

A Comparative Look at Residents'  
Displacement Experiences:  
**The Cases of Amsterdam and Istanbul**

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A Comparative Look at Residents'  
Displacement Experiences:  
The Cases of Amsterdam and Istanbul

Een vergelijkend onderzoek naar bewonerservaringen met  
gedwongen verhuizingen in Amsterdam en Istanbul  
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Gentrification and displacement have become part and parcel of contemporary neoliberal urban policy (Smith 2002, Slater 2006, Lees et al. 2010). In cities around the world, public authorities engage in redevelopment or renewal of disadvantaged neighborhoods. While the aim of these interventions is to upgrade social, physical and economic conditions, the result is often displacement – locals are forced out of their houses and neighborhoods by forces or events beyond the control of the household (Grier and Grier 1980, Lee and Hodge 1984). The residents are replaced by newcomers who are mostly middle class. The gentrification of disadvantaged neighborhoods is thus spurred by public policies, a process called state-led gentrification. Examples range from redevelopment in post-Katrina New Orleans (Bang 2010) to the massive restructuring of shanty towns in Guangzhou (among other cities in China) (He 2012); from the renewal of poor neighborhoods to make way for Olympic Games<sup>1</sup> such as in East London in 2012 (Watt 2013) to the renewal of historic neighborhoods such as Sulukule in Istanbul, involving the displacement of ethnic minority communities (İslam 2009). In line with the expanding geography of gentrification and displacement, millions are affected by these urban policies and processes (Atkinson 2004).

The expanding geography of displacement opens up new and old questions for urban researchers. Partly these questions have to do with the causes for displacement. Why are millions subject to displacement in cities around the world? The literature offers partial answers. For instance, the rent gap theory of Smith (2002) and the consumption-based theory of Ley (1996) explain gentrification and therefore indirectly why displacement happens. More recently, David Harvey (2003, 2008) discussed displacement as part and parcel of the macro-level process of accumulation by dispossession – that is, accumulation of capital based on dispossessing people of their houses, land, wealth and rights – in the context of contemporary neoliberal policy. Harvey (2003, 2008) argues that displacement emerges as a policy tool to transfer urban resources from the public to the private sector and from the lower to the higher classes. Although Harvey hinted that the way to analyze displacement was through the theoretical lenses of accumulation by dispossession, scholars have not yet tried to incorporate this theory into research on displacement. The concept of accumulation by dispossession provides powerful analytical leverage by which to understand the origins of gentrification and displacement. The present study follows in Harvey's footsteps, embracing the theory of accumulation by dispossession as an analytical framework to study the causes of displacement. The concept of accumulation by dispossession can be used to study displacement in concrete instances of displacement. To make full use of this potential, however, the concept has to be reworked; it must

become more sensitive to how the process plays out in different places. To that end, this study amends the theory by taking a grounded approach that explains and compares how accumulation by dispossession operates through urban renewal in different contexts.

While the origins of gentrification and displacement have received a good deal of attention in the literature, much less has been devoted to the *residents' experiences of displacement*. Researchers working on this topic have studied the impact of displacement on the conditions of residents before and after their move (Varady and Walker 2000, Kleinhans 2003, Clampet-Lundquist 2004, Day and Cervero 2010 among others). This research is valuable but it also misses important dimensions of the displacement process. What does it mean for residents to be forced out of their houses and neighborhoods where their communities and social networks are based? How do they perceive the policies that force them to move? What are the strategies they devise to cope with displacement and its impacts at its various stages? How do the social boundaries between different groups of displaced households change as they go through the process?

## 1.1 A comprehensive and comparative approach to displacement

To answer these questions, we have to do more than comparing the conditions of the residents before and after being displaced. The impacts of the move are important but are not the only dimension of displacement. How the residents experience *the process* of displacement and the renewal policy is crucial and therefore constitutes the second dimension of the displacement experience. Displacement usually does not happen overnight. It takes a long trajectory, along which residents undergo changes in their living environment and are confronted with renewal plans as they are being implemented. How the residents cope through the strategies they devise as individual and collective agents of the displacement processes comprises the third dimension of displacement experience. Residents are not passive recipients of the process but respond to it and thereby shape their own experience, at least to some extent. This study attempts to develop a comprehensive comparative approach to displacement on the basis of the five theoretical and methodological premises set forth below.

### 1.1.1 Approaching displacement as a process

Most of the existing literature investigates the impact and extent of displacement by taking snapshots of neighborhoods and/or households before or after displacement. This type of analysis does not take into account how certain neighborhoods change after they are targeted for renewal or how these changes are experienced by and affect the residents. Rather than looking at the material effects of displacement at the end of the process, there is a need to look at how these effects are produced and how living under the threat of displacement is experienced. To understand these aspects, displacement should be studied as a process by looking into changes that happen consecutively over a period of time

(Bernt and Holm 2009, p. 34). Thus, we need to bring the crucial element of temporality into the analysis of displacement. In the case of gentrification, as we shall see, pushing neighborhoods toward decline for years serves to legitimize interventions and produce consent (among original residents as well as the general public) for renewal operations that displace many from their houses and neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods change once governments target them for renewal and prepare the ground for gentrification and displacement (Slater 2004, Cybriwsky 2011). As less maintenance takes place the quality of life declines. Place-based social networks and community ties that are important for the livelihoods of disadvantaged residents (Clampet-Lundquist 2007, Fried 1963, Meert et al. 1997) become sparse as people move out. Safety declines as vacancy rates rise etc. (Sakızlıoğlu 2014). As existing quantitative studies usually reduce the meaning of displacement to residential relocation (Davidson 2008), there is little attention for what losing place-based social networks and community ties means to the people who are directly affected by the process of displacement even before an actual move takes place. Existing studies reduce this socio-spatial phenomenon to a spatial one (ibid. p. 225) and ignore how the gradual destruction of communities and neighborhood-based social networks affects disadvantaged groups long before actual displacement occurs. This study provides a qualitative account of how space changes over time. It focuses on the long process of neighborhood change before physical displacement occurs and investigates the lived experiences of displacement. By doing so, this study discusses not only the making of state-led gentrification but also the meaning of the impending destruction of community- and neighborhood-based social networks for the residents.

### 1.1.2 Bridging macro and micro theory

Displacement does not happen in a void but is a part of neoliberal urban restructuring. State-led gentrification is part and parcel of the neoliberal urban policy toolkit (Smith 2002) and helps to redistribute urban space and wealth among different classes. Thus, it acts as an important pillar of accumulation by dispossession; that is, it underpins the accumulation of capital based on dispossessing people of their houses, land, wealth and rights (Harvey 2008). As Harvey (2008) puts it:

*A process of displacement and what I call 'accumulation by dispossession' lie at the core of urbanization under capitalism. It is the mirror-image of capital absorption through urban redevelopment, and is giving rise to numerous conflicts over the capture of valuable land from low-income populations that may have lived there for many years (Harvey 2008, p.34).*

Macro-analysis helps us understand gentrification and displacement in their wider context but they may miss empirical richness that is needed to explain different experiences of displacement at the local and household level. There are also rich

journalistic accounts on residents' experiences, bringing to the forefront the miseries and sorrows in stories but there is also research showing that displacement has very different effects that are not always negative (Posthumus 2013). The effects are also not fully determined by structural forces; as active (collective) agents, residents affect the outcomes of the process (Manzo et al. 2008, Smith 2002). This study aims to bridge the gap between a macro and a micro analysis of displacement by taking a grounded approach that zooms in on the agency and the lived experience of displaced residents.

### 1.1.3 Examining boundary making

Wacquant argues that the morphology of the working class in neoliberal times has been changed "by deepening divisions of skills, employment status and reproduction strategy, as well as by spatial scattering" (2008, p.199). In studying displacement, it is then important to take into account "the mechanisms and modalities of class decomposition and its spatial correlates" (ibid.) and expose the existing divisions, conflicts and tensions in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Through the process of displacement, social boundaries between different social groups (based on ethnicity, class and property ownership) are reshaped and catalyze already existing divisions, conflicts, coalitions in these neighborhoods, as previous research has underlined (Gans 1982, Blokland 2003). Studying the remaking of social boundaries between different class, ethnicity and tenure groups would help us in several ways: 1) to refrain from romanticizing the dispossessed and their communities; 2) to illuminate the variety of displacement experiences and strategies against displacement regarding the intrusive socio-spatial interventions of the state in these neighborhoods (e.g., state-led gentrification); and 3) to understand the dynamics of the boundary-making process that is triggered by urban renewal.

### 1.1.4 Incorporating a comparative perspective

Back in the 1980s, Le Gates and Hartman (1986) called for a comparative perspective in displacement and gentrification studies to investigate different geographies of gentrification and displacement. In the course of time, some scholars have responded to this call. Yet, the emergent comparative imagination in the gentrification literature has been restricted to cities of the Global North (see Slater 2004, Carpenter and Lees 1995, Hackworth 2002 among others), leaving cities elsewhere off the research agenda. Until very recently, the literature has been dominated by studies on gentrification and displacement in the cities of the Global North (Lees 2012), although most displacement occurs elsewhere (Cabannes et. al 2010). Moreover, most existing studies apply the available conceptual toolbox, which was developed to explain instances of gentrification in the Global North, when investigating and conceptualizing gentrification and displacement outside that core area. Furthermore, there are various issues that some authors highlight and discuss in the literature regarding the peculiarities of the processes of (state-led) gentrification in the cities of the Global South that deserve more scholarly attention.

To name a few: formalization of hitherto informal housing and labor markets (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, Winkler 2009); market making for international developers through redlining and ground rent dispossession (Lopez-Morales 2011); state's higher capacity and propensity for repression (Cabannes et al. 2010).

Lees (2012) underlined the need for a comparative urbanism of gentrification, which would “begin the task of decentring the dominant narratives of gentrification from the Global North” (ibid. p.6) and thus refine gentrification theories (see also Robinson 2006). To meet this challenge, there is a need for a grounded approach to research geographies of gentrification (Lees 2012). That research would have to incorporate the local political contexts – existing neoliberalisms in different cities/regions/countries, the role and power of the state, elite coalitions, etc. Understanding the contexts that give rise to urban policies promoting gentrification and documenting the strategies of actors facing gentrification are crucial elements of this grounded approach.

There has been no study comparing gentrification processes in cities of the Global South and North for a long time. Harris' (2008) comparative work on London and Mumbai is perhaps the first attempt to fill this gap. So far, no comparative studies of displacement experiences in the cities of the Global South and North have been published. Such a comparison is exactly what is aimed for here to decipher geographies of gentrification and amend existing theories. Comparative questions emerge regarding displacement that have not yet been addressed by researchers include: How do patterns and impacts of displacement differ from one country to another? What produces differences/similarities in the patterns and impacts of displacement as observed in different contexts? To capture these differences, this research examines how different groups of residents (based on class, tenure, ethnicity) experience displacement. Likewise, the study compares the strategies used by the residents to tackle displacement and its negative effects. The reason to do so is to decode the context-dependent nature of these strategies as well as their similarities in different contexts.

### 1.1.5 Studying the experience and agency of displaced residents

To understand the displacement experiences at micro level, it is important to analyze how residents perceive urban renewal policies, interact with authorities, and develop individual and collective strategies to deal with displacement.

Some researchers discuss the role of residents' perception regarding renewal measures as a factor shaping their pre-relocation reactions (Kleinhans 2003, Van Kempen and Priemus 2002). Research shows that if residents understand and support the reasons for urban renewal and the logic and method of its implementation, they would be more inclined to approach the renewal process positively, which may affect their displacement experience (Kleinhans 2003).

The quality of the information, guidance and counseling provided during the urban renewal process also shapes the way residents experience it (Varady and Walker

2000). Another aspect is related to resident participation. On the one hand, if there are mechanisms to ensure the residents' participation in the decision-making and implementation of renewal projects, and if their needs and wishes are taken into account, the result may be more satisfaction about the process. On the other hand, citizen participation "can also be used to ensure cooperation of citizens without allowing them any meaningful influence" (Huisman 2012, p.1). Power imbalances are integral to the process of urban renewal. The decisions are often made from the top down, and the authorities use their power over information and time to fragment any resistance or alliances against the renewal plans. Moreover, the residents often don't have much say over the future of their houses and neighborhoods. In such a context, citizen participation involves power asymmetries, as the residents often lack the power and information to affect decision-making regarding urban renewal. If they are given any space for decision-making during the citizen participation rounds, their decisions are often about marginal matters such as the color of the tiles. The residents are not part of the decision-making, for instance, on whether each and every displaced household that wants to return can actually do so. If these power asymmetries are not overcome – that is, if the citizens don't get involved in the actual decision-making process – there is no meaningful citizen participation. Rather, the process is legitimated through the participation of citizens (*ibid.*). Participation, or the lack thereof, constitutes an important aspect of the displacement experience. In this sense, it is important to investigate individual residents' experiences of how and why a renewal operation is being carried out and of the resident participation, information, guidance and counseling that is provided during the process.

Residents are not necessarily only reactive in this process; they may come up with strategies to deal with the impacts of displacement. These strategies could be devised at both the collective and the household level (Newman and Wylie 2006). Among these strategies are joining households (doubling up), making informal arrangements with landlords, taking on another job to pay the increased rent, etc. (*ibid.*) Residents may also collectively respond to the threat of displacement. Anti-displacement campaigns set up by community organizations or directly by the residents themselves constitute a collective strategy to deal with displacement processes. The gains of collective resistance (or lack thereof) may directly affect the impacts of displacement for the residents. There is little research about existing mechanisms such as informal housing market arrangements (İslam and Enlil 2008). Nor is there much on residents' household and collective strategies such as doubling up with friends or family or resisting displacement through community organizing (Newman and Wylie 2006, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). As we get to know more about these mechanisms and strategies, we will be able to understand the displacement experience better.

## 1.2 This research in a nutshell

This study aims to fill the above-mentioned gaps in the literature by developing a comprehensive and comparative approach to investigate residents' experiences of displacement processes. This research studies displacement experiences of residents in the cities of Amsterdam and Istanbul through the analytical lens of accumulation by dispossession. It has three main aims. The first is to explain the macro dynamics of displacement. The second is to explain and compare how accumulation by dispossession works in different contexts of urban renewal. The third is to add a comparative dimension to the study of displacement through an intra- and inter-city comparison of residents' displacement experiences on the basis of evidence from Amsterdam and Istanbul. The study seeks to answer three questions:

1. *What are the macro-level political-economic dynamics that result in displacement?*
2. *How does accumulation by dispossession work in different urban renewal contexts?*
3. *How do the residents experience the process of displacement in different contexts?*

The two cities were selected for the comparison as many of their respective residents have experienced displacement. Furthermore, they represent radically different policy and regulatory frameworks impinging upon urban renewal. Istanbul has a weak welfare system, a negligible amount of social housing, a high percentage of owner-occupation and weak renter rights. Amsterdam, in contrast, has a well-established welfare system, a high percentage of social housing and strong regulations on renter rights. This contrast enables us to investigate not only the role of these different frameworks but also the similarities in the factors shaping the displacement experiences. Besides, the juxtaposition of these particular case studies can help to fill the gap in the literature by comparing displacement experiences in cities of the Global South and North. The study used a qualitative methodology. In Amsterdam, the data was collected in the period of August 2009 to December 2011 and in Istanbul between June 2010 and December 2011.

## 1.3 Outline of the study

The study consists of ten chapters. *Chapter 2*, the theory chapter, constructs the conceptual framework of the study. It starts with a discussion on accumulation by dispossession and how it works through neoliberal urbanization. It argues that displacement is the socio-spatial manifestation of accumulation by dispossession. A review of displacement literature is presented, followed by a review of such literature on Amsterdam and Istanbul. *Chapter 3*, the methodology chapter, introduces the research design and discusses the selection of cases, data collection techniques and data analysis.

*Chapter 4* presents an overview of urban policy and gentrification in Amsterdam. While the first part investigates urban policies in three different phases of urban development, the second part discusses how the city experienced the gentrification waves. The last part elaborates on the grassroots mobilizations against urban renewal and state-led gentrification processes. The neighborhood setting and urban renewal in Indische Buurt, Amsterdam are introduced in *Chapter 5*. *Chapter 6* goes into detail on the displacement experiences of the residents.

Embracing a historical perspective, *Chapter 7* describes the evolution of urban policy and gentrification in Istanbul. The chapter first discusses the three phases of urban development and urban policies and then presents the three waves of gentrification. Finally, the chapter covers the grassroots mobilizations against urban renewal and state-led gentrification in the city.

In *Chapter 8*, the setting of the neighborhood and the urban renewal process in Tarlabaşı/Istanbul are discussed. *Chapter 9* then gives an account of the residents' experiences of displacement in the case of Tarlabaşı based on three dimensions: 1) residents' experiences regarding the policy and living under the threat of displacement; 2) experiences regarding the impacts of displacement; and 3) residents' strategies to deal with the process and its negative impacts.

*Chapter 10* presents a comparative analysis of the case studies. It first offers an explanation of why displacement takes place. This is substantiated by an account of how accumulation by dispossession works in the local contexts of neoliberal urban policy in Amsterdam and Istanbul. The chapter offers some comparative reflections along with discussions of the selected themes based on the three dimensions of displacement. The last part of the chapter contains the conclusions of the study and some suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2

# Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In the contemporary neoliberal context, urban governments actively promote gentrification of neighborhoods to make their cities attractive for the 'right' type of people, functions and investment. State-led gentrification brings the socio-spatial make-up of cities in line with capital interests and middle-class culture. The class dimension of this creative destruction manifests itself as the widespread displacement of local residents. Neoliberal urban renewal policies that result in state-led gentrification displace and dispossess mostly the lower class of their assets and rights to the city (Harvey 2008).

In this chapter, displacement is regarded as a socio-spatial manifestation of accumulation by dispossession, as theorized by Harvey (2003, 2008). First, I discuss what Harvey means by this concept and then elaborate on its relation to neoliberal urbanization, state-led gentrification and displacement. In the second part of the chapter, I present a detailed literature review of displacement, its impacts, and individual and collective strategies to cope with it. Last, I present a review of literature on neoliberal urban policy and displacement in Dutch and Turkish cities.

### **2.1 Harvey's conceptualization of accumulation by dispossession**

What Harvey calls accumulation by dispossession is simply "the continuation and proliferation of accumulation practices which Marx had considered 'primitive'<sup>2</sup> or 'original' during the rise of capitalism" (Harvey 2005, p.159). Rather than seeing it as a historical phase in capitalist development, Harvey treats primitive accumulation, which he calls accumulation by dispossession, as an ongoing process in contemporary capital accumulation.

To develop his argument, Harvey relies strongly on the work of Luxemburg and Arendt. First, he cites an extensive passage from Luxemburg's exposition on the dual character of capitalist accumulation. On the one hand, it concerns the "transaction between the capitalist and the wage laborer" during the production of surplus value at "the factory, the mine, the agricultural estate". And on the other hand, it involves "the relations between capitalism and the non-capitalist modes of production" whereby "force, fraud, oppression, looting" are common practices. Harvey points out the weaknesses of her theory of underconsumption<sup>3</sup> to explain the crisis tendencies of capitalism and discusses "the lack of opportunities for profitable investment as the fundamental problem" (Harvey 2003, p.139). He, thereby, underlines the overriding importance of the theory of over-accumulation. Though refuting her understanding of the crisis tendencies of capitalism, what Harvey

finds valuable in Luxemburg's thesis on the dual character of capitalism is that capitalism needs "something 'outside of itself' in order to stabilize itself" (ibid. p.140). In his words, "... capitalism always requires a fund of assets outside of itself if it is to confront and circumvent pressures of over-accumulation" (ibid. p.143). According to Harvey, either the creation of its own 'outside' (as in the example of a reserve army of labor) or the exploitation of hitherto non-capitalist social formations or sectors within capitalism would be pathways toward capitalist stabilization (p.141).

Likewise, Harvey (2003) highlights the importance and contemporary validity of Arendt's argument, which runs along similar lines. In her discussion of the economic depression of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, Arendt emphasizes the role of the bourgeois rediscovery of the 'original sin of simple robbery' to overcome the depression. She underlines the ongoing role of primitive accumulation in capitalist accumulation (pp.142-3). Through the violent processes of dispossession, resources, be they empty land or new raw material sources, are produced to solve the problem of over-accumulation.

In short, drawing upon the arguments of Luxemburg and Arendt, Harvey concludes that practices of primitive accumulation do have a significant role to play in contemporary capitalism, namely by allowing it to overcome its crises of over-accumulation, and thus to reproduce and extend itself. Harvey poses that dispossession has become a principal strategy of accumulation. The reasons underlying this are, on the one hand, the crisis tendencies of capital accumulation through expanded reproduction and, on the other hand, the geographical expansion of capitalism to non-capitalist countries (and domains). On the latter point, Harvey interprets accumulation by dispossession "as the necessary cost of making a successful breakthrough into capitalist development with the strong backing of state powers" (Harvey 2003, p.154). Despite the general rise of accumulation by dispossession as the foremost accumulation strategy since 1980s, it is contingent and takes different forms. To varying degrees, it leads to a loss of assets and rights for the many.

Harvey mentions some practices of accumulation by dispossession that Marx had identified under capitalism such as "the conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusively private property rights" and "suppression of rights to the commons" (Harvey 2005, p. 159).

To the list compiled by Marx, Harvey adds some new practices. Some are continuations of established ones, notably the expulsion of the peasantry in Mexico and India after 2000 and slavery in the sex industry. Others are contemporary forms of accumulation, such as rent extraction from intellectual property rights and commodification of nature, by the agricultural industry.

Harvey emphasizes the very important role played by the state as a very active agent of accumulation of dispossession. The state, he asserts, uses its "monopoly of violence and definitions of legality" to foster and fine-tune these processes (ibid. p.159). Harvey identifies four constituent elements of accumulation by dispossession in the context of the contemporary neoliberal restructuring that is taking place all over the world.

These elements are 1) privatization and commodification, 2) financialization, 3) state redistributions, and 4) the management and manipulation of crises. Each of these is discussed briefly below (see *ibid.* pp. 160-165).

First, Harvey sees the transfer of assets from public use and ownership to private use and ownership as the underlying momentum propelling privatization and commodification, processes that are backed up by state powers. According to Harvey, not only the privatization of welfare provisions, public utilities and institutions but also the commodification of nature, intellectual creativity and cultural forms denote the loss of rights and thus constitute wholesale dispossession.

Secondly, Harvey argues that the financial system is a very important redistributive tool in contemporary capitalism. Thanks to the vast deregulation process since 1980, financial activities operated as mechanism to transfer income and assets to the benefit of the 'haves'. Harvey mentions "stock promotions, ponzi schemes, structured asset destruction through inflation, asset-stripping through merger and acquisitions, and the promotion of levels of debt incumbency that reduce whole populations, even in the advanced capitalist countries, to debt peonage, to say nothing of corporate fraud and dispossession of assets (the raiding of pension funds and their decimation by stock and corporate collapses) by credit and stock manipulations" (p. 147) as the central elements of contemporary capitalism, which is engaged in fraud, speculation and the "original sin of simple robbery" (p.161).

