattern: (1) they were built in the 19th century and non-Muslim groups inhabited them until the first half of the twentieth century, (2) the buildings deteriorated as a consequence of the mass exodus until the 1950s, (3) newly arriving low-income migrants from Anatolia inhabited those abandoned buildings in the early 1980s (İslam, 2005). This phenomenon, which is defined as the first wave of gentrification in the literature, began on the coasts of the Bosphorus, including the Kuzguncuk, Arnavutköy, and Ortaköy neighborhoods, at the beginning of the 1980s.

²⁴For example, Kemer Country in the European part of the city and Beykoz Konakları in the Anatolian part are two well-known early projects.

In the late 1980s, it spread to the Cihangir, Galata, and Asmalımescit neighborhoods in Beyoğlu, the city's social and cultural center, which was defined as the second wave of gentrification by Tolga İslam (2005). The state had no direct impact in the beginning of this process but was involved in the late 1990s through revitalizing acts. The process resulted in the renovation of historic houses and the upgrading of the neighborhoods, which, in turn, gave rise to an increase in rents and a shortage in affordable housing. However, this sporadic form of gentrification proceeded slowly, and displacement was limited.

4.4. Epilogue -Gentrification as a Twin Paradox-²⁵

This chapter introduced the neoliberal urban restructuring process in İstanbul between 1980 and 2000. To recapitulate, it discussed large-scale urban transformation projects and demolishment in Tarlabası and the Golden Horn; the construction of a new business district in the Levent-Maslak axis; proliferation of upscale office buildings, hotels, shopping malls, and gated communities; the transformation of gecekondu neighborhoods into middle-class apartments; and finally the classical form of gentrification in İstanbul. As cases revealed, although the term “gentrification” had not been used in academic discourse, the ontological presence of its several forms could be identified as early as the 1980s. However, as the previous sections demonstrated, it is evident that even the demolishment of Tarlabası and the Golden Horn, which included direct displacement in the core of the city, was rendered invisible in the gentrification literature, most likely due to the

²⁵ The “Twin Paradox” is a story that explains time dilation. In the story, one of a pair of twins flies away from Earth and then flies back again. As time is running more slowly in the spacecraft due to time dilation, the traveling twin finds the other twin older upon returning from the journey.

applied conceptualization and linear schema of the process, produced in the Anglo-American literature.²⁶

Taking (re)investment in the secondary circuit of capital, class polarization, and direct/indirect displacement as the core characteristics of gentrification, this chapter has demonstrated that the Western experience of gentrification did not travel or become adopted or copied; rather, gentrification as an abstract and general concept in İstanbul emerged as a product of different “historical, contextual and temporal forces” (Lees, 2012, p. 165). In an effort to both “locate and dis-locate” the gentrification and generate dialogue, it is worth outlining not only the manifestation of, in Clark’s words (2005), “order and simplicity” in İstanbul but also distinguishing place-specific pathways of gentrification between 1980 and 2000.

First of all, Neil Smith’s rent gap theory, in both its original formulation and its nuanced version, is relevant in the trajectory of gentrification in İstanbul. Smith’s rent gap theory was seen as overly deterministic for years, but it has recently seen a resurgence of interest due to its power as a conceptual tool to understand profit-seeking activities in urban lands (Smith, 1979; Lees *et al.*, 2016; Slater, 2016). On this basis, efforts to integrate into the global economy, the IMF program, entrepreneurial government, and the changing private sector actors paved the way for highly speculative urban restructuring in Turkey. The construction of Tarlabaşı Boulevard close to Beyoğlu, the new central business district lying to the north of Taksim, the luxury hotels overlooking the Bosphorus, and the rehabilitation activities in the historic inner-city neighborhoods are examples of investments in the secondary circuit in order to close the rent gap between the land’s actual value and potential value.

²⁶ For more rigorous theoretical discussion, those projects may be discussed under the title of development-led displacement which differs from gentrification. However, here, complete invisibility of the relationship of the projects with gentrification is noted.

A further relevant conceptualization produced in the mainstream is new-build gentrification. Davidson and Lees found that new-build developments along London's riverside produced a gentrified landscape while resulting, more likely, in indirect displacement in the form of "exclusionary displacement" (Davidson and Lees, 2005). The authors argued that gated communities, as a form of new-build gentrification, push low-income residents from the neighborhood.

On the other hand, scholars put forward that developers market upscale apartments and houses to high-earning groups who also have the social and cultural capital to pursue a "global lifestyle." Drawing on Lefebvre, Davidson (2007) argued that real estate actors generate global narratives at various stages of the gentrification process—design and planning, selling and marketing, and living—and produce global habitats shaped by global-level forces. Thus, these scholars contend that new-build developments are also a form of gentrification as they create a gentrified scene while producing the indirect displacement of lower classes.

Exclusionary displacement is highly related to segregation as it refers to shrinkage in the houses that low-income populations can access. In this regard, these studies evoke a wide range of discussions related to the mushrooming of gated communities in İstanbul as well as their marketing along with their target groups, the emerging middle and upper classes who desire a distinctive lifestyle and an image of a good life. On the other hand, the enclosure of urban land by upscale gated communities increases spatial segregation, resulting in the pushing-out of the urban poor.

Neil Smith coined the concept of the revanchist city to express revengeful activities of middle and ruling-class whites in the USA against minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed, gays and lesbians, and immigrants, who were accused of "stealing" the city from the white upper classes (Smith, 1996). The mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, identified those groups as major threats to urban order as well as the culprits of urban decay. Accordingly, his strategy was "reclaiming the public spaces of New York" and "cleaning the city" of those

“thieves” through aggressive arrangements known as zero-tolerance policing (Smith, 1996).

Smith formulated the revanchist city thesis as the opposite of the emancipatory thesis in gentrification literature within the context of New York City in the mid-1990s. However, the revanchist city thesis, which describes the legitimatization of the spatial exclusion of minorities through the discourse of “civic morality, family values, and neighborhood security,” strongly echoes the rhetoric of entrepreneurial mayor Bedrettin Dalan in the mid-1980s for the Tarlabası demolition nearly a decade earlier as a demonstration of a nonlinear trajectory.

The displacement of small business has also been a concern reflected in gentrification studies since the mid-2000s. This commercial displacement is regarded mostly as indirect displacement in the form of displacement pressure or exclusionary displacement in Western literature (Davidson and Lees, 2010). On this basis, while it is worth recognizing the eviction of more than 600 small manufacturing establishments during the Golden Horn waterfront regeneration project as commercial displacement, the state-led eviction of these establishments shows that gentrification in Turkey must be considered within the framework of state-led urbanization even as early as the 1980s.



CHAPTER 5

GENTRIFICATION ATTACKS HABITING (2002-2011)

The previous chapter showed that the neoliberal urban policy of the 1980s and 1990s was marked by the rent-seeking activities of the entrepreneurial local government and increasing spatial segregation. The present chapter completes this picture by dealing with the second decisive moment (2002-2011) of contemporary metamorphic gentrification in İstanbul. It goes on to discuss the changing dynamics in all levels of social reality that have played a part in the recent phase of gentrification. More specifically, it addresses the following question: What are the political, social, and economic dynamics behind the changing urban policy that promotes mega projects?

In this regard, this chapter also exercises the research methodology of the dissertation through a critical review of the existing literature. Accordingly, it begins with a discussion of the neoliberal policies of the newly emerged ruling party and its manifestations in the business class, which paved the way for crony capitalism. Section 5.2 further elaborates on everyday life and resistance against gentrification. Section 5.3 examines the spatial manifestations of the changing social realities in all levels, or, in other words, the concrete abstraction of the 2000s in İstanbul. Finally, Section 5.4 provides a discussion of totality from the vantage point of the gentrification literature in Turkey.

5.1.G Level

5.1.1.State

Following high levels of economic and political instability, Turkey entered a period of severe financial crisis starting in the early 2000s (see Yeldan, 2006). For recovery, the coalition government created a new economic team under Kemal Derviş in 2001, who had resigned from the Vice-Chair of the World Bank to become minister. He implemented an IMF program in parallel with the new set of conditionalities that neoliberal orthodoxy juxtaposed on the developing world: privatization, flexible labor markets, financial deregulation, central bank independence, flexible exchange rate regimes, and fiscal austerity (Yeldan, 2006; Bredenkamp, Josefsson, and Lindgren, 2009). To this end, according to Yeldan, the state apparatus became a facilitator of the new global hegemonic financial system (Yeldan, 2006).

Therefore, the electoral victory of the newborn Justice and Development Party (JDP) in the 2002 general elections can be regarded as the manifestation of a will to find a new and stable actor that could pull the country away from short-lived coalition governments and economic crises. Obtaining 34% of the general vote, the current ruling party—a successor of the Islamic Welfare Party (WP) and the Virtue Party (VP)—became the first single-party government since 1987. Furthermore, it was the first occurrence of an Islamic party coming to power with a majority in the modern secular system, which was interpreted by Alev Çınar as a “genuine experiment,” not only for Turkey but the whole world (Çınar, 2006).

According to Ziya Öniş, three interrelated elements constituted the economic foundation of this electoral success: (1) the party’s success in combining both the winners and losers of globalization, (2) the strong “track-record” of the JDP’s predecessor at the municipality level, and (3) the failures of center-left and right-wing parties “in achieving sustained and equitable growth, avoiding costly financial crises and tackling the problem of pervasive corruption” (Öniş, 2006, p. 207). Apart

from the political economy approach, as Tuğal mentioned, another set of contributions have argued that the Islamic movement leads to the embracement of excluded religious people and institutions within a non-Western, expanding modernity (Tuğal, 2009). In line with the works of these scholars, Tuğal also contended that JDP has “creatively blended Islam, tradition, supernaturalism, charisma, and informality on the one hand, and rationalism, tolerance, market relations, professionalism, and formality on the other hand to build Islamic modernity” (Tuğal, 2009, p. 22).

This creative assemblage was also visible in the party’s program. The “Development and Democratization Program” promised to raise human rights standards in Turkey to the level envisaged by the European declarations and acts. It also emphasized the importance of relationships with the USA, European countries, the EU, and NATO. The program supported secularism and identified it as a *sine qua non* condition for democracy and the guarantee of freedom of religion and conscience (JDP, 2002). Furthermore, in line with contemporary neoliberal conditionality, the program announced the party’s commitment to the free market economy while supporting privatization and limiting the state’s role in the economy to a merely regulatory function (JDP, 2002).

Since its inception, the ruling party has described itself as “conservative democrat” and elaborated its ideology in a document entitled “Conservative Democracy,” which was written by a leading JDP member with a foreword by the current President (Akdoğan, 2003). This document claimed that the party’s understanding of conservative democracy was not opposed to change in the sense of “development and progress”; rather, it was opposed to degradation and supporters of the status quo. According to the program, conservative democracy supports the synthesis of traditional values and modern developments and objects to the total rejection of either inherent structure or globalization. In this vein, the conclusion of the text summarizes the party’s general orientation through a pragmatist discourse that

emphasizes secularism, social peace, consensus, diversity, pluralism, civil society, human rights, and tolerance (Akdoğan, 2003).

The early policies of the current ruling party can be regarded as being in harmony with the promises of the party's program. Through its broad commitment to the IMF's financial program, the JDP managed to end the economic crisis that Turkey experienced in 2000 and 2001, with inflation rates falling to their lowest levels since the early 1970s (Öniş, 2004). The ruling party's proactive approach to Turkey's relations with the EU and associated reform programs also contributed to this recovery (Öniş, 2004). During its first years in power, the government followed moderate policies and accomplished constitutional as well as legislative reforms to raise democratic standards in Turkey in an effort to fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria (Özbudun, 2006). In this regard, Kandiyoti pointed out that the change in the Prime Minister of the period—the current President—was dramatic, as he had been calling the EU a “Christian Club” in line with the rhetoric of the WP when he was mayor of İstanbul in the 1990s (Kandiyoti, 2012).

The salient consolidation of power of the ruling party began with the election of the new President of the Republic, one of the leading figures of the party (Kaya, 2014). The President of the Republic has significant authority in the assignment of key positions in key institutions in Turkey (Kaya, 2014). Furthermore, the 2010 constitutional amendments, adopted by 58% of the popular vote in a referendum, accelerated the party's consolidation of power. In this way, the government began to penetrate into both the Constitutional Court and the Council of Judges and Prosecutors by placing its supporters. Accordingly, new juridical regulations began to be shaped. Here, it is worth mentioning that these early interventions later became the most significant challenge of the legal struggles against uneven urbanization and ecological destruction. The power of the executive body over juridical bodies has led to the interception of numerous cases against the mega projects along with mining, thermal power plants, and hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs).

On the other hand, the rapid economic recovery, along with the legal and institutional reforms to fulfill EU requirements, paved the way for important steps towards decentralization (Kayasü and Yetişkul, 2014; Kuyucu, 2017). In Kuyucu's words, "the carrot" of EU membership was a strong driving force for these steps. Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 and Municipality Law No. 5393 are two clear examples of decentralization attempts that entitled metropolitan municipalities to designate renewal sites and implement renewal projects in earthquake-prone, dilapidated, or historic areas. Furthermore, these new legal arrangements increased municipalities' power and authority in the development, control, and coordination of district municipalities while defining new powers to deal with natural disasters (Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). As Kayasü and Yetişkul (2014) mention, those laws also enhanced the administrative and financial autonomy of the local governments in many respects. First, the practice of the central government's approval of municipal council decisions was abolished. Secondly, "municipalities have been enabled to create their internal organization through their own decision making processes" (Kayasü and Yetişkul, 2014). Thirdly, the requirement for the final approval of the central government for budgets was removed (Kayasü and Yetişkul, 2014).

As Kuyucu (2017) pointed out, these laws also encouraged the participation of inhabitants in decision-making. By changing the criterion of urban citizenship from birthplace to residence, the laws turned all the inhabitants of a district into potential participants in governance. Furthermore, these laws enhanced the level of transparency in rulemaking by opening City Council meetings to public attendance (Kuyucu, 2017). Finally, a new institution, Kent Konseyi, in which NGOs, interest groups, and individuals would meet regularly to form agendas that the City Council had to discuss, was established (Kuyucu, 2017).

Another related law enacted in 2005 (Law No. 5366) concerned historical and cultural protection zones. The law granted authority to local governments for implementing regeneration projects in "dilapidated" historic neighborhoods. With

this law, municipalities are allowed to implement regeneration projects through partnerships with the MHA and private sectors.

Nevertheless, as noted by scholars, this decentralization reform package contradicted the centralist reforms passed in the same period (Kayasü and Yetişkul, 2014; Kuyucu, 2017; Tansel, 2019). One of the most visible manifestations of this centralization was the dramatic empowerment of the MHA operating under the Prime Ministry. Through a series of laws enacted in the early 2000s, the MHA's authority and power expanded in many respects, such that the MHA was transformed into the most powerful contractor and land broker in Turkey (Kuyucu, 2017). These new powers can be broadly summarized under four headings in line with the focus of this study. First, the MHA was granted the right to sell treasury lands. It valued these public plots under the market price and had the power to build on these sites itself or via private sector partnerships with a revenue share model. Second, the MHA gained the authority to provide loans for projects that aimed at regeneration of gecekondu neighborhoods or conservation of historic neighborhoods. Third, urban planning powers were also granted to the MHA in areas designated for mass housing development, as well as the authority to expropriate land or property within these sites. Fourth, the responsibilities and authority of the former Land Office were transferred to the MHA along with 64.5 million square meters of public land (Kayasü and Yetişkul, 2014; Kuyucu, 2017, Tansel, 2019).

However, as discussed in the following section (the G level of the 2010s), this administrative restructuring for the purpose of decentralization was accompanied by strong centralization and “failed to produce a tangible decentralized structure of power at local and regional levels” (Tansel, 2019, p. 6).

5.1.2.Capital

The previous chapter was concerned with the efforts of capital to prepare İstanbul for the demands of global capitalism in the post-1980 period. It introduced the visions and strategies of the existing national bourgeoisie in the urban restructuring process and established the emergence of a new segment of the bourgeoisie, which became the main private sector actor in the 2000s. This chapter offers a broader discussion of that emerging capital along with its relationship with the existing bourgeoisie from the vantage point of urbanization. More specifically, this section begins with the administrative and legal mechanisms that assisted the emergence of a powerful conservative Muslim bourgeoisie. It then goes on to discuss the compromise between two seemingly different groups of capital on privatization and disposessions.

The rise of a new segment of powerful bourgeoisie with strong ties to the ruling party has been widely discussed in the literature. Several scholars noted not only the legal and administrative arrangements but also the informal mechanisms mobilized by the ruling party in order to erect a new business class, through which it could consolidate its power (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2014; Sayarı, 2014; Gürakar, 2016; Esen and Gümüşçü, 2018). In this regard, the aggressive privatization program of the JDP has been the most significant trigger of state-supported capital accumulation, which is steadily configuring the urbanization process, whether concentrated or extended, since the early 2000s. Zaifer notes that the total privatization revenue of Turkey, which had been “\$7.39 billion between 1984 and 2001, reached \$66.77 billion in 2015” (Zaifer, 2018, p. 819). The ruling party privatized more state-owned enterprises than all of its predecessors combined between 2002 and 2014 (Ocakli, 2017). As will be discussed in Chapter 7 with the detailed examination of the accumulation trajectory of the actors of the Third Airport and Airport City Project, this privatization campaign supported the transformation of the Islamic Anatolian bourgeoisie from medium-scale enterprises to large holding companies (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2012; Zaifer, 2018).

Furthermore, the ruling government privatized significant parts of the energy sector, which was hitherto dominated by state institutions. The privatization of electricity distribution particularly supported the capital accumulation of the Anatolian business class. Besides distribution, recent years have seen radical efforts for the creation of private water rights, which means the commodification of water under the cover of the privatization of electricity generation. In this regard, the critical legal arrangement was the Water Usage Rights Agreement that allowed the General Directorate of State Hydraulics Works to lease rivers and streams for (often) 49 years (Erensü, 2017). As a result, a total of 597 hydropower plants were constructed as of 2019, with that number expected to grow to 1391 in 2023 (Erensü, 2017).

A further constitutive component of the new redistribution mechanism has been public procurement. The new Public Procurement Law, which was enacted in 2003, has been amended more than 150 times by the government (Çeviker Gürakar, 2016). These legal changes raised questions regarding the transparency of public contracts. Accordingly, several scholars argued that public procurement has been instrumentalized by the government in order to accelerate the capital accumulation of the Anatolian business class (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2012; Çeviker Gürakar, 2016; Esen and Gümüşçü, 2017). In this regard, Esra Çeviker Gürakar and Tuba Bircan's study of 49,355 high-value public procurement contracts, which were put in tender between 2004 and 2011, provided evidence that politically connected firms (established by JDP members, their family members, and/or members of pro-government business associations) won the large part of those public tenders.

A further significant actor in the capital accumulation mechanism has been the MHA, through which public land was transferred to the new bourgeoisie. As discussed in the previous section, the MHA has become the dominant real estate actor in pursuit of a set of administrative and legal changes made by the ruling government. In particular, the right granted to the MHA to join in partnerships with

the private sector for projects on public land and its exemption from the procurement law along with budgetary rules have rendered the MHA “one of the largest non-transparent instruments of capital accumulation” (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2018, p. 255). In this regard, Gürakar and Bircan’s study demonstrated that more than 60% of all MHA contracts were awarded to pro-government firms while the remaining 35% were awarded to local firms with or without political ties (Gürakar, 2016).

The previous chapter established the operation of a conservative Islamic business elite with and against the existing national bourgeoisie via the examination of two leading business associations: MÜSİAD and TÜSİAD. The late 1990s saw the emergence of further powerful business groups that represent provincial, small, and medium-sized enterprises and position themselves against the established big capital (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2012). Accordingly, several scholars have delved into the conflicts between those two different groups based on the assumed dichotomy between secularist national capital and Islamic provincial capital (see Tanyılmaz, 2015; Hoşgör, 2015).

However, from the vantage point of this dissertation, the common interests shared by those groups are far more significant for the urbanization process in Turkey. In this vein, the new millennium has been marked by the compromise of TÜSİAD-based holding companies and Islamic Anatolian capital on the aggressive privatization policy of the ruling government. As a concrete example, MÜSİAD-based Holding A and the Company D won the privatization tenders of four electricity distribution regions in partnership with TÜSİAD member Company B. Likewise, a leading TÜSİAD member holding and MÜSİAD member Company A cooperated for the Meram Electricity Distribution privatization. Another significant example is the partnership between two members of two different associations for the controversial Ilisu Dam and HEPP project. The TÜSİAD member-owned Bank provided loans for the project contracted by MÜSİAD member company when

foreign financial firms decided to withdraw, probably due to the environmental and cultural destruction. This compromise on privatization and dispossession will be further analyzed in Chapter 7 regarding the actors of the Third Airport and Airport City Project.

5.2.P Level

The previous chapter foregrounded everyday life and resistance in the first decisive moment. More specifically, it briefly touched on the everyday life of the displaced along with the seeds of resistance against uneven urbanization. As a part of this debate, it introduced emerging neighborhood beautification associations and professional chambers as the actors of urban movements. This section examines the reflections, developments, and transformations of that pivotal axis after the 2000s. In this regard, the following part begins with the attack of the G level on the everyday life of the urban poor who were displaced in this period; this attack will be elaborated on further in the following “Concrete Abstraction” section. The present section then goes on to discuss emerging urban movements in the 2000s that embody the urban poor, middle class, and professional chambers along with other newly emerged groups.

One of the most salient components of the G level’s attack on everyday life and habiting was the urban transformation projects of the early 2000s. In this regard, the first target was the transformation of gecekondu zones under earthquake risk such as the Ayazma, Tepeüstü, Başbüyük, and Gülsu-Gülsuyu neighborhoods of the inner city where the rent gap had been steadily increasing. Although the conceptualization of those projects as gentrification is problematical to an extent since their initial declared target was the construction of earthquake-resistant social housing for the “rights owners,” the result was indeed eviction of tenants and other “occupiers” or

the replacement of the existing low-income populations by newly built MHA projects while transferring the land to higher-income groups.

As discussed regarding the first decisive moment, the former migrants had the chance to transfer their poverty to new migrants, which is defined as “poverty in turn” (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2004). In the second decisive moment, those new waves of migrants mostly became the target of forced eviction in *gecekondu* transformation areas. As will be discussed in the following section, these neighborhoods were predominantly inhabited by residents with particular ethnic (Kurdish) and religious (Alevi) identities and were marginalized by official discourse.

The second pillar of the urban transformation agenda has targeted the historical inner-city neighborhoods. As noted in the previous section, with the enactment of Law No. 5366 on the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Assets Through Protection by Renewal, historic districts including the Neslişah and Hatice Sultan neighborhoods in Sulukule and the Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray, Süleymaniye, and Tarlabası neighborhoods were designated as urban renewal areas. Within the scope of those projects, the municipalities offered existing inhabitants the choice of either becoming a partner by paying the difference between the existing value of the houses and the construction costs of newly built units or moving to a unit in another district. If neither of these choices were accepted by the inhabitants, their property would be expropriated.

The aggressive neoliberal policies of the ruling government, which excluded the masses, including the original inhabitants of transformation zones, triggered new centralities for resistance in the first decade of the 2000s. As Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2014) highlight, those new solidarities involved diverse actors and claims ranging from urban to environmental claims and from health to transportation. In a parallel vein, Özlem Ünsal (2013) argued that the novelty of the recent urban

movements stems from the accompaniment of former opposition groups such as professional chambers and civil bodies with local neighborhood associations. The Chamber of Architects, in particular, has played a major role in resistance against transformation projects destroying both physical and social authenticity. In this regard, Table 5.1 provides a summary of the characteristics, arguments, and activities/methods of different actors of urban movements in İstanbul in the first decade of the 2000s, drawing on the studies of Ünsal (2013) and Türkmen (2014).



Actor Type	Examples	Characteristic of Members	Main Arguments	Activities/Methods
Civil Initiatives	• Human Settlements' Association • Solidarity Studio • INECE • Urban Movements • Taksim Solidarity • Enek is Ours	Well educated groups such as academicians, architects, planners, journalists and also university students	Opposition against the; • Destruction of social and historic authenticity • Subjugation of use value by exchange value • Displacement and expropriation • Exclusion from decision-making process • Enclosure of land from public use • Privatizations and disposessions • Unscientific and unlawful acts of planning	Establishment of local associations and/or direct involvement in local actions in collaboration with the local associations Increasing of visibility in international/national media and lobbying Advocacy in multiple scales Formulation of alternative plans Development of legal strategies for resistance Developing networks, producing knowledge and making it accessible Increasing the public knowledge and visibility of the struggle Organizing workshops, forums and other kinds of meetings and producing reports on contested topics
Neighborhood Associations	Tozkoparan GülsuyuGülensu Başbüyük Ayazma Sulukule Tarla başı Fener-Balat- Ayvansaray	Inhabitants	(Predominantly) Opposition against the; Displacement and attack to everyday life Loss of property rights Expropriation Marginalization through discourse of public authorities	Local protests Coloration with Civil Initiatives on the grounds of national/international visibility on media, lobbying, development of strategies, Organizing/participating workshops, forums to increase public knowledge
Professional Chambers	-	-	Same grounds with CIs and NAs Claims for public interest	<u>Distinctive method:</u> Open lawsuits against the projects that are against the public interest

Table 5.1. Different activist groups in Turkey (Source: Ünsal, 2013; Türkmen, 2014)

Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2014) argued that that “right to centrality” connotes mainly two types of claims: one is against exclusion from the decision-making process in shaping living space and the second is against spatial eviction and social exclusion from the center. As seen in Table 5.1, roughly speaking, civil initiatives and professional chambers mainly oppose exclusion from the decision-making process, while the main concern of neighborhood associations is eviction. Nonetheless, those groups found common ground to resist the subjugation of use value by exchange value. This attitude calcified in the words of Çavuşoğlu and Yalçın (2010, in Ergin and Rittersberger, 2014), activists from Solidarity Studio, as they interpreted Lefebvre’s “right to the city” as an opportunity for solidarity wherein underestimated similarities are emphasized. In line with this vision, the first decade of the 2000s saw energetic collaborations between civil initiatives and neighborhood associations, or in other words, between people claiming urban commons and inhabitants claiming their houses.