State redistribution is Harvey's third element. The neoliberal state appears to be the very agent of accumulation by dispossession. It involves itself in various redistributive activities that make income redistribution more favorable for the higher class. First and foremost among these activities is privatization. Cuts in social welfare provisions, provision of tax concessions and subsidies on corporate investment, mortgage interest rate deduction for homeowners, introduction of various user fees for public services, the rise of surveillance and social control, which creates its own market for private security – these are some other activities that, in Harvey's view, serve to redistribute income upwards.

Crisis creation, control and manipulation are the last element on Harvey's list. Worldwide, these features are crucial in transferring income from poor countries to rich ones, from the lower class to the higher class. The triad of being trapped in debt, deflation and structural adjustment programs guarantees accumulation by dispossession. In this process, state and international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank play a crucial role in controlling crises so that economic downturns are not generalized or lead to revolts, while ensuring that accumulation by dispossession will continue to happen.

## **2.2 Accumulation by dispossession, neoliberal urbanization and displacement**

Through the global neoliberal restructuring took place after 1980, the cities have remained the main sites of production and consumption. Meanwhile, the restructuring of urban

space has emerged as an invaluable means of capital accumulation. In Lefebvre's terms, cities were the bearers and the key actors of capital accumulation (Lefebvre 1991). Besides, in the process that Brenner and Theodore (2002) call 'urbanization of neoliberalism', cities are the key arenas where neoliberal initiatives are deployed and neoliberal modes of regulation get grounded (Keil 2002).

In parallel with the primacy of the urban, urban politics has taken a new direction, leaning towards an entrepreneurial, growth-oriented stance that could help reproduce the local social-economic relations in line with the demands of a deregulated economy (Hall and Hubbard 1998, Harvey 1989).

In the discussion by Swyngedouw et al. (2002) on urban politics at the level of local authorities, urban (re)development emerged as "a mediated objective, a necessary precondition for economic regeneration" and was perceived as "an opportunity to change economic hierarchies and functions within the urban region, creating jobs, strengthening the city's position in the urban division of labor" (ibid. p.548). Through the supply of infrastructure, financial subsidies and credits, exemptions from land regulations, allocation of public lands, subsidizing investments through public-private partnerships, etc., public authorities helped open up fresh spaces for capital accumulation while implementing large-scale urban restructuring, for instance in the form of flagship urban (re)development projects, culture-led revitalization schemes, and redevelopment/renewal of deprived neighborhoods.

The "systemic change in the way the state relates to capital" (Hackworth and Smith 2001, p. 475) and to neoliberal urbanization induced the emergence of gentrification as a global urban strategy (Smith 2002). In Hammel and Wyly's words:

*More than ever before, gentrification is incorporated into public policy -used either as a justification to obey market forces and private sector entrepreneurialism, or as a tool to direct market processes in the hopes of restructuring urban landscapes in a slightly more benevolent fashion.... (Hammel and Wyly 2005, p.35).*

Either with the aim to attract the 'right' type of people, functions and investment through culture-led, tourism and business-oriented revitalization schemes (mostly blended with the policy discourses of 'global city', 'cultural city', 'creative city') or with the target to halt the concentration of poverty, crime and physical dilapidation in deprived neighborhoods through social mixing strategies (often blended with the policy discourses of 'livable city', 'just city' 'healthy and safe neighborhoods' etc.), public/urban authorities not only inscribe the social and economic life of their cities with the reaffirmed hegemony of middle-class values and culture. They also displace problems and lower class people from sight with a spatial approach that, in the end, worsens rather than solves the socio-economic problems that are indicative of contemporary urban life.

The processes of state-led gentrification will be treated in depth below. But here, let it suffice to say that state-led gentrification, as the socio-spatial manifestation of neoliberal urban policy, is a process through which urban resources are transferred from the lower to the higher class and from the public to the private sector. Thus, it is the very pillar of accumulation by dispossession processes taking place in the contemporary urban world. In particular, urban renewal policy, by paving the way for state-led gentrification, involves dispossession: 1) through the *privatization/commodification* of social housing/public land and by dispossessing people of their rights; through expropriations of private property by the state to be transferred to the service of the private capital; 2) through *state redistributions* – i.e., tax cuts on urban investment by private capital, land provisions, letting the public sector bear the brunt of the losses involved in private investments, promotion of homeownership, tax relief on mortgages, etc.; 3) through *financialization* – the promotion of homeownership, which strengthens the mortgage market and brings about the securitization of the built environment; 4) through the creation and *management of social, economic and physical crises* in disadvantaged neighborhoods, which the policy attempts to solve through gentrification.

The consequences of state-led gentrification exemplify accumulation by dispossession quite well. Capital absorption and accumulation shape the outlook and the politics of neoliberal urbanization. The strong class-oriented nature of this process is manifest in the widespread dispossessions taking place in the cities. Local authorities not only alter the built environment through creative destruction but also redistribute wealth upwards. The masses are not only displaced but are also dispossessed of their right to the city<sup>4</sup>, being deprived of “the democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus capital” (Harvey 2008, p.37). Urban citizens’ right to participation and right to appropriation, which form the basic components of the right to the city (Purcell 2002)<sup>5</sup>, are taken away from them by the top-down decisions to restructure the city space in line with capitalistic urges. They are not only swept aside and kept from participating in decision-making about urban restructuring but they are also dispossessed of the right to use and reproduce their neighborhood.

### 2.3 What is displacement?

Displacement can be defined in general terms as a forced residential move induced by external forces or events beyond the control of the household (Grier and Grier 1980, Lee and Hodge 1984, Atkinson 2004). It can take the form of 1) public-sector displacement (resulting from public interventions such as urban renewal, public works, etc.) or 2) private-sector displacement (resulting from general market conditions and processes such as rent increases, disinvestment, reinvestment, etc.) (Lee and Hodge 1984).

Marcuse (1986) distinguishes four types of displacement. The first is *last-resident displacement*, which happens when the last household to occupy a housing unit gets

displaced due to economic or physical reasons (rent increases, demolition etc.). The second type, *chain displacement*, takes place when the former household(s) of the same housing unit was/were also displaced. Thirdly, *exclusionary displacement* occurs when a housing unit, vacated by a household becomes gentrified and thus unavailable and unaffordable to a similar type of household. In other words, exclusionary displacement means decreased housing availability for low-income households as the result of gentrification. Finally, *displacement pressure* is the pressure that the residents who are not immediately displaced feel due to the unfavorable changes taking place in the neighborhood, such as their neighbors and/or friends moving out, the closure of or change in the profile of the existing stores, changes in public services and facilities, etc., all of which make it less livable for the households.

As Marcuse (1986) underlines, it is important to investigate all these types of displacement to get a comprehensive perspective on how displacement takes place and how it affects the residents who are exposed to it. Even though it was the initial intention to cover all these types of displacement in this study, time and resources permitted only the coverage of last-resident displacement.

The literature on last-resident displacement consists mainly of studies that use existing and readily available quantitative data (Sakızlıoğlu 2014). Doing so, it is not possible to grasp how space changes over time before the actual displacement takes place, nor how such changes affect the residents living under the threat of displacement. In this sense, it is important to study the pressures of displacement that the residents experience before the actual displacement in order to fully appreciate how the process of displacement is experienced. Here, it should be noted that ‘pressure of displacement’ is different than ‘displacement pressure’, as Marcuse (1986) coined the term. According to his definition, displacement pressure is felt by the residents who are not yet displaced and live in the gentrifying area. These people are not directly displaced but do have to move out eventually because of the displacement pressure caused by changes in the neighborhood, moving out of neighbors, etc. Even though most of the respondents I interviewed were still living in the area and had not yet been displaced, they knew that they would be displaced sooner or later, and they were indeed displaced in the end. In this sense, it is not appropriate to refer to the pressures they felt before their actual displacement as displacement pressure. That is why I prefer to use the wording ‘pressures of displacement’ or ‘experiences of living under the threat of displacement’ to refer to the difficulties they experienced before their displacement.

Experiences of living under the threat of displacement can be studied on the basis of three dimensions (Sakızlıoğlu 2014). First, the changes in the neighborhood (moving out of neighbors, change in the profile of commercial shops, change in the public services, etc.) affect the experiences of the residents who live under the threat of displacement. These effects are aggravated by the pressures and threats posed by the authorities. The appropriation strategies of the state and landlords are thus the second dimension to be

studied in order to understand the residents' experiences of displacement pressure. As the last dimension, residents' worries also offer insight into the concerns, challenges and pressures they experience during this process.

## 2.4 Displacement in gentrification literature

Research on the phenomenon in the late 1970s and the 1980s made strides in the conceptual clarification and measurement of displacement (Marcuse 1986), the identification of the characteristics of the displaced (Lee and Hodge 1984, Henig 1984, LeGates and Hartman 1986), the impacts of displacement at the city and household level, and the scale and scope of displacement (Newman and Owen 1982, LeGates and Hartman 1986, Marcuse 1986, Schill and Nathan 1983, Grier and Grier 1980).

Different theoretical perspectives on displacement are implicit in the 'Emancipatory city' and 'Revanchist city' perspectives on gentrification (Lees 2000, Slater 2004). The former portrays gentrification as liberating, tolerant, emancipatory practice (Ley 1996, Caulfield 1989), thereby downplaying any impoverishing impacts of gentrification-induced displacement. The latter sees gentrification as the spatial expression of revenge against the disadvantaged through displacement and other forms of repression (Smith 1996, 2002).

Theoretical perspectives on the causes of gentrification, namely Smith's economic approach based on rent-gap theory (Smith 1986, 1996) and Ley's cultural approach prioritizing middle-class housing demands and lifestyles (Ley 1987), are also used to explain state-led gentrification and displacement. To these, Uitermark et al. (2007) added governmental goals to create social control in deprived neighborhoods. While in general social and penal policies are used complementarily to manage incivilities (poverty, crime, prostitution, etc.) in disadvantaged neighborhoods, upgrading built environment is used as a tool to change the profile of the neighborhoods, which supposedly improves the conditions of the neighborhood.

Other perspectives on measuring displacement and its impacts could be differentiated in terms of whether displacement was accepted as an integral part of gentrification. In the early studies, which tended to view displacement as integral to gentrification, researchers focused on the extent of displacement (Newman and Owen 1982, LeGates and Hartman 1986, Marcuse 1986, Schill and Nathan 1983), the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups, e.g., the elderly, blue-collar workers, low-income households etc., and the negative impacts of displacement such as deteriorating housing conditions, increased housing costs, loss of neighborhood networks and chain displacement (Schill and Nathan 1983, LeGates and Hartman 1986, Lee and Hodge 1984, Henig 1984, Sumka 1979).

Vidgor (2002) and Freeman and Braconi (2004) questioned whether gentrification really caused displacement and harmed the poor, proposing that displacement may not be integral to the process of gentrification. In their longitudinal study of displacement in New York, Freeman and Braconi (2004) compare the mobilities of the disadvantaged

groups in gentrifying and non-gentrifying areas and assert that the mobility rates of disadvantaged groups residing in non-gentrifying areas is much higher than that of the disadvantaged groups in gentrifying neighborhoods. This finding led the authors to assert that gentrification does not result in displacement of disadvantaged groups. Rather, what happens is a ‘housing succession’ by middle-class residents. Their presence ‘indirectly’ hurts the interests of the poor by pulling up the housing prices and rents, which results in less affordable housing for the poor (ibid.) – i.e., exclusionary displacement. The research made an imprint on the popular media and political accounts, where it was received with ‘cheers for gentrification’. The message emphasized, drawing selectively from that research, that gentrification is a process of neighborhood change and is not hurting the disadvantaged but working for the good of everyone. As USA Today claimed in a headline: “Gentrification: A boost for everyone” (Hampson 2005).

To challenge the stance that does not see gentrification as an integral part of displacement, Newman and Wyly (2006) combined quantitative analysis of the same dataset used by Freeman and Braconi (2004) with a qualitative inquiry in gentrifying neighborhoods based on in-depth interviewing and participant observation. The investigators’ aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the displacement effect and experiences in different neighborhood contexts, of the mechanisms involved and the survival strategies used by disadvantaged to ‘stay put’ in gentrifying neighborhoods. The qualitative analysis they conducted revealed that the existence of rent regulations and social housing assistance, anti-displacement campaigns mounted by community organizations, informal arrangements with the landlords, and individual renters’ bearing the burden of staying put in the gentrifying neighborhoods, function as household and collective mechanisms enabling the low-income residents to remain in the gentrifying areas. The authors conclude that without taking into account the mechanisms involved, the specificities of the contexts and the strategies of the residents, it would be impossible to understand how residents can stay put in their neighborhood and how they experience the process going on around them.

## **2.5 Impacts of displacement and factors shaping displacement experiences**

Even though it is methodologically challenging to study displacement, researchers have studied where the displaced move to (Bolt and Van Kempen 2010), the impacts on the displaced (Atkinson 2004, Curran 2004, Day and Cervero 2010, Kleinhans 2003, Slater 2004, He and Wu 2007), the impacts on neighborhood communities (Popkin et al. 2004, Clampton-Lundquist 2004, Uitermark et al. 2007) and the effects of displacement on socio-spatial segregation in the cities at large (Popkin et al. 2004, Kingsley et al. 2003, Varady and Walker 2000).

To start with the research on where the displaced move to, the literature shows that most displaced households move within or very close to the original neighborhood (Bolt and Van Kempen 2010, Goetz 2002, Van Criekingen 2008). Research also shows that moving in or close to the original neighborhood is often related to the social networks nested in the old neighborhood (Popkin et al. 2004).

According to the policy discourse, the state-led gentrification process is supposed to benefit, both socially and economically, the deprived neighborhoods and their residents. However, the picture presented in the literature is less rosy. Regarding the housing conditions of the displaced, the findings are mixed. While some researchers underline improved conditions of housing after displacement (Kleinhans 2003, Posthumus 2013, Popkin et al. 2004, Varady and Walker 2000, Wu 2004), others conclude that the housing conditions of the displaced are affected negatively (Goetz 2002, He and Wu 2007, Wu 2004).

Some studies point out that the rent burdens of the displaced increase after the displacement (Ashton and Newman 2004, Slater 2004, Wu 2004). The burden of increased rent on household income is less in contexts where renters with low income are eligible for rent subsidy to compensate the higher rent they face after displacement (Kleinhans 2003, Posthumus 2013).

A different line of research examines the effects of displacement on communities, social ties and networks. Some researchers, notably Fullilove (2009), emphasize the negative impacts of a loss of social ties and place attachment on the displaced. Other authors, such as Clampet-Lundquist (2004) and Manzo et al. (2008), underline the negative impacts of losing one's community and the difficulties involved in building up a new one.

There is evidence that displacement increases social and spatial segregation (based on class and ethnicity) at the city level (Popkin et al. 2004, Kingsley et al. 2003, Varady and Walker 2000). Yet, research also shows that displacement can bring about desegregation in some contexts due to the fact that the targeted restructuring areas are home to the highest concentration of ethnic groups and lower class residents (Bolt and Van Kempen 2010).

To understand how the process of displacement is experienced, it is not enough to look at the impacts after displacement. The process has to be investigated from the start to the end to understand how experiences are shaped as the process evolves. In this sense, an examination of the residents' experiences of living under the threat of displacement is a crucial part of the task of illuminating displacement experiences. Despite the emerging literature on displacement, little research has been published on the topic so far (Newman and Wyly 2006).

How the residents experience and perceive the renewal policy affects their displacement experiences at large. Kleinhans (2003) and Van Kempen and Priemus (2002) explain that the pre-relocation reactions of the residents are shaped partially by how they perceive the policy measures. If the residents understand and support the reasons, logic and the method of urban renewal, they would be more inclined to approach the process positively,

which may in turn affect their experience of the displacement process. Another important factor, as Varady and Walker (2000) note, is how the residents experience the information, guidance and counseling provided during the process. The existence of mechanisms for resident participation in decision-making and implementation regarding neighborhood renewal is another factor that shapes the residents' displacement experiences (Kleinhans 2003).

As Newman and Wyly (2006) report, residents develop strategies at the household and collective level to deal with the (negative) impacts of displacement. To start with the household level strategies, some of those who become displaced join other households (doubling up) (*ibid.* p.4), either because they cannot afford to get separate housing or because they want to minimize their housing costs after displacement. Others resort to the informal housing market to find relocation housing or else make informal arrangements to remain in their current housing until displacement (Islam and Enlil 2008). Some who have been displaced may take on another job to be able to bear the increased expenses after the displacement. The extra income could come from child labor or employment of women, etc. Others may use cost-minimizing strategies such as spending less (on clothing, entertainment, etc.) and postponing the purchase of necessary goods, etc. Another household strategy is to move within or close to the neighborhood to be able to keep one's social networks intact, as these are crucial to the social and economic survival of low-income households. Not much research has been done on household strategies to deal with the impacts of displacement, so there is a need to investigate these strategies.

Residents may also respond collectively to the threat of displacement. For instance, they may join anti-displacement campaigns organized by community organizations or directly by individual residents. Collective mobilization may directly affect the impacts of displacement when the residents contest and negotiate the conditions of the projects.

Usually, these mobilizations do not extend beyond the neighborhood or the city, being restricted to community-level organizations. But some do evolve into movements that reach beyond the original city and even beyond the country, such as the Abahlali movement in South Africa. In some cases, international solidarity is rallied to challenge the state's neoliberal urban policies that result in displacement (Cabannes et al. 2010).

In this study, grassroots mobilizations against displacement are approached not only as collective strategies to deal with the process of displacement at the very local level but also as a part of global resistance to accumulation by dispossession. Due to the fragmented and contingent character of the dispossessions taking place in different geographies of capitalist development, the widespread struggles against dispossession vary from landless peasant movements to anti-privatization protests and anti-displacement campaigns, etc. A loss of rights and assets, with the resulting destruction of livelihoods, is seen to underlie the proliferation of political and social resistance against dispossession.

According to Harvey (2005), these grassroots movements against accumulation by dispossession have three distinctive characteristics. To start with, the political target and

organizational mode of these new struggles are different from their counterparts in the earlier rounds of capitalism. Harvey mentions that these movements shifted the mode of political organization “away from traditional political parties and labor organizing into what was bound to be in aggregate a less focused political dynamic of social action across the whole spectrum of civil society” (2003, p.168). Widespread NGO-ization is part and parcel of the organizational mode of the struggles, which poses a great quandary about representation. As for their political target, struggles against dispossession are operating at varying scales, be they local, regional or global. The nation-state is not always the primary target for these movements, which differentiates them from labor and union movements.

Secondly, these struggles are locally embedded in the politics of everyday life. The particularity and embeddedness in the local setting make it hard for them to acknowledge and act against the macro politics of accumulation by dispossession. Thirdly, Harvey mentions that struggles against dispossession may not be equally progressive. They may be involved in politics of nostalgia, viewing what has been lost as the better way to solve the problems of impoverished populations. Otherwise, they may be defending certain privileges of some group, as exemplified by the property rights – based resistance of homeowners against displacement.

The general picture that Harvey sketches is elucidating, but his structure-based framework does little to help us understand in a detailed manner the processes and factors that shape the grassroots mobilizations against dispossession. In other words, the (non-) emergence, the development and the dynamics of these mobilizations in different contexts would have to be studied in order to construct a comprehensive analytical framework.

Let us start with the specific characteristics of the mobilizations against urban renewal (and the resulting displacement). These mobilizations mainly aim to protect the livelihoods, homes and properties of the residents living in a territory (mostly a neighborhood) from the threat of urban renewal. Many of the mobilizations only oppose particular policies and do not reject the political-economic logic of urban politics (Şen 2010). In this sense, the earlier works of Pickvance (1985) and Mayer (1982) are still illuminating. According to Mayer (1982), neighborhood movements are defensive in character if their main issue is how to protect certain privileges of some groups (particularly established property owners). Likewise, Pickvance characterizes movements as defensive when they arise from threats to the “housing and neighborhoods such as demolitions, urban renewal, or commercial redevelopment” (Pickvance 1985, p. 40). Especially the property owners’ reactions to urban renewal and state-led gentrification have been classified as defensive movements (Karaman 2010).

There is an emerging literature on resistance to accumulation by dispossession (Spronk and Weber 2007, Oldfield and Strokke 2007, Karaman 2010). Still, the need remains for a more systematic and comprehensive analysis of the contextualized politics of urban contestation against dispossession.

In light of these characteristics, this study views displacement experiences as comprised of three dimensions: 1) residents' experiences with the urban renewal policy and living under the threat of displacement; 2) their experiences with the impacts of displacement; 3) and their strategies to deal with the displacement process and its negative impacts.

## 2.6 Literature review of displacement in Turkish cities

The heightened political and economic interest in 'urban transformation'<sup>6</sup> in the cities of Turkey after 2000 has been met by an emerging literature on how these processes affect urban citizens and space.

In an evaluation of urban transformation projects, Kurtuluş (2006) states that these projects operate as policy tools that help transfer public resources, ownership rights and lower-income citizens' right-to-the-city to the private sector and to the middle and higher class. As the lower class get displaced from the urban areas that are designated for the use and consumption of the higher class people, segregation tendencies increase as the result of the transformation efforts (*ibid.*).

Many case studies have been conducted by researchers who investigate in detail the processes and impacts of urban transformation in *gecekondu* (squatter) neighborhoods and historical inner-city neighborhoods. Discussion continues on how the urban transformation agendas of the central government and municipalities actively promote gentrification and trigger the change in class composition in disadvantaged neighborhoods, thereby promoting an influx of middle class people (Güzey 2006, İslam 2005). The top-down character of the urban transformation projects has been noted, as has the restricted space for community involvement in the decision-making (Dündar 2003, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, Kurtuluş 2005, Ergin 2006). The effect of these projects is to transform and formalize the property relations in the remaining informal housing market, which involves the commodification of unauthorized and abandoned dwellings (Mühürdaroğlu 2005, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). Such policies are legitimized with reference to the modernization of Istanbul, which entails getting rid of *gecekondus* and making it 'a global city'. On the other hand, the residents and users of these deprived neighborhoods are represented as deriving undue benefit from urban growth<sup>7</sup> (in the case of *gecekondu* dwellers, as most of them could eventually obtain a deed to their informal housing; see Chapter 4). The modernization discourse represents these neighborhoods as nests for problems and unwanted activities such as drug-dealing, theft and terrorism (Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014).

Research has shown that renters and *gecekondu* dwellers with no title deeds are excluded from the renewal projects. They face the threat of displacement; the provisions they are offered, if any, are not enough to compensate them for the disposessions they face (Özdemir Sönmez 2006, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, Uzun 2005, Ergin 2007). Only in a few cases have the renters been offered the 'right to buy a house' at a mass housing estate in

the peripheral urban area (İslam 2009). The property owners and gecekondu dwellers are mostly offered the 'right to buy housing' in a mass housing estate on the urban periphery. The persons who actually move to these peripheral estates are offered reimbursement at the current value of their dwelling. They thereby become indebted to the Mass Housing Administration, the public authority for production of mass housing for lower class households in Turkey, and they have to pay the amount in excess of the compensation for their dwelling in long-term installments. Yet, most of the households cannot pay their installments and become displaced once again (İslam 2009).

Some researchers have shed light on different phases of displacement, especially in gecekondu areas. Güzey (2006), in a comparative study of urban transformation projects in five such areas in Ankara, discerns four phases of displacement. First the renters and the gecekondu dwellers with no title to their dwelling are not considered stakeholders in the urban transformation project and they get evicted immediately. As urban transformation proceed in time, attracting the influx of the middle class people, some households sell or rent their places to turn a profit. They constitute the second group to move out of the urban transformation areas, and most of them move to more affordable parts of the city and save the rest of the money for other purposes, such as the education of the children. The third group of displaced households is consisted of those who are induced to move out by the contrasts and resulting conflicts between the newcomers and the old squatter households. They differ in life style and in social and cultural background. The last to move are the households who cannot afford the maintenance and/or other increasing costs of living in an upgraded area and are thus forced to move from these neighborhoods (Güzey 2006). Dündar (2003) and Uzun (2003, 2005) also emphasize that displacement will take place differently in different phases of the projects. Yet these phases differ from one urban transformation project to the next, depending on the provisions and tenure structure in the area.

Likewise, there are variations in the rates of displacement in different neighborhoods. Güzey (2006) argues that wherever the rent gaps<sup>8</sup> are higher, displacement takes place faster than in places where the rent gaps are lower. And where do the displaced go? The literature suggests that the displaced move to lower-status areas close to the original neighborhood or to the peripheries of the city (Güzey 2006, Bartu and Kolluoğlu 2008, İslam 2009).

As for the impacts of displacement, Erman's study (2009) is the only one so far to focus on the displaced households and the impacts of their displacement. The study assesses the impacts of displacement on the gecekondu dwellers, who had to move to apartment buildings. Living there, they encountered heavy economic burdens. Moreover, they missed the gecekondu environment – both physically, e.g., by no longer having a garden, and socially, e.g., as their social networks were disrupted. Except for Erman's study, no comprehensive research has looked into the plight of the displaced and the impacts of displacement. However, various researchers do discuss how these projects have turned

the targeted areas into middle class neighborhoods by displacing the original residents. The effect is to increase the income segregation in the cities (Şen 2006, Mühürdaroğlu 2005, Kolluoğlu and Bartu 2008, İslam 2009). In some urban transformation and renewal project areas, where the option to stay put was offered, some conflicts between the original residents and newcomers occurred due to cultural and income differences (Uzun 2003).

Some scholars also underline the fact that social solidarity networks are dispersed due to displacement. This affects the livelihoods of the lower-class residents in particular, as their networks serve as a survival strategy for the poor (Koroğlu and Ercoşkun 2006, İslam 2010, Kolluoğlu and Bartu 2008, Kuyucu 2009). Sometimes, ex-gecekondu dwellers do not adapt easily to apartment living. They miss their single-story gecekondu with gardens, as well as the lively social ambiance of their old neighborhoods. This also applies to the displaced who move to mass housing blocks (Erman 2009, Kuyucu 2009, Kolluoğlu and Bartu 2008). For the residents of inner-city neighborhoods, moving to a peripheral area, which is where the mass housing estates are located, is like suicide. They are used to and need to continue living in the city center; for them, staying put is a survival strategy, as there are informal job opportunities in the center for which they can use their established networks (Şen 2006, İslam and Enlil 2006).

There is scanty research on the experiences of residents living under the threat of displacement. Sakızlıoğlu (2014) discusses two dimensions of that experience. The first is how residents experience the changes in their neighborhoods before the actual displacement takes place. As for the second dimension, renters are under pressure, not only from their landlord but also from the municipality, to move away. The pressure exerted by municipal police and tax officers on local shopkeepers, landlords pressuring to move out or asking for double or triple rents – these are among the threats and pressures the renters are exposed to (Sakızlıoğlu, 2014). In other neighborhoods, where the gentrification process speeds up due to the renewal projects, property owners adopt various strategies to convince the renters to move out (İslam and Enlil 2008). These strategies include offering in-kind benefits such as ‘one year of occupancy with no payment’ or ‘the equivalent of one year of rent’ (ibid, p.6). The renters manage to deal with these displacement strategies and stay put in their neighborhood if they know their legal rights and if they have the economic power and political will to use their legal rights, for instance by fighting their impending eviction in court (İslam and Enlil 2008).

The existing body of research reveals that urban transformation projects lead to the physical upgrading of the neighborhoods, which brings about gentrification in most cases. The upgrading does not resolve the social and economic problems, though, but merely transfers them to other areas (İslam 2009, Kuyucu 2009). In the long term, urban transformation policies would deepen the inequality and reinforce the patterns of segregation in the cities. Despite the growing geography of displacement in Turkish cities, not enough research has been conducted to understand the entire process of displacement as experienced by the residents.

## 2.7 Literature review: Displacement and urban restructuring in Dutch cities

The Dutch context of urban restructuring<sup>9</sup> is replete with ambitious policies to improve and re-differentiate the existing housing stock. Mostly in disadvantaged neighborhoods with high shares of low-cost, run-down social-rental dwellings, the inexpensive social housing stock is transformed into owner-occupied and private rental housing through physical intervention, typically demolition and replacement/reconstruction. The attendant policy of social mixing entails the insertion of middle-income households into these neighborhoods. The literature contains ample studies on the processes and impact of such urban restructuring in the Netherlands.

Among the significant policy implications cited in the literature is that physical upgrading and compulsory social mixing are not sustainable. Nor are these interventions sufficient to overcome the severe social problems of the target areas, such as crime, unemployment, poverty and segregation (see Aalbers et al. 2005, Bolt and Van Kempen 2002, Musterd et al. 1999, Ostendorf et al. 2001, Priemus and Van Kempen 1999, Uitermark et al. 2007). Some say that the pursuit of spatial solutions to the concentration of socio-economic problems could only disperse the problems, along with the people who are suffering from them, to other neighborhoods. For instance, the findings of a case study in Bijlmermeer/Amsterdam led the authors, Aalbers et al. (2005), to conclude that having the district cleansed of drug addicts, people involved in crime, delinquency, etc. through urban restructuring does not imply that the social problems would be solved.

Some studies draw attention to the infiltration of gentrification into Dutch urban policies (Uitermark et al. 2007, Van Gent 2013). Uitermark et al. (2007) assert that public authorities promote gentrification as a strategy to de-concentrate problems and 'problematic' groups and to create a social order in deprived neighborhoods. Gentrification is embraced as a 'governmental' strategy to improve urban 'livability' by attracting middle-class residents and dispersing groups associated with social disorder. The influx of middle-class residents into the restructuring neighborhood is appreciated by the public authorities as a legitimate means to create social control and to correct the extant social disorder, which poses problems for the authorities in their efforts to 'manage' the neighborhood. That is to say, gentrification is embraced as a 'civilizing' strategy in the Dutch context (Uitermark and Duyvendak 2008). Likewise Van Gent (2013) considers how gentrification is spurred by urban policy in Amsterdam, where third-wave gentrification, that is gentrification led by public policy and authorities, has set in. As many authors point out, policy ambitions to improve livability by promoting the influx of middle-class residents into poverty-stricken neighborhoods do bring about displacement<sup>10</sup> for some residents.

Botman and Van Kempen (2001) discern that the new dwellings in the renewal neighborhoods are unaffordable to poor households. They see this as the main cause of the

displacement of poor households from their neighborhoods. In that light, it is expected that the population flow will increase from one – probably not yet restructured – poor neighborhood to another because the restructuring would make it hard for the poor to stay put (Bolt and Van Kempen 2002).

Research findings show that most displaced residents stay in or close to their previous neighborhood (Bolt and Van Kempen 2010, Kleinhans 2003, Slob et al. 2008, Posthumus 2013). Slob et al. (2008) comment on the tendency among forced movers to relocate to neighborhoods that have relatively high concentrations of non-western minorities and social housing stock. Proximity to the previous neighborhood, household income and the percentage of minorities, together with the presence of a social rental stock, are revealed to be the factors most influential on the decision to move to a particular neighborhood (ibid).

While the housing conditions of the displaced improve after relocation (Kleinhans 2003, Posthumus et al. 2012), the impacts of displacement on community networks are considered detrimental (Uitermark et al. 2007). The displaced lose their social networks partially or entirely. But in most cases, the anticipated positive interaction between the newcomers and the old residents does not occur (Kleinhans and Van der Laan Bouma-Doff 2008, Uitermark et al. 2007).

Despite the growing body of literature about forced relocations due to urban restructuring in Dutch cities, very little research has been done on the residents' experiences of living under the threat of displacement, or on displacement experiences in general. Regarding the former, almost no research has focused on the changes experienced during the process of displacement (e.g., on neighbors moving out, the changing profile of the neighborhood shops, decreasing safety) that induce residents to move. Likewise, no researchers have explored the threats and pressures that residents face before their actual displacement.

Kleinhans (2003) was the only one to study how the process of displacement is experienced by the residents. The focus was on the actual experiences of forced relocation. The author elicited the opinions of low-income forced movers on the relocation process and on their new neighborhoods during his case studies of two restructuring neighborhoods in the cities of Utrecht and The Hague. The study concludes that the existence of legal provisions – priority status, relocation allowances and assistance, and the extant rent subsidy system – allow many residents to improve their housing situations and to enjoy upward mobility through these forced relocations. However, his study also reveals that households whose income is slightly above the ceiling for eligibility for rent subsidy entitlements benefit less from the restructuring. Rather, they have to shoulder the additional financial and social burdens of forced relocation.

Kleinhans (2003) goes on to discuss the difficulties experienced by the forced movers due to the restrictions on using the priority status<sup>11</sup> and the stress of forced relocation on the households. The psychological effects on forced movers are considerable. He also

concludes that demolition and forced relocation have limited negative effects on social networks, reporting that the residents did not consider the existing social ties to be crucial and that some of the residents could sustain their ties by relocating within their original neighborhood.

On the basis of the results of his study, the picture Kleinmans (2003) draws is generally favorable regarding the experience of forced relocation. However, the author makes some observations that require research and policy attention. He notes that the number of residents subjected to forced relocation increases over time as restructuring efforts intensify, especially in poverty neighborhoods. Thus, restructuring will intensify the competition for relocation possibilities in social rented sector. This would make it more and more difficult for forced movers with priority status to find a suitable relocation dwelling. Moreover, the chance that the regular low-income house-seekers will find a new dwelling in the social rented sector would decrease sharply by comparison to the holders of priority status.

The literature related to displacement in Dutch cities should certainly be supplemented by case studies on the residents' experiences of displacement. Besides, there is a definite shortage of comparative studies that would offer the perspective needed to discuss if and how the geography of displacement in Dutch cities is different than elsewhere.

## Summary

This chapter has introduced the theories and concepts that I will use throughout this study. Those tools will be used to analyze the displacement experiences of individual households from the wider perspective of accumulation by dispossession, which works through urban renewal, though different mechanisms are in play in different contexts. As a result, some residents are dispossessed of their houses, neighborhoods and rights in the process.

This chapter has also presented a review of the literature on urban restructuring and displacement in the Dutch and Turkish cities. The review serves not only to locate this study in the scholarly discourse but also to identify the gaps in knowledge that this study will address.

From the early 2000s on, the urban transformation agenda has been predominant in the urban policy field. Urban transformation projects have been started in many neighborhoods in Turkish cities, putting many people under the threat of displacement. The examples given so far show that these projects have not been beneficial to the local residents, most of whom were displaced from their neighborhoods. Lower class residents of these neighborhoods had to bear the heavy burden of displacement, notably the increased expenses and loss of the social networks that helped them to survive, both socially and economically. Even though there is a growing body of literature on these projects, research on displacement has been rather sparse. There is an urgent need for displacement studies that examine the process as experienced by the residents.

As for Dutch cities, contemporary urban restructuring programs that pursue social mixing in disadvantaged neighborhoods cause the displacement of locals. Yet, due to the well established renter rights and the welfare system in the Netherlands, the negative impacts of displacement are softened. Some researchers cite the improvement in housing conditions as a positive impact of displacement. Others call attention to the increasing economic burdens and worsening access to social networks. Even though the literature is growing, there are few studies on how the residents experience the process of displacement.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

*'Not everything that can be counted counts,  
and not everything that counts can be counted.'*

Albert Einstein

### **3.1 Research design and methodology**

This study is based on a comparative qualitative methodology, as it explores and compares processes of displacement in different urban contexts and residents' experiences of displacement. Designed as a multiple-case study, the data was collected in two cities, mainly employing qualitative methods.

The case study, defined by Yin (2003, p.9) as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a real life phenomenon within its real life context" was chosen as the research design because it allows a detailed examination of the settings where displacement takes place as well as their comparison. A multiple-case study will not only sharpen the analytical lens, allowing us to discuss the particularity of displacement in different cities, but will also help us see the convergences of these processes from the broader perspective of neoliberal urban restructuring.

#### **3.1.1 Case Selection**

The objective of the empirical part of the study is, first, to compare the displacement experiences of residents living in different cities and resorting under different policy and regulatory frameworks. The second objective is to compare the displacement experiences of different resident groups. Amsterdam and Istanbul were selected for the comparison in light of their similarities and differences. In both cities, many residents are subject to displacement due to urban restructuring implementations, for instance, due to the renewal of deprived neighborhoods in both cities (Sakızlıoğlu 2007, Van Gent 2013). But the institutional settings of the two cities differ as well. Turkey is known for its relatively weak welfare state, negligible amount of social housing, relatively high percentage of owner-occupation and relatively weak renter rights. The Netherlands, in contrast, is known for its well established welfare system, high percentage of social housing and strong regulations regarding renters' rights. In that sense, the two cases are embedded in very different policy and regulatory frameworks regarding urban restructuring. Their juxtaposition would therefore enable us to examine the role of these different frameworks in the shaping of displacement experiences.

For each city, I selected a disadvantaged restructuring neighborhood for the case studies. In Amsterdam, I selected Indische Buurt, a low-income, gentrifying neighborhood located to the east of the city center. The neighborhood was designated by the Ministry of Housing, Neighborhoods and Integration in 2007 as one of the forty priority (i.e., problem) neighborhoods. That label came with an extra budget for the renewal of the neighborhood, which had already started in the second half of 2000<sup>12</sup>. Indische Buurt has a relatively high share of non-western migrants (68 percent). Even though it is mostly a low-income neighborhood, it is becoming mixed-income due to the effects of the social mixing policies. The neighborhood hosts a range of tenure groups: temporary renters<sup>13</sup> and regular renters in addition to owner-occupiers.

Within Indische Buurt, I selected two different renovation projects that were implemented by the same housing corporation, De Alliantie, namely the Ceramplein block and Van der Pek block (VDP block from here on) renovation projects. I began with the Ceramplein project which was perfectly suitable for my research design as the project had just started. Yet its small scale made it unsuitable for comparison with the Istanbul case. I realized that each housing corporation has its own style and thus different impacts on how the displacement is experienced by the residents. Therefore, I decided to include another project under the same management to control for the effect of the housing corporation on the displacement experiences. The second project I chose is called the VDP block. It was completed and relocation into the newly renovated block had already taken place. Given the timing of the project, I could not trace the process from start to finish. But I decided to include it as a case study on practical grounds: 1) it was not possible to find an ongoing project under the same housing corporation in the same neighborhood; 2) I had to choose a project that would be completed within the three years remaining in my PhD period so that I would be able to investigate the temporality of displacement through follow-up interviews; 3) and it was in the same neighborhood as the Ceramplein project.

For Istanbul, I selected a historical inner-city neighborhood, namely Tarlabası, which is characterized by high physical dilapidation and socio-economic deprivation. It was designated by the local government as a pilot renewal area to realize physical restructuring<sup>14</sup>. The neighborhood is surrounded by gentrifying and gentrified neighborhoods. Tarlabası is host to a very heterogeneous population: households with different migration backgrounds, income levels, tenure, etc.

Both of these neighborhoods have already been undergoing gentrification for some years or had been under the threat of gentrification (Oudenampsen 2005, Sakızlıoğlu 2007). In that sense too, the two selected neighborhoods serve as laboratories. They are amenable to research into the dynamics and evolution of restructuring processes and displacement experiences. Moreover, they constitute two different contexts in which to explore the different geographies of displacement. Their heterogeneous populations allow us to study how different groups of residents experience displacement. For these reasons, I decided to take a grounded approach to determine, in a context-dependent manner,

patterns of displacement experiences among different group of residents. After the analysis of the data, I would then be able to distinguish patterns of displacement experiences among residents who differed in specific respects: 1) tenure status; 2) migration background/ethnicity; 3) class; and 4) gender.

Among these variables, class needs more elaboration. Even though a comprehensive discussion on class boundaries lies beyond the scope of this study, it is pertinent here to clarify what is meant by class and how it is operationalized in this study. Based on the work of Erik Olin Wright<sup>15</sup> (1989), I understand class as an outcome of (1) the ownership of the means of production, (2) skill level and 3) organizational assets. According to the first dimension, there are two classes: the owners (capitalists) and non-owners of means of production (the working<sup>16</sup> class). As Wright discusses, this dimension is not sufficient to fully comprehend the complex patterns of exploitation in contemporary societies. He therefore introduces two more dimensions.

The second dimension adds skill – ranging from low to advanced capacities – as a determinant of class location. For example, it is necessary to differentiate wage-earners with advanced skills such as Information Technology (IT) experts and professionals, e.g., doctors and lawyers, from low-skilled wage-earners such as cleaners. Even though both are wage-earners, the scarcity of skills distinguishes the one group from the other in a class structure. As the skill level increases from low to advanced, the class position shifts from working (lower) class to middle class.

The third dimension adds the level of organizational/managerial assets one possesses as a determinant of class location. A managerial position is a good example. Even though managers are wage-earners, just like the working class, their moderate- to high-level organizational assets – in other words, their control over others' laboring activities – locates them in a different class position. As one's organizational assets increase, one moves from lower to higher class positions.

Using these dimensions, I assigned my respondents the following class positions:

**Lower class:** The participants with no ownership (of means of production) and low to moderate skill and organizational assets (e.g., cleaners, textile workers, and waiters) are considered to be lower-class. This group also includes participants with precarious positions like street sellers or sex workers.

**Lower-middle class:** These are participants who own the means of their production but use only their own labor/skill to run their business. I include in this group small-scale producers, artisans, shopkeepers etc.

**Middle class:** Middle-class participants are the ones with mostly no ownership of their means of production and with moderate to high levels of skill and organizational assets, e.g., professionals such as lawyers, social workers, graphic designers. I include in this group highly skilled professionals, experts, and entrepreneurs operating one-person companies to sell their labor/skill.

Students – who are quite prevalent in the case of Amsterdam – were not assigned any class position as they are in the process of acquiring one.

### 3.2 The fieldwork and the data

The actual research began with a critical review of the literature, focusing on theoretical conceptualizations and empirical studies of displacement in a neoliberal policy context. The literature review revolved around the following themes: 1) accumulation by dispossession, contemporary urban policy and displacement; 2) gentrification as a global urban strategy and displacement; and 3) the impacts of displacement and displacement experiences. Not only did the literature review help to clarify the concepts, issues and themes central to this study and but it also served to determine a theoretical stance. These themes and concepts were then critically used in the later phases of the research. They informed the preparation of the survey questions, the selection of techniques for gathering ethnographic data and the analysis of the data at large.

As the second step of the research, I reviewed the urban restructuring and renewal policies and relevant legislative documents and projects plans, which further helped to contextualize and formulate the survey questions. Only thereafter did the actual fieldwork begin. I started in Amsterdam with an exploratory visit to Indische Buurt in July 2009 and proceeded to in-depth interviewing there in August 2009. The fieldwork continued for almost two and a half years and ended when I interviewed the residents at least three months after they had moved back into their neighborhood in the renovated dwellings. Follow-up interviews were not needed for the case of the VDP block, as the residents had already been living in their relocation houses for more than three months.

To capture the dynamics of the initial phase of the renewal process in Istanbul, I made several visits to the case-study area between June 2010 and December 2011. I limited the duration of the research to coincide with the total evacuation of the renewal area in Tarlabaşı before the renewal operations started in early 2012.

#### 3.2.1 Data collection techniques

This study employed a rich mix of qualitative data collection techniques. These techniques are summarized below, together with the rationale for using them.

**Document analysis** of policy documents, project plans and legislation to discuss the political economy of the urban policies in the two cities through time and to compare the characteristics of the respective regulatory/policy frameworks;

A systematic review of the policy documents and relevant legislation was undertaken for this study. Among those reviewed are 1) central government programs, plans and reports regarding urban and housing policy; 2) strategic urban policy documents<sup>17</sup>; 3) renewal/transformation plans and project proposals<sup>18</sup>; and 4) laws and regulations regarding urban renewal and housing.

*In-depth interviews* with the displaced and residents living under displacement pressures in the restructuring neighborhoods to compare displacement experiences.

In-depth interviewing, the main ethnographic technique used in this research, provided a deeper understanding of the residents' displacement experiences. The interviews conducted in two cities were semi-structured. Although the questionnaire was prepared in advance, to be certain to cover the themes and questions of the research, a list of themes and issues emerged in the field or during a specific interview, which I then had to cover in an unstructured way.

In Amsterdam, I used four separate interview sheets, which were prepared for different types of residents who were to be interviewed either before or after relocation. Two were used during the interviews that were conducted to understand the experiences of regular renters before and after their relocation. The other two sheets were prepared to capture the temporary renters' experiences of displacement before and after their relocation. As for Istanbul, only two sheets were used (before and after relocation) as there is no differentiation between temporary and regular renters in this context.

The interviews conducted before relocation covered six themes: 1) residential history; 2) satisfaction with the current housing and the neighborhood (a. satisfaction with and attachment to the current housing and the neighborhood, b. relations in the neighborhood and perceived problems in the neighborhood); 3) experiences with the displacement process and opinions regarding how the policy is implemented; 4) collective and household strategies to cope with the impacts of displacement; 5) perceptions and plans about the future; and 6) personal/household information.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with same respondents after their relocation. Besides the themes mentioned above, two more were then covered: 1) satisfaction with living in the new neighborhood and housing as compared to the old neighborhood and housing; and 2) impacts of the displacement process. Last, the interviews with temporary renters in Amsterdam elicited their opinions on and experiences with being a temporary renter. These topics were covered as an extra theme to capture the displacement process as experienced by temporary renters.

I prepared the questionnaire originally in English and translated it later into Turkish. The translation into Dutch was done by a native speaker. The list of questions was carefully worded and sequenced, yet it was used in a flexible manner during the interviews. According to the responses of and the issues raised by the respondents, I changed the sequence and went on to ask relevant questions rather than strictly adhering to the order in the list. Likewise, I changed the wording whenever the respondents could not understand the questions or used other terms to refer to the same phenomenon. In this way, the sessions turned out to be a combination of a structured interview, posing questions prepared in advance, and a conversation, in which the respondents felt much freer to convey their ideas, experiences and feelings.

In Amsterdam, my Dutch was not good enough to conduct the interviews myself, so I got help from three assistants. Their experience with interviewing or involvement in housing and resident struggles had armed them with knowledge of how the policy worked in the Dutch context. Before actually conducting the interviews, I spent hours talking with them about the research aims and questions but also some concerns in preparation for the official interviews. They held some preliminary interviews with my direct neighbors, who were also grappling with the process of renovation in their blocks. These preliminary interviews helped familiarize the assistants with and gain confidence about the questions, concepts and aims of the research as well as with the technique of interviewing.