As the following chapter will discuss in detail, all of those groups and their solidarity became one of the most significant blocks of the Gezi Resistance. Their ‘acquaintance,’ experience, and methods gained from previous movements against the urban transformation projects of the earlier decade were strongly manifested in Gezi. On the other hand, as the following chapter will also show, conspiratorial rhetoric produced by the government through Gezi hindered this emerging solidarity to an extent. The labeling, marginalizing, and punishing of Gezi activists led to fear and isolation of different groups in the resistance against contemporary gentrification.

5.3. Concrete Abstraction

As Chapter 4 outlined, one of the most salient spatial manifestations of the neoliberal urban policies of the 1990s was the mushrooming of segregated spaces, including shopping malls, luxury hotels, and high-end gated communities. The early 2000s saw an even further deepening of spatial segregation and exclusion, which can be gauged

even through the numbers. In this regard, Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu's well-known study (2008) introduced the dramatic increase in the number of luxurious hotels (50% increase in bedroom capacity) and shopping malls (47 shopping malls added) in the first decade of the 2000s. In a parallel vein, the number of gated communities steadily increased as Kurtuluş (2011) noted, reaching 1,000 in 2010 whereas there had been 150 in 2003.

In an effort to attract investment and close the rent gap, the first decade of the 2000s also saw the presentation of landmark projects such as the Dubai Towers, Galataport, Haydarpaşa, and urban regeneration projects by world-renowned architects (Kartal Urban Regeneration by Zaha Hadid and Küçükçekmece Urban Regeneration by Ken Yeang). Those projects have received harsh criticism from a wide range of voices including professional chambers, scholars, and international actors. Most of them have been canceled by the courts upon the efforts of professional chambers, and in particular the Chamber of Architects.

A further component of the previous decisive moment, the urban transformation projects, also proceeded into the first decade of the new millennium. Considering the necessary conditions of gentrification defined in this study, two targets of the urban transformation campaign were noted in the previous section (P level): gecekondu neighborhoods and the historical inner city. The legal arrangements behind the projects, the eviction strategies of the state, and the resistance against them have been well documented in the literature (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008; Gündoğdu and Gough, 2009; Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010; Lovering and Türkmen, 2011; Karaman and İslam, 2012; Uzunçarşılı Baysal, 2013). Accordingly, this section will review the existing literature from a different vantage point, which puts "form" as its focal point, to elaborate the thing/process dialectic in gentrification research for that decisive moment.

As Chapter 4 introduced, entrepreneurial activities of local government produced long-lasting rhetoric in legitimizing the spatial exclusion of the urban poor in the

1980s: cleaning the area for family values and security. This rhetoric of “cleaning” to make İstanbul a global city was further accompanied by bolder objectives of earthquake resistance and counterterrorism, while those gecekondu neighborhoods were labeled as “tumors” by the President (in Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010). In this vein, this decisive moment saw a more salient employment of discourse produced directly through the form. For example, the then-President of the MHA claimed that “irregular urbanization” breeds terrorism and there is gecekondu living behind terrorism (Uzunçarşılı Baysal, 2013). Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008) also noted research conducted by the Bureau of Counterterrorism claiming that terror organizations and gangs choose gecekondu for shelter. More interestingly, these authors mentioned that a terror expert argued that MHA houses make people more tolerant as they shed their prejudices by living with different people, unlike gecekondu neighborhoods where people who originated from the same city live together in the same settlements (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). Thus, according to the G level, while the habiting ‘style’ and the associated form of gecekondu dwellers support crime and terrorism, the homogeneous apartment blocks of the MHA and the habitat that they propose may act against it.

In this vein, one of the most debated issues in the Turkish literature was the attack of the G level on the everyday life and habiting of the P level through those urban transformation projects in which form played the decisive role. Uzunçarşılı Baysal (2013) noted that the authentic everyday life routines of Ayazma inhabitants, destitute Kurdish migrants mentioned in the previous decisive moment, including sitting with neighbors on the lawn, open-air weddings, and mass funeral ceremonies, were destroyed by the Bezişanbahçe MHA houses. In his article, whose title reflects the attack of form on everyday life, “Urban Renewal in İstanbul: Reconfigured Spaces, Robotic Lives,” Karaman (2012) also examined how the inhabitants’ use of space and lifestyle was destroyed through transformation projects. As he noted, a typical house in Başıbüyük had a garden space for growing vegetables, providing space for children and socializing with neighbors (Karaman, 2012). However, the

everyday routines stemming from horizontal space were demolished by the high-rise apartment blocks of the MHA while habiting was transformed into habitat, a product of the G level.

The second pillar of the urban transformation agenda has targeted the historical inner-city neighborhoods. As noted in the previous section, with the enactment of Law No. 5366 on the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Assets Through Protection by Renewal, historic districts including the Neslişah and Hatice Sultan neighborhoods of Sulukule and the Fener, Balat and Ayvansaray, Süleymaniye, and Tarlabası neighborhoods were designated as urban renewal areas.

It is safe to say that the most sensational renewal project was conducted in the Neslişah and Hatice Sultan neighborhoods, known as Sulukule. Sulukule was one of the last remaining residential inner-city neighborhoods of “commemorated old” İstanbul on the historical peninsula, which was home to a 1,000-year-old Roma community (Asu and Robbins, 2011; Kocabaş and Gibson, 2011). The neighborhoods were suffering from a lack of basic services on the one hand while they had unique centuries-old cultural and historical heritage on the other. The residents of Sulukule were known for their authentic everyday life, which was reflected in their living space; individual houses opened to courtyards functioning as semi-private spaces for socializing, washing, and drying the clothes or cooking. The residents of houses sharing the same courtyard were typically close relatives sharing the all-hands-on-deck struggle for life (Karaman and İslam, 2012).

The renewal project, which was based on the partnership of the local municipality and the MHA, envisaged the demolition of all houses except a few historic buildings to construct “neo-Ottoman style” housing targeting higher income groups. Similar to other transformation projects, the tenants had no property rights. They were granted leases in the Taşoluk MHA houses about 40 km away from the city center. The Taşoluk MHA housing consists of some five-story apartment buildings, which have nothing in common with the original everyday life of the Sulukule residents.

The same decisive moment also saw the employment of the ‘thing’ to touch the everyday life of the urban poor. On the one hand, the enactment of the Criminal Code in 2004, which made *gecekondu* construction a criminal offense punishable in prison, demonstrated the ruling government’s commitment to the abolishment of the former populist approach regarding informal housing (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010). On the other hand, this move did not mean that the ruling party put an end to the employment of ‘thing’ in exchange for votes. On the contrary, the ruling government invented more complicated methods, which are more compatible with neoliberal policies, to touch the everyday life of the people through ‘thing’ in order to consolidate its power.

One of those methods has been the outcome of the decentralization laws, which allowed municipalities to initiate partnerships to implement urban transformation projects. The ‘thing’ itself became a nexus between the ruling party’s policies of welfare services and the private sector. As Mine Eder (2010) demonstrates, the share of public expenditures for social services such as health care, social insurance, and education increased in the GDP despite rapid privatization trends for those services. Eder (2010) further argued that empowerment of municipalities’ authority in urban development with the enactment of laws concerning provincial administration and greater municipalities in 2005 allowed them to use the private sector for public services. Municipalities have organized soup kitchens (an Islamic tradition) for the poor, iftar meals during Ramadan, and in-kind assistance for the poor, mostly through the funding coming from the private sector operating in construction. As the report of the Public Procurement Office even mentioned, it would be naïve to think that charity would not become a substitute for bribery while leading to corruption and political arbitration (Kamu İhale Kurumu, 2007 in Eder, 2010). Furthermore, the participation of the private sector in social welfare has not been limited to donations to municipalities; it has also involved participation in Islamic, pro-government foundations. As Bozkurt (2013) mentions, those charity groups and associations have indeed substituted the welfare state. In other words, financing charitable work,

which consolidates the government's power by touching everyday life, provided profitable infrastructure and construction tenders for the private sector (Eder, 2010).

As explained in detail above, the MHA became the largest real estate actor in Turkey in the era of the JDP through numerous legal and institutional arrangements. However, its role in the construction of hegemony is twofold, between the G level and the P level. While the non-transparent MHA transfers public sources to the pro-government business class in the G level, it increases the satisfaction of the urban poor through the construction of projects targeting low-income groups in the P level. As Gürakar (2016) mentioned, MHA projects have always served as fertile tools to increase the votes for the ruling government.

In this regard, the study of Marschall *et al.* (2015) provided evidence of the significant impact of the MHA on the ruling government's electoral success via data for 900 municipal districts in Turkey. These researchers further found that the ruling government transformed the MHA into a punishment/reward mechanism for voters. Their research indicated that in districts where the ruling party mostly wins, factors other than those associated with housing needs and demands play a significant role in MHA housing projects. In a similar vein, in districts where it loses, MHA projects are mostly correlated with population growth, which is a key indicator of housing needs/demands (Marschall *et al.*, 2015).

5.3. Epilogue

The "human being" (and not "mankind") cannot do anything but inhabit as a poet. If we do not provide him with (as an offering and a gift) the possibility of inhabiting poetically or of inventing poetry, he will create it as best he can. Even the most derisive everyday existence retains a trace of grandeur and spontaneous poetry, except perhaps

when it is nothing more than a form of advertising or the embodiment of a world of commodities, exchange having abolished use or overdetermined it (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 82).

This chapter introduced multiple levels of social reality that have played a part in gentrification in the first decade of the new century. As discussed for the G level, the current ruling party came to power following a high degree of economic and political instability. Through its broad commitment to the IMF's financial program, the JDP managed to end the economic crisis in its early years. The two main pillars of the ruling party's growth engine have been construction and energy projects, which led to the acceleration and deepening of the dialectical movement of extended and concentrated urbanization while further blurring the urban/rural binary. Moreover, energy and construction projects have become tools for the government to foster economic growth and accumulation while consolidating its political power.

This place-specific agenda of the JDP necessitated an ambitious form of capitalism that transformed the state into a "switcher" that moved capital from the first circuit to the secondary circuit. As discussed in detail in Section 5.1, the ruling government has privatized more state-owned enterprises than all of its predecessors combined. Furthermore, the government privatized significant parts of the energy sector, which was hitherto dominated by state institutions. Thousands of workers were impacted by those privatizations; they lost their jobs, or they consented to wage reductions.

On the other hand, the ruling party has touched the everyday life of the working class through 'thing'. While the JDP abolished the populist approach regarding informal housing, it has used urban development more creatively to gain the popular vote from the working class. First, the municipalities were granted the right to initiate partnerships to implement urban transformation projects. This, in turn, allowed municipalities to participate more actively in social assistance for the urban poor, mostly through "donations" coming from companies operating in the construction

sector. Furthermore, MHA houses addressing the needs of low-income groups have provided a considerable amount of votes for the ruling party.

However, the ‘thing’ has been employed as a tool not only to touch but also to attack everyday life and to habit in the P level. In other words, not only has the process attacked the P level but also the form has excluded and separated a form of everyday life while replacing use value with exchange value. In this vein, this chapter has demonstrated that all levels of habiting, including form, became obstructions for capitalist urbanization. The residents of gecekondu neighborhoods or the people of Sulukule, as well as their habiting in Lefebvre’s words as ‘poets’ in the inner city, became an obstacle for the G level, to be reduced to the habitat of MHA houses.



CHAPTER 6

THE ERA OF SUPERLATIVES (2011-)

The previous chapter established the changing dynamics in all social levels and showed their spatial manifestations in the first decade of the 2000s. The present chapter goes on to discuss the recent decisive moment of contemporary gentrification and acts as a transitional chapter from which the research methodology will be re-scaled to the Third Airport and Airport City Project. In this sense, this chapter also addresses the following question while focusing on the recent decisive moment: What are the political, social, and economic dynamics behind the changing urban policy that promotes “mega projects”?

This chapter begins with a discussion on the changing policies of the ruling party with the second decade of the 2000s. More specifically, it touches on the steps away from decentralization attempts as well as EU reforms following the constitutional referendum in 2010, which were on the ruling party’s agenda in its early years. It then goes on to examine the impacts of the centralizing turn on the business class as well as the government’s further efforts to consolidate its power through the previously emerged symbiotic relationship between the government and the bourgeoisie. Section 6.2 focuses on the most important moment in the P level within the current decisive moment of contemporary gentrification: the Gezi Resistance. Section 6.3 examines the spatial manifestations of the changing social realities in all levels, or in other words, the concrete abstraction of the 2010s in İstanbul.

6.1.G Level

6.1.1. State

The presidential election of 2007 and the following constitutional referendum of 2010 became turning points for Turkey, marking the orientation towards a majoritarian democracy accompanied by damage to the separation of powers. Furthermore, a more apparent Islamic discourse began to dominate both the political and everyday atmosphere of Turkey. In particular, following its victory in the 2011 general elections, the ruling government began to move away from its early reformist spirit to meet EU standards. In this vein, the limiting of the media and freedom of expression, failure in the democratization of the constitution, politicization of legal decisions, increasing political pressures on the independence of the Central Bank and other regulatory institutions, and the increasingly non-transparent role of the state in the economy can be regarded as manifestations of this setback (see Öniş, 2014, 2019). Accordingly, Öniş has argued that even though Turkey is still a part of Western security structures, the commitment to the Western orientation ended in identity terms. He points out that the current President's increasing rhetoric about possible membership with Russia, China, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) represents the change in the mindset towards "conservative globalism" with an "Asian route," which can be capsulized as rapid economic development in the context of fewer democratic rights and institutions (Öniş, 2014).

Nevertheless, the ruling government succeeded in sustaining its electoral performance. It seems that both those departures from the first promises and a series of events that unfolded between mid-2013 and election day, including the Gezi Resistance and the December 17th corruption allegations, had no significant impact on the voters. In his campaign, the Prime Minister of the period, i.e., the current President, portrayed corruption allegations as an attempted coup and the Gezi Resistance as an attack by international lobbies. His campaign revolved around the

emergence of a “New Turkey” in his presidency, introduced as a transformative and total political vision.

The President also declared that he would not live in Çankaya Palace, which had been the seat of the Turkish Presidency since the founding of the state by Atatürk. Instead, he would move to a new complex, which can be regarded as the symbol of “New Turkey” and also as a break from the past (see Batuman, 2015a; Orhan, 2016).²⁷ As the new complex was to be situated on the first-degree protected Atatürk Forest Farm, the Ankara Administrative Court decided to suspend the order in 2014. However, the construction continued with the President’s command as he declared: “Let them tear it down if they can.” The complex has thereafter been called as “Kaç-Ak Saray,” in opponent media which simultaneously refers to illegality and the party’s name through a play on Turkish words. Apart from legal debates, its architectural style, huge construction budget, number of rooms, luxurious decorations, and even its monthly electricity bills have long been debated by academicians, non-governmental organizations, professional chambers, oppositional politicians, and the media.

Following the local and presidential elections in March and August 2014, the ruling party saw its first significant electoral loss in the June 2015 general elections, which ended its parliamentary majority. The President eventually decided to hold early

²⁷ Bülent Batuman (2015b, 2018) introduced the movement of social levels and also the interaction of form in different scales through Taksim, from the architectural form of the AKM to the square as public space. The question he intends to answer—why Taksim continues to be the reference point even though protests gained an antigovernment character across the country—can be seen as a contribution to the critical comments against planetary urbanization regarding its complete process-oriented agenda, which overlooks the form while blurring the place of the thing/process dialectic in urban research. See Batuman (2015b, 2018); also see Davidson and Iveson (2015) and Khatam and Haas (2018).

elections as the coalition negotiations failed. In the meantime, only a few weeks after the June elections, 34 young activists who were carrying humanitarian aid to Kobane were killed in a bombing attack in Suruç. Thereafter, the public security concerns increased (Öktem and Akkoyunlu, 2016).

Furthermore, on October 10th, only a few weeks before the repeat elections, a terror attack occurred during a “Labor, Peace, and Democracy” rally in the capital city of Ankara, which led to the death of 109 civilians and injured more than 400. As Öktem and Akkoyunlu (2016) have pointed out, the President indicated that only he and his party could provide security. In such a context, it seems that the increasing security concerns also increased the ruling party’s votes, which reached an all-time high in the November elections.

Esen and Gümüşçü (2018) have argued that although the ruling government recovered its electoral loss in the November elections, it still failed to restore stability. They describe how the government increased its authority, “cracking down” on academia, the media, and civil society, while the President also replaced the Prime Minister of that time with a more loyal friend. On 15 July 2016, the political and social climate was further intensified when a terrorist group within the military killed 250 people on the streets to overthrow the government. The government immediately declared a state of emergency, and thousands of civil servants were fired and even arrested. In this environment of “state of urgency” and following four elections in three years, the ruling party brought forward a constitutional referendum in 2017 to vote on the replacement of the existing parliamentary system with presidency. The President and the ruling government campaigned for the “Yes” vote, whereas the “No” camp comprised various political parties, including the main opposition party.

The fairness of the campaign, the uneven employment of the state apparatus, and illegal counting of votes were widely debated in media and scholarly works. Nevertheless, those debates would not hinder the ruling party’s victory. Following

the referendum and the constitutional change, Turkey held another election almost 17 months earlier than planned. In line with the referendum, the election focused on the designation of the first executive president of the new presidential model. In the same elections, Turkey also voted for the parliamentary majority. However, similar to previous elections, the fairness was heavily debated. The mission report of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe noted the “lack of conditions for contestants to compete on an equal basis” (in Taş, 2018, p. 5). Accordingly, Hakkı Taş argued that this twin election cannot be considered as a true competition since the ruling party hindered several elements of the political competition (Taş, 2018).

Nevertheless, the presidential system granted the legitimization and institutionalization of the already existing strong centralization. The new system endowed the President with a wide range of powers while weakening the power of the parliament, which meant a radical change in the allocation of power and hierarchical systems in Turkey.

To recapitulate, Turkey has seen increasing setbacks from the EU standards as well as significant damages to the separation of powers during the last few years. On the other hand, while the ruling party departed from its earlier perspective concerned with Western-oriented democratic standards, it strictly followed the millennium agenda of neoliberal orthodoxy for the developing world. The government’s policies have been shaped according to the directives coming from international organizations.

On the other hand, in the same years, the ruling party began to step back from its early decentralization attempts to facilitate, in Tansel’s words, “executive centralization” (Tansel, 2018). There are several arguments regarding this ‘dual face’ of the government (Kuyucu, 2017). Some argue that the party had always been an authoritarian Islamist party and used the democratic reforms of the early years as an instrument to reach its ultimate goals (in Kuyucu, 2017). The other view holds that

as the party won successive electoral victories and greater respect in the foreign policy arena, they became poisoned by their success (in Kuyucu, 2017). Kuyucu presented a third view, that this recentralization enabled the government to use controversial infrastructure and real estate projects to generate economic growth and employment during the low economic growth after the 2008 crisis (Kuyucu, 2017).

The first sign of this “recentralization” came with the 2009 local elections (Kuyucu, 2017). The Prime Minister of the period, i.e., the current President, announced a third bridge over the Bosphorus in the northern part of İstanbul. The announcement came as a surprise to everyone, including the JDP governed İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, since the team of the İstanbul Master Plan, which was accepted in 2009, was strictly opposed to the construction of a third bridge due to the environmental impacts (Kuyucu, 2017).

However, the 2011 general elections were the foremost precursor of the executive centralization of urban governance and policies since, following the elections, the urbanization debates entered a new phase in Turkey. Accordingly, “crazy” and “the largest” were the main adjectives of the election campaign, which heavily revolved around İstanbul. One of the main slogans of the general election campaign was “Stability shall continue, İstanbul shall grow” (“İstanbul büyüsün, istikrar sürsün”). The party program promised several mega projects, including a third bridge over the Bosphorus and also a third airport, which would be the largest in the world, as well as two new cities in İstanbul, each of which would house one million people. Furthermore, the Prime Minister mentioned a “Crazy Project” (“Çılgın Proje”), which would be explained later. The project provoked public curiosity and media speculation just before the elections. He eventually presented a plan for a canal linking the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

The ruling government grounded this de facto centralization with the creation of a new ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, in the same year. This ministry has been granted strong powers regarding urban development,

environmental protection, and planning at the expense of weakening and even excluding local governments, experts, NGOs, and residents. The enactment of Law No. 6306 on Transformation of Areas under Disaster Risk, which has also been the basis of mega projects including the Third Airport, further completed the puzzle. The law empowered the Ministry as the only authority in designating “risky areas.” Accordingly, in August 2012, the Council of Ministers assigned nearly 42,000 hectares of land along the Black Sea Coast on the European side of İstanbul, where mega projects would be built, including the Third Airport, as a “Reserve Construction Area.”

Running a national election campaign revolving around mega urban transformation projects proved to be a valuable tactic since the party increased its votes from 34.4% (2002) to 49.9% in the 2011 elections. Several analysts have attempted to elucidate the underlying reasons for that victory, such as the support of the EU and US for moderate Islam, a strong relationship with conservative low-income groups that had previously been excluded by the elite, or economic performance. However, as Çavuşoğlu and Strutz pointed out, apart from those reasons, the JDP embraced a strategy that touched on popular culture and everyday life through urban space, which was also introduced in neo-Gramscian and neo-Lefebvrian discussions of urbanization (Çavuşoğlu and Strutz, 2014).

Seen from a broader perspective, in Turkey, those mega projects and their “grand scale” became tools to legitimate governments’ policies, ranging from the flexibilization of workers’ rights to the violation of environmental laws. As will be a focus in the examination of the Third Airport, the discourse produced directly from the spatial form of the projects, such as the ‘the largest’ or ‘grand,’ along with the associated implications including ‘economic power,’ ‘employment,’ and ‘jealousy,’ rendered the violation of laws and uneven urbanization invisible while deepening the exclusion, discontent, and polarization.

6.1.2. Capital

The previous chapter established the decisive role of the ruling government in the rise of the new powerful bourgeoisie. It discussed the administrative, legal, and extra-legal arrangements to support the capital accumulation of erstwhile medium-scale Anatolian capital. Furthermore, it showed that the ruling government, existing big capital, and the “Anatolian Tigers” compromised on aggressive privatization and dispossession. In this regard, TÜSİAD members also took the lion’s share from among numerous privatization tenders.

However, this relatively ‘neutral’ attitude of the government began to change to an extent following the 2007 elections. The steps towards strong recentralization also projected across capital. In an effort to consolidate its power, the ruling party constituted a mechanism to exclude its opponents from capital accumulation. The components of this mechanism can be outlined as follows: (1) attachment of independent regulatory agencies (IRAs) such as the Public Procurement Authority, the Banking Regulatory and Supervision Agency, and the Energy Market Regulatory Authority to the respective ministries in 2011; (2) increasing disregard of higher courts decisions; (3) the limiting of the Court of Account’s authority in auditing the use of public sources in 2010; and (4) increasing employment of taxation, debt collection, and trusteeship to punish the opposing business class (Özel, 2012; Buğra and Savaşkan, 2014; Esen and Gümüşçü, 2017). The words of the then Prime Minister towards TÜSİAD regarding their refusal to endorse the package during the 2010 referendum, which then became a slogan during the Gezi Resistance, were indeed an encapsulation of the changing attitude: “taraf olmayan, bertaraf olur” (roughly translated as “those who do not take sides will be eliminated”).

Accordingly, the changing ownership of media organizations has become the most visible manifestation of the authoritarian turn in the business class following the 2007 elections. On the heels of the 2001 economic crisis, the Deposit and Insurance Fund (DIF) took over numerous media companies from defaulted holdings. By mid-

2007, pro-JDP business groups had begun to enter the media sector via those companies of the DIF. In 2007, for example, a pro-JDP holding, the general director of which is the President's son-in-law, took over one of the largest media groups from the DIF through controversial methods and credits from two public banks (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2012). In the following years, further pro-JDP businessmen entered the media sector (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2017). As Buğra and Savaşkan suggest, these media investments of prominent businessmen have been more about political bonds than economic profitability considering their other investments (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2014). These media bosses have been the key actors of the most valuable public tenders in energy, construction, and mining sectors as their media companies have acted as a return for public tenders to the government.

6.2.P Level

... does not necessarily arise out of a conscious plan, but more simply out of what people do, feel, sense, and come to articulate as they seek meaning in their daily lives. Such practices create heterotopic spaces all over the place. We do not have to wait upon the grand revolution to constitute such spaces. Lefebvre's theory of a revolutionary movement is the other way round: the spontaneous coming together in a moment of "irruption" when disparate heterotopic groups suddenly see, if only for a fleeting moment, the possibilities of collective action to create something radically different (Harvey, 2012, p. xvii).

The second decade of the millennium began with a wave of revolts all around the world, including the countries of Spain, Greece, the USA, England, Iceland, Tunisia, Egypt, and Brazil. As a comparison of those revolts is beyond the scope of this

dissertation, it should suffice to merely note the timing at this point (see Tuğal, 2013; Yörük and Yüksel, 2014). As the most constitutive part of the P level in the current decisive moment of contemporary gentrification in İstanbul is the Gezi Resistance, the following section discusses it from the vantage point of the focus of the study in concrete research.

Taksim Square is located in the heart of the city and has long been both the container and object of political action. The Gezi Resistance was begun to save an urban park adjacent to Taksim Square, which was to be demolished for the reconstruction of Ottoman-era barracks that would house a shopping mall. As Batuman (2015b) states, the demolishment of Ottoman artillery barracks in the early years of Republic was a part of the modernization and nation-building project of the new Turkish Republic after consolidating its power. In this regard, the intention of constructing that replica should be seen as a political gesture representing an act of revenge taken on the Turkish Republic. Artillery barracks housing a shopping mall as a concrete abstraction embodies the ruling party's neoliberal Islamism along with other projects in Taksim Square, including the pedestrianization of the square, the demolition of the AKM, and the building of a mosque (Batuman, 2015). In a nutshell, from the vantage point of this study, Taksim Square is not an arbitrary urban space and the Ottoman barracks is not an arbitrary project (see Batuman, 2015b, 2018). The form/the thing is reactive, moving within the dialectic.

As mega projects, the Taksim pedestrianization project was announced by the Prime Minister of the period (the current President) during the 2011 national elections campaign. Following the elections, the Metropolitan Municipality approved the plan for the project. In 2012, the Taksim Solidarity Platform was established by numerous different organizations including professional chambers, labor unions, neighborhood platforms, and also associations from not only İstanbul but also the Black Sea Region, which had taken part in other ecological struggles against extended urbanization. The platform mainly opposed the decision-making process, which excluded participation and scientific opinion. The organization argued that the

project was intended to destroy the appropriation of space by “the people” while enacting the disidentification of Taksim Square.