I was present during all interviews conducted in Dutch. As I was able to read and write in Dutch at the time of the fieldwork in Amsterdam, I could understand most of (on average 70-80 percent) what was said and took extensive notes as my assistant was conducting the interview. Afterwards, we always took some time to go over the interview to ensure that I got things right, checking my own notes with them. During these evaluation sessions, we had the tape recorder on to record our talk about the interview. While I would listen and transcribe these recorded pieces, my assistants would make an English summary of the interview, listening to the original interview once again.

I conducted the interviews with the temporary residents myself. This type of resident consisted mainly of international students and young people who did speak English. I could also interview the residents of Turkish origin.

As for Istanbul, I conducted all the interviews myself. The language barrier that I encountered there was among Kurdish-speaking residents. First I thought of recruiting a Kurdish-speaking person to help me conduct the interviews in Kurdish. This plan failed, as I could only find male assistants to help me; Kurdish women respondents did not feel comfortable with the mediation of a male assistant. As for the Kurdish male respondents, they could speak Turkish. To solve the difficulty of communicating with Kurdish females, I asked some women from the neighborhood or some relatives (daughter, son, cousin, etc.) of the respondents to translate for me during the interviews. I sometimes felt that the conversation could have gone much deeper if I knew Kurdish or if there had been a professional female interpreter. But mediation by family members or neighbors generally worked out well in the sense that the respondent felt freer to talk in the presence of these familiar faces. I held five interviews with Kurdish women, mediated by an interpreter from the family or neighborhood. For the rest of the Kurdish-speaking respondents, either their Turkish was good enough to hold the interview in Turkish or I improvised. That is, I asked extra questions to make sense of their half answers, given their limited vocabulary in Turkish, or they asked their neighbor to prompt them on the words they could not remember. One interview with a respondent of African origin was conducted in English. Some of the follow-up interviews were conducted by phone when it was not possible to meet the respondent.

The interviews took on average between an hour and an hour and a half. Since some respondents were very eager to talk about their experiences and neighborhoods, these interviews lasted longer, some taking up to four hours. The fieldwork took place in Istanbul during the spring and summer of 2010, with follow-ups in the autumn of 2011. The fieldwork was timed to enable extensive observation of daily life in Tarlabası. From the spring till the end of autumn, street life in Tarlabası is very lively. People sit outside in the streets or on their balconies, so it is easier to access the respondents but also to grasp the everyday routines of the neighborhood. I could easily start up conversations with people on the streets; I did not have to arrange for access to their private spaces or contact details. My contact with the respondents was of an informal nature and I did not need to make appointments to conduct the interviews. Thus, I held three ad hoc interviews on some days, whereas on other days I just had some informal conversations on the streets and in houses, shops or teahouses.

In Amsterdam, in contrast, I generally had to make appointments with respondents several days or even weeks in advance, which made the contact more formal. In the Ceramplein block, as there is a public space facing the houses called Ceramplein (Ceram Square), I could make contacts among the women who brought their children to the small playground on the square. I met one Turkish and one Moroccan woman residing in the Ceramplein block on the square during their daily routines, which made our interaction more informal.

The respondents were recruited by different techniques in the two cities. In Amsterdam, I had a contact person, who served as a 'gatekeeper', at the housing corporation, De Alliantie. What she did was to send the current and displaced renters of Ceramplein block letters informing them about the research and explaining that I would contact them to ask for their participation. After this letter was sent, we paid visits to their houses to ask them personally. The residents we could not reach in this way were phoned to request their participation. The gatekeeper at the housing corporation only mediated for the regular renters. I contacted the temporary residents myself ringing their doorbells or with an assistant who could help me with the communication and the interviews in Dutch. In-depth interviews took place from August to December 2009, during which period 25 respondents were interviewed. Twelve of them were temporary renters<sup>19</sup> and thirteen were regular renters whom we approached through the housing corporation.

The same contact person at the housing corporation also informed the former regular renters of the VDP block about the research. We contacted them either by visiting them at home or by phoning to ask for an interview. The in-depth interviews with the former and current renters of the VDP block took place between October and December 2009. We held 26 interviews with regular residents who either returned to their original block or moved elsewhere after the renovation.

In Tarlabası, the recruitment method was different. There, I used snowball sampling, starting with my initial contacts or with respondents whom I met later on in the

neighborhood. To overcome the drawbacks of that method, I turned to purposive sampling in the later stages of data collection. First, I already knew some of the respondents from my earlier research in the neighborhood. Getting back into contact with them, I not only got an insider's view of the neighborhood and the renewal plans but also referrals to other respondents. I first interviewed two shopkeepers, who became key respondents in the research. They were very active in the neighborhood organization, so they could introduce me to some other members of the organization, whom I interviewed later on and subsequently used their networks to get referrals to other respondents. By spending some time at the shops of the two key respondents, I could meet other people and gain some insight into the relations in the neighborhood.

The next step was to go around the neighborhood, street by street, to talk to people informally and try to recruit them as respondents. I was directed toward some potential participants by the respondents I had met while chatting on the streets. Thus, another snowball started to grow. The respondents were easy-going about sending me to someone they knew or accompanying me to the shops or houses of acquaintances they thought would participate. Having someone along from the neighborhood helped me overcome feeling like a stranger in the first weeks. After a while, I started setting quotas for the number of members of the groups. Realizing that I had reached a saturation point, I asked the respondents if they knew someone with certain characteristics (a renter with a particular migration background, etc.) and tried to arrange interviews with these individuals/groups.

At a certain point, I had reached at least one person to interview from each of the different groups in the neighborhood<sup>20</sup>. Then I took a break to reflect upon what I had been doing for almost one and a half months in the field. In the second round of data collection, which I started a month later, I talked to the neighborhood governors about an alternative way to recruit respondents. In the meantime I used my former contacts to direct me to members of more marginal groups in Tarlabası, such as transvestites, recycling workers, international migrants, etc. In gaining access to these groups, the rapport I had developed earlier with the respondents was very helpful. Most of these marginal people would not want to talk to a researcher, due to their insecure position, unless someone they trusted had introduced them. I had three more key respondents whose support helped me reach these disadvantaged groups easily.

In total, I conducted 48 interviews with neighborhood residents and seven interviews<sup>21</sup> with parties involved in the urban renewal process. In addition, several conversations were held during the fieldwork and these helped me refine the analysis.

The last round of fieldwork in both cities involved conducting follow-up interviews with residents wherever they had moved to. In Tarlabası, this stage started in November 2011, and I could reach 40 of the residents who had been interviewed previously. This time round, I interviewed them about the impacts of displacement and the living conditions in their new dwellings and neighborhoods. In Indische Buurt, the follow-up interviews

were completed in April 2012. Only two of the regular renters whom I had previously interviewed from the Ceramplain block could not be reached for a follow-up interview. At the VDP block, there was no need for follow-up interviews, as the regular renters had already relocated to their new dwellings. We could cover each and every research theme in a single interview with retrospective questions on their displacement experience. As for temporary renters of Ceramplain, I could reach nine of the twelve temporary renters I had previously interviewed and was able to conduct follow-up interviews with them. One reason why the others could not be reached for a follow-up interview is that two of the three lost to the second round were international students, who had probably left the country by then. All of the follow-up interviews took place by phone or internet phone (Skype) and were rather short, roughly 10-15 minutes.

*Participant observation* in pre-move and post-move neighborhoods to compare the impacts of displacement and its neighborhood contexts.

Engaging in participant observation enabled me to understand the dynamics of social life in the selected neighborhoods. I thereby gained insight into the settings in which events and interactions take place and into the norms, rules and contingencies that shape social interaction in the neighborhood. Through participant observation, I could augment the data with information that I had not gleaned from the in-depth interviews or informal conversations. This also strengthened the analysis; I could draw upon my observations of what actually works in everyday practice rather than having to rely solely on people's reflections during the interview or on conversations about what goes on in the neighborhood.

The participant observations differed in extent and quality in the two cities. In Istanbul, I participated first in informal gatherings and conversations, spending some days just sitting in (front of) different local establishments (hardware store, bakery, second-hand furniture shop, teahouses) chatting with the shopkeepers and customers or with passers-by. Not only could I meet a lot of people this way but I could also observe their daily interactions and contacts, or even their conflicts, in a natural setting. Quite often I sat on the doorsteps, mostly with women (and their children) from the neighborhood while they were knitting, chatting, gossiping, having tea or just chilling out after work. That would be when they would usually ask me questions rather than vice versa. Through their queries or simply from their conversations, gossip and stories, I learned a lot. I learned not only about the practice of using the street as a living room, as a place to meet and chat with neighbors about very elemental aspects of their everyday lives but also about their feelings and experiences about how the pressures of impending displacement affect the way they negotiate the challenges of everyday life.

Just sitting in the shade on those very hot summer days, I was fascinated by these women and really enjoyed these conversations. Their gossip, stories and responses to my questions helped me understand everyday life and relations in the neighborhood better. These encounters filled in the picture, adding what was not hitherto revealed to me or I

had not observed. Besides, I came to understand some inconsistencies between what I had been told (during the interviews or during the informal conversations) and how people actually interact or do things in everyday life. I could not have seen that bigger picture without participating and writing up regular accounts of these encounters in my field notes.

Besides these daily participant observations I was engaged in, I also attended the meetings that the neighborhood organization organized for the residents. I attended four of the organization's monthly meetings from May to August 2009. These events helped me understand the neighborhood organization – its aims, members, activities, the group dynamics and conflicts – as well as the organization of resistance and the action repertoire.

The last event I took part in was the renters' meeting, which was held in early July 2009. At that point, my participation had advanced beyond being just an observer. I found myself in a position to mediate between different parties. There was a clearly stated need to organize a meeting for renters but no one had taken the initiative to do so. From my very initial encounters in the field onward, one thing had been clear: that the renters were neglected by the municipality. The neighborhood organization was so strongly dominated by the property owners' interests that it gave insufficient attention to the renters' situation. The tenants themselves had no idea about their rights, and most were being pressured, either by the landlords or by the municipality, in many different ways. They had been asking me about the situation and their rights during our interviews or in informal talks and I was carefully offering whatever information I had in response to their questions or else directing them to some experts or organizations to ask for consultation. During one interview, a respondent suggested that it would be very helpful if an information meeting for renters would be organized. I picked up on this suggestion and decided to trigger the coalition of parties already active in the field to call a meeting for renters. The purpose would be to inform them about the current plans and situation as well as give them the opportunity to consult legal experts about their rights and individual situations. I went to talk with different parties, namely the neighborhood organization and the lawyers from Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği (Modern Jurists Organization) and the Chambers of Architects (TMMOB) and got their agreement to organize a renters' meeting. I announced it widely in the neighborhood but also on the e-mail forums of urban activists in the city. The announcement attracted quite a bit of interest among the activists, and some attended the meeting to support the residents. On the day itself, legal experts started the meeting by giving information about the project and the rights of the renters. This was followed by a round of questions from individual renters. All in all, the meeting showed the need for information, which was not provided by the municipality, and it was clear that the neighborhood organization fell short in organizing the renters. Indeed, the representatives of the neighborhood organization showed no interest in doing something for the renters. Instead, they accused the renters of being indifferent to the struggle of the neighborhood organization. My participation in this meeting helped me understand the different

positions that renters and homeowners took. I gained a better appreciation of the position of the neighborhood organization, the extent to which renters were aware of their rights and the homeowners' struggle against the municipality. At the same time the meeting demonstrated the lack of credibility for collective action against the municipality.

As the above description suggests, my level of participation in these events and daily encounters varied drastically. It ranged from participating as an observer or observing as a participant but was never purely an observer or solely a participant.

As for participant observation in Amsterdam, the opportunities were rather limited for a number of reasons. The first is the language barrier. My limited Dutch made it harder to engage in informal conversation on the street or in the shops. Yet I could speak Turkish and English when appropriate. I spent some time in the park and other public spaces close by the blocks I studied, chatting with Turkish, Dutch and Moroccan women (resorting to body language with the Moroccans) and some international students. I had some extensive conversations with earlier respondents whenever I came across them. I had tea with an international student who was a key participant. Not only did he tell me a lot about the changes in the neighborhood and the renewal plans but he also introduced me to his neighbors. Another reason for my limited participant observation in Amsterdam is the less than lively street life around the blocks under investigation. On Ceramplein, the park on the square was not used extensively by the residents of the block. While walking around the block, I would come across some of them, but walking around the block all day is not really a short cut to informal conversations. However, I did meet two women respondents in the playground. My interactions with them thus started informally, and I could join in their daily routines while they were letting their children play in the park.

Other than this experience, the conversations and participant observations had to take place mostly in private spaces, e.g., when I was invited to have tea with some Turkish women or international students or when I met some residents in the shops or at the street market. As for the VDP block, it was even harder to make participant observations in public spaces. There is no public space in the direct vicinity, except in the street the block is located on, and the only places I could meet the residents were the supermarket and some cafes around the housing block. I spent some time with a few women from Turkey who were still living or used to live in the block. Those conversations were quite helpful, allowing me to grasp the relations between the neighbors and the changes in the block through time and how the residents share their experiences of displacement.

All in all, it was rather hard to carry out participant observation in Amsterdam to the extent I could in Istanbul. This difference shows up in the analysis, as I had to rely more on what people told me. In Amsterdam, I did not have the chance to get a grasp of everyday interactions, feelings and ideas as things were happening, nor could I check whether what I had been told conforms to or diverges from what happens in daily life.

One implication of using three different methods of data collection, namely, participant observation, in-depth interviewing and document analysis, is that this study employs

methodological triangulation, which amounts to the combination of different research methods. The triangulation of data that involves “collecting information from multiple sources but aimed at corroborating the same fact or phenomenon” (Yin, 2003, p.99), is also employed in the study. Through the triangulation of data and methodological triangulation, I aimed to increase the internal validity of the research.

### 3.2.2 Reflection on the fieldwork experience: Field notes and personal diary

Field notes and a personal diary were the tools that I used to reflect upon the fieldwork experience.

To start with the *field notes*, I kept track of the impressions I had, observations I made in the neighborhood and information on residents and events. After the interviews, daily participant observations and participation in the key events during the fieldwork, I immediately wrote my field notes up. The routine allowed me to reflect upon what was happening in the neighborhood at large as well as on how people experienced the process and the threat of displacement in everyday life.

The nature of the entries shifted from simple reflections on my impressions and feeling strange during the first days of the fieldwork to a more focused writing process. The notes were then centered on the research questions and issues emerging from the fieldwork itself. Besides the notes on daily observations and interviews, what came in useful later on were the notes I took on the important (key) events<sup>22</sup> that happened during the fieldwork. These were very revealing and helped me understand the feelings and frustrations about displacement, the relations with the neighbors, residents’ encounters with housing and public authorities and the strategies they used to deal with the threat of displacement. My in-depth notes about these key events not only helped in the analysis phase but also shaped the research in the sense that they led me to recruit more people and different groups to participate in the research or to direct more specific questions toward the experiences with displacement.

I also took field notes after informal gatherings, talks and conversations. Taking field notes right afterwards was a way to reflect upon and grasp daily life. Moreover, it allowed me to compare my observations with statements from the in-depth interviews. That is to say, I could evaluate what was and what was not said and how these sources of information match up. I did not computerize these field notes but used them when needed during the analysis phase.

Secondly, I kept a *personal diary* to reflect upon my own feelings, ideas and observations while conducting the fieldwork in the two cities. This helped a lot, in the sense that I could contextualize myself as a researcher concerning what I experienced or observed that day, which allowed me to take some distance from the standpoints of the respondents. But it also helped me to cope with feeling strange, especially during the first week of the fieldwork or during some critical events. The reflections I committed to my personal diary sometimes turned out to be of an intellectual kind, showing how I was tackling

my research questions or which concepts I kept in mind as the fieldwork went on. The writing helped me make some initial linkages between the observations in the field and the concepts and questions of the research that were formulated at an earlier stage. Finally, the diary also allowed me to develop rather a focused approach for my memos and helped me turn my open codes into categories.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

#### **3.3.1 Use of computer-aided qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS)**

To aid the data analysis process, I made use of QSR Nvivo 9. CAQDAS did help, first and foremost, to handle and analyze the data in storing, coding and retrieving the data collected for this research. The textual data, i.e., interview transcripts, interview summaries, field notes, was stored, explored, coded and organized into categories using the program. Memos were written to reflect upon the codes and categories, which then helped me to discover patterns and relationships. Secondly, making use of the program also enabled me to create a formal structure for the data handling and analysis process. This made the data transparent and accessible, which is often not the case in ethnographic research.

#### **3.3.2 Coding process**

Besides the digital handling of the data, I read and re-read the transcripts and field notes. I listened, time and again, to the recordings and my own reflections upon the interviews. Before starting the digital coding, I performed manual coding to explore the data, line by line in an old fashioned way, and assign some preliminary codes. The computerized coding was initially performed openly, paying close attention to what the data was suggesting for interpretation and to new insights and ideas. Although open coding was initially used, the determination of categories and the assignment of codes were partially based on the research questions and the theoretical framework. After the open coding was done, I re-read the transcripts, summaries, notes and memos to explore some categories and consider some ideas that had emerged in the process. That is to say, the second round of coding was more focused in nature, as the objective was to re-explore the data in detail, keeping some emergent categories and issues in mind.

### **3.4 Methodological limitations of the research**

This study has some limitations, as does all research. To start with, the selection of the cases in Amsterdam is not optimal. I started with the Ceramplain project, which being in its initial phase allowed me to investigate how the displacement experiences took shape through time. I could talk to residents to learn about their experience of the process before the actual displacement. The problem was that there were no other ongoing renewal projects of the same housing corporation in Indische Buurt. There were some other

projects that the same corporation was going to start. But if I had waited, I would have run the risk of not finishing the research on time. Instead, I chose a recently completed project, namely the VDP block, where all of the displaced residents had already relocated to their new housing. The renovation was completed in late 2008, and I started a year and a half afterwards. The displacement experiences of the VDP block were thus investigated retrospectively. This, of course, has consequences for the results of the research in the sense that there had been enough time for the VDP respondents to reflect upon their experiences. The research could not follow how the experiences were shaped in different phases of the process as closely as it could among respondents from the Ceramplein block. For the case study of the VDP block, participant observation of the displacement process was also limited, as the project was already completed. Thus, I had to rely on the in-depth interviews with the respondents as the main source of data.

Secondly, there is a discrepancy between the scale of renewal in these two cases. Renewal in Tarlabaşı is much more extensive than at Ceramplein and the VDP block, which might affect the displacement experiences. The renewal of Indische Buurt is realized block by block and in different time periods by different housing corporations and private owners/investors, and this may affect the displacement experiences in a number of ways. On the one hand, renewal in phases might make some residents more enthusiastic about the impending renewal of their own dwelling. They can see how the other blocks are changing, and they too want to move to a nicer place. On the other hand, the residents are exposed to the nuisance of the renewal taking place in the neighborhood, which constantly reminds them of the upcoming renewal of their own buildings. Besides, block-by-block renewal breaks the potential resistance that could be organized at the neighborhood scale. Even though renewal is a collective issue, a problem faced by all residents who experience this process, the different timing of the renewal, along with the fact that the renewal remains at the scale of the block, would weaken any resistance against renewal of the neighborhood at large.

The third limitation of the study concerns the difficulty of generalizing from the patterns of displacement experiences detected among different resident groups, which are distinguished on the basis of tenure, ethnicity/migration background, class and gender. The main reason for this difficulty is that this research is qualitative. This means that too few respondents were reached to be able to verify or falsify the expectation that the experiences in a wider population would conform to the patterns observed in this study. Secondly, the correlates between these variables need to be checked through comprehensive quantitative analysis. Thirdly, other patterns can appear in other contexts of displacement based on other variables such as generational or age differences or educational attainment, and those patterns could elucidate the displacement experiences of different resident groups. These other variables need to be taken into account to understand displacement experiences comprehensively. All in all, the relevant variables and patterns need to be further researched using quantitative analysis.

As for the fourth limitation, the impacts of displacement, which constitutes one of the three dimensions of displacement experiences, could not be investigated fully. The reason is that the response rate on the follow-up interviews was not as high as targeted, especially among the renters of Cerampléin and some residents of Tarlabası. At Cerampléin, nine out of twelve temporary renters granted a follow-up interview, compared to ten out of thirteen regular renters. For Tarlabası, follow-up was successful for 40 out of 48 respondents. Yet, there were twelve residents who had not moved out for their houses when the research ended in the autumn of 2011. Thus, there were only 28 (out of 48 in total) interviews with actually displaced Tarlabası residents on which to base the discussion on the impacts of displacement. This leaves us with a partial picture of the impacts of displacement.

The fifth limitation of the research is related to the language barrier I had to overcome in Amsterdam. As my Dutch was not good enough, it was difficult for me to follow the daily conversations while engaging in participant observation. Of course, I could not conduct the interviews myself but needed the help of my assistants. Nonetheless, I could understand 70-80 percent of the interviews and found ways to double check and compensate for any misunderstandings. For instance, we went over the interviews right after they were conducted, and I discussed the entire interview with my assistant. Even so, it was not quite the same of level involvement that I had as an interviewer in the Istanbul context, where I was a native speaker.

A related limitation is that I had relatively more research experience in the field of Tarlabası as I had started to investigate this neighborhood in 2005 during my Master's study. This experience made me quite confident about some issues. I lacked this experience in Indische Buurt. Not only were the city and its policy context relatively new to me, but also I did not speak the language well.



## Chapter 4

# Urban Policies and Gentrification in Amsterdam

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This chapter presents the historical and political context in Amsterdam to prepare the ground for the upcoming chapters that discuss not only the case study of the displacement process in Indische Buurt but also the question of how accumulation by dispossession works through urban renewal in Amsterdam. First, I will discuss the evolution of urban and housing policies and gentrification in Amsterdam. Clark defines gentrification as “a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital” (Clark 2005, p.258). I embrace that definition as a benchmark for the ensuing discussion of the relation between urban policy and gentrification. Then special attention is paid to the restructuring policy targeting 40 high-potential (Vogelaar) neighborhoods, as this is the policy affecting the disadvantaged neighborhoods, including the one chosen for the case study in Amsterdam. Thirdly, the relocation policy will be discussed to understand the rights of the renters in Dutch context. The chapter ends by looking into the grassroots mobilizations against the urban renewal process and gentrification in Amsterdam.

Before I start, I should give a brief overview of the political and administrative structure in the Netherlands. In that light, I can then clarify the division of responsibilities among tiers of government regarding urban policy. In the Netherlands, there are two levels of local government. The first consists of the provinces, which lie between the state and the municipalities. A provincial council is elected every four years. It governs the province and is responsible for matters such as land management, zoning laws and controlling water boards at the regional level. The second level of local government consists of the municipalities (gemeentes), which are governed by an elected council (gemeenteraad) and an appointed mayor. The municipality of Amsterdam is divided into districts (stadsdelen), which are further divided into neighborhoods (wijken and buurten). Districts are governed by an elected council (stadsdeelraad) and a daily administration (dagelijks bestuur). The responsibilities of the district governments regarding urban issues include the management and maintenance of public space, issuing construction permits for housing and businesses, spatial planning at the district level, etc. As for urban restructuring, while the municipality of Amsterdam makes agreements about urban renewal with the national government and the housing corporations, it is up to the districts to work out the plans in detail.

## 4.1 Evolution of urban policies and gentrification in Amsterdam

### 4.1.1 Post-war reconstruction and piecemeal gentrification

In the post-war era (from 1945 to the 1980s), urban policy in the Netherlands was concerned with addressing the emergent housing shortage<sup>23</sup> through the production of social housing. In this era, the provision of decent housing that was affordable to all was the main ingredient of the redistributive policies, and social housing was considered to be a merit good (Boelhouwer and Priemus 1990). As a result, the share of social rental dwellings in the overall housing stock increased significantly, from 12 percent in 1947 to 23 percent in 1960 and then to 31 percent in 1970 (Van Kempen and Priemus 2002).

Various regulations were introduced, such as rent control, a central allocation system, subsidies for housing construction, and eventually rent subsidies. They helped to improve the housing conditions by providing housing for every income group (Van Kempen and Van Weesep 1994).

Rent control was instated in both the social and the private sector. According to this system, rents are calculated by a point system based on the use value of the houses. Among the criteria used for calculating the rent are size and amenities such as central heating and insulation. Above a set threshold, rents are not regulated and thus these dwellings are market-rate (private) rentals. As unregulated dwellings constituted a small portion of the housing stock, Uitermark (2011) states that in this period housing was largely decommodified.

Housing allocation was centralized and almost universalized. To start with the latter, one would have to be on the waiting list for enough time and/or have an urgent need or priority (on medical grounds, being elderly or disabled, etc.) to gain access to social rental housing. There was initially an age threshold of 26; in the 1960s, it was lowered to 18. Likewise, single households and unmarried couples, who were previously ineligible for social housing, became eligible in the 1960s.

Furthermore, social rental housing was subsidized by the government, and in this way there was tight control on the supply, which in turn stimulated construction. Housing corporations, which are private non-profit institutions, were in charge of supplying and maintaining affordable social housing of good quality with the subsidies they got from the government. In addition to the supply-side subsidies, individual renters were also eligible for rent subsidies from the 1970s on. Renters could apply for rent relief only if their rental unit was in the regulated sector; the amount of subsidy was proportionate to their income.

The government's redistributive interventions in the housing market throughout this period facilitated the production of affordable housing for all (Boelhouwer and Priemus 1990). But the policies also ensured an equitable housing system based on the decommodification of housing and a universalized and centralized allocation system in which housing was treated as a merit, not a luxury good (Uitermark 2011). In such a system, renters enjoyed full tenure security with regular (permanent) contracts; that is, the

lease was of unlimited duration and could only be terminated for specific reasons. Tenure security also rested on the fact that the rents are regulated, which means there will be no unforeseeable increase in the rent. Massive interventions in the housing sector were part of the economic policy, in that the state wanted to keep housing costs and wages low in order to keep the economy competitive (Dieleman 1994).

In the 1970s, restructuring of the existing housing stock began with the renewal of the pre-war districts. In the 1960s, policy-makers drew up redevelopment plans for Amsterdam's central city according to modernistic ideas. Renewal was based on a bulldozer approach (Van Weesep and Wiegiersma 1991) and met with resistance from the residents, who could delay or stop the plans, at least partially. This led to a revision of the policy (Terhorst and Van de Ven 2003), whereby the residents were given a crucial role. This new approach, called 'building for the neighborhood', guaranteed resident participation in the plan-making and implementation of urban renewal.

Some institutions were formed during this period to ensure resident participation. A renters' support team and renters associations were created to support the residents, to safeguard their rights and to encourage their participation in urban politics. As Uitermark (2011) argues, this promoted further resident engagement and the democratization of urban politics.

In this period, gentrification started with the initiatives of individuals in the historical city center. Government regulations on the housing market restricted gentrification to the private sector (Van Weesep and Wiegiersma 1991). As most of the housing stock was the property of housing corporations and was thus heavily regulated, it was not at all possible to benefit from rent and value gaps (*ibid.*). Even though strict state regulation allowed gentrification only when redevelopment was permitted in an area, gentrification expanded throughout the 1970s, especially in the Canal district and the Jordaan.

In the Canal district, the building stock – consisting mostly of warehouses and the residential houses of merchants – was privately owned. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the district suffered from physical dilapidation as the result of suburbanization, deindustrialization and population decline. As described by Van Weesep and Wiegiersma (1991) and Van Weesep (1986), gentrification started with the conversion of warehouses and lofts; it then kept pace with the restoration of the residential stock and the construction of condominiums.

The Jordaan, hitherto a working-class neighborhood located to the west of the Canal district, also suffered from disinvestment and dilapidation in the 1960s. As the result of public housing renewal and private investments to renovate the historical buildings in the area in the 1970s, the district gradually became very attractive to new social groups, particularly young single households, professionals and artists. Even though gentrification picked up speed gradually, the district remained mixed as lower-class renters stayed in their public housing units.

In the second half of the 1970s, urban restructuring and gentrification slowed down as the result of the economic crisis. To reverse the outflow of the middle class (due to suburbanization) and dilapidation, a 'compact city policy' was implemented, which opened up more space for the construction of expensive, private-rental and owner-occupied housing. The city supported private initiatives to boost tourism as well as cultural and leisure events. As a result of these policies, gentrification started to expand again by the mid-1980s. Many commercial establishments were opened to serve tourists and the middle class: restaurants, bars, boutiques, art galleries, etc. (Terhorst and Van de Ven 2003).

Gentrification could retain some of the social mix during the 1980s, as there was still strong regulation of social housing and, to an extent, of private (re)development (Van Weesep and Wiegiersma 1991). As Terhorst and Van de Ven (2003) conclude, gentrification did not cause large-scale direct displacement in those years. Yet, exclusionary displacement did occur as gentrified areas became unaffordable to the lower class households.

Even though the state promoted the private sector in the 1980s, which made gentrification possible, gentrification was not yet part of the official policy (Van Weesep and Wiegiersma 1991). This changed in the 1990s.

#### 4.1.2 Neoliberalization of urban and housing policy and infiltration of gentrification into urban policy

In the late 1980s, the Ministry of Housing published a new memorandum called '*Housing in the 1990s*' (VROM 1989), which announced the gradual neoliberalization of Dutch urban and housing policy. The memorandum decentralized housing policy, handing over public responsibility for managing the housing stock to municipalities and housing corporations. It also promoted a role for the private sector in housing production and reduced the construction and operating subsidies for the social rental sector. All in all, these changes signaled a shift in policy towards a market orientation (Dieleman and Van Kempen 1994, Priemus 1995, Priemus and Van Kempen 1999). In 1995, property subsidies were abolished for the social housing sector as the result of the balancing and grossing operation (brutering) for housing corporations. This meant a change in the status of the housing corporations, which became private actors with public responsibilities. They had to finance their operations – renovations, new construction, maintenance, etc. – through the private capital market; that is to say, the social rental sector became dependent on the capital market (Priemus 1995, 2005).

Parallel to the commodification and deregulation of social housing, new precarious types of tenancy, namely temporary renters and anti-squatters, were inserted into the system in this period. Temporary renters are renters with contracts that stipulate a limited duration of stay. The landlord can terminate the contract without any obligation to provide a reason. The landlord does, however, need to give notice to the temporary renters a month before they have to move out. Temporary renters are mostly placed in to-be-renovated/demolished housing blocks by the housing corporations. Anti-squatters are put in empty

buildings to prevent squatting and are not given a rental contract, so they have no renter rights. They have to be ready to move out on short notice. Uitermark calls temporary renters the 'flex-workers of the housing market' (Uitermark 2011), which indicates an increasing insecurity in the housing market. Likewise, Huisman (2013) describes this process as the precarization of the housing market, as the number of temporary renters increases and their temporariness becomes the norm rather than the exception.

In the post-1990 period, two important urban policies were adopted, namely the Big Cities Policy and the White Paper on Urban Renewal (VROM 1997). To start with the former, the Big Cities Policy was initiated in 1995 by the first Kok government (1994-1998). Its ambition was to develop an integral approach to existing problems. To that end, certain themes were prioritized: increasing neighborhood safety; social support for disadvantaged groups; enhancing the urban economy; investing in education and employment; and physical restructuring to improve urban livability (Priemus 1997, 2005). As Priemus (1997) explains, the implementation of this policy led to further decentralization of urban policy and brought about an increase in the financial resources of the big cities through budget re-allocation for the restructuring programs. The Big Cities Policy had a neighborhood approach. Among the programs resorting under this policy were 'All the Neighborhood' (Heel de Buurt), 'It is Our Neighborhood's Turn' (Onze Buurt aan zet), '56 Priority Neighborhoods Program' and very recently the '40 High-Potential Neighborhoods Program', which were implemented in 1998, 2001, 2005 and 2007 respectively (see Priemus 2005 for further information).

The White Paper on Urban Renewal was prepared by the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM 1997). Its aim was to combat spatial segregation in cities by creating socially mixed neighborhoods. The promotion of livability and economic viability was one of the mottos of the policy document. Re-differentiation of housing stock was elevated to the main policy means to address the typically urban problems – e.g., the concentration of unemployment, crime, drug abuse, nuisance, etc. – associated with the predominantly cheap, multi-family (post-war) housing stock, with its concentrations of lower-class households.

The housing stock was to be re-differentiated by converting social rental housing into high-quality owner-occupied dwellings, which would attract a higher class of residents. The urban problems would be dispersed and spatial segregation would be prevented. Demolition, renovation, merging small units and selling off parts of the low-cost social rental stock, and building new owner-occupied dwellings – these were some of the main tools of the re-differentiation policy. With the White Paper on Urban Renewal, the social housing stock was for the first time declared to be part of the problem, whereas that stock had always been assigned a crucial policy role in the effort to solve urban problems (Priemus 2005).

Despite its ambitious pursuit of socially mixed and more livable neighborhoods through the influx of affluent groups, the White Paper on Urban Renewal was highly criticized by

scholars. It was said that housing re-differentiation, which was merely a spatial solution for severe social problems, would not offer long-term sustainable solutions but would disperse the problems instead (Musterd et al. 1999, Priemus and Van Kempen 1999, Ostendorf et al. 2001). In this period, gentrification became a policy goal (Musterd and Van de Ven 1991). Urban policy promoted gentrification by lifting earlier regulations that prevented to make profit from the rent and value gap. On the one hand, the conversion of social housing to owner-occupied dwellings as a means to achieve socially mixed neighborhoods helped to change the social profile of these neighborhoods. The social mixing policy entailed replacing lower class households with middle-class households. Furthermore, in this era, it became possible to subdivide entire buildings into flats by dividing the ownership. With this deregulation, it became easier to sell parts of the building as individual units, which paved the way for gentrification (Van Weesep 1986, Oudenampsen 2005).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the gentrification of the Jordaan district and the historical center accelerated as yuppies moved in. In the mid-1990s, gentrification also started in the Pijp, a central neighborhood with a 19<sup>th</sup>-century housing stock. The middle class (professionals and Western migrants) bought up properties there and, in time, amenities such as trendy bars, cafés and restaurants mushroomed to serve the needs of these groups (Terhorst and Van de Ven 2003). Even though the geography of gentrification in Amsterdam extended in this period thanks to the deregulation of the housing system, the growth was, to a considerable extent, impeded by the regulations that were still in force.

#### 4.1.3 Infiltration of gentrification into urban policy

Not long after the launch of the White Paper on Urban Renewal, a new Dutch Housing Memorandum called '*What people want, where people live*' was issued for the time period 2000 – 2010 (VROM 2001). This new policy document shifted the emphasis toward the quality of the housing environment and freedom of choice. It was no longer the quantity of housing that was considered to be the problem but rather its quality. The citizens' demand for housing was taken as the touchstone for the re-differentiation attempts, and enhancing the quality of the living environment was set as a core target (VROM 2001). The supply-side orientation in the production of social housing, which through the years had enabled lower class households to access moderate-quality housing, was abandoned. Instead, a new demand-side orientation was pursued. This meant tailoring the housing stock to meet the housing preferences and needs of the middle class, which would lead to the anticipated filtering. In a nutshell, the promotion of filtering marked a transition in Dutch housing policy.

Besides, housing re-differentiation is pursued through the restructuring of urban neighborhoods with a concentration of social housing stock. Removal of the inexpensive social rental dwellings became the main pillar of the policy to create a more 'balanced' neighborhood population. That is to say, the goal was a drastic decrease in the share of

the social rental stock – the policy document calls for the sale of 500 thousand units by the housing corporations in ten years (VROM 2001). The promotion of owner-occupation was among the key policy messages of the Memorandum. This demand-oriented trend provided the grounds for the infiltration of gentrification into urban policy as a desired direction for urban change in Amsterdam. That direction was openly propounded in the recent housing and structural visions prepared for Amsterdam.

The recent visionary policy document called *Housing in the Metropolis: Housing Vision for Amsterdam till 2020* is based on the central assumption that there is more affordable housing than needed (Amsterdam Municipality 2009). According to this document, the mismatch between income groups and housing segments is problematic. The policy is based on a presumption that the middle class renters should leave the social housing sector and be encouraged to become homeowners or to enter the private rental market. Therefore, one of the aims put forth in the policy document is to expand the owner-occupied sector through the sale<sup>24</sup> and conversion of social housing and by building new complexes that would open up more space for the middle class residents in the city.

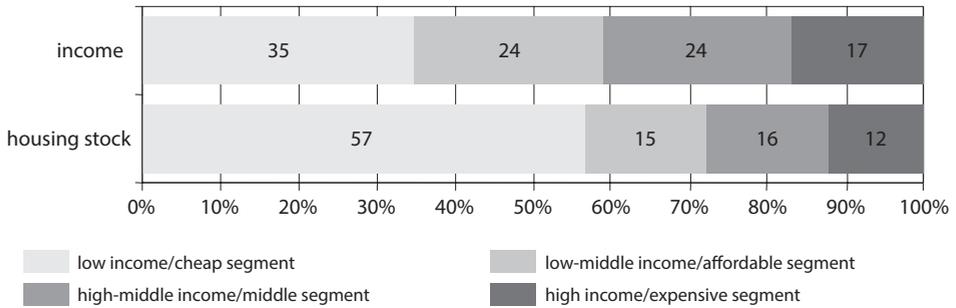


Figure 4.1. Income groups and housing segments compared, 2008 (Amsterdam Municipality, 2009, p.26)

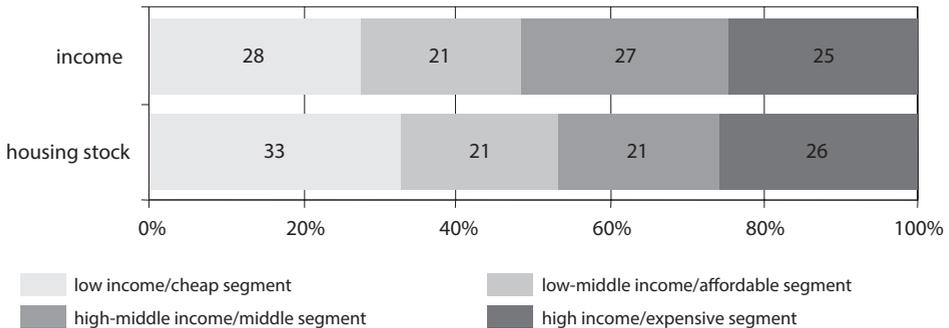


Figure 4.2. Income groups and housing segments compared, as targeted in 2020 (Amsterdam Municipality 2009, p.31)

On the one hand, a decrease in the share of low-cost social housing is targeted by 2020. On the other hand, the presence of the lower class households is projected to decrease by 2020, not only proportionately but also in absolute numbers, which means that these households will no longer feel welcome in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, more residential space is being opened up to the middle class households, who are referred to as ‘*the cement of the society*’ (Amsterdam Municipality 2009, p.12), by providing more expensive rental and owner-occupied housing (see Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2).

Gentrification is counted as one of Amsterdam’s qualities, along with its young population and diversified economy (ibid., p. 33). Amsterdam apparently knows how to attract native Dutch and Western migrants, who come to study and stay on afterwards. The housing vision aims to provide housing and urban facilities to attract and/or keep these groups in the city. In relation to this, gentrification is embraced as a policy tool to develop the potential in neighborhoods with favorable locations that are nearby and well connected to the center. Some of these neighborhoods are already attracting investment; for others, the policy addresses the need to support investors in smart ways so as to boost gentrification (ibid., p.50).

Another policy document, *Pillars for the spatial development of Amsterdam: Memorandum towards the structural vision* (Amsterdam Municipality 2009), frames the regional strategy/vision for the development of Amsterdam. It projects the production of new dwellings on brownfield sites (old industrial and port areas); urban transformation in the peripheral post-war neighborhoods; and the gentrification of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhoods lying close to the center. High-density construction is projected for brownfield areas. To make more space for the middle class, it envisions social mixing of the post-war neighborhoods. As for the expansion of the city center, the ambition is to spread existing facilities into the 19th and early 20th century neighborhoods, as the demand for leisure and residential facilities in the city center is excessive. Some explicit goals for expanding gentrification include the promotion of cultural facilities and building for the middle class households who would be encouraged to relocate in these neighborhoods (Van Gent 2013).

To summarize, urban policy documents in this period embrace two main tools to promote gentrification. First, social mixing is adopted as a means to attract middle-class residents, especially in areas with a concentration of social rental stock, and implies a re-differentiation of the housing stock. Secondly, the urban policy seeks to support investors and potential gentrifiers by providing the infrastructure to boost gentrification. This aim could be achieved in different ways: e.g., issuing permits to split the ownership of the buildings, making more housing available for expats, or renovating public spaces to boost investment around them.

So far, the discussion has focused on how the ambition to promote gentrification became part and parcel of urban policy. The question remains whether it actually leads to

further gentrification. Boterman and Van Gent (2014) and Uitermark and Bosker (2014) argue that this is the case: tenure conversions trigger gentrification in neighborhoods with better market positions, resulting in the influx of middle-class native Dutch households into the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhoods around the historical center. In contrast to the stated aims of the policy, post-war neighborhoods do not show evidence of the anticipated social upgrading, according to the findings of Boterman and Van Gent (2014) and Uitermark and Bosker (2014).

Besides the gentrification triggered by tenure conversions in residential areas, brownfield sites were also subject to gentrification, with interventions by the local authorities. The regeneration of the Westergasfabriek site is a good example. In the 2000s, the disused gas factory was transformed into a cultural and recreational venue by the district government of Westerpark. This culture-led regeneration project formed the first example of state-led gentrification in Amsterdam.

Another example of culture-led gentrification comes from Indische Buurt. This ethnically mixed and disadvantaged neighborhood has experienced upgrading in its built environment, accompanied by a slow but steady change in the composition of its population. Previously squatted buildings, public properties and former industrial areas have been gradually gentrified at the initiative of individuals and through collaboration between the district government and the housing corporations. An outstanding example is the gentrification of Timorplein, the site of an old public school complex. Upon the initiative of the housing corporation Ymere, the complex was turned into a cultural and touristic venue where there is now a youth hostel, a cinema, a trendy restaurant-bar and a bike repair shop (Oudenampsen 2005). In sum, hitherto a spontaneous process, gentrification became more and more embedded in urban policy in Amsterdam through the years.

#### **4.2 Forty 'problem neighborhoods'**

In 2007, the Minister (Vogelaar) of Housing, Neighborhoods and Integration selected 40 problem<sup>25</sup> neighborhoods in the country where a renewal program would be carried out within the framework of a new urban renewal policy. The aim was to improve the socio-economic and housing conditions in neighborhoods where social, economic and physical problems were concentrated. The plan was to draw from an additional investment budget<sup>26</sup>, which is funded by the housing corporations based on the national government's agreement<sup>27</sup> with AEDES, the umbrella organization of Dutch housing corporations, to make these neighborhoods 'livable' in ten years. The municipalities have been in charge of preparing neighborhood action plans with the collaboration of housing corporations and other parties involved.

The priority neighborhoods were selected on the basis of some subjective variables – the judgments of occupants – and some objective ones – income, employment, housing

stock, safety, etc. The funding of relevant projects in the 40 designated neighborhoods would come from three sources: 1) housing corporations<sup>28</sup>; 2) treasury money in the form of a municipal fund<sup>29</sup>; and 3) funds from other ministries acting in the fields of education, health, social welfare and culture<sup>30</sup>. The aim was that diverse parties – such as renters, municipalities, housing corporations, the business community, police, social workers and schools – would work collaboratively to turn these problem neighborhoods into attractive places to live and work.

### 4.3 Relocation Policy

The implementation of the current restructuring policy requires the displacement of some residents. This section deals with the relocation policy that is tied to urban renewal to enable a comprehensive understanding about the rights of the residents together with the responsibilities of housing corporations regarding relocation of the residents.

The government's responsibility in housing issues is defined in the Constitution<sup>31</sup> as the promotion of adequate housing opportunities, while protection for renters is enshrined in the Dutch Civil Code. Whenever there is extensive renovation or demolition of the existing housing stock, housing corporations can relocate their renters to some other residential areas. However, renters do have certain rights when they are forced to move due to urban renewal, and they need to be compensated for the burden of forced relocation.

To begin with, the housing corporations have to conduct a survey to get to know the housing needs and wishes of their renters living in the structures to be renovated. In this questionnaire the renters are asked for their opinion on the renovation or demolition plan that is to take place in their block. According to regulations, a demolition or renovation plan can be executed if 70 percent of the renters with a regular rental contract approve of the renovation or demolition plan or if 70 percent of the renters with regular contract already had moved out. Besides, housing corporations are responsible to provide the necessary information, guidance and consultation about the plans, the process and the rights of the renters. They send letters and organize information evenings to inform the renters. Moreover, the personnel of the housing corporation or the Development Agency of the Municipality of Amsterdam (Ontwikkelingsbedrijf Gemeente Amsterdam; called OGA from here on) pay house visits to make an inventory of housing needs and demands and to provide guidance to the renters while searching for a relocation house. Some independent parties such as Amsterdam Housing Support (Amsterdam Steunpunt Wonen) and Neighborhood Housing Support (WSW) can be involved in the process to help the renters or renters' committees and to ensure their participation in the process.

Regular renters are entitled to a relocation house that is comparable to their present dwelling (i.e., in size, type, etc.). They get priority status for such housing in the social housing system over other house seekers. This priority is valid for a year, which is called the relocation period. However, this relocation period can be prolonged by the housing

corporations, if all of the renters cannot be relocated within a year (Kleinhaus 2003). Besides, renters are given priority for houses in their original neighborhoods over renters from other neighborhoods.

The housing corporations are in charge of providing extra support to help the displaced renters find a new dwelling. Provided that there are suitable dwellings in renewed/rebuilt blocks, housing corporations have to offer those dwellings to the renters so they can live in their original block after renovation. In this case, the renters are relocated to temporary dwellings during the renewal/rebuilding phase. Once the renovation or reconstruction is completed, they move back to the original blocks.

For all renters who have to move out due to renewal or demolition, relocation allowances are provided by the housing corporations to compensate for the expenses of relocation. Furthermore, renters with a low income can get (additional) rent subsidy to compensate for the increase in rents after relocation. Relocation policy serves to reduce the negative impacts of the urban renewal programs.