Nevertheless, a pro-JDP construction company—also one of the contractors of the Third Airport Project—won the tender of the project in August 2012. In 2013, the construction began in Taksim. In the same period, apart from the legal struggle, Taksim Solidarity was conducting numerous other events, including concerts and meetings, to raise awareness. The organization stated that they collected some 10,000 signatures against the project through those activities. In light of this, it is safe to claim that the awareness raised in that tense atmosphere through the solidarity of diverse groups with different focuses was one of the main triggers of the Gezi Resistance.

On May 27th, a few activists gathered in Gezi Park when bulldozers entered the area to cut down the trees. On May 30th, police dispersed the activists and burned their tents. The activists and also Taksim Solidarity then made a call through social media for a gathering in the park. In the evening, more than 10,000 people were gathered at Gezi Park (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013).

Later on, the brutal police attack on the group sparked a spontaneous revolt that evolved into a nationwide movement. “Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance” became the main slogan chanted across the country. Some people joined the protests from their homes by switching their lights on and off or banging pots to make noise. Thousands of people ranging from “generation Y” to nationalists and from “Revolutionist Muslims” to LGBT groups came together to chant “capital get out, Gezi Park is ours,” another of the main slogans.

In the following days, the Deputy Prime Minister of that time met with a group of representatives, including Taksim Solidarity. The representatives declared their demands to be the cancellation of both the Taksim project and the demolition of the AKM building, the dismissal of governors and officers who were responsible for police brutality, the prohibition of tear gas and other similar materials, release of

detained citizens, and the lifting of bans on the use of public space starting with Kızılay and Taksim (Taksim Dayanışması, 2013). However, the demands of the solidarity movement also extended beyond the city center, agglomeration, or concentrated urbanization and into extended urbanization:

We would like to inform those who are currently in government that the content of this rising reaction consists of our reaction to the pillaging of our ecological heritage with plans and practices like firstly the project for the 3rd bridge over Bosphorus, the project for the 3rd airport in Istanbul, Kanal Istanbul project, AOC (demolition of Ataturk Forest Farm), HES (Hydroelectric Power Plants) and more recently the draft law on the Protection of Nature and Biodiversity... (Taksim Dayanışması, 2013).

The components of Taksim Solidarity, ranging from neighborhood associations to Black Sea Region organizations, and their demands from the government reflect the microcosm of the Gezi Resistance. The revolt, indeed, was a manifestation of the demand for the appropriation of space, whether urban or rural. Thus, it was the culmination of all those early struggles against privatization, dispossession, and displacement, not only in İstanbul but across the country.

On 15 June 2013, the police evicted the Gezi Commune and ended the occupation. Shortly after, protestors began to gather in local parks to conduct public forums. Within a week, some 65 forums were being held daily in public parks in İstanbul, which further proliferated in more than 50 locations across the country (Hamzemin, n.d. in Erensü and Karaman, 2017). Those park forums evolved into collectives focusing on a range of issues such as feminism, queer perspectives, ecology, and workers' rights. Furthermore, as Erensü and Karaman (2017) point out, the Gezi protests echoed in other cities across Anatolia. In this regard, Erensü and Karaman (2017) argue that "from ecological struggles in Arhavi, Artvin and Amasya to urban battles in Tuzluca and Okmeydanı Gezi's 'value extend[ed] beyond it' (Badiou, 2012: 95); thus, what emerged at the site of Gezi de-localized and then re-localized in other sites, connecting all these sites."

Özkaynak *et al.* (2015) also linked the Gezi protests to other struggles against the mega projects, mining, and energy projects in Turkey, drawing on an electronic map produced by local activists, scholars, and civil society organizations as part of an international project initiative called the Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities, and Trade (EJOLT). As the authors noted, the early version of the map was extensively tweeted during the Gezi Resistance (Özkaynak *et al.*, 2015).



Figure 6.1: The environmental struggles across Turkey (Source: Özkaynak *et al.*, 2015).²⁸

²⁸ Map of environmental conflicts in Turkey. Accessible in Turkish at <http://www.direncevre.org>.

In this regard, the P level section of the following chapter goes on to demonstrate the representation of the Gezi Resistance in the contemporary gentrification struggle through concrete research on the Third Airport and Airport City Project.

6.3. Concrete Abstraction

The national election campaign of the ruling party in 2011 and the associated document “Vision 2023” introduced a set of goals revolving around urban development and infrastructure investments. Three of those projects are particularly remarkable considering their impacts, which not only go beyond the city boundaries but reach planetary scale: the construction of the third bridge over the Bosphorus, the İstanbul Canal, and the third airport in the Northern Forests. From the vantage point of this dissertation, those projects are also concrete abstractions of the current decisive moment of contemporary gentrification. In this vein, as the Third Airport Project is the focus of this study, this section will provide only a brief discussion of the other two projects predominantly through photographs as they are thought to be more explanatory in thinking about the dialectic of concentrated and extended urbanization.

In an effort to protect the Northern Forests and ecosystems, linear growth along the south was planned in the 2009. Nonetheless, in the following year, the route between Garipçe and Poyrazköy in the north was designated for a motorway in the 1/25,000 scaled “İstanbul Province Northern Marmara Motorway General Plan” (Gülersoy and Gökmen, 2014).

The bridge was opened with a ceremony on 29 May 2013, on the 560th anniversary of İstanbul’s conquest. Before the groundbreaking ceremony, the İstanbul Mufti (Head of Religious Affairs) recited the Quran, and the ceremony was initiated with prayers and the Janissary band. The bridge’s official name, Yavuz Sultan Selim, was announced during this groundbreaking ceremony. The name sparked controversy as

Ottoman Emperor Yavuz Sultan Selim was defined as “Selim the Grim” in some sources due to events resulting in the death of Alevi in his period. Nevertheless, the bridge was then opened to traffic on 26 August 2016.



Figure 6.2. Construction of North Marmara Motorway (Source: Photo courtesy of Bekir Dindar, 2019)²⁹



Figure 6.3. Route of North Marmara Motorway (Source: Photo courtesy of Bekir Dindar, 2019)

²⁹ Bekir Dindar is graduated from the Department of Photography at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Mimar Sinan University. He generously shared his personal archive with the author.

Like other northern mega projects, the bridge also acquired many superlatives in contemporary urban discourse. It is the “widest suspension bridge in the world with a width of 59 m and it has the highest A-shaped towers in the world with a height of 322 m” (Fiscina *et al.*, 2016). The main span length is “1,408 m, while the total bridge length is 2,250 m” (Fiscina *et al.*, 2016).



Figure 6.4. Route of North Marmara Motorway (Source: politeknik.org.tr, accessed 20 November 2019)

However, the most sensational mega project of the 2011 election program was the İstanbul Canal, the previously referenced “Crazy Project.” As mentioned above, during the 2011 national election campaign, the Prime Minister’s promise of a “Crazy Project” (“Çılgın Proje”) sparked a curiosity for days. He eventually presented a plan for an artificial canal linking the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, parallel to the existing Bosphorus Strait, as a part of the projected “New İstanbul.”



Figures 6.5-6.6.-6.7. The route of the İstanbul Canal (Source: Photographs shared for Between Two Seas, courtesy of Zeynep Yılmaztürk, 2019).³⁰

³⁰ Between Two Seas is a four-day walking route between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, along the İstanbul Canal route, organized by Serkan Taycan and supported by the 13th İstanbul Biennial.

The route of the project has been changed several times since its announcement, but according to the final announcement of the Ministry of Transportation and Maritime, the İstanbul Canal will be built on the Küçükçekmece-Sazlıdere-Durusu route, which was known as the fourth alternative. The waterway is projected to be 45 km long, 400 m wide, and 25 m deep. Since there is little official information about the project, the following descriptions have been taken from the promotional videos released by the government. The promotional video begins with a well-known hadith on the conquest of İstanbul. It goes on to introduce the “superlatives” of the project, promising the most beautiful canal in the world and the project of the century. The video then introduces the “New City,” which is projected as the second largest city of Turkey. This new city is to cover an area of 455 million square meters including the 76 million square meters of the new airport, 30 million square meters of the canal, 33 million square meters of Ispartakule and Bahçeşehir, 167 million square meters of building plots, 108 million square meters of roads, and 37 million square meters of green area.



Figure 6.8: Projected “new city” in İstanbul (Source: Promotional video released by government: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ER2g2UBd0Y>).

At this point, a calculation is presented, which reveals the distorted nature and green area perception of G Level. In this regard, the video notes that the area of roads includes 26 million square meters area of wooded area along with refuges as well as building plots include 83 million square meters of green area. So, 42% of the total area -except airport and canal areas- is the green area. In this way, the new city has the largest green area comparing to the other metropolises of the world. Figure 6.10. shows the areas identified as green areas.



Figure 6.9. The areas involved in the calculation of total green area(Source: promotional video released by government: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ER2g2UBd0Y>, accessed in November 14 2019)



Figure 6.10-11-12-13: The views from the İstanbul Canal—central area, bridge, high-rise buildings, Japanese-style restaurant (Source: Promotional video released by government: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ER2g2UBd0Y>, accessed 14 November 2019).

Along its route, there will be ten bridges with “wonderful design,” seaports, cultural facilities, and a free zone including buildings that reflect German, Italian, Persian, American, Spanish, and many other countries’ architectural styles. The ground floors of those buildings are being reserved for restaurants, whereas the other floors are projected as offices. On the top levels of the site, there will be 465 high-rise buildings, which are defined as “the most aesthetic structures in the world,” while replicas of historic buildings will be placed along the waterway.

The promotional video goes on to introduce the külliye complex located in the new city. Religious music accompanies scenes of the mosque, Ottoman bazaar, soup kitchen, and hotel located in the külliye. A short clip then explains the representations used in the mosque’s design, with six minarets referring to six pillars of faith in Islam; their total length referring to AD 622, the date of the Hegira; and the dome diameter of 114 m representing the number of surahs in the Quran.



Figure 6.14: The views of the külliye of the İstanbul Canal (Source: Promotional video released by government: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ER2g2UBd0Y>, accessed 14 November 2019).

6.4. Epilogue

As discussed in the previous chapter (G level), in pursuing the objective of creating a business-friendly environment, the JDP government followed moderate policies and accomplished constitutional as well as legislative reforms necessary for Turkey's membership in the European Union, including steps towards decentralization. This approach of the ruling party also contributed to the recovery from the economic crisis that Turkey had experienced in 2000 and 2001. However, the second decade of the millennium saw an emergence of radical recentralization. Adoption of a presidential system and damage in separation of powers further paved way for the top-down policies. This turn was also projected onto the capitalist class as the ruling government began to implement a punish/award system on the business class through several mechanisms.

As also discussed in the previous chapter (P level), the ruling party's aggressive privatization policy and associated cost savings from living labor, along with the dispossession immanent to extended urbanization, resulted in numerous protests throughout Anatolia. Furthermore, state-led gentrification projects in historic city centers sparked resistance mostly on a neighborhood scale. From this vantage point, this chapter has argued that the Gezi Resistance should be seen as the culmination of those revolts and the discontent produced, whether rural or urban, rather than a sudden strike against the construction of a shopping mall in Gezi Park. Furthermore, Gezi Park was not only the peak of the culmination; it was also the trigger of a new kind of solidarity extending beyond the urban/rural divide.

The urban policies of this decade were among the most visible crystallizations of the recentralization and associated top-down approach. Those mega projects reflected the ruling party's blend of political Islam and neoliberalism. The Third Bridge, with its tender price of two and half billion dollars and its pro-JDP contractor on the one hand and its Islamic opening ceremony on the other, manifested the interesting amalgam. The promotional video of the İstanbul Canal also reveals this by beginning

with Islamic references to introduce billion-dollar luxury residences, office buildings, and shopping malls along with a giant mosque. These mega projects with their superlatives are thus packaged as shining stars, but, as will be discussed in detail in forthcoming sections, the ensuing natural destruction will be dramatic.

In this vein, this chapter has presented a general picture of the current decisive moment of contemporary gentrification in İstanbul. The following chapter goes on to examine the manifestations of the changing dynamics in all social levels through concrete research on the Third Airport and Airport City Project.





CHAPTER 7

METAMORPHIC GENTRIFICATION: THE THIRD AIRPORT AND AIRPORT CITY PROJECT

The previous chapter showed changing dynamics in all levels of social reality in the decisive moment of 2011-. The present chapter is indeed an integral part of the previous chapter and it zooms on the same decisive moment. Accordingly, this chapter aims at examining the manifestations of the social dynamics discussed in the previous chapter on the scale of the Third Airport and Airport City Project. To do that, it re-scales all the analytical categories of the research methodology.

As noted, this thesis is a theoretically driven inquiry that employs concrete research as a tool. For the sake of clarity, the following part introduces data in a descriptive way, whilst the conclusion chapter provides a theoretical interpretation.³¹ Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that all the data presented have been selected, sorted, and interpreted to examine the contemporary gentrification in Turkey within the broader capitalist structural context. These sources have been understood as

³¹ This approach is inspired by Lefebvre's regressive-progressive method, which is extensively found in his works on rural sociology (Elden and Morton, 2016). For Lefebvre (2003a: 117), this method involves three steps: (1) Descriptive. Observation ... In the foreground: participant observation in the field. Careful use of survey techniques (interviews, questionnaires, statistics). (2) Analytic-regressive. Analysis of reality as described. Attempt to give it a precise date ... (3) Historical-genetic. Studies of changes in this or that previously dated structure by further development and by its subordination to overall structures. Attempt to reach a genetic classification of formations and structures in the framework of the overall structure. Thus, an attempt to return to the contemporary as previously described, in order to rediscover the present, but as elucidated, understood: explained. See also Elden (2004) and Elden and Morton (2016).

research objects that can be analyzed through the epistemological framework of the thesis, which sees capitalist urbanization as the underlying essence of the whole. Put differently, the thick descriptions on the Third Airport were used as analytical tools and produced through abstract conceptualization to excavate the main concerns of critical theory rather than achieving a 'naïve objectivism' that rejects the concepts of structure (Brenner, Madden and Wacshmuth, 2009).

This chapter employs merely primary sources in the examination of the project, including official documents, reports, lawsuits petitions, contracts, speeches of authorities as well as in-depth interviews.³²

In this regard, this chapter begins with exploring the materialization of; top-down policies, the politicization of juridical bodies, symbiotic relationship between state and private sector, violation of laws as well as extra-legal arrangements in G Level of the project. It then goes on to discuss the manifestation of previously discussed struggles in the micro-scale of P Level of the Airport Project along with the further dynamics of everyday life, difference, and resistance that emerged through the project. Finally, the last part aims at an examination of the project as form/thing along with its dialectical relationship with the process via Lefebvre's notion of concrete abstraction.

7.1.G Level

7.1.1. State

In June 2011, the Prime Minister (i.e., the current President) introduced the New Airport Project during the announcement of the “New City in İstanbul” as a part of the 2011 election campaign presentation. Following the announcement, a group of legal arrangements were established as the basis for the mega projects (see the report

³² It employs the images of the secondary sources in the explanation of private sector actors' previous projects.

of the Chamber of Environmental Engineers, 2018). In August 2012, the Council of Ministers assigned land of nearly 42,000 hectares along the Black Sea Coast on the European side of İstanbul where mega projects would be built, including the Third Airport, as a “Reserve Construction Area.”

The Third Airport and Airport City Project is to be fulfilled with the build-operate-transfer model, which is a type of public-private partnership. The government’s role in this scheme can be summarized as selecting contractors among bidders and defining the planning guidelines. The project was put out to tender by the Infrastructure Investments General Directorate of the Turkish Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications in May 2013 before the approval of the Environment Impact Assessment Report, which was inconsistent with Law No. 2872 (Environment Law). A joint venture group, Companies A-B-C-D-E, won the tender by offering 10 billion and 247 million Euro cost and 22 billion and 152 million Euro tender price. The consortium will operate the airport and airport city for 25 years. The operation cost is supported by public sources as the General Directorate of State Airports Authority guarantees approximately 340 million Euro for each year (increasing year by year) and a total of approximately six billion and three hundred Euro at the end of the twelve years.

As the project area is located within the Northern Forests, the site selection has been heavily debated by professional chambers, scientists, academicians, and NGOs. Furthermore, the designated area has been inconsistent with the 1/100,000 scaled İstanbul Environmental Plan, which was prepared by numerous scholars and scientists in 2009 for, ironically, the JDP-ruled Metropolitan Municipality. Accordingly, opponent groups claimed that the Prime Minister himself had selected it without considering scientific opinion. In this vein, the speeches of the Prime Minister and Transportation Minister of the period support this claim of scholars and chambers:

I know this area very well. I know Çiftealan, Ağaçlı well... When we were helicoptering with dear Mr. Yıldırım, I said that we'll construct an airport here, but not enough, these holes should be designed as lakes, inshallah. It will be a different pleasure to see lakes and green together on the way [to the airport]. This site has not been selected by coincidence. It is selected based on the ecological balance, wind data, natural and artificial structure of the area. We helicoptered around this area with dear Mr. Yıldırım and the technical staff (Erdoğan, 2013).

Dear Prime Minister, we have visited here many times *with you to designate the site*. You guided us, led us, encouraged us... To transform these holes and to enhance the country's economy and aviation through this transformation, we decided on this site (Yıldırım, 2013, emphasis added).

On the other hand, as 80% of the project area consists of forest, water basins, and natural resources, the experts introduced the possible catastrophic impacts of the project on the climate, human health, the demographic structure, fertile lands, the marine ecosystem, the region's characteristic flora and fauna, and migratory bird paths as well as the local community, which has lived off agriculture for years. However, the ultimate answers of the G level to those concerns are "economic gain" and "employment." For the G level, the anticipated economic return of the project compensates the ecological destruction. In this vein, the General Directorate of State Airports Authority replied to my question concerning the site selection criteria through CİMER as follows:

Atatürk Airport, which was opened in 1953, has not been appropriate for further development as it is located within the city. For this reason, the construction of a new airport with the same features came to the agenda. For this aim, we discussed why İstanbul needs an airport and put forward the basic principles. Furthermore, we considered the projects and expectations in İstanbul along with the characteristics of Atatürk Airport and evaluated the *economic feasibility* of İstanbul Airport. Following these studies, the feasibility studies of İstanbul Airport were conducted, and all these future statistical projections, *project costs, other factors that may impact expenditure, daily value analysis, sensitivity analysis, and economic and financial analysis were conducted*. Based on these findings, an area of 76.5 million square meters between Yeniköy and Akpınar villages was designated. The site has been designated based on ecological balance, wind data, and the natural and artificial structure of the area (General Directorate of State Airports Authority, 2019, emphasis added).

In the first part of this answer, the General Directorate of State Airports Authority explains the selection criteria based on merely economic concerns and uses notions that are vague and synonymous, such as project cost, expenditures, daily value analysis, and economic analysis. In the final sentence, it touches on ecological concerns with the same words of the President, and even in the same order: ecological balance, wind data, and the natural and artificial structure of the area.

The plea of the defense documents in the lawsuit petitions prepared by government authorities (Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, Ministry of Transport and

Infrastructure) also supports this perspective, which assesses natural heritage by economic gains.³³ Here, the authorities put forward that the aim of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is “to protect environmental values without hindering economic and social development.” Furthermore, the report explains the foremost reasons behind the site selection as follows:

The project is a very significant investment for İstanbul, which has become an *important commercial center* of the world. It is evident that through this investment, we will get stronger in international political and commercial areas. This investment will yield benefits not only for local people and İstanbul, but the whole country will get the political and *economic benefit*. İstanbul, the largest and the most crucial city of fast-growing and developing Turkey, seeks alternative areas due to the increasing population, settlements, and commerce. In this sense, the most important reasons for the site selection are: *proximity to the sea and the city center, the low expropriation cost* for such a large-scale project, and the inability of Atatürk Airport to meet the daily requirements (The Plea of Defense, 2014, emphasis added).

Following the designation of the area as “reserved,” the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning charged the MHA with responsibility for the expropriation. In December 2013, the MHA began to offer agreements to the property owners. However, the property owners and the MHA could not agree. The MHA went to court, demanding the cancellation of land registrations of many parcels within the

³³ These documents were shared by lawyer Alp Tekin Ocak during the interview.

construction area. In June 2014, the İstanbul 3rd Civil Court of First Instance concluded the suits against the MHA and decided to cancel the expropriation annotations on the land registrations in pursuit of the finalization of the decision.

The Council of Ministers promptly found another solution. In January 2014, the Council issued an injunction on urgent expropriation concerning İmrahor, Tayakadın, Yeniköy, Ağaçalı, Akpınar, and İhsaniye villages. In the same year, the İstanbul Bar Association and several inhabitants appealed the decision of the Council of Ministers regarding the urgent expropriation and its basis, the “public benefit.” In 2015, the Council of State stopped the execution of urgent expropriation and ruled that the Ministry’s decision had no legal basis for conducting urgent expropriation. From there on, the MHA began to follow the regular expropriation procedure.

As mentioned above, since 80% of the project area consists of forest, water basins, and natural sources, the project received significant critical commentary. The project was also on the agenda of the Gezi Resistance, as Taksim Solidarity demanded the cancellation of the project during a meeting with the Prime Minister’s Deputy of that period in June 2013. As will be discussed in detail, several branches of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects also filed lawsuits against the project, and numerous debated issues from the tender process to the EIA reports became matters of dispute. Furthermore, four citizens who had no connections with NGOs also brought a lawsuit with a claim to the city.

Accordingly, the groundbreaking ceremony was conducted in a tense atmosphere in June 2014. The Prime Minister emphasized phrases such as “the largest of the world” and referenced the “jealousy” of foreign powers in his speech to legitimate the project while enemizing the opponents. In this sense, the architectural form and scale of the project became the most powerful tool for this legitimatization of uneven development while rendering all legal violations, the corruption allegations, and the ecological destruction invisible. Furthermore, the discourse of employment bolstered

the image in such a context of consistently growing unemployment rates. Here, it is worth quoting the President's speech at length.

Turkey is witnessing a historical moment; *the largest* airport of the six continents, and the world, is today rising... This project has a unique place in this ninety-one-year period, it is one of *the largest* projects of our Republic history with its *grandiosity*, capacity, and significance... My brothers and sisters, this airport *befits this nation's dignity!* It befits this country's dignity! Here, we are not building *only an airport but a city*. It will *employ* 80,000 people. In the first year of its operation, it will *employ* 120,000 people. Everything that should be in a city will take place in this project: hotel, hospital, place of worship, and congress center, all will be there. Through this airport, the commercial sector will be more alive, the *economy will be greater*. Last year in May, some Gezizeka [a play on Turkish words that identifies the people who participated in the Gezi Resistance as idiots] mushroomed. Those Gezizeka, unfortunately, envied this airport because they cannot even imagine such a *grand* airport. Nevertheless, their imagination cannot reach our actions... This project has a symbolic value; it demonstrates the point that Turkey has reached to the world... *We did not build just an airport but a victory monument!* While Turkey has been overcoming ill fortune, winning victories, these people on the street [alluding to protestors] are used to *obstruct the rise* of Turkey... On the other hand,

an organization, a gang, who attacked our national values, has appeared on December 17/25.³⁴ Here, as you know, the target was the businessmen who won the Airport tender, they wanted to arrest them. Why? To hinder the tender. The aim was not corruption; the aim was to hinder the Marmaray [a rail tunnel under the Bosphorus strait], the Third Bridge, but mostly this airport. Thanks to Allah, we ruined their traps... Our *enemies* are watching us and are disappointed. Turkey is not the old Turkey, we are not admiring, but we are being admired (Erdoğan, 2013, emphasis added).

The President repeated these phrases in the financial agreement ceremony of the project. His phrase “we did not build just an airport but a victory monument!” was hung on the walls of the airport. Furthermore, the powerful rhetoric of “enemy” and “jealousy” was also embraced by other government authorities. The Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications of the period stated that “we know that certain circles are anxious about our development and huge projects such as the Third Airport and the İstanbul Canal ... The Third Airport mostly worries Germany as Frankfurt Airport has been positioned as a monopoly” (Elvan, 2015). One of the well-known İstanbul Deputies of the party also had a similar perspective; he asserted that “Germany organized the Gezi Resistance. Then they made December 17/25. They have problems with our mega projects” (Kuzu, 2017).

³⁴ On 17-25 December 2013, four ministers and some of their relatives as well as many powerful businessmen were arrested with the accusation of corruption. Voice records were leaked. Nevertheless, all were released.

Furthermore, a pool media news channel produced a television show (“special news,” in their words) called “Who is frightened by the Third Airport?,” which focused on the countries that were “jealous” and “anxious” because of the Third Airport.³⁵ According to the television show, Germany is anxious about losing its monopoly as a hub, England is afraid of the passenger capacity, and France is troubled by the grand scale, whereas the USA worries about its advanced technology (3. Havalimanı Kimleri Korkutuyor, 2014). This conspiracy rhetoric traveled into daily discussions that could be followed through social media in that period. The proponents of the ruling party began to share quotes, stories, data, and videos about that fear of those countries. The ecological concerns of the opposing groups began to be presented as hostile attacks against development, while the opponents themselves were described as enemies or German agents.

The financial part of the project has also been sensational. Numerous news outlets reported that the Third Airport Project was unable to get international loans since the EIA report of the project was not qualified for international criteria and the Equator Principles. The words of the Director of Environment and Sustainability of the project may support this argument as she mentioned that the contractor firm had ordered another report to get international loans and see the real situation (personal interview).

The project did not receive that international loan. In October 2015, a loan agreement for four and a half billion Euro between the contractor firm and six national banks was made for the first phase of the project. Here, the public bank, whose founding purpose was supporting farmers and agriculture, provided the most substantial amount of credit: one billion and 480 million Euro. Each of the other public banks

³⁵ See the G level section of the previous chapter.

provided 960 million Euro, and each of the three private banks gave credit of 300 million Euro.

Finally, the first phase of the İstanbul Airport officially opened on 29 October 2018, on Republic Day. The ceremony was overshadowed by not only the illegal implementations and ecological destruction debates but also by the death of workers just a month ago. In this sense, the speech of the President in the opening ceremony may be regarded as a response to those debates. He mentioned the economic gains and development to be achieved through the project once again and particularly gave thanks to the contractor firm.

6.1.1 Capital

The ambitious mega urban projects are indeed a part of an equally ambitious form of capitalism that transformed the state into a “switcher” that moved capital from the first circuit to the secondary circuit. As discussed in detail, aggressive privatization policies engendered a group of powerful private sector actors. In this vein, private sector actors of the Third Airport and Airport City Project have been illustrative of the crystallization of the symbiotic relationship between government and capital.

Three holding companies of the consortium are within the group defined as “Anatolian Tigers.” However, all members of the consortium (five giant holding companies) are dominant members of a network that operates throughout the country. They are constant winners of public contracts, including those for HEPPs and privatizations. According to the World Bank’s data, these five holding companies are among the world’s top ten public tender-winning companies (World Bank, 2018).

On 7 October 2013, the consortium of five companies, Companies A-B-C-D-E, founded a new company, Company X, to construct and operate İstanbul Airport for 25 years. This section begins with the examination of the members of the consortium

one by one and goes on to discuss the strategies, visions, and representations of Company X through semi-structured interviews conducted with four directors.

Company A

The leading company of the group was founded in 1987. The chairman of the company originates from the hometown of the President (Rize). The company has grown noticeably since the JDP came into power. As Table 7.1 indicates, during the ruling party's era, this holding won several public tenders for the privatization of state enterprises, infrastructure, electricity distribution, dams, and HEPPs.

Table 7.1: Some of the public tenders that Company A won during the JDP era (prepared based on information on the official website of the holding company)

Name of Public Tender/Privatization	Location	Date
Eti Copper Facilities Privatization	Kastamonu	2004
Samsun Natural Gas Distribution	Samsun	2004
Eti Aluminum	Konya	2005
Ilisu Dam and HEPP	Mardin	2007
Beyhan 1 Dam and HEPP	Elazığ	2007
Ankara-İstanbul High Speed Train		2007
Konya (Seydişehir and Çumra) Natural Gas Distribution	Konya	2007
Meram Electricity Distribution	Konya	2009
Ankara-Sivas Railway Project		2009
Çamlıbel Electricity Distribution	Sivas-Tokat-Yozgat	2010
Uludağ Electricity Distribution	Bursa-Balıkesir-ÇanakkaleYalova	
Ordu-Giresun Airport	Ordu	2010
Trabzon-Aşkale Highway	Trabzon-Aşkale	2010
Menge Dam and HEPP	Adana	2011
Cenal Karabiga Power Plant	Çanakkale	2013
Boğaziçi Electricity Distribution	İstanbul	2013
Akdeniz Electricity Distrubition	Antalya	2013
İstanbul Airport	İstanbul	2013

Following the privatization of state-owned Eti Aluminum and Eti Copper, hundreds of workers' contracts were canceled. The number of workers before privatization was 2,057 in Eti Aluminum and 318 in Eti Bakır, whereas they had decreased to 1,493 and 261, respectively, after the privatization by 2012 (Zaifer, 2015).

Furthermore, as seen in the table, the electricity and gas distribution privatizations provided regular income for the company. Here, seemingly opposing capital groups of the 1990s compromised on the aggressive privatization of state enterprises. For example, Anatolian Tiger Company A won the tender of Meram Electricity Distribution with a holding company that is a leading member of TÜSİAD.

Moreover, Company A has become a leading holding in the construction of dams and HEPPs during the JDP era. Following new legal arrangements on water rights, Company A won the tender for the controversial Ilisu Dam and the HEPP project on the Tigris River in Batman province. The Ilisu Dam's reservoir threatened numerous villages, archeological sites, farmlands, and the city of Hasankeyf, more than 10,000 years old, along with its inhabitants. Accordingly, the project has received harsh criticism from national and international organizations, becoming one of the most controversial dam projects in the world.

Another debated project of the company with a TÜSİAD-member holding, once again, is the construction of the Karabiga Cenal Power Plant in Çanakkale, in the Marmara Region. At the beginning of the project, the court decided to suspend the execution of the EIA's positive report. In response to this suspension, the contractor firms divided the report into four pieces to alleviate the environmental impact of the project. However, the court again decided to suspend the execution of the EIA's positive reports. Nevertheless, in the end, the Cenal Thermal Power Plants have been constructed and started electricity production.



Figure 7.1. From the protests against the Karabiga Thermal Power Plant (Source: <http://sendika63.org/2013/08/karabigada-termik-santrale-yurutmeyi-durdurma-karari-cikti-134339/>, accessed 10 July 2019).

In 2012, Company A became involved in another controversial project by taking a role in the long story of the Cerattepe mining attempts in Artvin. For more than twenty-five years, Cerattepe has seen several mining companies and several court rulings against such projects as the mining threatens one of the most essential nature conservation sites in Turkey. However, in 2012, a new mining license was issued by the government and Company A got the EIA's positive report soon after. In January 2015, the Rize Administrative Court overruled the project's positive EIA report. The company then received another positive EIA report despite the court ruling. Thereafter, another complaint was filed by sixty-one lawyers in July 2015, with the signature of seven hundred and fifty-one people, which turned the struggle into the most extended environmental court case in Turkey's history (Bayhan, 2018; Ocak, lawyer of the case, personal interview, 2019).

Company B

Company B started its operations in 1976. It is a member of TÜSİAD. Company B has grown significantly during the JDP years through privatizations and public tenders.

Table.7.2. Public tenders that Company B won during the JDP era (prepared based on the information in the official website of company B, accessed 18 June 2019)

Name of Public Tender/Privatization	Location	Date
TEKEL Liquor Privatization	Seventeen factories throughout Turkey	2004
Sabiha Gökçen Airport International Airport Operation and International Department Construction	İstanbul	2007
Pembelik Dam and Hepp	Tunceli-Elazığ	2008
Seyrantepe Dam and HEPP	Elazığ	2008
Alkumru Dam and HEPP	Siirt	2008
Uzunçayır Dam and HEPP	Tunceli	2009
UEDAŞ electricity distribution	Bursa	2010
ÇEDAŞ electricity distribution	Yozgat	2010
Operating rights of İskenderun Port (39 years)	Hatay	2011
Yusufeli Dam and HEPP	Artvin	2012
Boğaziçi Electricity Distribution	İstanbul	2013
Akdeniz Electricity Distribution	Antalya	2013
İstanbul Airport	İstanbul	2013

One of the most controversial public tenders that Company B has won was the privatization of the TEKEL alcoholic beverages section as the following trajectory in terms of profit has attracted considerable interest. The TEKEL alcoholic beverages section was privatized by a block sale of 100% of shares for 292 million dollars to a consortium in 2004. After two years, the consortium sold 90% of the shares to the Texas Pacific Group for 810 million dollars. Four years later, the Texas Pacific Group sold its shares to Diageo for 2.1 billion dollars.

Like other members of the joint venture group, Company B has also been a favored holding for HEPP tenders. The Pembelik Dam and HEPP is one of the most controversial projects of the company, which manifested the very familiar pattern of HEPP project trajectory in Turkey: controversial EIA reports, urgent expropriation, local struggles, and suspension of executions by the court, nevertheless ending with construction.



Figure 7.2. The protests against the Pembelik Dam and HEPP in Tunceli (Source: <https://www.cnntrk.com/2012/turkiye/05/21/koyluler.hes.baraji.santiyesini.basti/661792.0/index.html>, accessed 20 June 2019)

Company C

Company C was founded in Gaziantep in 1974. It is a member of MÜSİAD. Like its partners in the joint venture group, the company started operating in the construction sector in Anatolia. Similarly, the company significantly grew during the JDP era through public contracts. Table 7.3 indicates some of the public tenders that the group has won in the last years.

Table 7.3. Some of the public tenders that Company C won before the Third Airport Project (Prepared based on the information in the official website of the company, accessed 22 June 2019)

Name of Public Tender/Privatization	Location	Date
İstanbul D-100 Highway Metrobus Road Construction	İstanbul	2006
Natural Gas Distribution	Bursa	2006
Kalen Dam and Hepp	Giresun	2006
Ataköy Waste Water Treatment Facility	İstanbul	2007
Melen Supply Pipe	Düzce	2008
Torul Dam and Hepp	Gümüşhane	2008
Çanakkale-Ayvacık Highway	Çanakkale	2010
Yusufeli Dam and Hepp (with company A and D)	Artvin	2012
Taksim Pedestrianization Project	İstanbul	2013
Third Airport	İstanbul	2013

Company C is the contractor firm of the controversial Taksim pedestrianization project, discussed in detail above, which sparked the Gezi Resistance. Furthermore, the company is the owner of a media group that is claimed to be a member of pool media.³⁶

Company D

Company D, a member of MÜSİAD, was founded in Elazığ in 1977. Similar to other partners, Company D has been steadily growing by spreading its services since the

³⁶ Pool media refers to a media group established by the command of the President to support the policies of ruling government. See Chapter 6.

ruling party's ascent to power. In this vein, Table 7.4 indicates some of the public tenders that Company D won in the last years.

Table 7.4. Some of the public tenders that Company D won before the Third Airport Project (prepared based on information on the official website of the company, accessed 18 May 2019).

Name of Public Tender/Privatization	Location	Date
Akköy Dam and Hepp	Gümüşhane	2008
Construction work of Kayseri Northern Passage Variant	Kayseri	2012
Tandoğan-Keçiören Metro	Ankara	2011
Soma Thermal Power Plant	Manisa	2012
Ankara High Speed Train (Build-Operate-Transfer)	Ankara	2013
Yalnızardıç Dam and Hepp	Alanya	2013
Third Airport	İstanbul	2013
Doğankent Dam and Hepp	Giresun	2015
Torul Dam and Hepp	Gümüşhane	2015
Kürtün Dam and Hepp	Gümüşhane	2015
Akkuyu Nuclear Plant (with Companies A and C)		

A similar story for Company D can be traced through the trajectory of the Soma Thermal Power Plant. Yırca is a small village with four hundred houses in Soma, Manisa province. In 2012, Company D won the tender for the Soma Thermal Power Plant construction. Following the controversial positive EIA report and urgent expropriation decisions, the villagers began guarding the olive trees in the village. However, in November 2014, the company cut down some six thousand olive trees while dispelling the villagers with pepper spray and barbed wire. On the same day, the Council of State granted a motion for stay of execution, and the EIA's positive report was canceled in December by the court. Nevertheless, Company D found a

new area for the thermal power plant in Soma adjacent to the villages of Kayrakaltı, Bozarmut, and Türkpiyale and completed the construction.

Company E

The first company of the group, a member of TÜSİAD, was founded in 1976 in Ankara. In 2004, Company E began to invest in energy production. Table 7.5 indicates the public tenders that Company E has won in recent years.

Table 7.5. The public tenders won by Company E before the Third Airport Project (prepared based on information on the official website of the company, accessed 19 May 2019).

Name of Public Tender/Privatization	Location	Date
Hamzalı HEPP	Kırıkkale	2008 (operation date)
Reşadiye HEPP 1-2-3		2010 (project completion)
Hamzadere Dam	Edirne	2011(project completion)
Pirinçli Dam and HEPP	Çorum	2013
Sukenarı Dam	Trabzon	2013
Third Airport	İstanbul	2013

The most controversial project of Company E was the Kavak HEPP Project, passing through Kamilet Valley in the eastern part of the Black Sea Region. Since the project was conducted by a sub-company of Company E, it is not listed on the official Company E website. Kamilet is not only located within the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot, one of the 34 World Biodiversity Hotspots identified by Conservation International, but also within the Caucasus-Anatolian-Hyrcanian Temperate Forests, classified as one of 200 Global Ecoregions (WWF and IUCN, 1994; Zazanashvili *et al.*, 1999 in Yüksel and Eminağaoğlu, 2017). Moreover, it lies within the North-Eastern Anatolia Centre of Plant Diversity and covers the Eastern Black Sea Mountains, designated as one of the 144 important plant areas in Turkey (Özhatay

et al., 2003, 2005). In this vein, the project has seen dozens of protests, not only in the region but throughout Turkey.

Company X (A-B-C-D-E)

Following the tender, the consortium of five winning companies founded a new company in 2013. Company X will complete the construction of and operate İstanbul Airport for 25 years. This section aims at revealing the visions, strategies, and representations developed by the capital side of the G level with data obtained through the official website of Company X and in-depth interviews conducted with four directors: the Architectural Design Director, Airport City Real Estate Development Director, Environment and Sustainability Director, and Corporate Communication Director.

The emphasis on superlatives and associated spatial fetishism, seeing construction as a panacea for unemployment and economic development, is also apparent in the discourse of capital. On the official website of Company X, the project has been described by the board of directors as follows:

Istanbul Airport will start operations on 29 October, 2018 in the 95th anniversary of the foundation of our Republic, and will represent Turkey in a way that *befits its commercial and touristic potential* and the Turkish people. Already awarded for its design and value-added projects before its opening, the name of Istanbul Airport will be written in golden letters in the history of aviation as “*the world’s largest airport built from scratch.*” ...Turkey aims to take its place among the leading countries in the world with breakthroughs in the aviation sector. Meanwhile, at [Company X], we take pride in undertaking construction and operation of *the largest “Build-Operate-Transfer” project* in the history of the Republic of Turkey... Istanbul Airport will distinguish itself from a myriad of other build-operate-transfer projects thanks to the *added value it will offer for the Turkish economy. Following the completion of all phases in 2025, the total direct and indirect employment will go as*

high as 225,000 employees, and the household income will rise to 4.4 billion dollars (Message of Boards, 2013; emphasis added).

In a similar vein, the Director of the Corporate Communication Department mentions that:

This Project is—I'm not saying this as a generic motto—the most important infrastructural project of Turkey. Why? Because the most important international brand of Turkey is Turkish Airlines and it needs a home to support its position as an airline, which flies to the most destinations around the world (Director of Corporate Communication, personal interview).

Following the project description, the Corporate Communication Director underlined the political prejudice against the Airport Project, which, according to him, stems from the “owner of the vision,” referring to the President. He stated:

This project is seen as a political project because of the identity of the person behind the vision. For this reason, people could not take an objective approach. Rather than understanding the necessity and benefits of the project, it is presented as a political instrument (Director of Corporate Communication, personal interview).

Although the Third Airport Project was introduced as an infrastructure project, the tender also comprises the construction of the “Airport City,” which includes high-end residencies, hotels, luxurious retail shops, private universities, and commercial office spaces. However, this part of the project (high-end) has not been emphasized in the public speeches of government authorities. Similarly, the Director of the Corporate Communication Department did not include the Airport City in his description of the project, but added the following comments when specifically asked:

This airport will be an international hub, a connection point. Accordingly, passengers will need an airport city. It is expected that 40% of the total passengers will be transfer passengers. The people who travel from Beijing to London, from Delhi to Paris... They will spend time here. There are examples in Manchester, Hong Kong; if you are distant from the city center, you need offices, hospitals, shopping malls... there is significant potential here (Director of Corporate Communication, personal interview).

Nevertheless, the Director of Airport City's Real Estate Development mentioned that Airport City is being constructed to increase the economic gain of the joint venture group as their ultimate aim is to "make profit":

We will pay 22 billion Euro to the state in twenty-five years. Nearly a billion Euro a year. As this price cannot be met through merely airport facilities, the earnings of Airport City have been added to the contract... Aviation is an industry with its commercial aspects (Director of Real Estate Development, personal interview, 2019).

The Director of Real Estate Development said that while the target group of the Airport City project is generally white-collar airport employees, the eastern part of the Project—at one and a half million square meters—will be different. He also gave clues regarding the "New City" in İstanbul as he specifically mentioned that this eastern part of the Project had been planned in line with the Third Bridge and the İstanbul Canal.

Before the introduction of the final remarks of the last interviewee, the Director of Environment and Sustainability, it is worth referring to two texts to better understand the G level's perspective about nature: Lefebvre's discussion of nature and use value in *Production of Space* and Horkheimer's "Revolt of Nature" in *Eclipse of Reason*.

This dissertation aims at integrating Lefebvre's theory as the heart of inquiry through its persistent framework. In this vein, this study has heavily endeavored to make the systematic core agenda immanent to the discussions rather than citing his texts in "proper" parts. However, here, using Lefebvre's definition of nature with his exact words provokes critical reflexivity to understand the distorted perception of nature of the representatives of the G level in the Third Airport Project.

'Nature' cannot operate according to the same teleology as human beings. The 'beings' it creates are works, and each has 'something' unique about it even if it belongs to a genus and a species: a tree is a particular tree, a rose a particular rose, a horse a particular horse. Nature appears as the vast territory of births. 'Things' are born, grow and ripen. Then wither and die. The reality behind these words is infinite. As it deploys its forces, nature is violent, generous, niggardly, bountiful, and above all open. Nature's space is not staged... But today nature is drawing away from us... It is becoming impossible to escape the notion that nature is being murdered by 'anti-nature' - by abstraction, by signs and images, by discourse, as also by labour and its products (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 70).

In a similar vein, Horkheimer's interpretation of nature and men also points to the borders of their relationship:

The story of the boy who looked up at the sky and asked, 'Daddy, what is the moon supposed to advertise?' is an allegory of what has happened to the relation between man and nature in the era of formalized reason. On the one hand, nature has been stripped of all intrinsic value or meaning. On the other hand, nature has been stripped of all aims except self-preservation. He tries to transform everything within reach into a means to that end. Every word or sentence that hints of relations other than pragmatic is suspect... The history of man's effort to subjugate

nature is also the history of man's subjugation by men (Horkheimer, 1947, p. 71).

Man's effort to subjugate nature by abstraction is clearly manifested in the video presented as an environmental plan by Company X. Replacing the turtles, trees, and flora as well as changing the routes of birds or using high-tech sensors to displace birds have been thought of as rights of the human being for construction:

Proactive precaution is essential. There was a waste yard that was attractive to the seagulls. We were counting up to 55,000 seagulls in the sky. Their circulation was like this: feeding in the waste yard, then drinking water in Terkos, and resting here. The most important part of the chain was feeding; we eliminated feeding from the chain, and it worked, they disappeared... Our wildlife experts participated in the design meetings to discuss the channels, landscape, discharge system, where to use barbed tape against the animals... Our control tower has a design award; there were 5.5 cm holes along the height of it; they had no function but a visual purpose. However, these holes could be a nest for the starlings, so we made them smaller and used wires to keep them apart (Director of Environment and Sustainability, personal interview).

The EIA report for the project also demonstrates the G level's perception of nature. The report mentions that the Third Airport Project Area is located within the main bird migration paths and all of the East European bird population has been following this path. Accordingly, the EIA report remarks that the migratory paths of 500,000 white storks, 25,000 black storks, and at least 250,000 raptors, including hawks, honey buzzards, and lesser spotted eagles, pass through the project area. However, the report goes on to discuss methods for repelling the birds, such as frightening them with voices; the removal of the rats, spiders, all insects, and any kinds of organisms that could be food for birds; and the removal of agricultural activity as well as all puddles and pools. Finally, the report mentions that birds may "threaten the planes"

and warns against “bird strikes.” At this point, there is one question to be answered, posed to me by the lawyer of the Third Airport citizens’ case, Alp Tekin Ocak, during an interview: Do the birds strike the planes, or do the planes strike the birds?

As noted in the introduction, the book *Planetary Urbanization: Implosions and Explosions* features a cover image of the huge and desolate Tar Sands in Alberta, Canada, which is a zone of intensive resource extraction supporting fossil fuel-based urbanization (Brenner, 2014a). In a similar vein, projects conducted in the Harvard Urban Theory Lab to understand planetary urbanization focus on the changing landscape in the Amazon, Arctic, Gobi, and even the atmosphere to support the metabolic consumption of urbanization. They ask the striking question of how these areas can be rendered invisible in urban research while urbanization has the foremost responsibility for their destruction. At this point, the maps indicating the changing routes of birds for the construction of an airport also raise the same question on the borders of the research. Such maps prove that empiricist urban research, which assumes a spatial unit, settlement type, or project as a research object while overlooking the process, is limited to understanding contemporary planetary urbanization, which has reached the urbanization of the atmosphere.

7.2. P Level

In an effort to rethink gentrification as an immanent component of planetary urbanization, the previous chapter developed the P level with two pillars: everyday life and resistance. In a parallel vein, the re-scaling of the P level aims at examining the multidimensional micro-aspects of the Third Airport and Airport City Project. Accordingly, the following section begins with the impacts of the project on the everyday life of the residents of the adjacent village. It then goes on to discuss new solidarities and struggles of emerging actors against gentrification.

The Third Airport and Airport City Project area covers 76,500,000 square meters in two districts: Eyüp and Arnavutköy. There are six villages, İmrahor, Tayakadın, Yeniköy, Ağa lı, Akpınar, and İhsaniye, in the designated expropriation area. According to 2018 data, the total population of those villages is 9,290. As noted, this study focuses on Ağa lı village as only Ağa lı (Yukarı Ağa lı) has residents who will be directly displaced from their homes through the expropriations.

Although the village looks closer by bird's-eye view, it is nearly fifteen minutes from the main terminal building by car. However, as Figure 7.3 indicates, when the construction is completed, Airport City, the mixed-use part of the project, will be adjacent to the village.



Figure 7.3. Location of Yukarı Ağa lı

Ağa lı is a village of the Ey p district of İstanbul. According to a survey conducted in the district in 2005, the monthly income of 72.1% of the population was lower than 1,000 TL, and 40% of children were working in the district (AK-TEL

Engineering, 2014). According to the report, a large part of the population is low-income groups that migrated from Anatolia as well as from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Based on information provided by the muhtar, it may be said that the village of Ağa lı is a micro-representation of the Ey p district (muhtar, personal interview). With a population of 979 (AK-TEL Engineering, 2014), Ağa lı village is located on the coast of the Black Sea in the European part of İstanbul. Before Ağa lı, there were two farms called Tophane and Frenk in this area. Following the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and then population exchange, Bulgarian immigrants settled in the village. After the 1970s, the demographic structure began to change with the arrival of immigrants from Anatolian cities such as Sivas, Tunceli, and Kastamonu. The primary source of livelihood is animal husbandry and was once mining.

The village had already become an operational landscape supporting urbanization due to the mining activities before the airport project. Although its history with extended urbanization dates back to the 1950s, changes in Ağa lı's pastoral scene dramatically accelerated after the initiation of the airport construction. Yet, as seen in Figure 7.4, Ağa lı was still characterized by green sceneries and rural life in 2019.



Figure 7.4. Pastoral Scene of Ağa lı Village (Personal archive, 2019)

However, the impacts of the metabolic consumption of the airport construction have begun to be projected across the village. The most visible destruction of the extended urbanization in the village has been the transformation of Ağa lı's seacoast. As mentioned in in-depth interviews, not only the residents of Ağa lı but also many visitors (mostly low-income) from the city had been enjoying the beach and its clear water until the initiation of the construction. The beach has now been transformed into a landfill site to support the construction, resulting in the enclosure of land from public use for the sake of profit-led appropriation. It is now hard to believe that people were swimming on that beach just a few years ago. Satellite images of the beach demonstrate the destruction (Figure 7.5).

As the beach was probably the most joyful of the appropriated spaces in the village, almost all of the interviewees mentioned their memories of it without being asked. In this vein, the head of the Ağa lı Village Beautification and Improvement Association explained their struggle against coastal degradation, which stems from the appropriation of the area as a landfill site. The head of the association is working in the inner city but spends his weekends in Ağa lı. His statement demonstrates that even micro-scale resistance is a manifestation of dialectical movement between different levels of society as well as intrinsic power relations:

There was a beautiful beach. Nearly 20,000 people were using the beach on the weekends. They were not elite people, it's okay, but people were coming to enjoy... They have permission for filling the mining area, but they are filling in the beach. Under the cover of the project, they are taking sands from my beach and filling it with debris. There is enormous rent-seeking in this work. I made an official report and filed a complaint against it. Then they replied to my complaint "not to prevent the works of subcontractors of mega projects for our country." Indeed, this operation is not about the project. There is rent-seeking here (Head of Ağa lı Village Beautification and Improvement Association, personal interview).



Figure 7.5. Land fill and changes in the sea cost, 2013, 2019



Figure 7.6. Sea coast of the village (Personal archive, 2019)

The village of Ağaçlı is indeed a microcosm of the recent urbanization processes in the Northern Forests, where naturally rich areas are being enclosed in order to provide resources for ongoing constructions in the first phase and are then transformed/will be transformed into the agglomeration in the following stage. In this vein, the arrival of stone quarrying for the construction of the Third Airport is the first stage for Ağaçlı. As is well documented in the literature, quarrying profoundly affects the natural habitat and water sources. Accordingly, some interviewees mentioned that their animals' grazing area has shrunk because of the quarry. As muhtar mentioned, "the quarry is okay to some extent, but there is a water leak, a black water leak killing all the grass for animals" (former muhtar of the village, earning a living from animal husbandry, migrated from Sivas more than forty years ago). However, the quarry's impact is not limited to direct destruction. Trucks carrying stones, whose numbers can reach 600 in a day, have invaded public spaces and children's play areas. The vehicles have been aggressively projected across the pastoral scene of Ağaçlı (Figure 7.7). They have not only resulted in water, air, and noise pollution but have also threatened safety.



Figure 7.7. Trucks carrying stones in Ağaçlı(Personal archive, 2019)

The project has not only environmental impacts on everyday life but also social impacts wherein displacement and dispossession are centrally located. In line with the analytical categorization of this dissertation, semi-structured interviews focused on understanding (1) the perceptions of the residents regarding urban policy of the G level, (2) satisfaction with the participation and information levels, (3) the cost of displacement, and (4) the contradictions between personally benefitting from the project and collective action.

First, and ironically, almost all of the interviewees from Yukarı Ağaçlı village who will be directly displaced through expropriation support the construction of the Third Airport as well as the urban policies of the government. They particularly emphasized this support during the interviews. The former muhtar also made this clear: “We never object to the airport, we support the mega project, but the issue is, what will happen to us?” (former muhtar of the village, earning a living from animal husbandry, migrated from Sivas more than forty years ago). In this sense, the economic development of the country and personally benefitting from the increasing rant-seeking are two motivations behind the support. Accordingly, the words of Mrs. Y.B. encapsulate the thoughts of most of the respondent women: ³⁷“this area will flourish... we want shopping malls, residences, but we want to stay” (Mrs. Y.B., of working age, moved to her father-in-law’s house in Ağaçlı ten years ago). Mrs. M.H. from Yukarı Ağaçlı, for example, mentioned that “the young people are unemployed, my son is also unemployed, the project is good for work opportunities” (Mrs. M.H.,

³⁷ I conducted my interviews with a group of women in an informal way. The interviews were like ‘friends gathering’ that I could hardly manage the dialogues as they also asked me numerous questions about my work and personal life whilst offering homemade pastries and cakes. In such an atmosphere, I mean by ‘encapsulation of thoughts’ that when a woman speaks her mind in one issue it is supported by other women in the meeting.

earning a living from animal husbandry, migrated from Ordu thirty years ago). Mrs. S.T., from Yukarı Ağa lı, also spoke on this issue:

I went to the airport for the opening ceremony, I don't object to the airport. It is good for employment. They can establish cooperatives where we can sell our [soup mixes], milk, eggs. We want to work... If they build residences, shopping malls here then animal husbandry will be finished. We can't continue. But if they benefit us, give us our rights and provide jobs for our children, then it is good. If they do something good, we don't want to do animal husbandry (Mrs. S.T., earning a living from animal husbandry, lives in Ağa lı more than twenty years).