#### **4.4 Grassroots mobilization against urban renewal and state-led gentrification in Amsterdam**

Considering grassroots mobilizations against government policies is important to get a better understanding of the process and experience of displacement. Resident movements in Amsterdam were strong in the 1970s and 1980s, when they were able to turn the modernistic policies based on a bulldozer approach into a 'building for neighborhood' approach (Terhorst and Van de Ven 2003, Van Weesep 1991). In this period, resident engagement became crucial to policy-making and implementation. Several institutions – such as renters associations and renter support teams – were formed to encourage the residents' participation and to safeguard their rights. The squatter movement collaborated with renters to stop any urban renewal that would not benefit the renters and to prevent gentrification. Yet, this opposition weakened in time. According to Uitermark (2011), the resident movements have been institutionalized to an extent that the organizations, which were hitherto functioning to mobilize renters to protect their rights, are now in favor of compromises (*ibid.*). Besides, the squatter movement also lost its momentum and most of its ties to the residents. The resident movement ceased to exist as a city-wide network of grassroots organizations pushing for radical solutions with respect to social housing and participation. Yet, there are mobilizations in different neighborhoods where the residents are under the threat of displacement and gentrification. There are three factors that affect the emergence of mobilization or its absence. The first is that housing corporations generally neglect the maintenance of the social rental stock for years before they actually announce renewal for these blocks. In time, the renters who could afford to move out have already done so. The ones who stay put live in deteriorating conditions for years. When the start of renewal is announced, most welcome it, given the physical

condition of the dwellings. Thus, it becomes easy to convince these people of the need for a renewal operation, so less mobilization occurs even though the renters do not participate in the decision-making process. In sum, their consent is manufactured through deferred maintenance (Sakızlıoğlu, 2014).

Secondly, housing corporations promote the formation of resident committees in the blocks that are undergoing restructuring. The interested residents are called to join such committees, which mostly make decisions about the internal design of the houses (e.g., open/separate kitchen, color of tiles). The residents in these committees get involved in these minor decisions and, most of the time, are isolated from the residents who are not on these committees. Through selective accommodation of the residents' wishes, housing corporations co-opt the most interested residents, who otherwise would have the potential to stir up opposition to the housing corporation.

The third factor that affects mobilization is the fragmentation of tenure types. In the blocks to be renovated or demolished, vacant apartments are not rented to regular renters anymore but rather to anti-squatters and temporary renters, who have fewer rights and cannot claim relocation housing when the renewal starts. As the number of regular renters decreases it becomes hard to organize a mobilization. Moreover, anti-squatters and temporary renters usually don't attempt to mobilize due to their precarious situation in the housing market. Being dependent on the housing corporations and anti-squatting agencies to find alternative housing, they are less inclined to protest. All in all, it would be an exaggeration to speak of a resident movement in Amsterdam at present. Yet there have been exceptions.

Among the most recent examples of such struggles are the resident organization in Van der Pek Buurt<sup>32</sup>, the resident organization SlimBlijven<sup>33</sup> in Amsterdam East, and resident groups in Spaarndammerbuurt<sup>34</sup>. Even though these different organizations are contesting the particular policy implementations in their own blocks and neighborhoods, it is possible to discern some characteristics that they have in common.

To start with, these resident groups mostly want to stop the implementation of the renewal policies. They say the dwellings offered for relocation are too expensive. Moreover, they are against the yuppification (veryupping) of their neighborhood that the renewal would bring about. Yet these struggles are not comprehensive in the sense that most of the time they focus on the rights of the regular renters but do not include temporary renters or anti-squatters. However, in some cases, alliances are made with the squatter movement and other organizations that fight for renters' rights.

As for the repertoire of action that these resident groups make use of, they first negotiate with the housing corporations. In such negotiations, it is mostly the rent increases and the relocation options for individual renters that are at stake. Secondly, in the historical parts of the city, residents submit applications to get their buildings listed as monuments to delay the operations of the housing corporations and prevent demolitions. Thirdly, resident organizations lobby the municipal council to get its support to stop the renewal

operations of the housing corporations. By making alliances with urban professionals (architects, monument experts, etc.), residents groups can prepare and present alternative plans for their buildings, which constitutes a fourth way to contest the renewal plans.

Another strategy is to organize demonstrations to attract media and politicians' attention to their case. A sixth one is for individual renters to enter into legal battle with the housing corporations, seeking to claim their rights. As a last strategy for action, in some neighborhoods social centers are opened to provide residents with meeting places for their political actions as well as for recreational purposes. Likewise, neighborhood festivals are organized to support the mobilization of the residents and create some space for further mobilizations. These events usually involve squatters, less often anti-squatters, in the struggles of the residents.

## Summary

Amsterdam has a strong tradition of equitable urban and social policy, which has left its mark on the current socio-economic and physical structure of the city. The tradition is eroding under the pressure of neoliberal policies, however (Uitermark 2011). This chapter has examined the evolution of urban policy and gentrification in Amsterdam and discussed their relation. In addition, relocation policy and resistance to the renewal projects and gentrification were discussed. By doing so, the chapter has set the historical and political stage for the discussion in upcoming chapters, which will concern not only the case study of state-led gentrification process in Indische Buurt but also how accumulation by dispossession works through urban renewal in Amsterdam.

While redistributive policies ensured the supply of affordable housing from 1945 to 1980, the gradual neoliberalization meant the commodification and decentralization of the social housing system. Gentrification has played a part in this policy change. Amsterdam has undergone three waves of gentrification. The first one was characterized by piecemeal instances of gentrification initiated by individual gentrifiers, and it was impeded by the strong regulations in housing market. The second wave (1989-2002) started with the deregulation of social housing through privatization and cuts in subsidies for the production of social housing. These policies overcame the barriers of earlier regulations that prevent profiting from rent and value gap, and the geography of gentrification in Amsterdam expanded. The third wave of gentrification took place after 2000 and is marked by the emergence of gentrification as a policy goal (see also Van Gent 2013, Uitermark and Bosker 2014). The municipal government now uses tenure conversion to allow middle-class households to move into neighborhoods that were previously almost entirely composed of social housing. In light of existing research, it appears that, due to this policy, gentrification is actually increasing in areas with strong market positions, such as Amsterdam's center and the neighborhoods adjacent to the 19<sup>th</sup> century ring, while

gentrification is not apparent in neighborhoods with weak market positions (Van Gent 2013, Uitermark and Bosker 2014).

Given that the Netherlands has one of the most highly regulated housing markets, the evolution of gentrification in Amsterdam may be characterized, in the words of Smith, as: “the story of state involvement in the land and housing markets, the relaxation of state controls which precipitated a rush of private investment, and broad, sometimes violent, political opposition to state and private designs over housing” (Smith 1996, p.172). The negative impacts of displacement, though, are still mitigated by the relocation policy that provides the displaced households with comparable relocation housing and monetary compensation to cover the costs of moving.

# Chapter 5

## The Setting of and Urban Renewal Projects in Indische Buurt/Amsterdam

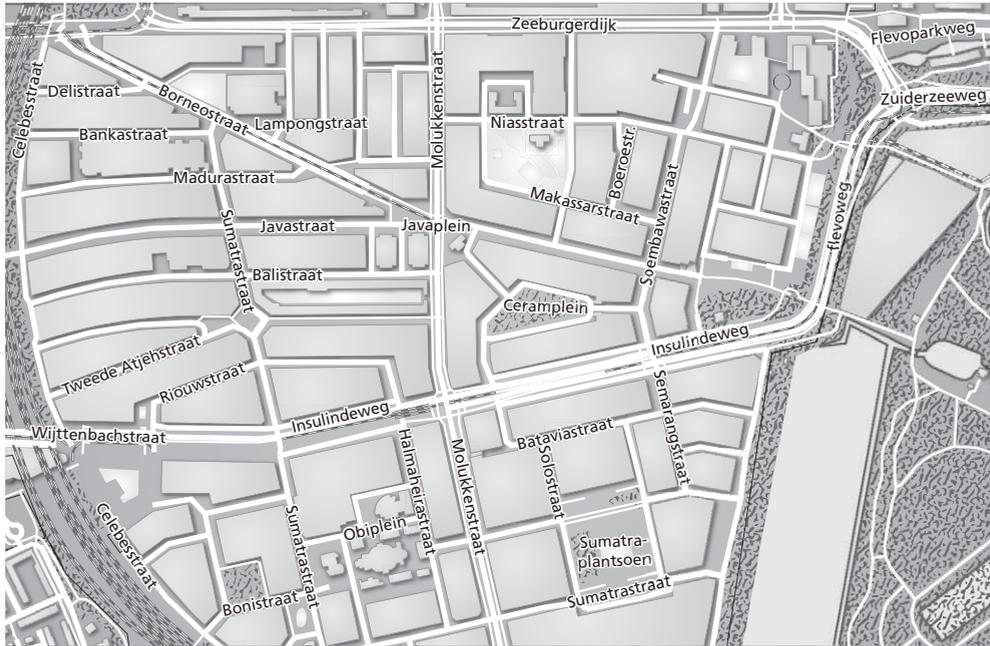
### 5.1 The neighborhood setting

#### 5.1.1 Location: Where is Indische Buurt?

Indische Buurt is located in the district Zeeburg in the east of Amsterdam. The boundaries of the neighborhood are framed by the Amsterdam-Hilversum railway on the west, by Flevopark on the east, Zeeburgerdijk on the north and Valentijnkade on the south. Indische Buurt is the oldest part of Zeeburg district and falls under the jurisdiction of the municipal district East (Stadsdeel Oost).



**Figure 5.1.** Location of Indische Buurt in Amsterdam



**Figure 5.2.** Map of Indische Buurt showing the four quadrants

The streets of the neighborhood are named after the islands of Indonesia, which used to be a colony of the Netherlands. It is divided into four quadrants by the intersection of the two main axes of the district, namely Molukkenstraat and Insulindeweg. The northern quadrants are Makassarpleinbuurt (northeast) and Timorpleinbuurt (northwest) and the southern quadrants are called Sumatraplatsoenbuurt (southeast) and Ambonpleinbuurt (southwest).

Alternatively, the neighborhood can be divided into two sections: the old (consisting of the northwest quadrant) and the new Indische Buurt (the other three quadrants). The old Indische Buurt is part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ring even though it was built at the turn of the century. The new Indische Buurt was mainly built between 1920 and 1940. In the new part, the land is privately owned, whereas land in the old part is owned by the municipality, which leases it to the property owners.

In this study, I will focus on two renewal projects, both of which are located in the north part of the neighborhood. While one of these projects, namely the Van der Pek block, is located in the old Indische Buurt, the other project area at Ceramplein lies in the northeast quadrant and thus forms part of the new Indische Buurt.

### 5.1.2 Indische Buurt through time: A brief history of the neighborhood

The Indische Buurt remained underdeveloped through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The western part of the neighborhood was built up first, starting at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



This negligence triggered resident mobilization, as Heijdra (2000) points out. In 1972, the residents set up a housing working group (*Werkgroep Wonen*) to stop the dilapidation and improve living conditions in the neighborhood. This working group, which operated under the auspices of the Dutch Communist Party (CPN), was constituted by representatives of resident groups, social workers and a merchants' association (Heijdra 2000). Due to the high profile of the group, which engaged in publicity campaigns through petitions, pressuring politicians and contacting the media, the neighborhood received attention in the political arena. In 1974, a renovation plan was drawn up for the neighborhood. In 1975, though, it was decided to go for demolition and new construction instead, as the foundations were in bad shape and renovation would be more expensive.

According to Heijdra (2000), during this phase of urban renewal, the neighborhood suffered from impoverishment. There was much simultaneous demolition and new construction. Property owners who were not interested in renovating their places boarded up their buildings and abandoned them. The neighborhood looked like a war zone (Heijdra 2000). Besides, the rents of the newly constructed houses were high, while the people living in the to-be-demolished houses did not feel safe. Some of the residents and squatters thought that the renewal plans of the municipality went too far and were not in line with the residents' demands, so they came together in a neighborhood center in a forum called *Buurtoverleg*<sup>35</sup>. They demanded small-scale demolitions rather than razing entire blocks and wanted the residents to be able to stay put in their own neighborhood. The group organized demonstrations and petitions, after which the municipality accommodated their demands (Bohl 2010). Starting from the late-1970s and continuing throughout the 1980s, the prevailing approach to renewal at the city level was to build for the neighborhood, that is, to meet the needs and demands of its current population. Accordingly, some buildings in *Indische Buurt* were renovated and some arrangements were made for better maintenance of the existing housing stock (*ibid.*).

In this period, the municipality also expropriated some buildings in the neighborhood. These properties were targeted by a speculator, who then acquired them from the municipality. His plan was to evict the renters and then construct owner-occupied houses with government subsidy, a plan that was strongly contested by the residents and squatters. Uniting against speculation and the construction of owner-occupied housing in the neighborhood, a coalition of renters and squatters proceeded to squat many of the houses owned by this speculator and demanded that these properties be turned into social-rental houses. In the end, their demands were accommodated by the municipality, which decided to buy back all these buildings to construct social-rental houses instead of owner-occupied housing (Heijdra 2000).

During the 1980s, the new construction went on in the neighborhood, with higher and larger apartments being built. In the 1970s and 1980s, the neighborhood became home to many squatters, who occupied boarded-up houses to live in after making some necessary renovations. They were very active: organizing campaigns along with the residents against

speculation, opposing the introduction of housing for sale, and protesting renewal operations that ran counter to the demands of the residents (Bohl 2010). In the 1990s, the squatters disappeared from the neighborhood, first due to the new construction, and secondly because the old houses were being used as temporary relocation dwellings for the displaced residents (*ibid.*).

From the 1960s on, the composition of the population changed continuously. The relocation of the port to the west of Amsterdam in the 1960s and the gradual suburbanization (to Purmerend, Lelystad, etc.), along with the construction of the mass housing estate called Bijlmermeer in the 1970s and 1980s, caused the population of the neighborhood to decline. Furthermore, some residents moved out due to the physical dilapidation that the neighborhood had suffered through the years. The outflow of mainly skilled workers and government employees from the area was, to an extent, balanced with the influx of non-Western immigrants from Morocco, Turkey and Surinam in the 1970s and 1980s (Anderiesen and Reijndorp 1990). The neighborhood became home to a concentration of non-Western immigrants over time, and some parts were still suffering from bad maintenance, more native-Dutch residents left the neighborhood throughout the 1990s (*ibid.*).

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Indische Buurt was suffering from physical dilapidation as well as a concentration of social problems such as unemployment and a high crime rate, which is why the neighborhood came to be selected as one of the 40 priority neighborhoods in the Netherlands. Intervention in the 2000s started with the Urban Renewal Plan for Indische Buurt 2001-2005, which was prepared by the district government Zeeburg. The plan was based mainly on the principle of re-differentiation of the social housing stock, through which the social problems were expected to be solved. Accordingly, the municipality engaged in renovations of public space. The housing corporations initiated many renewal projects, which involved selling off part of the social rental stock, increasing the share of private rentals<sup>36</sup> to attract the middle class to the neighborhood. As a result of the concerted efforts of the housing corporations and the municipality, the change in the housing stock in this period was drastic, as a glance at Table 5.1 shows. From 2000 to 2010, the share of social housing decreased from 93 percent to 70 percent, while the share of the owner-occupied and market-rental sectors has increased sharply (O+S 2011).

In this period, Indische Buurt had undergone a process of gentrification (Oudenampsen 2005). On the one hand, housing corporations initiated prestige projects, especially in the oldest part of the neighborhood, which triggered culture-led gentrification. One of these was the Timorplein project, where an old school complex was converted into a cultural venue that includes a cinema, youth hostel, restaurant & café and small businesses. This pioneer project in Indische Buurt attracted students, tourists and middle class residents. It also opened up avenues for further culture and tourism-led regeneration. As one

**Table 5.1.** The composition of the housing stock in Indische Buurt (percentages) (O+S 2011).

Tenure type	2000	2010
Social rental	93	70
Market rental	3.5	10
Owner-occupied	3.5	20

interviewee said, “Indische Buurt changed from being a neighborhood that you pass by to a neighborhood that you go to for certain activities.”

Likewise, Borneohof, an old monumental building on Javaplein, was renovated in the late 2000s by the housing corporation De Alliantie, which calls this building ‘the pearl of Indische Buurt.’ The corporation included 67 rental dwellings in the project, 47 of which are moderately priced<sup>37</sup> private rentals while 20 of them are social housing units. There are also an underground parking garage, a library, a grand café & bar and a fitness center. The square was renovated with the collaboration of the district government<sup>38</sup> Zeeburg (Stadsdeel Zeeburg). The cultural facilities serve the tastes of the middle class, who use the square often. It is quite common to see the square full on a sunny day, especially the terrace of the new café to which middle-class inhabitants (young professionals, young couples with children, artists) tend to flock. Private rentals attract a particular group within the middle class, people who have neither the financial wherewithal to buy a house nor the time to wait for access to social housing. Furthermore, Western immigrants who come to work temporarily or do not want to make the binding investment of buying a house are also interested in private rentals. The renewed square attracts other groups as well. For instance, the public library, where many children and elderly people from the neighborhood go, is a very mixed public space. Considering all these features, the Borneohof project could be counted as a mixed development. As a prestige project,



**Photo 5.1.** Timorplein (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

Bornehof works to change the image of the neighborhood and attract the middle-class people.

Besides these prestige projects, the municipality and housing corporations engaged in city-marketing to improve the image of the neighborhood through a campaign called Neighborhood Promotion Indische Buurt. The campaign was initiated collaboratively by the central city, the district government Zeeburg and the housing corporation Dageraad, and it was funded by the EU as an initiative to improve the image of the neighborhood. Indische Buurt was promoted as a World Neighborhood (Wereldwijk), and many activities were organized: a cultural festival, art market, multicultural market, etc. At the center of this campaign, the diverse cultures present in the neighborhood were promoted to boost the neighborhood's image, and ethnic diversity was appreciated as an opportunity for social and economic upgrading.

This campaign highlighted Javastraat, the main shopping street in the neighborhood. The concentration of ethnic businesses in Javastraat was seen as an advantage in the effort to upgrade the street, casting it as a street for World Shops (Wereld Winkels) (Stadsdeel Zeeburg, 2008). Ethnic diversity was promoted to the extent that it can increase economic viability while serving middle-class tastes. To enhance the quality and diversity of the shops, more permits could be issued for cultural and recreational facilities such as restaurants, cafés and bars, book shops, etc.

Another project that the district government Zeeburg initiated in partnership with the housing corporations active in the neighborhood (particularly De Alliantie) is called World Housing (Wereld Wonen). It is a program to upgrade and differentiate the existing housing stock in the old Indische Buurt with financing from the Urban Renewal Investment Budget (Investeringsbudget Stedelijke Vernieuwing – ISV). While



*Photo 5.2.* Bornehof at Javaplein (after renovation) (Photo by Bahar Sakızlioğlu)



**Photo 5.3.** Changing face of Javastraat (Photos by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

the housing corporation, De Alliantie, was to renovate its housing stock in this part of the neighborhood, the municipality was responsible for stimulating the private owners to take action to renovate their properties. Through the provision of subsidies, permission to subdivide ownership and relocation support for the renters of the houses to be renovated, the municipality stimulated the property owners to undertake renovations.

In the course of subdividing the ownership and converting rental houses to owner-occupancy, many renters had to be relocated. The displaced households were compensated with relocation allowance and relocation housing. Javastraat has been transformed drastically and now offers attractive housing for young urban professionals and young couples with no children. In other words, the street has been gentrified in the hands of the municipality.

### 5.1.3 Physical characteristics

Indische Buurt is of relatively recent vintage. The old and new Indische Buurt differ regarding the built environment and street plan. The old part of the neighborhood, the northwest quadrant, has the characteristics of a 19<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood, even though it was built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. The architectural design, small size of the parcels and fragmented ownership are such characteristics. Accordingly, the layout features long and narrow streets with little green and few facilities, and the houses are quite small, on average 50 square meters (Bohl 2010). There are some monumental buildings such as the Van der Pek block, which were built as the first social housing complex with a communal inner garden in Amsterdam, and the Berlage block located at the intersection of Javaplein,

Balistraat and Javastraat, which was built in 1915 for large working-class families with little income.

This part of the neighborhood is mainly in private ownership. Even though the property titles had originally been issued for entire buildings, in 2005 numerous subdivisions took place, promoted by the municipality. Subdivision was the first step toward conversion of the rental units to owner-occupancy, a procedure that brought about a population change in this part of the neighborhood.

The typically urban character of this old part, with its architectural design and lively streets with many shops, makes it attractive for the existing middle-class residents as well as for potential gentrifiers.

The new Indische Buurt was built between 1920 and 1940. While the street plan has a mixed character, with both wide and narrow streets, the houses are relatively more spacious (circa 60 sq meters) than in the old part and the buildings are designed as blocks. In that regard, this part of the neighborhood resembles Hoofddorpleinbuurt, a neighborhood to the west of the city center. While the new Indische Buurt has an urban character, its rather more planned structure creates a quieter urban feeling than the spontaneous urbanity one feels in the old quarter. The most distinguishing feature of this part of the neighborhood is the presence of many squares and inner courtyards within the residential blocks. These are the places where the social life of the neighborhood flourishes.

#### 5.1.4 Social characteristics of Indische Buurt

The population of Indische Buurt is 22,410 (O+S 2012a), and many of its residents are migrants. While more than half of the population consists of non-Western immigrants (54 percent), persons of Moroccan descent constitute the largest group (21 percent) among the non-Western immigrants.

One-third of the households consist of a single person, while couples with and without children account for 19 and 35 percent respectively. Eleven percent are single-parent

**Table 5.2.** Indische Buurt population by ethnicity in 2011 (O+S 2012).

Ethnicity	%
Surinamese	8
Antillean	2
Turkish	10
Moroccan	21
Other non-Western immigrants	12
Western immigrants	12
Native Dutch	34
Total	99

**Table 5.3.** Comparison of housing stock, Indische Buurt in 2011 (percentages) (O+S 2011b).

Tenure type	Indische Buurt- West	Indische Buurt- East	Municipal district East	Amsterdam
Social rental	62.1	73	52.6	47.5
Market rental	14.7	10.8	19.4	25.4
Owner-occupied	23.3	16.2	28.0	27.2

households. These shares are very similar to those at the municipal level except that in Indische Buurt the share of couples with children is slightly higher, 35 percent compared to 34 percent for the city at large.

As for the occupational profile of the neighborhood, in the eastern part of Indische Buurt, the sector of health and wellbeing is most strongly represented, followed at a distance by education and trade, accounting for the largest shares of the employed residents (35, 13 and 11 percent, respectively). The employed residents of the western part of Indische Buurt work mostly in the sectors of health and wellbeing, research, education and trade (15, 15, 13 and 13 percent, respectively) (O+S 2011).