Mrs. Y.T. also points out the economic benefits of the project:

The airport is very nice, I'm not against the project. Our country is developing, God bless the president... They can employ us... If they will build luxurious residences, shopping malls here, it's okay, but they should give us our rights. Who doesn't want it? ... They can build us a house in our village, but we can't afford to build. We don't want to go to another place (Mrs. Y.T., of working age, lives in Yukarı Ağa lı more than twenty years).

Another inhabitant from Yukarı Ağa lı, who was born in Ağa lı, also mentions benefitting from the rents:

Not only our fathers but our grandfathers were born here... This house was built in the 1970. Now, they are displacing me; I don't want to be evicted. The graves of my mother and father are here, this village is my home... I'm not complaining about the airport. If the government builds us villas like those in G kt rk [referring to luxury housing units], it is okay then (Mr. D.A, Yukarı Ağa lı resident, retired).

On the other hand, a few of the respondents opposed both the project and the policies of the G level. Interestingly, these interviewees live in Aşağı Ağacli and so they will not be evicted through expropriation. However, they evaluate the project and the macro-policies in totality along with concerns about democracy, ecology, and uneven urbanization. These residents have mostly come from the city center to live in rural areas. There are sociocultural differences between these relative newcomers and the local communities. In this vein, although the number of recorded interviews was limited, the narratives and field experiences demonstrated the contradictions of these two opposing groups in the village.³⁸ Mr. B.A.'s statement outlines the contradictions between those two groups:

I lived and worked in İstanbul. Then I moved here twenty years ago. There is no valid value for me [referring to the project], but there is for others. For me, this project is a rip-off for Turkey. It is a huge forest area, habitat, there is no need... The villagers have lost their souls, they watch the protests of the NFD in secret. None of them care about the nature. [The contractor firm] takes sand from the beach, the villagers say "what's it to me." Their only concern is their buffalos, nothing else (Mr. B.A., retired, Aşağı Ağacli inhabitant).

As for their satisfaction with the participation and information, all interviewees thought that they had not been properly informed about the process. Furthermore, almost all the respondents heard about the Airport City part of the project during the interviews and saw the architectural project then for the first time. The architectural

³⁸ On the first day of the field visit, I met with the muhtar. On that day, we did not go to village's café (kahvehane) as the muhtar mentioned that a dispute with another group had occurred. I felt this dispute during other visits and it shaped all of my behaviors and plans in the area. In a similar vein, the head of the neighborhood association also touched on the tension between two groups. Accordingly, I conducted the second part of my interviews in the kahvehane, where Ağacli residents who objected to the Airport Project could be found. Although the presented interview was conducted with Mr. B.A., there were five other inhabitants present who also contributed their thoughts during the interview.

renderings of the project surprised the respondents. Regardless of their political support, all respondents emphasized the disappointing attitude of the government. They have been feeling invisible to the government. The outputs of the top-down approach in the project have further deepened this anxiety. Mr. B.S. is a retired man and his now-85-year-old father-in-law built their home in Yukarı Ağa lı some thirty years ago. At present, Mr. B.S. lives with his wife and her father in this house. During the interview, he emphasized that living in that village after retirement was their long-standing dream. However, he now feels invisible, defining his feelings as follows:

The state does not see us. They did not come here. Once, a lawyer for TOKİ came, he said to me “The state does not deal with you.” They ignore us... In 2013, I went to the district office and city office of the party, but they all avoided saying something, their answer was “the order is from the top” (Mr. B.S., retired, Yukarı Ağa lı resident).

These discussions ultimately raise the question of who will benefit from the project. Almost all of the respondents stated that wealthier groups will benefit from the project, not the existing users of the land. They believe that their property will change sooner or later. Mr. B.S. continued on this issue:

The work of TOKİ is to take the land from someone and give it to someone else. The price of land will increase after changing hands. These lands will benefit other people. TOKİ will get our land cheap and then sell it to others... They want us to go with the price of a sunflower seed [an idiom in Turkish] to transfer our land to the moneybags. They build residences or whatever to sell for a billion liras. They don’t care about us.

In a parallel vein, many respondents emphasized that they had struggled with all the difficulties of a rural area to make it a home for years and it is not fair to displace them now. Mrs. Y.T. mentioned the injustice created through the project as follows:

We suffered for years: no bus, no road, no water... We have those things now... If the project is realized, they will push us out... we all think that they will push us out and the rich will come here (Mrs. Y.T., of working age, lives in Yukarı Ağa lı for more than twenty years).

Along these lines, respondents listed their strong social ties, relatives, memories, and the burial plots of their relatives as motives to claim the right to stay. The statements of the respondents provide evidence for the suggestion of rethinking displacement as a phenomenological/lived experience of un-homing, which is closely tied with familial, financial, social, and even ecological modalities (see Davidson, 2009; Atkinson, 2015; Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees, 2019). The former muhtar also shared his feelings:

They did not ask the opinions of the residents. We earn money from livestock. Ağa lı's history dates back to two hundred years ago. We have ties here, our ancestors sleep here in the village cemetery. Where can people go now who are sixty or seventy years old? How can they find another job other than animal husbandry? (Former muhtar of the village, earning a living from animal husbandry, migrated from Sivas more than forty years ago).



Figure 7.8. Houses of Yukarı Ağaçlı (personal archive, 2019)

Almost all of the respondents stated that there is no possible price to compensate this displacement. Beside social ties, they also have economic concerns as they earn their living from animal husbandry and their animals live in the village. Mrs. Y.B. talks about her worries: “My husband is 50 years old. He has been a livestock farmer all his life. How can he find a job in İstanbul? What will my two children do?” (Mrs. Y.B., earning a living from animal husbandry). Similar concerns were also shared by Mrs. M.H.: “We have been earning money from animal husbandry. My husband is 55 years old. What will he do? We don’t want to move out, we can’t afford to live in İstanbul” (Mrs. M.H., earning a living from animal husbandry, migrated from Ordu thirty years ago).

A further economic concern, mostly mentioned by the women, is the future of their children. Almost all female respondents stated that their children live or will live in their houses after marriage and that they have built the house for them. Their homes, farming, and animals play an important role in the economic survival of their children. The children of the village have also been caring for livestock since young

ages. They allocate time to help their parents. Even though they also attend school, it is difficult for them to obtain entry into a prestigious public university due to contextual economic reasons (quality of public high schools, requirements of private lessons and courses for scoring highly on the university entrance exam). This, in turn, decreases their chances of finding a well-paying job in order to afford to live in İstanbul. Mrs. Y.T. shared her anxiety:

This house is the future of my children. I have three children. If we lose this house, we'll be miserable. If my children have no house, *they cannot afford to live in the city*. We built this house for them. I don't want any money. *It's better to drown in the sea, better to die than move* (Mrs. Y.T., of working age, lives in Yukarı Ağa lı for more than twenty years).



Figure 7.9. House of a villager who plants vegetables and fruits to supplement the budget (personal archive, 2019)

The in-depth interviews with residents also revealed a contradiction between the experiences of users and the discourse of capital, namely the contractor firm. The director of sustainability of Company X explained their social sustainability program, which focuses on the participation and development of the socioeconomic conditions of local communities. In this regard, she also shared a presentation of their social sustainability program, which follows the International Financial Corporation standards. The presentation claims that Company X renovated a health center and also built a new one, organized educational activities for 1,250 people, established a local community complaint mechanism that has been used by 10,320 people, developed a local community employment strategy and a database for employment, employed 3,000 people from local communities, initiated a cooperation program and technically supported 15 women, built two disaster and earthquake stations, and supported 180 families for livestock and farming. Furthermore, according to the presentation, Company X received the Corporate Social Responsibility Program of the Year Award at the Stevie International Business Awards in 2017. Thus, it is argued that Company X's Social Investment Program aims at establishing trustworthy relations with neighboring local communities as well as developing projects towards that end (Company X Social Management Presentation, n.d.).

The investigation of the quantitative data presented in the documents or the actualization levels of those sustainability programs are beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, very simple questions arise at this point: Why do all of the residents who will be displaced through expropriation ask for information? And why do almost none of them have knowledge about the Airport City Project adjacent to the village? Why do almost none of the respondents have knowledge about participation? Furthermore, it is conflicting that, on the one hand, the residents of Yukarı Ağaçlı who earn their living from animal husbandry will be displaced and, on the other hand, Company X states that they support families for livestock and farming. The former muhtar of the village also shared his experience about "economically benefitting from the project" so far:

Integrate our young people into the project, provide educational courses. Young people want to work... the company gave out the application forms for employment. Young people filled out the forms, but the firm didn't reply back. We want to benefit from such a big project adjacent to us (former muhtar of the village, earning a living from animal husbandry, migrated from Sivas more than forty years ago).

As the in-depth interviews demonstrated, the village is not homogeneous and the existing users of the land have different educational levels, jobs, and demands. There is no definite way to categorize the groups. Even the most apparent division—that between the local community and relative newcomers—does not represent a realistic classification as the demands and needs also change with the same group. However, an explanatory division line can be drawn between the group that supports the project and others. As mentioned, the group that supports the airport project emphasized it very clearly during the interviews. This group also put a distance between themselves and the NFD due to the latter's relationship with the Gezi Resistance. This group states their discontent regarding the participation of opposition parties in neighborhood meetings and making this project a “political” issue. In this regard, the head of the Ağaçlı Beautification Association said:

The NFD is an opponent to the government. They played an active role in the Gezi events. When they approached us, the government prejudged us. We did not call the NFD... Our common ground is not mega projects (the head of Ağaçlı Village Beautification and Improvement Association, personal interview).

The Director of Sustainability of Company X also argued that the local communities have been annoyed by the NFD's actions. She shared her experiences during a meeting about the project to support her arguments:

We tried to conduct a meeting with local communities. We invited villagers and muhtars as they need to know about the project. However, people from the NFD also participated in the meeting. We encountered provocative actions. They triggered an outcry. However, the good thing was that the villagers answered them. They said “this is about us, what is it to you?” Someone from the NFD said, “I can’t see anyone from the villages.” It was a big gaffe since the meeting room was full of villagers. Then they had a quarrel (Director of Environment and Sustainability of Company X, personal interview).

The interpretations of the head of the NFD supported these explanations regarding the different expectations of the groups. She also mentioned that they could not succeed in taking joint action with the local communities due to the different demands:

Some of our members participated in the meetings, supported their struggle. For example, we directly supported the road blocking act in Ağaçlı. However, our demands are different. For some of the inhabitants, selling their land is an opportunity since it is difficult to sustain livestock and farming. Apparently, mega projects triggered an increase in the value of the plots (head of the NFD, personal interview).

As mentioned before, Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2014) have argued that there are two types of claims in urban movements: exclusion from decision-making processes on the use of urban or rural land, and physical eviction. In this regard, in Ağaçlı, those two different claims conflict rather than reinforce each other for stronger resistance.

However, solidarity emerged following the arrival of a stone quarry in Ağaçlı to support the construction of the project, which can be regarded as a new centrality involving those different groups. The residents of Ağaçlı and the NFD activists have protested the arrival of the stone quarry as well as the government’s decision that “an EIA report is not

required for the quarry” in 2016 (Figure 7.10). This protest was defined as common action during in-depth interviews with both inhabitants of the village and the NFD.



Figure 7.10. Protests by villagers and NFD activists against the stone quarry (Source: <https://kuzeyormanlari.org>, accessed 22 June 2019).

The second component of the P level is the emerging actors who claim their rights to the city. As discussed in detail, the Third Airport and Airport City Project manifested the top-down approach of the G level by ignoring scientific and professional opinion. This aggressive approach also fostered reinforced solidarity. A large group of scientists and scholars published articles, held meetings, and made statements regarding the negative impacts of the project.³⁹ The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (2015) also held a press conference and announced that

³⁹ See the NFD's Third Airport Report (2015); TEMA: İstanbul'un Geleceğini Etkileyecek Üç Proje: 3. Köprü- Havalimanı-Kanal İstanbul Tema Vakfı Uzman Görüşleri (2014); Tolunay (2015); Press statement of Zerrin Bayrakdar, <http://politeknik.org.tr/3-havalimani-projesi-tamamlanirsa-kaybeden-istanbulolacaktir-prof-dr-zerrin-bayrakdar-mimarist/>; and annotation of Orhan Sevgi (2015) in the expert report of the lawsuit, among others.

several of its branches had filed lawsuits against the Third Airport Project. Numerous debated issues from the tender process to the EIA reports became matters of dispute as the top-down approach of the government left no alternative other than legal struggle.⁴⁰ In this regard, the head of the İstanbul Branch of City Planners, Akif Burak Atlar, interprets the top-down approach of the project as follows:

Since we have not been involved in the decision-making process, our participation method became objection and lawsuits. We have no choice other than filing lawsuits... The decision is inconsistent with the 2009 Environmental Plan. They integrated the project like patchwork without a rigorous analysis. There are eight articles in the plan notes, which is unacceptable even for a student project, none of which are associated with planning. They have bypassed planning in a way (Head of the İstanbul Branch of City Planners, personal interview).

Although several NGOs have responded to the Third Airport Project, the NFD is the most active organization in the area and on social media. The head of the NFD, Nuray Çolak, mentioned that the organization was founded as an outcome of the Caferağa Park Forum, one of the “after Gezi” forums. Without a hierarchical structuring, people resisting the destruction of the Northern Forests established the organization. With the contributions of several scientists and scholars, they prepared a detailed report including hard evidence about the dramatic ecological destruction, which in turn provided broader recognition for the movement. Çolak also stated that professional chambers had supported the organization. She explained their struggle tactics as follows:

⁴⁰ <https://www.mimarist.tv/3-havalimani-planlari-yargiya-tasindi-basin-aciklamasi>

We developed a variety of tactics and campaigns against the project. We organized the “Nefes Ol” campaign to explain the impact of the projects... We participated in the meetings set by the contractor firm in the villages, filed two lawsuits against the EIA report of the stone quarries opened for the airport construction. We provided information and counter-views for the international finance corporations that offer loans for the project. This was the most powerful tactic we have developed so far as they could not receive international loans(head of the NFD, personal interview).

The organization is recognizable not only in İstanbul; it is also attached to several movements against mining, hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs), and constructions on natural assets across Anatolia. As a result, the website of the NFD is one of the most living and detailed information portals regarding the urban and ecological struggles in Turkey. Nearly 80,000 people have followed their social media account. In this regard, the head of the NFD also emphasized the power of social media in getting and spreading such extensive information:

We provide nationwide information mostly through the network constituted over time. Some news stories arrive at our social media account, or we recognize some of them from social media. Social media has a significant contribution. We try to support the struggles beyond İstanbul, and you cannot provide this information through mainstream media. We try to reach large masses through social media (head of the NFD, personal interview).

Apart from NGOs and professional chambers, four citizens brought a lawsuit with a claim to “the right to the city”.⁴¹ This lawsuit represents a unique legal struggle as it

⁴¹ Here, the words of the lawyer of the case during the interview quoted directly. Lefebvre (1996, [1968]) introduced the concept right to the city to refer a demand and cry for the city. The new

was presented by “just citizens,” not residents, professional chambers, or NGOs, against an urban development project. More specifically, the lawsuit was filed against the EIA report of the project, and the court issued a suspension of execution in 2014. However, although inconsistent with environmental law, the construction continued during the suspension decision. Moreover, the government used extra-legal tactics to interfere with the decision. The lawyer for this case, Alp Tekin Ocak, explained the trajectory of the struggle as follows:

The EIA report of the project was considerably inadequate for such a large-scale project. We, as the citizens, indeed claimed: “you cannot be the only decision-maker of the project since it impacts our lives.” The EIA report should include national, even international impacts... We are in the same collective intellectual pool with professional chambers. Nevertheless, the Minister of Environment objected and the contractor firm was also intervening. The court decided on an execution of suspension. However, the decision was reversed after twenty days and the members of the court were assigned to different courts. This is a significant discussion here about the independence of judiciary. There is a Council of Judges and Prosecutors directly dependent on the Ministry of Justice. They can arbitrarily assign the locations of the judges. This, in turn, weakens the objectivity of their decision... Normally, the duration for the expertise report is a few months. However, it took one and half years to complete the procedure in our case... We objected to the commission of experts as some of them were bureaucrats. Finally, when we went to explore in person, the construction site was already established and construction was going

millennium has seen a resurgence of interest to the concept from both scholars and international organizations (see Harvey, 2003; Marcuse, 2009; Mayer, 2012 and also for critical reading on the employment of the concept by international organizations see Kuymulu, 2013)

on... There are practices that find a way around the laws. They make a very small change in the plans and display them again... We objected to the insufficient content of the EIA report, they wrote a new one with more pages during this period (Lawyer of the citizens' case, personal interview).

On the other hand, the case can be regarded as a milestone in the urbanization struggle in terms of creating new discussions for both legal arrangements and scholarly works on “who is the victim” in urban development projects or “who has the right to the city.” Those discussion are also very relevant to the planetary urbanization thesis as they interrogate the validity of the urban/rural divide and any territorial borders in claiming the right to the city. Alp Tekin Ocak shared his experiences about borders and claims:

For the airport project case, we organized intervention, too. The court accepted interveners who lived in İstanbul but did not accept the intervener from İzmir. It did not accept the international concerns, such as bird migratory paths, to be involved in the case... However, the court accepted the interveners from Trakya, from Ankara for the case against the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant. On the other hand, for the stone quarry cases, the court only accepts the inhabitants of the nearest surroundings. For example, you cannot be an intervener if you own land here but not inhabiting it (lawyer of the citizens' case, 2019)

The lawyer of the case is also an activist who defends ecology cases against the resource extraction and land reclamation projects across the country. Accordingly, the extra-legal arrangements seen in the airport case and the lawyer's prior experiences have constituted a tactics pool for developing the thinking on legal struggles across Turkey. He shared his experiences as follows:

It is important to be organized, to establish associations or foundations. For example, the cases regarding soil that are opened by TEMA are always accepted without the discussion of interest. Accordingly, in the

Black Sea, we support the associations whose founding purpose is to protect the environment—the Ordu Environment Association, for example. The method is very important. We motivate local inhabitants to represent themselves rather than lawyers. They should see this as a process where they can be involved, rather than difficult technical issues. We are trying to succeed in this. For example, we prepare a case with 25 people against a stone quarry, we write the petitions, but the inhabitants themselves open the case... Their first-hand narratives impact the judges more than the representation of lawyers. The courts are open to this struggle. Despite the fact that they suffer oppression from the government authorities, they try to act ethically. In this sense, the direct participation of inhabitants also strengthens them as the judges are not happy about the participation of governors in the court [i.e., bureaucrats of the cities have been participating in the courts as observers, which may be interpreted as a threat by judges]... This has been the case for nearly fifteen years, as a reflection of central government. On the other hand, I can say, there is resistance, too (lawyer of the citizens' case, personal interview).

A further organization that has contributed to this solidarity is the Spatial Justice Association. The association is working on a publication that explains the lawsuit case against the Airport Project in order to narrate the legal trajectory, including the extra-legal tactics of the government, through visualization of the legal documents, which are seen as difficult technical documents by ordinary people. In this regard, this effort should be seen as an attempt to reinforce solidarity by spreading information in order to broaden legal struggles. The director of the publication, Barış İne, explains their aim as follows:

The acceptance of the citizens as the beneficiaries by the court was a progressive interpretation. It showed the people that there is such a method. It turned 740 people in Cerattepe then... We focus on visualization; we want to show the volume of the case... The first EIA report is 300 pages, whereas the second is more than 1000 pages. This means that “if a 300-page report is not enough, we write 1000 pages then.” The EIA report has been seen as an obstructor by the government (representative of Spatial Justice Association, personal interview).

The emergence of new centralities through the connection of diverse struggles manifested itself in September 2018. Since the beginning of the construction, the poor working conditions of the Third Airport construction workers had received attention, at least from the left-wing media. However, the strike that began on 14 September after a shuttle vehicle crashed the night before, killing two workers and injuring many, received widespread recognition. Although the cause of the crash was reported as heavy rain, the workers argued that the overdriving of the buses was the reason for the accident. During the strike, the workers announced their demands from the company, including their salaries, which had not been paid for six months, and the cleaning of dirt and bedbugs in the dormitories.⁴² The workers also stated that more than four hundred workers had died as of September 2018 and that the official number (fifty-two) did not reflect reality. Furthermore, in interviews, the demands of the workers were introduced, which included the minimum living requirements for a human being.

Three workers died yesterday. One and a half hours ago, another worker died. His brother was there. He was shouting. They [referring to Company X] came and shut him up. We're sick at heart. I'm asking

⁴² This information has taken from the interviews of the workers in Önsöz Tv and social media account of the workers called 3. HL. İşçileriyle Dayanışma.

now, “Am I a human being? Do I have value for this country?” My living conditions are miserable. I’m not seeing myself as a human being, I’m not (construction worker, 2018).⁴³

However, on the second day of the strike, the local gendarmes detained over 500 workers for gathering to protest without a permit and resisting police. Twenty-four of them were arrested on 19 September 2018. The prosecution charged 61 people, including the head and spokesman of the union. The union’s social media group shared the progress of the legal process, calls for the coming protests, and the stories of the workers, most of whom had come from East Anatolian cities. Simply reading these posts answers the question of whether these workers of the Third Airport, who may never see the center of the city and never participate in a protest for the city or in the city, can be rendered invisible for the urban struggle.

On the other hand, the social media account of the platform has been followed by more than a thousand people, including more “popular” accounts, which focus on the struggle against uneven urbanization, with thousands of followers. Those more popular accounts also retweet the announcements. These social media accounts, including those of NGOs and professional chambers, have indeed constituted a pool for people who resist ecological destruction and uneven urbanization. Furthermore, they spread awareness of other similar issues. Like Gezi, social media acts as the cement of the new centrality.

7.3. Concrete Abstraction

Let us for a moment consider the space of architecture and of architects, without attaching undue importance to what is said about this space. It is easy to imagine that the architect has before him a slice or piece of

⁴³ From interviews on Artı TV.

space cut from larger wholes, that he takes this portion of space as a ‘given’ and works on it according to his tastes, technical skills, ideas and preferences. In short, he receives his assignment and deals with it in complete freedom. That is not what actually happens, however. The section of space assigned to the architect—perhaps by ‘developers’, perhaps by government agencies—is affected by calculations that he may have some intimation of but with which he is certainly not well acquainted. This space has nothing innocent about it: it answers to particular tactics and strategies; it is, quite simply, the space of the dominant mode of production, and hence the space of capitalism, governed by the bourgeoisie (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 360).

I have examined all the functions for this project. I didn’t work on cemeteries only; indeed, I suggested to the executive committee that a nice cemetery can bring money, and graveyards are very expensive in İstanbul [jokingly]. Anyway, I worked on all kinds of functions you can think: driving experiences, the used car market, the auto show area, entertainment centers. However, we have decided these functions for now according to the conditions in Turkey. They are flexible, they can change according to the conditions... The thing is not only giving an architectural function to the buildings, but you should also know the profitability... There will be no museum here, it will be something different that brings in money [indicating the museum building from the rendered images of the project]. This museum design is something called “architect romance” (Director of Real Estate Development of Company X, also an architect, personal interview).

The words of the Director of Real Estate Development of Company X, who is an architect, are an eloquent “contextualization” of Lefebvre’s arguments. His words clearly demonstrate how architects indeed become producers of representations of space, whether called “collective unconsciousness,” “habitus,” “way of life,” or a

“cultural model” (Stanek, 2011). His words are a pure expression of how an architect’s “white sheet” is filled up according to the strategies and tactics of the G level (Lefebvre, 1991).

The following section traces this relationship between architecture and the G level through the examination of the architectural form and function of the Third Airport Project. In this vein, this section seeks to examine how architecture materialized the strategies and tactics of the G level or, conversely, how the G level instrumentalized architecture to attack the P level’s habiting. In line with the focus of the study, this section aims at critically reviewing the project through engagement with Lefebvre’s notions including use value/exchange value, habiting/habitat, and quantitative/qualitative space, as well as his thinking on separation and segregation.

The area intended for the Third Airport and Airport City Project falls within the Northern Forests of İstanbul in the European part of the city along the Black Sea. The construction has taken place on an area of 7,659 hectares, 6,172 of which are located in forested land, between the villages of Yeniköy and Akpınar. The area extending along the coast of the Black Sea includes woods, forestlands, lakes, ponds, brooks, and sand fields and 1,180 ha of mining fields, 236 ha of pasture, and 60 ha of agricultural areas. There were also rural settlements, namely the villages of İmrahor, Tayakadın, Yeniköy, Ağaçalı, Akpınar, and İhsaniye, which were subjected to urgent expropriation. In this regard, the area analytically falls within the extended urbanization moment of urbanization.



Figure 7.11. Panoramic view of the project area (Source: AK-TEL Engineering, 2013)

The project area covers categories of forest land, agricultural land, coast rehabilitation area, controlled area, beach, and sands. In this sense, construction is restricted for the large part of the project area according to the existing laws.



Figure 7.12. The project area before construction started (Source: AK-TEL Engineering, 2013)

According to the EIA reports, 80% of the project site is forested area. Furthermore, the first EIA report mentioned that there are 70 lakes and ponds in the area. However, these lakes were defined as “small and large water bodies” in the final EIA report. Whether described as lakes or artificial water bodies, these wetlands are a part of the habitat for numerous species, as noted in the section of the report on flora and fauna. As also mentioned in the EIA report, the construction will remove all of these wetlands along with the animals’ natural habitat (AK-TEL Engineering, 2013, in Tolunay, 2015)

Apart from forest lands, the impact area of the project also includes significant ecosystems and habitats, such as the coastline between Terkos and Kasatura, Ağıldere and the Ağa lı Dunes, the G m   dere Dunes, and the Had mk  y and Kemerburgaz forages and heathlands (Tolunay, 2015). The area harbors high endemic diversity and the EIA report mentions that there are eighteen types of endemic plants in the project’s impact area. According to Tolunay, this means that 45% of the endemic plants of İstanbul lie in the project’s impact area (Tolunay, 2015).



Figure 7.13. View from the project area (Source: documents shared by the Director of Environment and Sustainability of Company X, n.d.)

Although an EIA report mentions that the hunting, killing, and hindering of the animals and the damaging of their eggs are forbidden, it has not touched on the fact that the project will destroy the reproduction and resting areas of the animals (Tolunay, 2015).

The Third Airport and Airport City Project has been designed by the international architectural team of Grimshaw Architects (concept design), the Nordic Office of Architecture, Arup Associates, Perkins+ Will, Haptic Architects, and Kiklop Design. The construction will proceed in four stages. The first stage of the construction process was completed at the end of 2018, whereas the final date of the construction process was determined as 2039 (AK-TEL Engineering, 2013).

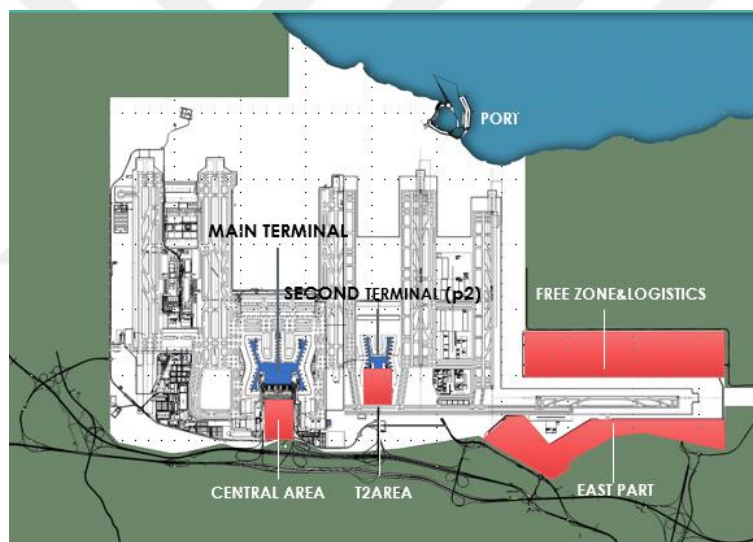


Figure 7.14. Site plan of the İstanbul Airport and Airport City: Terminal 1 Central (Core) Zone, T2, Free Zone, East Part (Source: Presentation of the Director of Real Estate Development, n.d.)

The discourse mobilized by the architectural team reflects the G level's fetishism of "construction of an airport." In this vein, as the G level, the architects also draw a correspondence between the grand scale of the airport and economic growth. Grimshaw Architects, for example, interprets the Third Airport as a reflection of İstanbul since it offers "unparalleled passenger capacity and vital economic growth"

(Grimshaw, n.d.). Partner Andrew Thomas states that the project is a “vital step” in the growth of the economy and that they “share the consortium’s ambitions to develop a truly outstanding airport design worthy of the world city of Istanbul”. The ambitiousness of the project has also been emphasized by the principal partner of the Nordic Office of Architecture, Gudmund Stokke: “We are glad to be able to respond to the high demands of the client and create an exceptional solution, both in terms of functionality and architecture.” Accordingly, Nordic has found a motto to represent the boldness of the project: “The sky’s the limit.”⁴⁴



Figure 7.15. View of the terminal building (Source: Screenshot from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i2MP_r-P-M , accessed 15 June 2019)

The architectural team has also emphasized the local identity as a source of inspiration in their interviews and presentations (Figure 7.15). The conceptual design

⁴⁴ Retrieved from <https://nordicarch.com/project/istanbul-new-airport>.

team of Grimshaw Architects asserted that the vaulted ceilings pierced with skylights draw on the architectural character of İstanbul.⁴⁵ As seen in Figure 7.18 and 7.20 the use of the vaulted soffit lies at the heart of the concept in both the processor and piers. The roofs are expressed in a series of vaults, which, according to the design overview document, echo the vaulted ceilings of historic Turkish buildings. Süleymaniye Mosque has been particularly emphasized in interviews by the architects in terms of penetration of light. The design report shared by the design director also states that “the roofs are clearly expressed in a series of vaults. These echo the vaulted ceilings of historic Turkish buildings but are detailed to demonstrate an inherently modern aesthetic” (New Airport Design Report, n.d.). Figure 7.16 shows the structure of the roofs.

⁴⁵ Retrieved from <https://grimshaw.global/projects/istanbul-new-airport>.

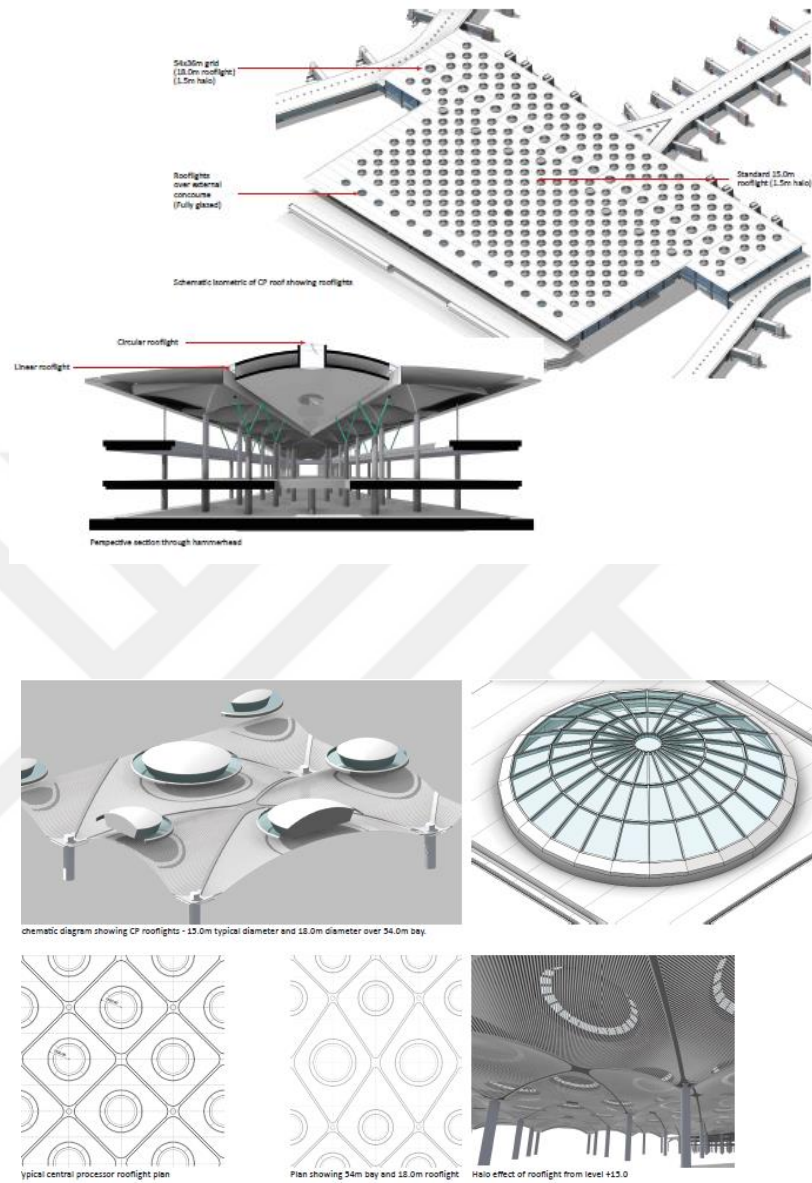


Figure 7.16. Structural diagrams of roofs and roof lights (Source: The New Airport Design Report, n.d.)

However, the contractor firm has preferred to use the image of the Hagia Sophia in international brochures rather than Süleymaniye to introduce the source of inspiration.



Figure 7.17-18. Brochure of the Third Airport produced by Company X (Source: official website of company X, accessed 16 June 2019)

The design of the vaulted ceilings pierced with roof lights raises the question of whether it really represents the specifically Islamic and traditional references that are heavily mobilized in the rhetoric of both the architects and the contractor firm.



Figure 7.19. The isometric view of main terminal (Source: New Airport Design Report, n.d.)



Figure 7.20. Perspective through the central processing area (Source: New Airport Design Report, n.d.)



Figure 7.21. Main entrance bridges (Source: personal archive 2019.)



Figure 7.22. The view from the southern portico (photograph by the author, 2019)



Figure 7.23. The view from the processing area (photograph by the author, March 2019)

As mentioned above, the language of the design team echoes the discourse of the G level for the Third Airport. In this sense, the central processing area interfaces with the central pier, and the east and west piers are defined as “dramatic” and “grand scale” in the design report, in tune with G level discourse. Those adjectives are used to define level changes between two buildings and the 54-meter span of the processing area’s retail facility at the pier and the central processing interface (New Airport Design Report, n.d.).



Figure 7.24: Interface of processing area and east pier (New Airport Design Report, n.d.)



Figure 7.25. Interface of processing area (New Airport Design Report, n.d.)

Accordingly, the human experience also corroborates the rhetoric of grand scale. Beginning from the entrance, the oppressive impact of the massive scale is felt through monolithic portals situated at the end of the bridges, which cross the void at a level of +15 m while increasing the perception of the dimensions (Figure 7.27 and 7.28). Giant columns supporting the vaulted soffit along with the impressive penetration of daylight from the circular roof lights at the apex strengthen the impression at first sight on the departure level of the central processing area.

In December 2015, Company X organized a design contest for the Airport Traffic Control Tower of the Third Airport. The winning design was chosen from among six shortlisted concepts from Zaha Hadid Architects, Moshe Safdie Architects, RMJM Architecture and Masterplanning, Massimiliano Fuksas, Grimshaw + Nordic, and Pininfarina-AECOM. As Figure 7.26 indicates, Company X shared the six proposed designs. According to Company X, most of the shortlisted designs were influenced by Turkish culture. Zaha Hadid Architects were inspired by whirling dervishes, RMJM by the ever-present seagulls of İstanbul, Fuksas by minarets, and Safdie Architects by Ottoman geometrical patterns.



Figure 7.26. Proposed designs for the Airport Traffic Control Tower of the Third Airport (Source: https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/istanbul-new-airport-air-traffic-control-tower-designwinner-announced_o, accessed 22 July 2019)

AECOM and Pininfarina won the competition with a design inspired by tulips, which represented a significant cultural reference, in Company X's words, in Turkish-Islamic history.⁴⁶ Tulips have been deeply interwoven with Ottoman and Islamic culture as "Allah" in the Arabic script resembles the shape of a tulip and the letters that form the word "tulip" ("lale" in Arabic) are the same as those that form the name of Allah (Behiery, 2017). Furthermore, the flower strongly evokes the Ottomans as the reign of Sultan Ahmed III was known as the "Tulip Era."



Figure 7.27. Traffic Control Tower of the Third Airport designed by AECOM and Pininfarina (Source: Official website of Company X, accessed 22 July 2019)

⁴⁶ Retrieved from the official website of Company X.

The rhetoric of Islamic references in the vaulted soffit design and the tulip-inspired control tower have been completed with a grand-scale mosque having a capacity of five thousand people and dominating the entrance to the site.

Although the G level emphasized the infrastructural features of the project, it is also a real estate project including the construction of residences, hotels, and luxurious retail and office spaces. The official website of Company X announces that the Airport City will serve the city, not only the airport customers. The shopping and life center, which is directly connected to the subway line, will host many domestic and foreign brands and will provide 24/7 service.⁴⁷

In this regard, the Director of Airport City's Real Estate Development clearly mentions that the motive behind the Airport City Project is to "earn money" in order to pay the 22 billion Euro tender price, which cannot be compensated merely through the airport's facilities. The following section introduces the Airport City, mostly through an interview conducted with the Director of Real Estate Development of Airport City. He explained the project via a PowerPoint presentation with AutoCAD drawings but shared only the .ppt presentations.

⁴⁷ İSTANBUL AIRPORT CITY (n.d.). Retrieved from the official website of Company X.

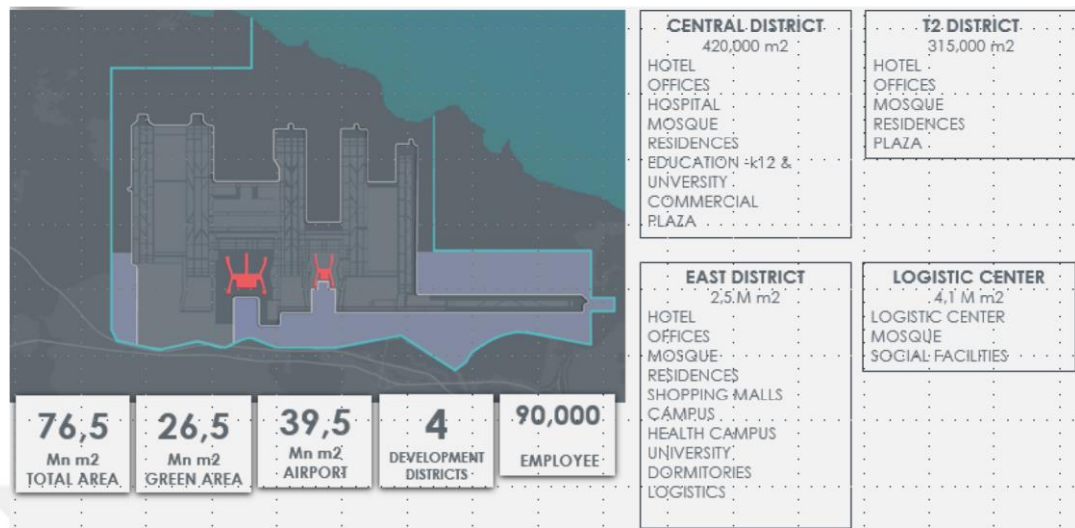


Figure 7.28. General information on Airport City (Source: Presentation of Director of Real Estate Development, n.d.)

As seen in Figure 7.28, Airport City, developed within the project area of İstanbul Airport, has four main zones. The director indicates that forty million square meters of the total area (seventy six and a half million) are dedicated to airport facilities, whereas the total area of Airport City is about ten million square meters. Beginning from the Terminal Core Zone (Central Area), it is only a short walk from the main terminal building. The director mentions that this area mainly includes buildings for the aviation sector, addressing the white-collar employees of airport companies along with the Turkish Airlines offices due to its close proximity to the main terminal. Furthermore, according to his presentation, there will be four hotels of different standards, a hospital, a private university, a techno-park, residences, retail shops, and a mosque that can hold five thousand people.



Figure 7.29: View of the Central Area (from the presentation of the Director of Real Estate Development, 2019)

According to the presentation, the T2 area will be developed in line with the second terminal (Third Phase). This area also includes the construction of hotels, office buildings, a mosque, and residences. Furthermore, there will be a rail system between this area and the main terminal building.



Figure 7.30: View of the T2 area (from the presentation of the Director of Real Estate Development, 2019)

The final part of Airport City is referred to as the “East part,” which is particularly significant for this study. As the director mentions, this part is different since it is thought of as a part of the mega projects including the İstanbul Canal and a grand-scale port.⁴⁸ This area is also in close proximity to the villages that are subject to expropriation. Accordingly, Yukarı Ağa lı village, in which nearly 50 households will be directly displaced, is adjacent to this part of the project.

⁴⁸ The interview was conducted before the route of the İstanbul Canal was changed.

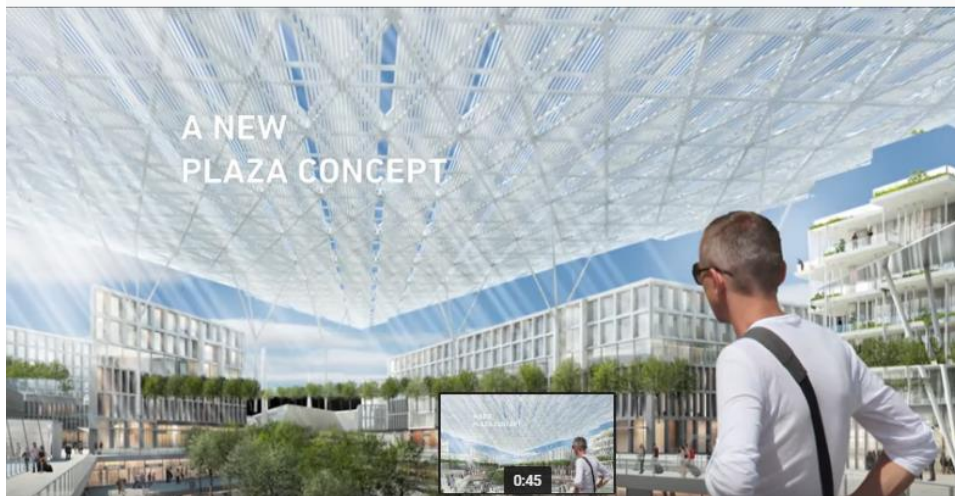


Figure 7.31-32. Rendered images of Airport City (Source: Official promotion video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i2MP_r-P-M)

This area is thought of as a part of the “New İstanbul” project; thus, it addresses people other than airport employees or passengers. According to the director, this part of Airport City is approximately three million square meters and larger parcels, compared to the central and T2 areas, have been allocated for the planning. For example, 250,000 square meters have been allocated for a shopping mall.



Figure 7.33: “Shopping boulevard” in Airport City (from the presentation of the Director of Real Estate Development, 2019)

This area will also include a private university, hotels, and luxurious residences. The director notes that as the model of the project is “build-operate-transfer,” they cannot sell any property since Company X has also been the tenant. For this reason, he mentions that they have designed this part as temporary residences and shared offices, which are also more feasible in terms of economic conditions. This part of the project also includes an area for logistics and the director adds that they have had a meeting with Amazon.com, Inc.



Figure 7.34. T4 Area, Airport City (Source: Presentation of the Director of Real Estate Development)

Lefebvre introduced the distinction between *habiting* and *habitat* in the P level. He said that *habiting* has been reduced to the *habitat*, and thus the human being to the functional acts. While the *habitat* is the imposition of authority and a device of capitalist rationality, *habiting* is the complex lived experience, an invention of the individual. Here, Lefebvre's distinction between *habiting* and *habitat* evokes an alternative reading of the Airport City Project. As discussed for the P level, most of the Ağaçlı inhabitants earn their living by farming and animal husbandry. They live in single-story houses with poultry coops. Animals graze in the village. The people of Ağaçlı “inhabit as poet” since, as Lefebvre argues, “even the most derisive everyday existence retains a trace of grandeur and spontaneous poetry” (Lefebvre, 1970 [2003], p. 74).



Figure 7.35. Transformation of everyday life (Source: Screenshots from the official promotion video and TV program on Ağaçlı Village, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ju6FJ8qRTtk> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkPU1Zagr2E>, accessed 23 July 2019 and 30 March 2019, respectively)

In this sense, the Third Airport City does not only directly displace those fifty households but it excludes, separates, and segregates a form of everyday life. Airport City promotes an “ideologically justified political conception of space” that conforms to the logic of capital (Lefebvre, 1970 [2003], p. 73). The figures above are screenshots from the promotional video of Airport City that present a new kind of everyday life in which the people are supposed to be happy. As Lefebvre says, “it is a strange way of interpreting happiness” (Lefebvre, 1970 [2003], p. 141).

7.4. Epilogue - Metamorphic Gentrification

This chapter has presented an exercise of “scaling” the research methodology by drawing on empirical research on the Third Airport and Airport City Project. In this sense, it has re-scaled all of the social levels of the decisive moment (2011-) in a territorial sense to capture the place-specific contemporary gentrification process driven by the mega project. Since the conclusions emerging from the empirical research will be discussed in detail in the conclusion of this dissertation, this section ends with a discussion on why this study has defined contemporary gentrification in İstanbul as “metamorphic” to avoid repetition.

Brenner and Schmid suggested a different urban epistemology building on a tripartite analytical framework that focuses simultaneously on processes of concentrated, extended, and differential urbanization while decentering the object of analysis from thing to process (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Schmid, 2018). From the vantage point of the planetary urbanization thesis, gentrification research has been stuck in the analytical category of concentrated urbanization, which has resulted in the interpretation of the concept as a detached phenomenon existing in some inner-city neighborhoods. Thus, a monocentric understanding of the city along with the strict separation of center/periphery in the analysis has isolated the concept from the wider planetary transformation. Therefore, the theoretical reorientation of planetary urbanization first of all necessitates the unbinding of the analytical category of gentrification. In this regard, Chapter 7 has demonstrated that contemporary gentrification in Turkey manifests fluidal categories in a specific way.

The project area is located in forest land including coal mines; thus, it takes part in the analytical category of extended urbanization. However, the Airport and Airport City Project suggests a shift in the analytical category of the land from extended to concentrated. In other words, differential urbanization does not occur in the same

category; rather, it creatively destroys the operational landscape while also shifting its analytical category. Accordingly, this study has defined this nuanced way of contemporary gentrification as metamorphic to imply the transformation of urban land including coal mines and forest land—which connotes operational landscapes and non-urban—to a mega-scale airport and mixed-use development—which connotes agglomeration—through gentrification.





CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This thesis has tackled the main question of why the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey can be recast as a process that is immanent to planetary urbanization. Conversely, it has employed the notion of planetary urbanization to understand the place-specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey within the broader totality. It has done so via the case of the Third Airport and Airport City Project, which has been constructed on an erstwhile rural settlement, forest, and mining area in the Northern Forests of İstanbul. Here, all the data obtained from primary sources including official documents, reports, lawsuit petitions, contracts, and the speeches of authorities as well as in-depth interviews have been selected, sorted, and interpreted to examine contemporary gentrification in Turkey within the broader capitalist structural context. Detailed descriptions of the Third Airport were produced through abstract conceptualization to excavate the main concerns of critical theory rather than achieving a value-free inquiry that rejects the structure.

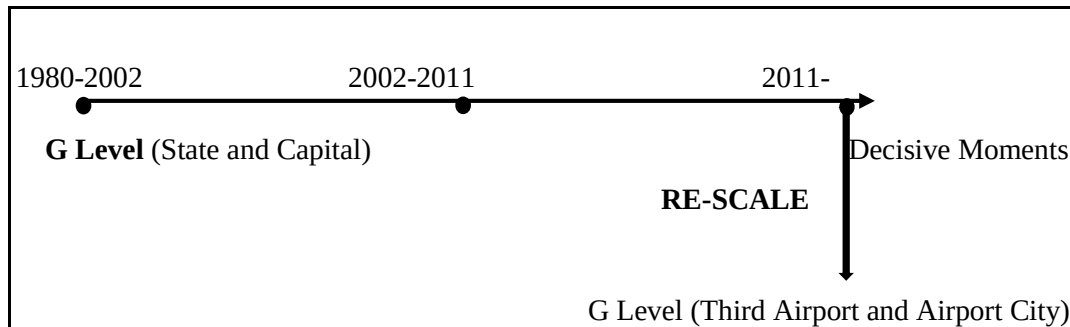
In this vein, first of all, the study defined its epistemological framework building on the planetary urbanization thesis. Secondly, through this process-oriented epistemological stance, it built an original research framework drawing on Lefebvre's social levels and his notion of concrete abstraction. In this way, it extended the planetary urbanization thesis through inextricable engagement with everyday life and struggle. Furthermore, the integration of the notion of concrete abstraction as an analytical category allowed the study to examine the thing/process dialectic on different scales. This methodology was tested for all of the decisive moments of gentrification in Turkey and then scaled to the Third Airport and Airport City Project for concrete research.

The following sections address the findings of the study in more detail. The hypothesis at the outset of this research suggested that the current mega projects in İstanbul are not an isolated and mushrooming phenomenon but rather constitute another moment in the historical process of gentrification in İstanbul. In line with this stance, the temporal continuity of all levels of social reality was examined. Accordingly, Section 8.2 provides a discussion of the trajectory of each level throughout the different decisive moments and finally examines their crystallization on the scale of the Third Airport and Airport City Project. Section 8.3 presents “a look back” at the theory while addressing the main research question via evidence from the concrete research. Section 8.4 advances the key contributions of the study and potential topics for future research. Finally, Section 8.5 provides concluding remarks in pursuit of defense.

8.1. Discussion

8.1.1.G Level

8.1.1.1. State



As discussed in Chapter 4 on the first decisive moment, the post-1980 neoliberal adjustment program, which was counseled by the IMF with an aim of legitimatizing neoliberal orthodoxy, led to the increasing hegemony of international capital in the Turkish economy (Boratav, 1990, 1991). The leader of the then-ruling Motherland Party (MP) played a vital role in the implementation of a new policy model that relied

on free trade, flexible exchange rates, export subsidies, outward orientation, and privatization (Boratav, 1990, 1991).

In an effort to keep up with the adjustment program and global trends, the government adopted major policy measures directly linked to the dramatic landscape change in İstanbul. In this vein, the government instituted a new two-tiered metropolitan municipality system in which municipalities were granted considerable authority for urban development plans. These arrangements were accompanied by changes in the allocation of the fiscal sources among different governmental levels as the revenues channeled from the central budget to the municipal administration steadily increased. Those steps towards decentralization should be seen as components of a decisive moment to understand the current stage of the gentrification process in Turkey.

The same years also saw the establishment of the Mass Housing Fund under the MHA in 1984 for the purpose of subsidizing low-income and middle-income housing. The emergence of this actor was a milestone in the urbanization trajectory of Turkey. After the 2000s, the new ruling government dramatically empowered the MHA's authority and designated it as the largest real estate actor in Turkey. While the MHA originally aimed at benefitting low- and middle-income groups, the large contractors attracted by state subsidies and the provision of cheap land became the major beneficiaries in the end. The MHA has remained at the center of the contemporary gentrification in Turkey through its expropriation authority.

In this decisive moment, the 1994 local elections were a crucial turning point for İstanbul. While the mainstream parties fully embraced the global city project, the current President, who at that time was the candidate of the Islamic Welfare Party, put distance between himself and the global city ideal as well as EU membership and instead ran a campaign revolving around the needs of the urban poor, specifically addressing *gecekond* neighborhoods. This rhetoric made him the new mayor of İstanbul in 1994.

The second decisive moment saw not only continuities but also transformations in the G level, which have had impacts on the current phase of creative destruction in İstanbul. In this regard, the current President won the 2002 general elections with an entirely new discourse promising the implementation of the requirements for EU membership and a free market economy. The ruling party strictly followed the IMF-supervised program with its policies shaped according to the directives of neoliberal orthodoxy of the period, ranging from the flexibilization of labor rights to rent-seeking urban policies.