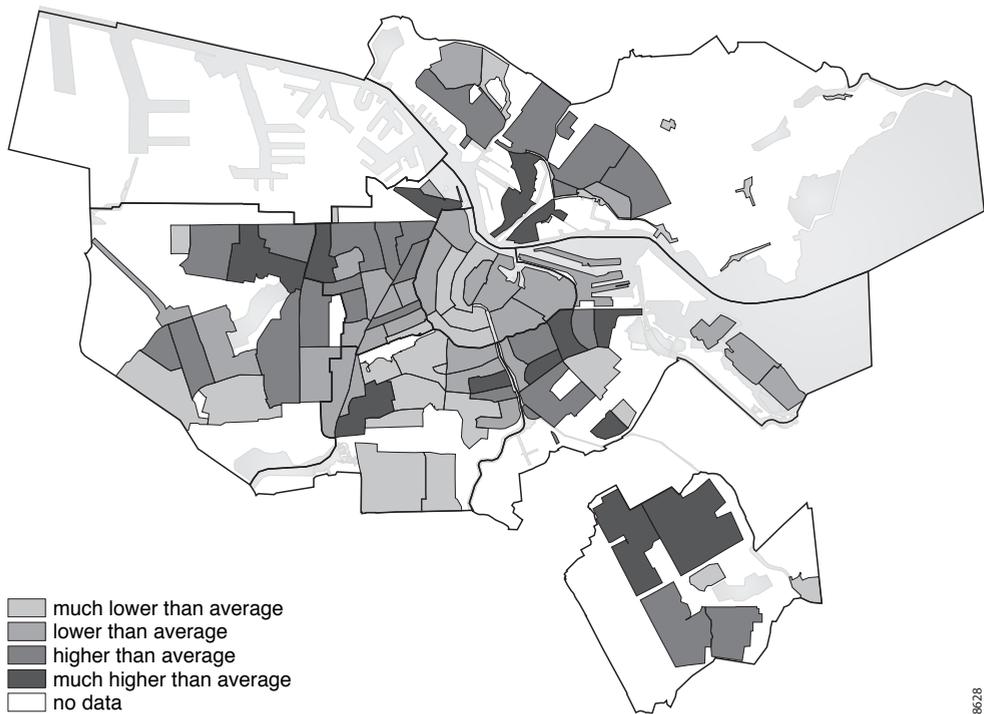
As Table 5.3. shows, Indische Buurt has a higher share of social housing and a smaller share of owner-occupied housing than either the municipal district East or the city at large.

The average duration of residence in the neighborhood, at slightly more than seven years, is approaching the city average of eight years (Samen Indische Buurt, 2009, p.61). Due to increased efforts at urban renewal in the neighborhood, the average duration of residence has been declining as some residents move out and (middle-class) newcomers move in. Almost half of the residents have lived in the neighborhood for less than four years, whereas another 20 percent has lived there for between five and nine years, which means that 70 percent have lived there for less than nine years. While 12 percent of the residents have lived there for 10 to 14 years, another eight percent has been present for somewhere between 15 and 19 years (O+S 2008, cited from Samen Indische Buurt, 2009).

On the one hand, the residents of Indische Buurt face social problems such as high unemployment, poverty and territorial stigmatization. On the other hand, the neighborhood has changed remarkably in recent years with the urban renewal rounds that have brought about gentrification. This section focuses on the social processes and dynamics that have helped shape Indische Buurt: poverty/social deprivation, stigmatization and gentrification.

#### *Poverty and social deprivation*

From its establishment till the 1970s, Indische Buurt had been host to working-class people, government employees and tradesmen with relatively better-off positions. Yet in the 1970s there was an outflow of population due to suburbanization and the ever-



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**Figure 5.4.** Concentration of households with minimum income in neighborhoods compared to the Amsterdam average (16.6 percent) (Amsterdam Municipality 2011)

worsening physical dilapidation of the neighborhood. Meanwhile, there was an influx of immigrants from Surinam, Turkey, and Morocco. Even though urban renewal started in the late 1970s and went on throughout the 1980s, the renewal effort did not stem the outflow of the native-Dutch population, who moved to the city center or the suburbs. Besides, other developments of the time – most prominently, deindustrialization, the relocation of the eastern port facility and the shift of the urban economy towards the service sector – converged with the economic downturn of the 1980s and together resulted in the economic and social impoverishment of the neighborhood (Bohl 2010). The newcomers were mostly low-skilled, and many workers were unemployed after the factory closures in the port area. In time, not only the concentration of immigrant groups but also social impoverishment increased in the neighborhood. Below, I will sketch the contours of poverty in the contemporary Indische Buurt, making use of some statistical data on income, unemployment, welfare dependency and quality of education.

The contemporary Indische Buurt is one of the neighborhoods in Amsterdam with a high concentration of households on a minimum income. According to the Poverty Monitor (Amsterdam Municipality, 2011), 27 percent of the households in Indische Buurt live on a minimum income<sup>39</sup>. Indische Buurt has the third highest concentration

of households with minimum income, after Kolenkit (30 percent) and Volewijck, IJplein/Vogelbuurt and Stadionbuurt (all three with 28 percent). Figure 5.4 depicts the concentration of households with a minimum income compared to the city average of 16.6 percent.

As for the share of minimum income households per ethnic group, all the ethnic groups in Indische Buurt have higher share of households with a minimum income than the city average for their ethnic group. For instance, 41 percent of the Moroccan households in Indische Buurt have a minimum income, compared to 36 percent of the Moroccan households in Amsterdam at large. What is remarkable is that 41 percent of the Surinamese households have a minimum income, which is much higher than their share (11 percent) for Amsterdam (Samen Indische Buurt, 2009).

Furthermore, the average length of time that households have to survive on a minimum income, that is, the duration of persistent poverty, is much higher than the city average (*ibid.*) Likewise, the share of young people who grow up in households with a minimum income is higher in Indische Buurt than in the city at large, namely 39 and 25.5 percent, respectively (*ibid.*, p.17). Poverty is more common among single-parent households and relatively large households, the latter category coinciding with ethnic minority households. While half of the single-parent households in Indische Buurt have a minimum income, this figure is 40 percent for the entire city (Samen Indische Buurt 2009, p.77).

In the same vein, the annual disposable household income in the city is higher than that in the neighborhood, amounting to 30,600 and 23,900 Euros, respectively (O+S 2009). While in Indische Buurt-West the share of lower-class residents<sup>40</sup> declined in 2007, this share has risen in Indische Buurt-East over the years. The decrease in the western part is due to the urban renewal operations that took place there (Samen Indische Buurt 2009).

Another factor that leaves its imprint on the poverty statistics for the neighborhood is the high unemployment rate compared to both the district and the city at large (8.9 vs. 6.2 and 6.3 percent, respectively). As Table 5.4 shows, the percentage of unemployment among non-Western immigrants is even higher, at 12.3 percent compared to 10.7 and 10.5 in district East and in Amsterdam, respectively. Long-term unemployment<sup>41</sup> in Indische Buurt is almost twice as high as the city average (UWV Werkbedrijf, 2011).

Employment opportunities in the neighborhood for persons of non-Western origin are restricted to low-skilled jobs in the service sector. These jobs, however, are mostly offered through ethnic networks, and even though they may be relatively secure, they are low-paid.

The share of low-income households with public assistance (WWB<sup>42</sup> benefit) is higher in Indische Buurt-West and Indische Buurt-East (7.6 and 9.1 percent respectively), whereas it is only 5.8 percent of the total households living in Amsterdam as the table 5.5. shows.

All of the factors mentioned above are indicative of the severity of the poverty and low chances for social mobility in the neighborhood. The prospects for climbing out of poverty

**Table 5.4.** Unemployment in Indische Buurt (O+S 2011)

	Indische Buurt- West	Indische Buurt- East	Municipal district East	Amsterdam
Unemployed (%)	8.4	9.3	6.2	6.3
Unemployed non-Western immigrants (%)	12.3	12.4	10.7	10.5

**Table 5.5.** Residents aged between 15-64 receiving WWB benefits (percentages) (O+S 2009a, 2011b).

	2009	2011
Indische Buurt-West	8.3	7.6
Indische Buurt-East	8.9	9.1
Municipal district East	5.5	5.4
Amsterdam	5.5	5.8

are even worsened by the low quality of education available in the neighborhood. There are many 'black schools', which means that the majority of the pupils are of non-Western origin. The drop-out rate among youngsters is higher than the city average, namely 17 vs. 15 percent (Statstat 2010). The low quality of education also hampers the social mobility chances for future generations. Social benefits, on the one hand, and solidarity networks among people of the same ethnic origin, on the other, help the poor to survive poverty.

#### *Crime and territorial stigmatization*

Indische Buurt was designated as one of Amsterdam's six 'problem neighborhoods'. Even though that name was changed later on to 'high potential neighborhoods' (*krachtwijken*), the connotation of problems persisted in the political as well as the media discourse. Indische Buurt already had a negative image since the 1980s, and that designation put an extra stigma on the neighborhood. It is one of the priority areas of the police, who conduct regular stop-and-search operations. Besides, security cameras have been installed at several locations around the neighborhood to monitor anti-social behavior and prevent crime.

Petty crime, which includes shoplifting but also burglary and drug-dealing/use, is one of the problems of the neighborhood. According to an objective safety index both Indische Buurt-West and Indische Buurt-East are less safe than Amsterdam overall, which means that more break-ins, acts of violence and vandalism, nuisance, traffic problems and drug nuisance take place in Indische Buurt than in the city at large. According to a subjective safety index, which measures the residents' feelings of safety in a neighborhood, the residents of Indische Buurt-West perceive their neighborhood as relatively safe whereas the residents of Indische Buurt-East consider their neighborhood unsafe (see Table 5.6).

**Table 5.6.** Objective and subjective safety in Indische Buurt according to the safety index<sup>43</sup> in 2010 (OOV/O+S 2010).

	Objective	Subjective
Indische Buurt-West	81	74
Indische Buurt-East	81	116
Municipal district East	75	75
Amsterdam	76	76

**Table 5.7.** Nuisance as perceived by Indische Buurt residents (percentages<sup>44</sup>), 2009/2010 (Livability and Safety Monitor 2010).

	Drugs nuisance		Youth nuisance	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Indische Buurt-West	22	10	34	27
Indische Buurt-East	25	21	29	33
Municipal district East	14	10	21	22
Amsterdam	11	10	21	21

Another problem in the neighborhood is drugs. The nuisance caused by drug use and dealing is above the city average, though it is declining. Table 5.7. suggests that youngsters hanging around in the streets cause more nuisance here than in the city at large. This problem seems to be decreasing in the western part of the neighborhood but increasing in the eastern part.

### *Gentrification*

Indische Buurt has been undergoing gentrification since midway through the 2000 decade. During the renewal operations, the conversion of existing social housing into owner-occupied and private rental housing has changed the neighborhood population. At the same time, several prestige projects undertaken by the housing corporations have changed the image of the neighborhood. The new service providers in the entertainment and cultural sector have attracted more tourists, students, young professionals and dual-income couples with or without children.

This population change is more visible in the Indische Buurt-West, where there is also a concentration of prestige projects. Renovating and converting the monumental Berlage block, hitherto squatted, into student housing and turning the former bath house into a trendy café, 'het Badhuis', were the initial developments that triggered the gradual gentrification. In the second half of the decade, the renovation of the monumental school at Timorplein and the opening of a cultural venue on the square were harbingers of

gentrification. By the end of the decade, the renovation of Javaplein and the opening of a public library, trendy café and fitness center marked the turnaround of Indische Buurt. The introduction of mid-range market-rate rentals alongside social housing attracted more middle-class residents to the neighborhood. All these developments triggered further upgrading in their immediate surroundings; for instance, new cafés and bars sprouted up in and around Javaplein, and a bookstore opened on Javastraat.

The designation of Indische Buurt as a problem/priority neighborhood also put some pressure on the local government and housing corporations to start urban renewal projects that would upgrade the physical and social look of the neighborhood. Many of the above-mentioned projects were undertaken by housing corporations, while the district government took charge of renovating some squares and other public spaces.

Even though Indische Buurt has always hosted a concentration of social housing, the composition of the housing stock has changed drastically since 2000. There was a sharp drop in the share of social-rental housing, from 93 to 70 percent, between 2000 and 2010, as depicted in Table 5.1. The decline was steeper in the western part of the neighborhood, where in 2010 62 percent of the stock was social housing compared to 73 percent in the eastern part. That is also why the waiting time for social housing in Indische Buurt-West rose from 8.3 years in 2008 to 9.8 years in 2009, as shown in Table 5.8. Thus, not only was it hard to get a house in this rapidly gentrifying part of the neighborhood but the housing stock had become more suitable for the middle class over time, while becoming less accessible and less affordable for low-income people. Compared to the city average, however, rents in Indische Buurt are still quite affordable. The average monthly rent for social housing in Indische Buurt (€359 in Indische Buurt-West and €367 in Indische Buurt-East) is lower than the city (€426) and district averages (€419) (Wonen in Amsterdam, 2009).

Even though housing prices decreased in the country at large, they rose slightly in the center of Amsterdam and in the neighborhoods in the ring around the center. The latter trend was also found in Indische Buurt between January 2011 and January 2012 (Het Parool, 2012).

**Table 5.8.** The change in average waiting time for social housing in years (Woningnet 2008, 2009)

	2008	2009
Indische Buurt-West	8.3	9.8
Indische Buurt-East	11.8	10.6
Municipal district East	10.6	11.4
Amsterdam	10.7	11.5



**Photos 5.4.** Gentrification on Javaplein (Photos by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

As for commercial upgrading, many higher-end businesses in the entertainment sector<sup>45</sup> mushroomed there, together with businesses in creative sectors<sup>46</sup> and though less so, in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. In Indische Buurt-West, the share of ICT businesses in 2013 is higher than the city average, 9.1 and 8.8 respectively (O+S 2013). Likewise, the share of businesses in creative sector in Indische Buurt-West increased from 15 percent in 2008 to 39.3 percent in 2012, while the share of businesses in creative sector in Amsterdam at large increased in the same period from 14.5 percent to 28.4 percent (O+S 2012). Recently some ‘gentrifier’ restaurants, cafés and bars have opened in the neighborhood, especially in the western part. These higher-end businesses have replaced the traditional snack bars, coffee shops and small-scale take-away restaurants (Ernst 2011). The customer profile of these new places has also changed with the increasing presence of students, young professionals and dual-income couples with or without children.

The role of the local government in this commercial gentrification has been significant. On the one hand, it stimulated the supply of high-end businesses by facilitating permit approval. On the other hand, through the neighborhood improvement plan, it not only encouraged housing corporations to undertake projects to improve the cultural and entertainment sector but it also undertook projects to rehabilitate public spaces in an effort to attract high-end enterprise. The project for Javastraat, which brands this central street as a Mediterranean shopping street, was initiated by the municipal district in collaboration with the housing corporations. The project foresees the commercial upgrading of the existing range of businesses in the street, thereby making more space for higher-end, higher-quality businesses.

All in all, gentrification has made its mark on Indische Buurt by shaping the social and economic geography of the neighborhood after the year 2000.

## 5.2 Indische Buurt as a lived space: Indische Buurt in residents' perception

### 5.2.1 Whose neighborhood is Indische Buurt?

In the following part, I will try to clarify whose neighborhood Indische Buurt is by referring to how different groups of residents appropriate the neighborhood. I will first discuss Indische Buurt as a 'civilized' and traditional Dutch working-class neighborhood; secondly I will discuss it as an immigrant neighborhood; thirdly, I will examine it as a 'rising' multicultural neighborhood.

#### *'Civilized' Dutch working-class neighborhood*

Indische Buurt used to have a concentration of Dutch working-class people, who started to leave the neighborhood upon the relocation of the port in the 1960s and with the suburbanization trend of the 1970s and 1980s. From the 1970s onward, the outflow of Dutch working-class families was balanced by the arrival of immigrants, mainly from Morocco, Turkey and Surinam. In time, the percentage of non-Western immigrants increased as affordable dwellings were vacated by the Dutch households. This history is now remembered with reference to the present, from which some of the respondents prefer to distance themselves. Mr. R is one of them:

*Javastraat has been taken over by Moroccan and Turkish shops, ha? It used to be an old working-class street with butchers and bakers and all sorts. But it is now all butcher and grocery shops: you break your neck over the eggplants on the pavement and I think this is what has changed, you know, then, we lost all the milk shops, pet shops. I think a lot of people living in this neighborhood they don't need pets; they eat them so they don't need pet shops. (Mr. R, middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

People like Mr. R have certain nostalgia for the past and they do not feel they are part of the present neighborhood which, in their eyes, has been taken over by Moroccan and Turkish people. They make reference to the past to distance themselves from the present or from the people who make up the present population, namely non-Western immigrants.

On a very different note, Mrs. L, who came to the Netherlands as a political refugee, also distances herself from the present with reference to the idealized past. Recounting the history of the Van der Pek block, she praises the architect:

*If you read the history, Van der Pek, the architect of this building, built the block for working class and he was pro-working class. His wife was organizing meetings for women*

*about working class. This I liked very much. They would also use the inner garden as a communal space. I wish they would also put some benches in the garden now but they would not. People do not want it. They want only flowers and etc. in the garden.* (Mrs. L, middle-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP block)

Her appreciation of the block as it was in the past – a working-class residence with a communal garden – refers directly to her dissatisfaction with the contemporary privatization of social housing in the block and the privatized/individualized use of the garden. The contemporary Indische Buurt is not like the working-class neighborhood it once was. This reference to a certain vision of the past (based on working-class values) is a way to take distance from the individualized lifestyle prevailing in the contemporary block/neighborhood.

All in all, for some the nostalgia for Indische Buurt as a civilized working-class and Dutch neighborhood works as a tool to distance themselves from a present that they are not satisfied with.

***Indische Buurt as a Moroccan/immigrant neighborhood: ‘Too much of the same sort’***

As stated before, Indische Buurt has been home to many immigrants who came to work in the Netherlands. This concentration is described by Mr. YU as the following:

*Although everyone has a right to live where s/he wants, there was a bit too much of the same sort.* (Mr. YU, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP)

This ‘sort’ was the ‘immigrant sort’ that he distinguished himself from. The concentration of immigrants was the reason for some native-Dutch respondents not to feel at home in the neighborhood.

For instance, as Mrs. J, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, points out, there were mainly Moroccan and Turkish people living in the neighborhood and fewer Dutch people. That changing profile might have made her feel less connected to the neighborhood, as she didn’t have contact with these people.

Likewise Mr. G, a middle-class native-Dutch renter from the VDP block, was complaining that people spoke Turkish and Moroccan in the streets and he felt alienated. He said that Dutch was only spoken around the police station and that all his neighbors had very little knowledge of the Dutch language. Mr. G was not happy about the concentration of immigrants in the neighborhood and added that he would have appreciated a better mix.

These middle-class, native-Dutch residents distanced themselves from the residents of Turkish and Moroccan origin. In the end, when they had the chance, they chose to move to a neighborhood with a concentration of Dutch residents. Indische Buurt as a migrant neighborhood did not appeal to them.



**Photo 5.5.** Javastraat: Mixed and vibrant face of Indische Buurt (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

All in all, some native-Dutch, middle-class residents complained about the Indische Buurt as an immigrant neighborhood. They thought the concentration of immigrants was problematic, or even threatening.

### ***Indische Buurt as a rising, ‘multicultural’ neighborhood***

*From the 1980s till now, I have seen the neighborhood change from a deteriorated, unknown neighborhood to a quite rich area.* (Mr. E, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)

*Indische Buurt had an incredibly bad name when I moved in. Old houses, a lot of immigrants, drug houses and quite some criminality. Happily I never got involved in anything but there were shootings, robberies, etc., my friend got dragged from his bike once. But in the last 5-10 years, things changed.* (Mr. A, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)

Many respondents appreciate the changes that took place in the neighborhood in the course of the last five to ten years: the incoming Dutch population, physical upgrading and decreasing criminality, etc.

Among the respondents who appreciated the change in the neighborhood, some Dutch middle-class renters emphasized its multicultural appeal. As the neighborhood became more mixed with the incoming Dutch population and yet preserved its immigrant touch, it was seen as ‘truly’ mixed, authentic and multicultural. For instance, Mr. W was making

the point that the neighborhood became more like the Pijp<sup>47</sup>. It is dynamic, safe and getting more vibrant with the incoming facilities and people.

*It has all been lively because of the culture here. You know the Turkish culture, Moroccan culture, but it was, the only difference was that it was less safe. It was more of a slum... You know it is more of a mixture of people here now. You know it was more Turkish people and Moroccan people and now you notice that Dutch also kind of moved in more. I don't know, that is kind of my understanding. More students as well, also more kind of outside people moved in and you still have all the culture from the Turkish people and Moroccan people. So it is kind of very dynamic in the neighborhood. It is cool. (Mr. W, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

Another respondent who greatly appreciates the change in the composition of neighborhood population is Mrs. Z, a middle-class, Western migrant renter from Ceramplen. She underlined that the neighborhood was becoming more mixed income-wise through the differentiation of housing. The 'ghetto feeling' in the neighborhood was not there anymore, which she attributed to the upgrading in the physical environment and renovations in public spaces.

Others appreciated the change in the profile of the shops in the neighborhood. There was an increase in cultural and entertainment facilities and the local shops were also upgrading; for instance, an expensive furniture shop had opened up on Javastraat.

Yet others thought these changes were too costly for some residents of the neighborhood. Mrs. L talked about the costs of all these developments in the neighborhood and emphasized that it was getting slowly but steadily more expensive thus less accessible for the lower class residents. Mrs. L criticized the mixing policy:

*I think this is a double-sided policy. On the one hand, they could have kept all the social houses as social housing and thereby keep all the displaced renters here. Instead they increased the rents to attract certain classes here in this block, which they indeed managed as it is quite central here. As I said, for instance the houses on 1e Atjehstraat were entirely sold to mostly Dutch people. That is not nice as the entire atmosphere of the street changed with all the luxurious cars etc. I wish it stayed mixed. (Mrs. L, middle-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP block)*

Mr. DR was another renter who was critical about the change in the neighborhood. According to him, this change was not serving the original residents in the neighborhood but catering to a new class, who consume these new services and places in the neighborhood. In his words:

*I do not go there so often but Javaplein became a place that caters to a new class with all the upgraded cafes, restaurant, even the library. When I moved to Indische Buurt it was not like this at all. Not many of the new places are for the local IB people but for the newcomers. It is becoming more and more expensive for normal people to stay put or move to the neighborhood. (Mr. DR, Western migrant, temporary renter<sup>48</sup>, student, Ceramplein)*

To sum up, the rise of a multicultural Indische Buurt is appreciated by a group of middle-class Dutch renters. Yet this multiculturalism is exclusionary, as it makes the neighborhood too expensive for many who cannot afford the rising cost of living there.

### 5.2.2 Residents' attachment to and satisfaction with their neighborhood and houses before displacement

Almost all regular renters at Ceramplein (12 out of 13) felt attached to and were satisfied with the neighborhood. Among the reasons they mentioned for their satisfaction/attachment were the presence of friends, relatives, parks and squares; the long duration of residence in the neighborhood; and good relations with one's neighbors. As for the respondents from the Van der Pek block, more than half (16 out of 26) felt attached to the neighborhood, while some felt no attachment. Most of those who felt no attachment had no connections in the neighborhood and thought it was not a safe place to live. The ones who felt attached to the neighborhood were comfortable because of the presence of relatives, acquaintances, friends, the good location of the neighborhood and its open public spaces.

In contrast to the regular renters cited above, most of the temporary renters of the Ceramplein block felt no attachment to the neighborhood. The few who did feel attached had good friends and spent time in the neighborhood; for the rest, the neighborhood was not of a scale to socialize or to spend their free time. The very few who were attached to the neighborhood had a relatively longer duration of living in the neighborhood compared to those who were not attached. Though they had different attachment levels, almost all temporary renters were satisfied with the neighborhood.