The ruling party furthered its decentralization policies in the second decisive moment through new municipality laws in harmony with the EU requirements in the first years of its power. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, the same decisive moment also saw strong centralization through the dramatic empowerment of the MHA operating under the Prime Ministry (Kayasü and Yetişkul, 2013; Kuyucu, 2017; Tansel, 2018).

Finally, the last decisive moment witnessed salient withdrawal from the early EU oriented reforms as well as decentralization attempts. As discussed in Chapter 7, following the constitutional referendum of 2010 and then the general elections of 2011, the centralizing turn became bolder. In this vein, the replacement of the existing parliamentary system with presidency in 2017 only granted the legitimization and institutionalization of already existing top-down policies. This unique presidential system also endowed the President with a wide range of power while significantly damaging the separation of powers. Accordingly, Chapter 7 demonstrated how this centralization, politicization of juridical bodies, and associated top-down approach crystallized in the scale of the Third Airport:

- The increasing centralization manifested itself even in the first phase of the project: its announcement. Urbanization debates entered a new phase with the 2011 general elections. Accordingly, “crazy” and “the largest” were the main slogans of the election campaign, which heavily revolved around İstanbul and

its development. The President himself announced the Airport Project during the election campaign, and the mega projects were among the top issues that he presented during the first presentation of the campaign. Rather than the associated ministries or municipalities, the President also personally promised an additional “Crazy Project.”

- The top-down approach most dramatically and destructively crystallized in the site selection phase. The speeches of the President and the Transportation Minister of the period gave the strong impression that the President had designated the area via a helicopter trip without considering scientific opinions. This impression was supported by the fact that the designated area was inconsistent with the 1/100,000 scaled İstanbul Environmental Plan. The plan was prepared by numerous scholars and scientists in 2009 for the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, which was also under the ruling party. In other words, the designated area contradicted even the plan of a JDP-governed municipality. Furthermore, several professional chambers took the project to court. Accordingly, as discussed in detail throughout Chapter 7, in-depth interviews and document analysis proved that top-down decision-making operated in the site selection phase while participation and scientific opinion were completely ignored.
- The ruling government legally grounded this strong centralization through the creation of a new ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, in 2011. This ministry was granted strong powers regarding urban development, environmental protection, and planning at the expense of weakening and even excluding local governments, experts, NGOs, and residents. The enactment of Law No. 6306 on Transformation of Areas under Disaster Risk, which has also been the basis of mega projects including the Third Airport, further completed the puzzle.

- On the other hand, the strategies of the ruling party to implement its top-down project were not limited to extra-legal arrangements; they also involved the violation of laws. The Third Airport Project was put to tender before the approval of the EIA report, which was clearly inconsistent with the Environment Law. Furthermore, although the court gave the decision of suspension of execution for the case opened by four citizens, the construction continued, which is inconsistent with not the Environment Law.
- As discussed in Chapter 6, following the 2010 referendum on constitutional amendments, the ruling government began to penetrate the Constitutional Court and the Council of Judges and Prosecutors through new arrangements. This restructuring of juridical bodies and damage to the separation of powers deeply impacted the trajectory of urbanization in Turkey. The Council of Judges and Prosecutors' assignment power over judges became one of the most significant challenges of the legal struggles against uneven urbanization and ecological destruction, not only in İstanbul but throughout the country. In this regard, the Third Airport Project was not an exception as the judges of a case opened against the project were reassigned following the decision of suspension of execution and the construction continued.

8.1.1.2. Capital

While the 1980s and the 1990s, the first decisive moment, were marked by the tension between two seemingly different groups of capital, TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD, they entirely compromised on aggressive privatization via public tenders and accumulation by dispossession while setting aside their cultural conflicts in the 2000s.

As shown in Chapter 6, the second decisive moment experienced a variety of administrative, legal, and informal mechanisms that assisted the emergence of a

powerful conservative Muslim bourgeoisie (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2014; Sayarı, 2014; Gürakar, 2016; Esen and Gümüşçü, 2018). In this regard, the two main pillars of the ruling party's economic growth agenda, construction and energy projects, have been particularly significant in the emergence of new capital. Those two pillars also led to the acceleration and deepening of the dialectical movement of extended and concentrated urbanization while further blurring the urban/rural binary.

This place-specific economic growth agenda of the ruling party necessitated an ambitious form of capitalism that transformed the state into a “switcher” that moved capital from the first circuit to the secondary circuit. As discussed in detail in Chapter 6, the current government has privatized more state-owned enterprises than all of its predecessors combined (Ocaklı, 2017). Thousands of workers have been impacted by those privatizations; they lost their jobs or they consented to wage reduction. Furthermore, the creation of private water rights resulted in dramatic damage to the natural and cultural heritage throughout Anatolia while producing violent forms of accumulation by dispossession.

The ruling government's strategies for switching the capital were not limited to legal arrangements. As demonstrated in Chapter 7, violation of laws has become a constant component in both concentrated and extended urbanization. Chapter 7 showed that the trajectory of different projects followed a similar pattern: controversial EIA reports, suspension of execution decision by the court, urgent expropriation, suspension of execution for urgent expropriation by the court, and construction despite the court's decisions.

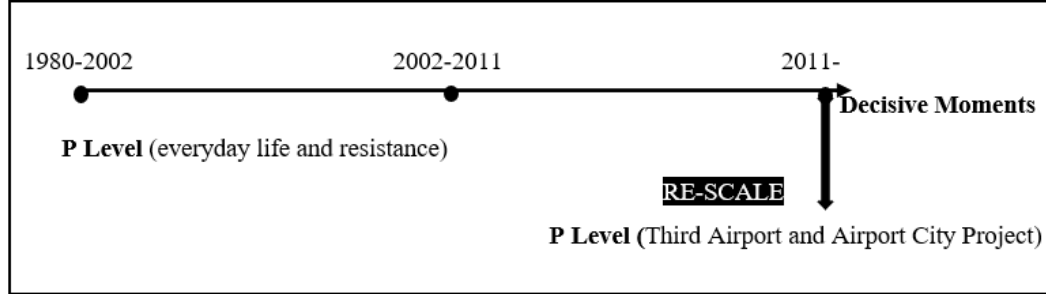
The government's push for accumulation by dispossession and privatizations in return for consolidation of its power over society produced a symbiotic relationship between state and capital. In the Turkish context, this relationship is further crystallized in an original way: through the production of a “pool media.” As discussed in Chapter 6, this pool media was established by a small group of holding companies who are also constant winners of public tenders including privatizations,

mega projects, and energy projects. The media group, consisting of television channels, newspapers, and radio stations, persistently supports all kinds of policies of the ruling party. They also use the discourse revolving around the scale of the spatial fix, economic growth, and employment to cover up injustices, wherein only these media owners and a few other groups have access to all kinds of resources, whether urban or rural.

The Third Airport Project is one of the most illustrative projects to understand those hidden relationships behind the concrete abstraction. Chapter 6 showed how the private sector actors of the Third Airport Project extracted the very essence of human and nature in the quest for accumulation throughout the country, whether rural or urban. These actors are also the contractors of the energy and resource extraction projects implemented in natural and cultural heritage areas including Hasankeyf, Cerattepe, Kamilet Valley, and Karabiga, along with the privatizations that exploited living labor such as Eti Copper and Aluminum, TEKEL Liquor, and numerous electricity distribution enterprises. Moreover, one of the contractors of the joint venture group is also the owner of a media group that is a crucial member of pool media. Furthermore, the Third Airport Project is also a “representative” of the “compromise on privatization” as the joint venture group includes members from both TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD.

In a nutshell, the Third Airport and Airport City Project is a significant crystallization of a network consisting of the government, private sector, and media. The project is a concrete abstraction that hides accumulation by dispossession and cost savings from living labor actualized throughout Anatolia. In this regard, the gentrification trajectory in Turkey extends Brenner and Schmid’s original formulation in which extended urbanization is seen as metabolic supporter of concentrated urbanization. In Turkey, apart from its supporting role, extended urbanization also acts as a capital accumulation device for the very same actors of the large-scale urban transformation and infrastructure projects in the heart of the city.

8.1.2. P Level



In an effort to rethink gentrification as an inextricable component of planetary urbanization, the P level as an analytical category focuses on two dimensions of micro-realities throughout the study: everyday life and resistance. More specifically, following the intellectual mediation between scales with the P level and the P level of the Airport and Airport City Project, this dissertation developed this line of analytical categorization based on two pillars: the everyday life of the displaced and actors of resistance against exclusion from the decision-making process (see Ergün and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2014). While it has been argued here that this categorization provides a meaningful analytical operation in the P level to understand the reflections of those components in the scale of the study area, future studies may more powerfully integrate cultural perspectives, including changing consumption habits and lifestyles of the new conservative middle class.

In this vein, Chapter 4 provided a brief introduction on the everyday life of the two different groups defined with different portrayals as “İstanbulites and others” or “Zekeriyaköy and Sultanbeyli” in the literature as a prologue. Abstaining from this kind of overly culturist duality, Chapter 4 developed an interpretation of the “new” urban poor as the “future” victim of the state-led gentrification projects in the 2000s and the new middle class as a “future” component of the urban movements against state-led gentrification projects in the 2000s.

As shown in Chapter 4, gecekondu amnesty laws and generation of urban rents paved the way for the emergence of an anti-gecekondu discourse. The inhabitants of gecekondus began to be defined as “people after quick money,” “millionaire peasants,” “gecekondu mafia,” and “the landlords” by the media and other groups (Erman, 2004). On the other hand, those gecekondu owners eventually had the chance to transfer their poverty to newly arrived migrants, who were mostly the victims of forced migration from East and Southeast Anatolia in the 1990s (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2005). Those migrants mostly attached themselves to empty buildings in inner-city historical neighborhoods or became tenants in gecekondu neighborhoods that became the targets of state-led gentrification projects in the 2000s.

This same decisive moment also saw the emergence of a new middle class. Apart from being gentrifiers of historic neighborhoods, this new middle class was also among the actors of the opposition against the entrepreneurial urban policies of local governments. In this regard, beautification associations deserve particular attention, which are mostly established in historic city centers that have seen a classical form of gentrification. Cihangir, Kuzguncuk, Galata, and Arnavutköy were among those gentrified historic neighborhoods that protected their neighborhoods through associations.

Furthermore, this period was also marked by increasing opposition of professional chambers. The Chamber of Architects struggled against several projects such as the Tarlabası Project, Park Otel, and Gökkafe, not only by lawsuits but also through the formation of public opinion. Furthermore, the chamber supported inhabitants in Arnavutköy, Gayrettepe, Beşiktaş, and Moda in order to create awareness about urbanization for sustainable development (Önal, 2004).

In this regard, Chapter 5 developed those dimensions in the second decisive moment. While the previous decisive moment may be seen as the “foregrounding” period, the

second decisive moment has been more powerfully and clearly reflected in the P level of contemporary gentrification.

Chapter 5 showed that “cleaning” for family values and security to make İstanbul a global city was further accompanied by the objectives of earthquake resistance and counter-terrorism in the first decade of the 2000s. Inner-city historic neighborhoods and gecekondu neighborhoods were the two main targets of the urban transformation projects. However, the attack of the G level against everyday life and habiting was confronted with the counter-rationality of the P level. While the strategies of the government to achieve displacement differed from one project to another, as several studies put forward, the resistance of the existing inhabitants who are directly faced with displacement has been complicated on the grounds of individual interest and its conflict with collective action. On the other hand, the other component of the resistance, civil initiatives and professional chambers, mainly opposed exclusion from decision-making processes that claimed to be for the public good. As Chapter 5 showed, in this regard, the second decisive moment saw energetic collaborations between different segments of the resistance.

On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter 5 and elaborated in Chapter 7, the ruling government’s aggressive privatization policy and associated cost savings from living labor along with the dispossession immanent to extended urbanization resulted in numerous protests throughout Anatolia. From this vantage point, Chapter 6 introduced the third decisive moment in the P level, which interprets the Gezi Resistance as the culmination of those revolts and discontent produced in both rural and urban areas. In this regard, the Gezi Resistance can be interpreted as a nexus that represents the arrival point of the dissolving urban/rural binary in resistance. Furthermore, Gezi Park was not only the peak of the culmination but also the trigger of a new kind of solidarity that goes beyond the urban/rural divide.

Finally, Chapter 7 interpreted manifestations of those decisive lines in the scale of the project in the P level:

- First, the top-down approach of the G level has been dramatically crystallized in the everyday life of the inhabitants who will be directly displaced through expropriation. As Chapter 7 introduced, none of the respondents are satisfied with the levels of information and participation. All of the interviewees noted that they have heard about the project from the media. Furthermore, all respondents have learned about the displacement from the expropriation documents they received from the MHA. Accordingly, none of the interviewees had any knowledge about the future of the project. The Airport City will be adjacent to their village, yet all of them heard about its name for the first time during interviews and saw the architectural renderings then for the first time. In this vein, the unknown future, fear of losing their homes, economic concerns, and the question of who will benefit from the project gave rise to anxiety among the residents. Almost all of the interviewees believed that the village will be transformed into an upper-class neighborhood in the future and they will have to move. However, none of them want to move.
- Second, there is a temporal continuity throughout the decisive moments in the perceptions of the displaced residents—the first component of the analytical category—on the grounds of individual interest and its conflict with collective action. Almost all of respondents who will be directly displaced support the mega projects and believe that these projects are important for economic growth and employment. None of the respondents who will be displaced mentioned any concerns about natural destruction or uneven urbanization; rather, they emphasized the employment opportunities, and increasing rents for the village.

On the other hand, they complained at length about the obscurity, expropriation prices, and displacement. In other words, the interviewees perceive those policies separately and react to the G level only it attacks their everyday life. The atmosphere

of Turkey, and in particular the fear of being accused of being a “traitor,” contributes to this contradiction to an extent, but it is mostly a product of the fragmented perception of totality (Lefebvre, 1991, 2003). The households interpret ecological concerns, political concerns, and displacement concerns as separate issues rather than the interwoven outcomes of capitalist urbanization.

This perception of the existing inhabitants has saliently manifested in their relationship with the most active NGO against the project. In-depth interviews showed that the existing inhabitants participated in a new centrality initiated by the NFD during the first announcement of the project. However, most of the respondents noted that they stepped back after they recognized the activists’ relationships with Gezi in order to not damage their individual interests. Most of the interviewees, including the head of the Ağaçlı Village Association, emphasized that they had nothing in common with the NFD, whose focus is natural destruction, except their resistance against the quarry.

Seen from a broader perspective, the conspiratorial rhetoric of Gezi resulted in deepening polarization through labeling the activists as betrayers. Such post-truth politics contributed to the alienation of the inhabitants, as almost all the residents of Yukarı Ağaçlı, who will be directly displaced, have hesitated to engage in solidarity. Put differently, the alienation has been objectified in Ağaçlı in such a way that the residents, who are appropriating space, have deprived themselves of collective struggle against the domination of space by exchange value. In this sense, the research framework has demonstrated that alienation goes beyond economics; it is also political and ideological (Lefebvre, 1991 [1968]; see also Elden, 2004).

A further hypothesis at the core of this research suggested that the explosion of the urban/rural binary not only serves for capitalist urbanization but also creates new terrains, battlefronts, encounters, and tactics for resistance against capitalist urbanization. The explosions of capitalist urbanization give way to the explosions of struggle produced from the dialectic of concentrated and extended urbanization.

As seen in Chapter 6, the experience gained in the Gezi Resistance was channeled into the park forums that were held across the country. Those park forums then evolved into collectives focusing on a range of issues such as ecology, feminism, queer perspectives, and workers' rights.

Zooming in to the Third Airport Project, the NFD is one of the most active and well-known movements against the mega projects. As the director of the organization mentioned in an in-depth interview, the NFD was founded as a product of the Caferağa Park Forum, one of the “post-Gezi” forums. Chapter 7 showed that the NFD is recognizable not only in İstanbul; it is also affiliated with several movements against mining, HEPPs, and construction on natural assets across Anatolia. As in-depth interviews showed, the NFD organizes, participates in, and supports numerous struggles across the country via the Internet, and more specifically through social media. Moreover, this organization has developed a place-specific tactic for the struggle against the Third Airport of providing information and counter-views for the international finance corporations that would offer loans for the project. In this regard, the interviewee mentioned that these efforts have had effects on the corporations as the project could not receive loans from international banks.

Seen from a broader perspective, Chapter 7 showed that the top-down approach has not only served for capitalist exploitation but also gave way to reinforced solidarity. Several branches of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects filled lawsuits against the Third Airport Project. Numerous debated issues from tender processes to EIA reports became matters of dispute. Furthermore, a large group of scientists, scholars, and NGOs published extensively and declared their objections via different national and international platforms.

Moreover, four citizens with no connections to NGOs brought a lawsuit with a claim to the right to the city. This lawsuit became a milestone in the struggle against uneven urbanization in Turkey as it was opened by “just people” rather than the inhabitants or users. As seen in Chapter 7, the lawsuit faced several illegal/extra-legal

arrangements, such as the changing of the court board, the assignment of bureaucrats as experts, and violation of suspension of execution decisions. Nevertheless, this experience has opened new horizons for both legal arrangements and scholarly works on “who is the victim” in urban development projects or “who has a right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996 [1968]). Moreover, as in-depth interviews showed, lawyers’ experiences gained in such lawsuits empowered their tactics in Cerattepe since they have endeavored to provide the participation of larger groups. All in all, top-down policies and damages to the separation of power gave rise to new place-specific tactics that go beyond the urban/rural division.

The connection of diverse struggles and social classes is also another characteristic of new centralities. Scaling to the Third Airport Project, as Chapter 7 showed, the poor working conditions of the Third Airport construction site have received attention since the beginning of the construction. However, the strike that began on September 14, 2018 after a shuttle crash resulted in the death of two workers and the injuries of many attracted widespread recognition. The strike, however, ended with arrests. The social media account of the Third Airport Workers’ Platform has been announcing the progress of the legal process, issuing calls for upcoming protests, and also posting the stories of the dying workers, most of who had come from East Anatolia. Simply reading these posts answers the question of whether these workers of the Third Airport, who may never see the center of the city and never participate in a protest for the city or in the city, can be rendered invisible for the urban struggle.

Accordingly, another conclusion to address is the emergence of social media as the cement of the new centrality. Increasing communication technologies, and more specifically social media tools, have connected and consolidated the struggles of extended and concentrated urbanization, once segregated.

8.1.3. Concrete Abstraction

As noted in the dissertation's introduction, one of the main departure points of this study from the planetary urbanization thesis is its implicit emphasis on the defense of the thing/process dialectic as an analytical category in urban research. Accordingly, this study expanded its methodology through the integration of Lefebvre's concrete abstraction to social levels. This analytical category examined the place of "thing" in dialectical movement as a component that reacts and transforms the process. Similar to the social levels, the notion of concrete abstraction has also been scaled to the architectural form of the Third Airport and Airport City Project.

The post-1980 neoliberal adjustment program that was counseled by the IMF led to the increasing hegemony of international capital in the Turkish economy. These combined forces of neoliberalization and globalization brought İstanbul to the fore as an arena not only for sustaining the adjustment program but also for the materialization of capital accumulation. Accordingly, the global city discourse has been fully embraced and legitimized in an effort to attract investment. In this context, the İstanbul mayor of that time implemented several ambitious large-scale projects, known as the Dalan Operations, including the demolition of hundreds of historic buildings in Tarlabası, the relocation of the industrial zone on the Haliç shores to the periphery, and the construction of large boulevards in their places. All of these interventions were also an encapsulation of the current state of the orchestrated gentrification process in İstanbul: attacks on habiting and everyday life, the privilege of exchange value over use value, and displacement. They also generated a long-lasting rhetoric in legitimizing the spatial exclusion of the working class: "cleaning" the area for family values and security. This rhetoric of "cleaning" to make İstanbul a global city has been further legitimized by bolder claims about "super cities," "anti-terrorism," and "earthquake resistance" while presenting a competitive gentrification campaign mobilized in the historic neighborhoods beginning from the early 2000s.

In this vein, the neoliberal urban policy of the 1980s and 1990s was marked by increasing spatial segregation and exclusion as well as the rent-seeking activities of entrepreneurial local government. From this vantage point, the relaxation of development plans in the mid-1980s may be the most crucial policy considering its long-term results for nature. Through these new arrangements, upscale gated communities mushroomed around the forest lands, water basins, and lakes, including those in the Northern Forests of İstanbul. The most famous gated communities were constructed in this period near forestry land, whose “brand value” has been used for the marketing of Airport City.⁴⁹

At the same time, this decisive moment has also seen the employment of concrete abstraction to touch the everyday life of the urban poor. As Chapter 4 introduced, the discovery of urban populism allowed the MP government to compensate the economic costs for those urban poor who had suffered most from the worsening income distribution that resulted from neoliberal policies (Boratav, 1990, 1991). In this period, the *gecekondu* amnesties and subsidies for home ownership acted as the strategies of the G level to utilize concrete abstraction in exchange for votes.

Chapter 5 maintained those pivotal axes in the second decisive moment to understand their temporal continuity. The current ruling government also used urbanization in a fruitful way while in power. While the ruling party abolished a populist approach regarding informal housing, it has used urban development in a more creative way to gain the popular vote from the working class. First, the municipalities have been granted the right to initiate partnerships to implement urban transformation projects. As Chapter 5 showed, this in turn allowed municipalities to more actively participate in social assistance for the urban poor, mostly through “donations” coming from the companies operating in the construction sector.

⁴⁹ Kemer Country, for example, was mentioned during the interview with the Director of Real Estate Development of Company X.

Furthermore, the JDP touched the everyday life of people through MHA houses intended for low-income residents, which, in turn, provided votes for the party. In other words, the government succeeded in penetrating the everyday life of low-income residents through concrete abstraction, be it directly or indirectly.

Chapter 5 also introduced a salient attack of the G level on the P level in which form plays a decisive role. This decisive moment was marked by the employment of form of urbanization as a tool to legitimate spatial exclusion. According to the G level, while habiting “style” and its associated form of gecekondu support crime and terrorism, the homogeneous apartment blocks of the MHA and the habitat they propose may act against it. Thus, while habiting became an obstructor for capitalist urbanization, the form of it transformed the process.⁵⁰

Accordingly, Chapter 6 showed how this movement succeeded in the third decisive moment. The urbanization trajectory in Turkey entered a new phase with the 2011 general elections. An ambitious urban development campaign that embraced the rhetoric of “mega,” “crazy,” and “the largest” was presented by the President as a part of the 2011 general election campaign. The President presented the mega projects in İstanbul as a national concern that should hold relevance in the general election campaign, and the ruling party significantly increased its votes and came to power once again with the support of that campaign revolving around urban development in İstanbul. From this point, the form of the projects, namely their “grand scale,” impacted the process.

Zooming in on the Third Airport Project, Chapter 7 demonstrated that the architectural form or the scale of concrete abstraction became the most powerful tool for legitimatizing uneven development while rendering all legal violations, corruption allegations, injustices, and ecological destruction invisible. Furthermore,

⁵⁰ See Chapter 2 for habiting vs. habitat (Lefebvre, 2003).

the economic growth and employment discourse directly produced from the massive scale of the “thing” bolstered the image in such a context of consistently growing unemployment rates. Moreover, through the analysis of official documents as well as speeches of the G level, Chapter 7 showed that this specific discourse produced from the scale of the form deepened the already existing exclusion of the masses on the one hand while reinforcing social polarization on the other. More specifically, it showed that the ruling government marginalized the groups who objected to the Third Airport Project on the basis of uneven urbanization, ecological destruction, and exclusion. The G level labeled all the professional chambers, scholars, scientists, and NGOs who have had ecological, social, and technical concerns as groups obstructing the progress to be achieved through the “largest” form.

Chapter 7 also showed the materialization of the G level through architecture within concrete abstraction. More specifically, it argued that the Third Airport Project as a concrete abstraction reflects the amalgamation of political Islam and neoliberalism with the tulip-inspired design of its control tower, Süleymaniye Mosque-inspired vaulted roof, and a grand-scale mosque dominating the entrance on the one hand and more than ten million square meters of shopping malls, luxurious offices, and residences on the other.

A further conclusion associated with the notion of concrete abstraction emerges from the G level’s problematic perception of nature. Chapter 7 showed that the distorted perception of nature is the product of place-specific spatial fetishism. This perspective also manifested in the scale of the Third Airport and Airport City Project. An official EIA report remarked on the migratory paths of thousands of birds and the significance of the flora and fauna in the area on the one hand and explained methods to “fight against” the birds for the sake of construction on the other. This perspective on nature was duplicated not only in capital but also among architects, as in-depth interviews showed that the design process has been focused on fighting against nature.

A relevant conclusion of this section is that architects acted as the producers of representations of space while reflecting the G level's spatial fetishism. Chapter 7 demonstrated how the "keywords" of the G level, such as "economic growth," "grand-scale," "ambitious," and "dramatic," have been mobilized in the architectural discourse. Similar to the actors of the G level, architects of the project also equated the construction of a mega-scale airport to economic growth. In-depth interviews further revealed that the exploitation of architecture by capitalism resulted in the alienation of the architect through the transformation of his labor power into a commodity. The words of the Director of Real Estate Development of Company X, who is an architect, was evidence of this alienation: "design is flexible as it is changing according to the economic conditions... the thing is not only giving an architectural function to the buildings, but you should also know its profitability" (Director of Real Estate Development, also an architect).

All in all, the G level proposes a new kind of everyday life through concrete abstraction calcified around the segregated residences, shopping malls, and office buildings. Thus, the 'the thing' becomes an impetus for the process. Put differently, not only does the process attack the P level, but also, the form attacks everyday life. In this sense, the Third Airport City does not only directly displace existing inhabitants; it excludes and separates a form of everyday life while replacing the use value with the exchange value.

8.2. Looking Back to the Theory

Why can the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey be recast as a process immanent to planetary urbanization? Or, conversely, how can the notion of planetary urbanization explain the contextually specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey within the broader totality?

The main hypothesis of this study proposed that the place-specific trajectory of gentrification in Turkey is a process intrinsic to planetary urbanization rather than a detached phenomenon existing in some neighborhoods. This overarching assumption necessitated bringing contextual particularities to an analytical level wherein common concerns, which connect inner cities from London to Mumbai or New York to Turkey, can be discussed. In other words, the concrete research revealed the place-specific determinations of the gentrification process in order to contribute to the understanding of the complexity of planetary urbanization. These steps also paved the way for the ultimate aim of the study, which is “looking back” at gentrification theory. In this vein, the following section situates the conclusions that emerge from the concrete research within the mainstream literature in order to nuance and revise the theory. For the sake of clarity, the three necessary conditions of gentrification that were introduced in the first chapter, including class polarization behind the gentrified scene, noticeable increase in investment in the secondary circuit of capital, and different forms of displacement, are employed as common concerns in the analytical plain (Lees *et al.*, 2015).

1. Noticeable increase in the secondary circuit of capital

Harvey’s capital switching theory is one of the main pillars of gentrification to build upon (see also Lefebvre, (2003 [1970])); Harvey, 1978, 1982). Harvey has argued that capital over-accumulation in the primary circuit switched into the secondary circuit to overcome the crisis. As Lees *et al.* mention, China further provided a refinement of the theory as the two circuits in China are mutually supportive rather than the secondary rising above the primary (Lees *et al.*, 2016). This study showed that Turkey has also seen a place-specific form of capital switching. As Chapter 6 showed, the capital switching to the secondary circuit in Turkey mainly comes from underpriced privatization of state enterprises along with the dismissals and extreme cost savings made from living labor. There is also an additional source for capital accumulation in Turkey, which has been discussed in previous chapters drawing on Harvey’s theory of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005). The accumulated

capital defined in Harvey's theory is the capital that is switching to the secondary circuit in Turkey. Output becomes input in the circle and this goes on and on. Furthermore, the borders of switching are blurred; they sustain each other. From this point, Turkey also experiences mutually supportive circuits of capital, but not between production and the built environment as in China—rather, between privatization, dispossession, and real estate.

Switching capital to the secondary circuit first of all necessitates the designation of the most profitable sites. Neil Smith defines those profitable areas with the rent gap theory, which connotes a disparity between actual land rent and potential land rent at its “highest and best use” (Smith, 1979, p. 543). Here, Smith defines a process that begins with the decline of a site due to disinvestment and goes on with the movement of capital to the site for the possibility of high profit. Even though this sequence of disinvestment/investment is not valid for the contemporary metamorphic gentrification in Turkey, Smith's rent gap theory is still valid in a nuanced way. In Turkey, the gap is “created” and “extracted” by the state from and through natural heritage, which is also a part of the historical continuum of gentrification, rather than tracing the cycle of valorization and de-valorization. More specifically, the relaxations of development plans in the mid-1980s gave way to the construction of upper-class gated communities in the Northern Forest lands of İstanbul, which had been marketed with the natural beauty of the site. Accordingly, as shown in Chapter 7, contemporary metamorphic gentrification has benefitted from the rent gap, which is not only created through natural heritage but also the “heritage” of the erstwhile created rent gap in the adjacent neighborhoods in the historical continuum.

This nuanced way of switching capital necessitates a nuanced way of policy discourse in turn. While the mainstream literature discusses the gentrification discourse revolving around the social mix, participation, or sustainability, the gentrification trajectory in Turkey is legitimized through economic growth and employment rhetoric, which is reinforced by conspiracy discourse and polarization. Furthermore, the form of the spatial fix—the concrete abstraction—is directly used

by the government to legitimize and sustain the process, which is an unfamiliar discussion, if not totally absent, for the mainstream. Although this dissertation has examined the thing/process dialectic through its research methodology, genuine gentrification conceptualization requires the integration of this dialectic, which is crucial for critical urban studies. In doing so, an analytical level can be found to discuss the global architectural style and discourse that produce as well as accelerate all forms of displacement, ranging from direct to exclusionary.

However, rhetoric alone did not suffice to designate some 7,659 hectares as construction area in the forest lands known as “lungs of İstanbul.” As Chapter 7 demonstrated, the violation of laws, ambiguity, top-down approaches, and ignoring the opinions of professional chambers, scholars, and scientists operated as a system for switching the capital while facilitating speculative urbanization at the expense of the destruction of natural heritage. From this point, the characteristics of gentrification in Turkey dramatically differ from the mainstream discussions revolving around participation and sustainability, while future studies may find more in common to discuss with the Global South.

2. Class polarization lies beneath the gentrified scene

This study argued that class polarization lies at the heart of gentrification, which also demarcates the concept from more neutral terms such as urban renewal, regeneration, or redevelopment. In this vein, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 examined the multidimensional class polarization lying beneath the metamorphic gentrification in Turkey, which subsumes diverse actors and struggles.

The first dimension is the original users of the Northern Forest villages. While a large part of the project covers forest lands, the Airport City part of the project will be adjacent the area of villages. Here, it would be naïve to believe that the existing users who are not directly displaced through expropriation can keep going about their rural lives in their modest houses. The high-end residences, shopping malls, offices, and

private universities that address the super-rich will exclude their lives both socially and spatially.

As seen in Chapter 7, the strike that began on 14 September following the death of two workers at the construction site was also a crystallization of sharp class conflict. The demands of the workers, including salaries that had not been paid for six months and the treatment of dirt and bedbugs in the dormitories provided by the company, which is dealing with the marketing of a “distinctive, prestigious life” in Airport City, was a dramatic manifestation of the polarization that lies beneath the gentrified scene.

Seen from a broader perspective, as Chapter 7 showed, mega projects have fomented the discontent of different social classes that have already been opposing the exploitation of all natural, historic, cultural, and material sources of Turkey by a small group. Gezi Park was a striking manifestation of this conflict. Hence, the resistance against the Airport Project has not been raised only above the social, political, and environmental conflicts but also the exclusion of the middle and lower classes by the appropriation of urban space and natural sources.

All in all, on the one hand, metamorphic gentrification in Turkey is the spatial manifestation of steadily polarized class relations, while on the other hand, it is the further intensifier of the existing polarization.

3. Displacement

Gentrification researchers have long interpreted displacement as a multidimensional process and experience for the original users rather than the moment of physical dislocation (Marcuse, 1985; Davidson, 2009; Sakizlioğlu, 2014; Atkinson, 2015; Varlı Görk and Rittersberger, 2016; Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees, 2019). Accordingly, several terms (e.g., direct, indirect, exclusionary, pressure, lived, phenomenological, un-homing) have been used to understand the nuanced way of displacement as a process. On the other hand, Chapter 7 gave the signal that those

definitions require further refinements for Turkey. Although a rigorous analysis of this nuanced way of displacement for contemporary gentrification in Turkey exceeds the scope of this study, certain evidence has suggested that while eviction has already been operating through expropriation, the Third Airport and Airport City Project will lead to mass displacement, including both direct and indirect forms, in the following years.

As Chapter 7 showed, almost all interviewees learned of their coming displacement through the expropriation documents they received from the MHA. Nearly fifty families are experiencing enforced eviction. As discussed in detail, the eviction trajectory included several manifestations of top-down approaches along with numerous extra-legal arrangements. The discussions on this form of displacement—enforced eviction—are more familiar in the mega-scale projects implemented in the Global South than in Global North experiences.

It is obvious that the scale of this displacement will only increase in pursuit of the construction of Airport City in the following years, including luxurious residences, hotels, office buildings, and shopping malls. Numerous media sources and the narratives from the villagers gave the strong impression that giant holdings had already invested in land adjacent to Airport City, including parcels in the villages. Apparently, the following years will see a larger increase in the rent gap, which is already large, and, accordingly, increased pressure on the users.

Besides land price pressures, certain evidence also suggests that original users will experience displacement pressure. As Chapter 7 showed, most of the interviewees have been living in rural areas for their whole lifetimes, earning money from animal husbandry. In this regard, it is strongly possible that they will not feel at home and will possibly be isolated following the construction of the high-end mixed-use project. Almost all of the respondents, meanwhile, believe that the state or wealthy people will cheaply take their property one way or another and they will not be able to afford to stay in the gentrified district.

Measuring displacement is difficult, and it is defined as “invisible” in the mainstream since the empirical evidence is weak. However, the findings of a study from Santiago drawing on a survey of 746 original households provide us fertile grounds to measure exclusionary displacement in İstanbul (Lopez-Morales, 2016). The study brilliantly connected the unequal ground rent capture to exclusionary displacement, finding that ground rent levels captured by developers and by original owners/residents differed significantly as the system blocked the profits of the original residents with which they could have afforded replacements. The trajectory of Santiago heavily echoes the possible future of Ağaçlı. As the residents of Ağaçlı have already predicted and mentioned in the interviews, certain evidence suggests that large-scale developers will capture the ground rent instead of the existing owners when the area is developed. This, in turn, will also give way to displacement pressure as the original residents will have limited access to the newly developed high-end projects and will also be unable to purchase new replacement accommodations using the captured rent gap. Accordingly, the extremely unequal power relations between the investors and existing population along with the high rate of land ownership among the original population seem destined to drive exclusionary displacement in Ağaçlı in the following years in ways similar to Santiago (see Lopez-Morales, 2016).

In summary, looking back on theory demonstrates that gentrification in Turkey is not a detached phenomenon that exists in some neighborhoods but is in fact immanent to planetary urbanization, whose underlying essence is the capitalist world system. The contextual particularities of gentrification in Turkey do not represent a different ontology; it is a place-specific form of gentrification that is dialectically and relationally situated within the “context of context.” Stretching the term at the planetary scale, appropriation of gentrification as a general and abstract concept showed that class polarization, capital switching, and displacement remain at the focal point of planetary gentrification in different forms. On the other hand, the concepts produced through the concrete research on the Third Airport and Airport

City Project are not exclusively relevant to Turkey but have potential for the refinement of the theory to more deeply serve as an abstract concept across both Northern and Southern cities.

8.3. Key Contributions of the Dissertation and Future Studies

1- Through an engagement with recent interrogations regarding the object of analysis in gentrification research, this dissertation has critically reviewed the contextualization of gentrification in Turkey to date by shifting the scale from neighborhood to planetary on the one hand and reinterpreting the process on all social levels on the other. In doing so, it has re-contextualized and re-conceptualized not only the historical process but also the recent phase of gentrification in İstanbul in relation to planetary urbanization and within totality.

More specifically, first of all, this dissertation has revealed that focusing on and copying Anglo-American linear schemas rendered many forms of gentrification invisible and eventually resulted in overlooking the place-specific trajectory of the process in the post-1980 period. While the gentrification literature in Turkey merely deals with the classical form of the process for that period, this study argues that gentrification in Turkey must be considered within the framework of state-led urbanization even as early as the 1980s.

The research methodology of the thesis also allowed a rethinking of the current form of the gentrification process in Turkey. The evidence gained from the diachronic analysis and the fieldwork demonstrated that the contemporary form of gentrification in Turkey can be defined as “metamorphic” as it shifted the analytical category of the operational landscape. Furthermore, it subsumes place-specific characteristics: (1) a distinct form of fetishism attached to the built environment; (2) a massive switch of capital from the primary circuit to the secondary circuit through dispossessions and extreme cost savings made from living labor across the country;

(3) destruction of natural assets and its legitimatization through economic growth discourse; (4) violation of laws; (5) the covering up of corruption, economic pain, and increasing unemployment through the discourse on the built environment; (6) ambitious top-down urban policies shaped by subjectivities; (7) network formations consolidating “fixed” holding companies; (8) a symbiotic relationship between capital and government; and (9) the creation of legal as well as extra-legal displacement mechanisms.

On the other hand, the framework of the dissertation has explored not only the macro-order but also everyday life and new centralities for struggle that go beyond the traditional binaries. First, it showed that the conflict between individual interest and collective action is also concomitant with the historical trajectory of gentrification in İstanbul and manifested itself in the scale of the Third Airport and Airport City Project once again. On the other hand, Chapter 7 showed that explosions of capitalist urbanization also gave way to explosions of struggle beyond any boundaries. This study has demonstrated that the contextually specific form of struggle against gentrification in Turkey subsumes (1) the absolute objections of professional chambers, scholars, and scientists; (2) ecological struggles across Anatolia; (3) reinforced solidarity as a reaction to top-down policies; and (4) the participation of urbanites, peasants, and workers along with their emerging broadening and reflexive place-specific tactics.

2- Neil Brenner and Chris Schmid’s reinterpretation of Lefebvre’s notion of planetary urbanization is one of the most influential theses of the recent years in urban research. However, despite a significant body of contribution on theoretical discussions, the employment of its framework in empirical analysis remains rare. In this regard, this study does not only empirically ground the framework of the planetary urbanization thesis but also contributes to the theoretical refinement process through its original research methodology developed to test that framework. More specifically, this study has contributed to the planetary urbanization thesis on the following three main axes.

First, this thesis has increased the gravity of struggle and everyday life in the core agenda of planetary urbanization through the integration of the P level into the research methodology as an analytical category. In doing so, it examined not only the imposition of global forces but also the political dimensions of everyday life along with their dialectical movement.

Second, this dissertation has broadened the role of extended urbanization in the original formulation of the planetary urbanization thesis. Brenner and Schmid defined extended urbanization as a metabolic supporter, or as a consequence of urban life. However, the place-specific trajectory of Turkey proves that extended urbanization is not only a physical supporter but also a financial supporter, since it acts as a capital accumulation device for the very same actors of the large-scale urban transformation and infrastructure projects in the heart of the city. In this vein, new horizons on the financial role of extended urbanization can be integrated into the core agenda of planetary urbanization.

Finally, both the main departure point of this study from planetary urbanization and its main contribution is its implicit emphasis on the defense of the city/thing as an analytical category in urban research. For this aim, this study integrated Lefebvre's notion of concrete abstraction as an analytical category to understand the thing/process dialectic. In doing so, it examined not only the process but also the crucial role of thing/city/built environment.

From this vantage point, this study has shown that genuine gentrification research requires more engagement with the thing/process dialectic. The theory of gentrification can become a nexus to rethink hegemony-building through concrete abstraction ranging from instrumentalization of global architectural styles to consolidation of authority at the expense of displacement. In this regard, there is a need to include the form as an analytical category in gentrification research as well as new methodologies to achieve this.

3- As described in the introduction, this study has critically reviewed the planetary urbanization thesis by drawing on previous critical urban studies as well as further third-wave Lefebvrian works and has constructed its epistemological framework accordingly. Furthermore, it produced its own original methodology to operate that framework, drawing on Lefebvre's conceptualization of social totality and concrete abstraction. Accordingly, this process-oriented research methodology of the study can be tested and revised for different cases. Although this study used gentrification—as an abstract concept—as a filter for the operation of methodology, this filter can easily be engaged with feminist, queer, or critical ethnic perspectives. In this vein, this study contributes not only to the discussions on the planetary urbanization thesis but also to the substantial body of works that are defined as third-wave Lefebvrian studies.

From this vantage point, a related research area for Turkey is the characteristics of contemporary gentrifiers. Here, the international capital and investors particularly need attention, which exceeded the scope of this dissertation. In this regard, the theoretical model of this study can be used to examine the impact of international capital on both concentrated and extended urbanization in Turkey.

4- This dissertation has provided 'before physical displacement' data gained from Yukarı Ağacli residents who will be evicted through expropriation. The respondents emphasized their relationship with nature, animal husbandry, family relations, and social ties while expressing their understanding of home. Most of them also mentioned that there is no price that could compensate this displacement. In this sense, the interviews demonstrated that the understanding of displacement should go beyond the physical dislocation and move towards a more nuanced conceptualization of displacement. Conceptualization of displacement as a process of 'un-homing' for not only those evicted through expropriation but also for other residents and their children, who will experience alienation, provides better insight rather than focusing merely on the 'thing,' such as the number of families that will be displaced or the moment of dislocation (see Atkinson, 2015; Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees, 2019).

Furthermore, fieldwork showed that the area has significant illustrative potential to examine not only last-resident displacement but also chain displacement. The findings of this study may also provide a basis for future studies to understand exclusionary displacement, which is very rare in the literature.

5- The Third Airport and Airport City Project became one of the most sensational projects in the history of the Republic of Turkey. As in-depth interviews demonstrated, the top-down approach was accompanied by a veil of mystery during the project. There is a wide assumption that it is a difficult task to obtain information about the project from the state authorities or contractor firm. Airport City is particularly secretive as there are only some architectural renderings available on the official website.

At the time of the writing, the new mayor of İstanbul—a member of the main opposition party—had participated in a television program to explain the possible profound damages of the İstanbul Canal. During the show, he also mentioned the Third Airport and asked the journalists if they had heard anything about the Airport City adjacent to the Third Airport. There were no answers. From this vantage point, this study has contributed to “informing” people as the dissertation has included the envisaged plans and programs of Airport City along with detailed interviews with the project directors.

8.4. Afterword: On Architecture and Totality

Looking from the ‘post-dissertation defense’ vantage point, it seems that ending this study by introducing my engagement with Lefebvre as an architect in the context of my own intellectual journey is necessary to elucidate the place of ‘architecture and architect’ within this study.

As an undergraduate architecture student, as one would expect, I was heavily engaged with my design studio projects, including both shopping malls and mixed-

use developments—flagships of capitalist accumulation—or the restoration of historic housing stock—less so flagships of capital accumulation. Unsurprisingly, I was eagerly following the ‘starchitects’ and their projects, wherein architectural forms seemed to be dominating all the ‘planet’ at one point, the point where the architect stood.

In the same years, again unsurprisingly, I was following the articles, interviews, and meetings of Turkish ‘starchitects,’ some of which were touching on critical urban theory. That is to say, I was an architecture student dreaming of designing an ‘iconic’ project on the one hand, and I was, ironically, recognizing the uneven development of capitalist urbanization on the other. This mindset was apparently the production of, in Lefebvre’s words, a fragmented perception of reality.

Nevertheless, there were moments in which the borders of those fragments became blurred. In the third year of my undergraduate education, we assisted the UNESCO-supported Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Program for four months as a part of our architectural restoration course. Fener and Balat are low-income neighborhoods located on the coastline of the Golden Horn. Each room of the decayed historic houses was the shelter for one tenant family that had migrated from Southeast Anatolia. During those four months, we spent a considerable amount of time with the families. Although the rehabilitation program had strict rules against displacement, the inhabitants were feeling the fear of losing their homes, which brought further deterioration to their poor living conditions. I witnessed these feelings closely.

Three years later, I worked on a similar project called ‘Rehabilitation of il Casilino 900’ in Rome. Casilino 900 was a camp settlement inhabited by low-income families from the former Yugoslavia. We worked for long hours over five months in the camp to learn about the inhabitants’ everyday life and struggles. Finally, we designed their houses on the basis of their needs as a part of an urban design studio project. During those two projects, I not only closely witnessed the lived experience of poor

conditions but I also began to think about architecture from a different perspective. Through those two experiences, I realized that the consciousness of the architect had a significant role in the ‘rehabilitation’ of everyday life.

Those experiences crystallized in my thinking during my PhD courses. As mentioned in the introduction, discussions on the role of architect and architecture against capitalist urbanization in line with Lefebvrian theory throughout the “Social and Cultural Themes in Architecture” course shaped my thoughts irreversibly. Those discussions facilitated a moment for externalizing myself and then confronting my own position, thus constituting an overcoming. That is to say, the dialectic of theory and practice that I had experienced so far became my own starting point for answering the question of where architecture is in the resistance to capitalist urbanization. Accordingly, the recognition of theory as an absolute instrument and accessing reality through abstract concepts became constant in my own interpretation of ‘world.’

This orientation gave rise to my own engagement with Lefebvre’s notion of totality. In pursuit of delving deeper into Lefebvre’s theory and reconciling his wide-ranging discussions on urban, rural, state, and everyday life through his three-dimensional dialectic, I realized that his notion of totality has the potential to push the architect as well as architectural research beyond their territories. This was Lefebvre’s originality. Lefebvre was constructing a totality, wherein architecture was also taking place, and then externalizing himself from the whole totality. In other words, he kept a critical distance from the ‘totality’ as the object of analysis. Accordingly, this dissertation has also endeavored to understand this totality through his conceptual tools in an open-minded way. His tools were not merely an inspiration or a starting point; they constituted the very ‘DNA’ of this study. I did not set a critical distance to architecture as an architect, but rather to totality as an architect.

In this vein, this dissertation has used Lefebvre’s notion of concrete abstraction to refer to that totality behind the urban form. Lefebvre defined concrete abstraction as

an abstraction that “concretizes and realizes itself socially, in the social practice” (Lefebvre, 1977 cited in Stanek, 2008). Accordingly, this dissertation used the term to persistently refer to the hidden social relations behind the form and thus its dialectical relationship with social levels. As noted throughout this work, the dialectical relationship between the abstract and concrete is the ‘seed’ of that thesis and the notion of concrete abstraction also represents that seed. From this vantage point, the notion of concrete abstraction is employed to refer to the dialectic as well as the inextricability of form and process. It was aimed here to examine how form materialized the social levels, or, conversely, how social levels instrumentalized it.

Finally, all in all, this study set the M level as the backbone of this totality. Throughout the dissertation, the M level was used as the mediator between different social levels and acted as the context. It is the level for defense and attack, and an arena for the collision of the G level and P level. In this regard, this dissertation has explained the M level, wherein planetary urbanization is exercised.

It can be argued that achieving such totality in research does not necessitate Lefebvre’s theory. Nevertheless, my study honestly could not penetrate the capillaries of social levels and then frame them in a systematic way through only empirical research, without his theory. Lefebvre’s rigid tools along with the systematization of his theory through the planetary urbanization thesis significantly pushed my research and thinking on all levels. The confrontation of theoretical abstraction with practice provided valuable insights for this study though steadily checking back on theoretical interpretations and refining/broadening them according to the practical world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

List of Interviewees and Semi-Structured Questions

Questions for State Authorities (replied through the Directorate of Communication)

- 1- What are the motivations behind the Third Airport Project?
- 2- What kind of benefits will the project generate for Turkey and İstanbul?
- 3- What is the mission of the Transportation Ministry in the project? Can you explain the role of the Ministry and the project procedure?
- 4- What kind of research was conducted to designate the site? Which criteria were considered?
- 5- What is your opinion about the strict opposition of professional chambers and scholars? What could be the fundamental reasons for this conflict?
- 6- Do you interpret the project as a functional transportation project that is isolated from the city? Or as a new attraction center for the city?

Interviewees and Questions for the Contractor Firm

	Name	Occupation	Topics Discussed
1	Ms. Ü.Ö.	Director of Environment and Sustainability/Company X	Sustainability strategies, such as architectural design, environment, and social policies, of the contractor firm
2.	Mr. G.Ş.	Director of Corporate Communications/Company X	Aim and objective of the Airport Project
3.	Mr. A.Ö.	Director of Airport City/Company X	Design and real estate strategies of Airport City
4.	Ms. E.D.	Director of Design Office/Company X	Architectural design of the project

1- What is your assessment of the Third Airport and Airport City Project's symbolic meaning for İstanbul?

2- How do you define the project? An infrastructural project located in an isolated area that targets airway personnel and passengers, or a new attraction point targeting wider groups?

3- Could you explain the architectural program and design principles of the Airport City? How do you define the target group of the Airport City?

4- There are highly critical comments emphasizing the lack of research regarding the possible catastrophic impacts of the project on climate, fertile lands, the marine ecosystem, the region's characteristic flora and fauna, and bird migratory paths. What is your opinion about those comments? What is your assessment about the relationship between the project and nature?

5- Could you explain your strategies and methods for the protection of social authenticity?

Interviewees and Questions for the NGOs

	Name	Occupation	Topics Discussed
1.	Mr. A.O.	Lawyer of the citizens' case	The matters of dispute for the case opened against the Third Airport Project
2.	Mr. A.A.	Head of the İstanbul Branch of the Chamber of City Planners	Their role in the decision-making process, the matters of dispute for the case against the Third Airport Project
3.	Mr. B.İ.	Member of Center for Spatial Justice	Their strategies for the struggle against the project
4.	Ms. N.Ç.	Head of Northern Forest Defense	Their strategies for the struggle against the project

1- What is your assessment about the participation in the decision-making processes of the project?

2- What are your objections to the project?

3- What have you done regarding your objections so far? Can you explain your tactics and experiences? Do you think those tactics can be used for other struggles across the country, whether ecological or related to urban development?

4- How do you evaluate your relationship with the existing villagers?

Interviewees and Questions for the inhabitants of Ağaçlı village

	Name ⁵¹	Occupation
1	Mr. T.Ş.	Former Muhtar of Ağaçlı village
2	Mr. E.A.	Head of Ağaçlı Beautification Association
3.	Mrs. S.T.	Housewife
4	Mrs. Y.T.	Housewife
5	Mrs. M.H.	Housewife
6	Mrs. H.T.	Housewife
7	Mr. B.A.	Retired
8	Mr. D.A.	Retired
9	Mr. B.S.	Retired

1- How many years have you been living in Ağaçlı?

⁵¹ This study used random initials as further precaution to protect the privacy of the respondents.

- 2- Has your land been expropriated? If yes, what do think about displacement?
- 3- How do you earn money?
- 4- Can you explain an ordinary day for you and your family?
- 5- How do you define your relationship with the village?
- 6- When did you hear about the project? What do you know about the project?
- 7- How has your environment and life changed (if it changed) after the initiation of construction?
- 8- What do you think about the Third Airport and Airport City Project?
- 9- Can you evaluate your satisfaction of the levels of information and participation?
Have you participated in any meetings to get information?
- 10- Do you have information about the Airport City part of the project?
- 11- What are your expectations from the project?
- 12- What are your suggestions for existing inhabitants to benefit from the project?
- 13- What kind of offer could compensate your moving costs?
- 14- Do you think that higher income groups will move into your village? What are your future projections?

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

Middle East Technical University (2020)

Ph.D in Architecture

Dissertation titled 'Rethinking Gentrification in İstanbul through Planetary Urbanization' Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargin.

Middle East Technical University (2010)

M.Sc in Urban Design

Dissertation titled 'Gentrification in Fener and Balat Neighborhoods: The Role of Involved Actors'.

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Yeditepe University (2006)

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Full scholarship (University Entrance Exam top ranking in department)

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AWARDS, FUNDING

Roma Tre University, Master in Urban Design, *Erasmus Scholarship*, 2008-2009.

Honour Degree for the project 'il Casilino 900 Rehabilitation Project', *Roma Tre University*, 2009.

PUBLICATIONS AND SCHOLARLY WORK

Çalışkan, T., "Gezegensel Kentleşme Çağında Soylulaştırma: Üçüncü Havalimanı Örneği", in Kent, İnşaat ve Ekonomi Kongresi, Mart 2019, Gaziantep, (published in the proceedings book).

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