As for neighborhood facilities, most respondents from Ceramplein and the VDP block were very much satisfied with the facilities in and around the neighborhood. There are many different shops on Javastraat and Molukkenstraat, about which the residents were very satisfied. Some middle-class regular renters from VDP said that there had not been enough cultural and entertainment facilities in the past but that this was changing with the opening of new cafés, restaurants and sports venues in the neighborhood. Medical facilities such as hospitals and clinics offer satisfactory service, according to both the temporary and regular renters. A few regular renters from both project sites complained about the quality of the schools, referring to the concentration of non-Western immigrants (in so-called 'black schools'), and said their children did not get a good-quality education.

All residents were very satisfied about the public spaces such as parks and squares in the neighborhood. Especially the proximity of two parks, namely Flevopark and Oosterpark, was very nice for those who liked jogging, walking and picnicking.

Every regular and temporary renter in both projects was satisfied about the neighborhood's location, emphasizing that it was very close to the center and also very well connected by the public transportation. A few mosque-goers among the respondents were satisfied with the mosques in the neighborhood. Only one respondent was a church-goer, and she was satisfied with the church. All in all, most renters were satisfied with the transportation, public spaces and location of the neighborhood.

As for residents' satisfaction with their houses, a majority of the regular renters of Ceramplein and the VDP block were not satisfied. The most commonly cited reason was poor maintenance. In Ceramplein, the housing block had subsidence. At both project sites, the houses were old, humid and lacked proper insulation. Some regular renters, especially the large families, also said their houses were too small and lacked proper facilities (separate toilet, bath, etc.). However, some regular renters from both blocks were quite satisfied with their houses even though they were old and not well maintained. An affordable rent and a nice big garden were among the features that made these renters feel satisfied about their houses.

Some of the regular residents felt they were stuck with their houses as they could not afford anything better elsewhere. For instance, Mr. N., a middle-class native-Dutch regular renter from Ceramplein, could not find anything bigger but still affordable for his five-person household, even though they had wanted to move out earlier because the house was too small and old. He complained that there were not many large and affordable houses in the social segment and that he could not afford to buy a house for his family either.

Likewise, Mr. ES felt stuck with his house in the VDP block. He had accepted it because it was the only affordable and available housing he could get to bring his family to the Netherlands:

*The house was old and very hard to live in. The doors were not closing, for instance, they were almost open. Regardless of these I accepted the house as I was in a rush to find a house so that my family could come to the country. And it was also affordable (Mr. ES, middle-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP).*

For some, their satisfaction is simply due to having a roof over their heads. Mr. Y, for instance, calls his house 'crisis housing', as he badly needed the house at the time he moved in:

*I do not have high expectations and that is why I could live there. But sometimes people were visiting me and asking how I could live there. I did not mind so much. It was crisis*

*housing for me as I needed a place and it was the best option. The toilet and shower were in the same place for instance. The house also had subsidence. When I stepped out from my kitchen to the garden, I would step almost half a meter up. Also when it rained, there was water coming in the shower and there would be snails on the floors. Sometimes I would get up in the middle of the night to go to the toilet and I would step on a snail on the way. (Mr. Y, lower-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Mrs. MT from Ceramplein complains a lot about the condition of her house. Yet she still doesn't want to complain as there are many others who cannot get a house at all:

*Thank God, I would not want to complain. Thank God that we have a house. I would not want to complain. Yet, the walls are moist and we have a lot of mice. It is very dusty and my son and I are allergic to dust. We suffer from that. Furthermore, the windows and doors are in very bad condition. The heater is constantly on as it is very cold inside due to bad insulation. That is why it is not a proper house as our health is at stake. But Thank God, I would not want to complain. There are many people, who cannot get a house at all. (Mrs. MT, lower class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Likewise, Mr. B from the VDP block declares that he is satisfied with his previous house because it was affordable, even though the house itself was not satisfactory:

*We were satisfied with the old house in Balistraat. It was cheap and above all we had no other alternative. My income was low so we had to find all the time dwellings that were cheap, affordable. The last house was very affordable and we were happy with it even though the house was not satisfactory itself. It was too old and everything was breaking down. It was cold and was not isolated well. We had a heater in one room. There was no central heating. (Mr. B, lower-class, non-Western, regular renter, VDP)*

These renters were relegated to living in substandard conditions as they were stuck at the bottom of the housing market. While some could not afford a better house, others could not move as there was scarcity of suitable housing (for instance, housing for large families). Even though they were not happy about the conditions of their housing, they reported satisfaction considering the possibility of worse-off cases such as finding no house, paying more rent or even being homeless. The same was true for most temporary renters. Even though they complained about their houses, they still expressed satisfaction, as it was almost impossible for these people to find alternative housing in Amsterdam.

Regarding the temporary renters, the main reason for their declared satisfaction was the temporary nature of their stay in their houses. In that sense, they had low expectations. On the other hand, most of the temporary renters who were satisfied with their houses complained about issues such as the lack of central heating, poor insulation and dampness.

A few were dissatisfied; they were deeply troubled by the bad state of their houses, particularly the subsidence. Yet most tried to make the best of the situation as they were only going to stay temporarily in these houses and it was very hard to find another place to live.

### 5.2.3 Relations in the neighborhood before displacement

Regular renters' relations with their neighbors vary widely, though there is a similar pattern for both project sites. To start with, some residents both of Ceramplein and the VDP block had very close relations with their neighbors. Except one respondent, who was a second-generation Western immigrant, these people were either of Moroccan or Turkish origin. Among them are renters like Mr. I, a Moroccan regular renter from Ceramplein, who is very much involved in the neighborhood and knows many of his neighbors. In his words:

*We are a small village in Ceramplein. Everyone knows what others are up to. My neighbors for instance know a lot about me. If I go out of the neighborhood for a day, the next day they ask "hey, where were you yesterday?". Neighbors watch each others' children, if somebody is sick and needs to go to the hospital by car we take care of it. (Mr. I, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Like Mr. I, Mrs. C from Ceramplein, an elderly renter of Turkish origin, also mentioned her close relations to her neighbors. They, as a family, would visit their neighbors, have coffee or dinner together and even invite them to their hometown in Turkey, as she mentioned:

*We had Turkish neighbors, Moroccans and also Dutch ones. With the Dutch neighbor on the second floor, we were sometimes having dinner. We would often offer them what we cook at home or they would come to us to have dinner... we invited them to Turkey and they came to visit us there. We lived together for years. They also had helped us a lot. (Mrs. C, lower-class, Turkish, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Mrs. U, a previous VDP block renter of Turkish origin, also mentioned her very strong contacts with her neighbors in the block:

*We would sit outside with the neighbors. I would go down to have a chat with my neighbors whenever I would feel bored at home. It was very nice over there. (Mrs. U, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP)*

Not everyone had close relations with their neighbors, although they had some familiarity. The respondents in this group had casual relations with their neighbors;

these respondents were mostly native-Dutch middle-class renters with strong urban orientations.

For these residents, the neighborhood was not the scale at which they wanted to socialize with people; they preferred to find friends and acquaintances elsewhere in the city and even in other cities. Their relations with their neighbors were mostly restricted to greeting them, as Mrs. K puts it:

*You know, saying hi (dag zeggen) when I see them on the stairs or in the street. Very superficial, indeed.* (Mrs. K, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Greeting creates familiarity with the neighbors, as Blokland (2003) also finds in her study, and some small acts of assistance can be asked and provided if needed, for instance, when a key is forgotten inside, a postal package would be delivered or a hammer is needed. This is why these 'superficial' relations are considered to be (potentially) supportive. Yet they can turn into 'draining' relations if the neighbors actually disturb each other. There were a few renters in Ceramplein and some at the VDP block who were bothered by some of their neighbors. Noise, drug dealing/use, neighbors with psychiatric problems and frequently changing tenants were the main sources of nuisance. Mr. Y, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, for example, complained that his two neighbors were very noisy. Likewise, Mr. R, a middle-class Western migrant from Ceramplein, was bothered by his upstairs neighbors who had sublet rooms to various individuals with whom he had issues. These subletting tenants changed all the time. They were generally too noisy and some were using/selling drugs. He did not want to call the police about the illegal sub-letting his neighbor was involved in, but he suffered from the nuisance himself. That is why he described his relations with this neighbor as 'draining'.

Especially at the VDP block, some of the regular residents were psychiatric patients and drug addicts who caused serious problems for their neighbors. Mrs. H, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, complained about the same neighbor who had psychiatric problems and made a lot of noise. He even had set his house on fire one day. Mr. ES, a middle-class, non-Western migrant, also mentioned the problems he had with a neighbor who was a drug addict and causing trouble all the time. The renters had to deal with these problems, which was quite draining for them.

Temporary residents of Ceramplein usually had superficial relations with their neighbors. For some (mostly international students), it was the language barrier that restricted their communication; for others, the neighborhood was not a place to socialize, as they were not often at home. Most of them did know their neighbors by sight and greeted them in the streets or in the stairways, yet their relations did not go beyond that. There were very few among the temporary renters whose relations with their neighbors were very good. They visited one another at times or helped each other when needed.

These were generally renters with a longer duration of residence in the neighborhood and in Amsterdam.

As for relations with family members, not many respondents had relatives in the neighborhood. Both in Ceramplein and the VDP block, some renters had family members living nearby. These renters, who were either of Turkish or Moroccan origin, had very strong ties to their family members in the neighborhood. They visited each other frequently and showed strong solidarity, supporting each other when needed (e.g., borrowing/lending money, looking after children or the elderly, eating together). One of them is Mrs. MT from Ceramplein, who invites her brother and his wife almost every day for dinner during Ramadan, as she recounts:

*Almost every day in Ramadan they [her brother and her sister-in-law] come to us for dinner. They are both working the entire day in their shop in the west. That is why I invited them for Ramadan to have dinner together.* (Mrs. MT, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Others did not have any relatives in the neighborhood, nor was it part of their daily routine to see or exchange support with their family members. On the other hand, almost half of the respondents in Ceramplein and one-third in the VDP block had some friends in the neighborhood with whom they had regular contact. Almost none of the temporary renters had family members in the neighborhood. The exceptions were two temporary renters who did have relatives in the neighborhood with whom they had close relations.

Regarding the relations in the neighborhood, it is possible to make a distinction between two different groups among regular renters of Ceramplein and the VDP block based on ethnicity. The first group consists of renters who have very close-knit solidarity ties with their neighbors, relatives and acquaintances in the neighborhood. The renters in this group are mostly of Moroccan and Turkish origin, who indeed create their own 'small village' where they feel very much at home. This clustering underlies their strong attachment to the people in the neighborhood. It is important to note the gender aspect, as it is mostly the women of ethnic minorities who build their social networks at the neighborhood level. Their low language proficiency and low educational levels, together with a patriarchal family structure, restrict these women's social life to the neighborhood and sometimes even to visits within their houses.

The second group consists of mostly native-Dutch residents who have very limited relations with their neighbors. To the extent that their neighbors don't bother them, they consider their relations to be 'good' and 'supportive'. Most of these people do not have family members nearby and have very few if any friends in the neighborhood. They may feel attached to the neighborhood but not necessarily to the people in it.

As for the temporary renters, they are rarely connected. They are not rooted in the neighborhood; they only know their neighbors by sight and just greet them on the

streets. The main factor restricting their relations is the temporariness of their stay in the neighborhood or even in the city; for some, the language barrier is another factor.

These patterns suggest that renters of an ethnic minority have strong neighborhood-based social networks. Presumably, these networks are prone to dispersal due to displacement. It is expected that the impacts of losing these networks will be stronger for women of ethnic minorities who are socially dependent on these networks.

#### 5.2.4 Problems in the neighborhood before displacement

Although many residents deny that Indische Buurt is a problem neighborhood, they still mention some problems that have been haunting the neighborhood. To start with, many regular renters both from Ceramplein and the VDP block consider the youngsters loitering in the streets and/or in the square to be problematic, while few temporary renters considered them to be causing trouble. These young people gather in public spaces, sometimes harassing people; they talk loudly and make a nuisance of themselves, from the perspective of the people living on the square. Mr. R from Ceramplein was talking about this problem:

*They hang around in the square and are nuisance. You cannot leave anything in cars because they break in; you know it is the same thing everywhere in the city. I am not a young woman and a person who feels vulnerable and intimidated. I am a big guy you know, I say fuck off and I don't feel intimidated at all. (Mr. R, middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Mrs. Z from Ceramplein was also among the few who had confrontations with the youth hanging around:

*I had about five confrontations a year. That would be small things like 'Please don't kick your football here but on the field', you know. They were all making smart ass comments. But I could handle it by myself. I never called the police, for instance. (Mrs. Z, middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

A renter who was harassed by these youngsters was Mrs. MO from the VDP block. For some months she lived with her girlfriend and these youngsters mocked her for being a lesbian. A group of youngsters of between nine and twelve years old banged on her windows and made them dirty and swore at her in the street.

*It was quite annoying, as it was a lot of noise and quite childish, though I also was never bothered too much about it... The funny thing is that I now see them working in the new Albert Heijn and they come towards me to ask how I am doing, telling me how nice that I have a kid now, etc. (Mrs. MO, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP)*

Likewise, Mr. P, a temporary renter from Ceramplein, was annoyed by the loitering youngsters as they harassed his wife a couple of times. He tells the story thus:

*I am annoyed by the guys, you know, who hang around at the corners. It is, you know, most of the times it is nothing but sometimes they kind of bother my wife when she passes by, they yell some kind of insults, you know. It has happened a few times. Not regularly but you know couple of times it happened, it was not nice. You know people like that don't know how to behave in a civilized manner.* (Mr. P, student, Western migrant, temporary renter, Ceramplein)

Even the respondents who had had confrontations with these youngsters did not consider them to be threatening. Even though they consider these children to be a problem, most say they are just being noisy. Most did not experience any harassment or criminal behavior involving these young people.

Another problem as recalled by the some renters of Ceramplein and the VDP blocks is drug dealing and drug use in the neighborhood. Ceramplein renters complained about some dealers on the square or in public spaces close by, such as Javaplein. The VDP residents mostly complained about drug addicts who were their own neighbors.

A few renters mentioned other problems: the lack of parking space, the poor quality of education (black schools/'zwarte scholen'), burglary, graffiti and drunkenness on the square. More than half of the renters declared that they had not experienced any major problems in the neighborhood.

Compared to Ceramplein residents, respondents from the VDP block were more bothered by problems in the neighborhood. While some complained about the garbage in the streets, others mentioned car and house break-ins. Among the other problems, they mentioned the bad condition of the houses in the neighborhood, anti-social neighbors and black schools.

As for the temporary renters from Ceramplein, most of them had no problems in the neighborhood. Only a few, as mentioned above, perceived the loitering youth as a problem.

## Summary

Indische Buurt is a centrally located and disadvantaged neighborhood. Its settlement dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Till the 1970s, it was a neighborhood for workers with relatively better positions in the labor market, such as dockworkers. It came to be a migrant neighborhood after the 1980s with the arrival of immigrant populations and the gradual departure of native- Dutch residents. Poverty, crime, stigmatization and gentrification are the processes and dynamics that shape contemporary Indische Buurt. While severe problems such as unemployment and poverty haunt the neighborhood, the

gradual gentrification that started in the first decade of the 2000s has gradually changed the socio-economic character of the neighborhood, especially the northwest part.

Different groups perceive the neighborhood differently. Some refer to its past as a civilized Dutch neighborhood to distance themselves from the contemporary Indische Buurt as a migrant neighborhood. While some native-Dutch renters perceive Indische Buurt as a migrant neighborhood, about which they are not happy, some other native-Dutch renters criminalize or use a patronizing tone about the migrants, e.g., blaming Moroccans for the problems in the neighborhood.

The ethnic minorities have strong neighborhood-based social networks, while the native-Dutch renters do not. Especially the women of ethnic minorities are dependent on their social networks; thus, it is important for them to stay put in the neighborhood.

Regular renters from both Ceramplein and the VDP block mentioned some of the problems they face in the neighborhood, such as loitering by youngsters, burglaries, lack of parking space, while most temporary renters perceived no problems in the neighborhood.



# Chapter 6

## Displacement Experiences in Indische Buurt/Amsterdam

Several renewal projects have taken place in Indische Buurt, which has been upgrading in the last decade, and many residents have faced displacement due to these projects. The Ceramplein and the Van der Pek (VDP) block are two of these projects. In this chapter, I will first introduce the renewal processes in these two blocks that have been realized by the housing corporation De Alliantie. I will then discuss the residents' experiences of displacement with reference to three dimensions. Their experiences with the renewal policy and living under the threat of displacement will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of the impacts of displacement. Last, I will examine the third dimension of their displacement experiences, namely, household and collective strategies.

### **6.1 Renewal processes at Ceramplein and Van der Pek block**

Ceramplein is a small green square located in the northeast quadrant of Indische Buurt. The houses around the square were mainly built in the 1920s and 1930s. Social housing owned by the housing corporation De Alliantie is on the south side of the square facing the owner-occupied houses. Before the renovation started, there were 47 affordable social housing units. The renewal project for Ceramplein was announced in May 2008. The relocation period started in September 2008 and was to last a year, according to the plans of the housing corporation. Yet, there was a delay, and it was not till January 2010 that all the residents had moved out. Then the renovation of the housing block started, which took a year.



***Photo 6.1.** Ceramplein Block in Indische Buurt (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)*



*Photo 6.2.* Van der Pek Block in Indische Buurt (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

The aim was to renovate the run-down social housing units in such a way that they would meet the contemporary housing demands. The number of housing units would be cut by more than half, to 21, to make room for more spacious and luxurious housing for middle-class families. Of these 21 units, 11 would be constructed as social housing and the rest would be market-rate rentals. Thus, the number of social housing units in the block would be cut by more than 75 percent, and the spacious new market-rate rental housing would attract middle-class renters.

By the time the project was announced in May 2008, there were only 25 regular renters<sup>49</sup> in the block; the rest of the residents were temporary renters<sup>50</sup> who had anti-squatter or campus contracts<sup>51</sup>. Through the letters sent to the residents and information meetings organized by the housing corporation De Alliantie, regular renters were informed about the process. Regular renters had a right to a uniform allowance guaranteed by law; it entailed: 1) the right to relocate to the renovated block provided that suitable houses were available and the renters met the income requirements; 2) priority status in the social housing market for a relocation house (under the same conditions); and 3) the right to a relocation allowance (approximately 5000 Euros to defray the costs of relocation).

Among the temporary renters and anti-squatters, only the ones with campus contracts were offered alternative housing, as the housing office at the University of Amsterdam had the obligation to relocate these students and/or researchers till the end of their studies or their work contract with the university. The rest did not have any rights regarding relocation.

The second project, the VDP block, was built by the famous architect Ernst Van der Pek in the early 20th century. The block was among the first social housing complexes in the city at large and was the first one with a communal inner garden, for which the block was later designated as a national monument. The social housing complex initially was the property of the housing corporation called Rochdale. In time, the ownership of the block changed from Rochdale to the housing corporation De Dageraad and, later on, to De

Alliantie. Initially, the block had 88 social housing units, which were targeted for renovation by De Alliantie. At the beginning of 2006, the housing corporation announced that the block was to be renovated; the relocation was to take place from February 2006 to February 2007. Yet, due to delays in relocating the renters, this period was extended till July 2008.

The project was presented as a prestige project by the housing corporation, as the block was a national monument. The aim was to renovate this monumental building in a way that it would fulfill the contemporary housing demands of the residents and at the same time protect the architectural value of the building. The number of housing units decreased to 62 after the renovation, while the number of social housing units in the block was cut down to 30. In other words, the number of social housing units decreased to one-third of the original number. Eight units were put into the private rental market; the rents for the other 24 units were raised by 130 percent, as allowed by law for a registered monument.

When the project was announced, there were 76 regular renters living in the block, while the other 12 households were temporary renters. De Alliantie sent letters to the regular renters to inform them about the process of renovation, and they were offered the uniform provisions guaranteed by the law as stated for the Ceramplein project. The situation of the temporary renters and anti-squatters was the same as in the Ceramplein project.

#### *Differential treatment of different renter groups*

As I discussed in the previous chapter, tenancy types are quite differentiated and the rights and responsibilities regarding relocation are institutionalized in the Netherlands. The fragmented nature of tenancy results in the differential treatment of renter groups by the housing corporations during renewal operations. Accordingly, the housing corporation, De Alliantie, treated different renter groups differently in the two project areas.

To start with regular renters, they were offered the uniform allowances: priority status in the social housing market and the possibility to return to the renovated block if their income and household type would meet the criteria for the available dwellings. As the housing corporation made the decision to reduce the number of social housing units and to add private rental apartments to the blocks, it was not possible for each and every regular renter to return to their original block. From the first residents' meeting on, the housing corporation encouraged the regular renters to use their priority status in the social housing market. This was interpreted by some residents to mean that the housing corporation was trying to move as many renters as possible. Mrs. PE, a lower-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, stated that she felt pretty much pressured by the corporation. In her words:

*They were pushing everyone to move out, and to start looking for another apartment by means of Woningnet, although there was still a lot of time. (Mrs. PE, lower-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

Likewise, the renters had not been informed initially whether it would be possible to return to their original houses after renewal. This uncertainty also pushed them to look for alternatives in the social housing market using their priority status. Furthermore, some of the regular renters were not offered the possibility to return to their original house or another flat in the renovated block as there was no match between their demands and the type of housing that would be available in the block. Some of these renters fought for their right to return, either through legal channels – filing a lawsuit – or through negotiations. In the end, all of these renters could get a relocation house in their original block.

There were some discrepancies in the way information was disseminated to the regular renters. While the housing corporation informally informed some residents about the pending renewal plans as soon as they moved in, others did not hear about the plans until two years before renewal actually started. In the meantime, quite a few of the regular renters had moved away due to bad maintenance, for instance. Others, who knew about the prospective planning, strategized about their stay in the block, even though they were expecting to move out. Furthermore, the housing corporation did not accept new regular renters for the vacant units but instead allocated them to temporary renters, anti-squatters and students with campus contracts. So doing, the corporation changed the social profile of the blocks years before the actual renovation was announced. As some regular renters reported, the high turnover of residents affected their attachment to their house and neighborhood.

According to some renters, the possibilities to return to a desired house in the block were not standardized. Mrs. KO, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter who could not get the ground-floor apartment she demanded for relocation, was complaining that some other renters with a position similar to hers did manage to get a ground-floor house with a garden. She thinks this happened further along in the process so that quick solutions could be found for the remaining renters.

Likewise, Mrs. H, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, wanted a ground-floor apartment, as she had also had one before the renewal. She had to insist that her preference be written down; the corporation representatives told her that she had no chance of getting one, as the ground floors were reserved for elderly people and renters with a medical need. Yet, as Mrs. H argued, there were very few such renters in her block; this stance strengthened her hand in the negotiations on getting the ground-floor housing she wanted.

Mr. HM, a lower class, Moroccan, regular renter from Ceramplain, called this process a ‘tug of war’ (*touwtrekkerij*). If the renters knew their rights and had strong negotiation capacities, they could get what they wanted from the housing corporation, whereas others had to look for alternatives in the social housing market or had to accept what they were offered. The former group mostly consisted of middle-class, native-Dutch renters, while the latter was formed by lower-class ethnic minorities.

Temporary renters were treated differently, mainly because they had limited rights. The housing corporation did not have an obligation to relocate them. Only the temporary renters with campus contracts were offered relocation dwellings as the University of Amsterdam was obliged to arrange alternative housing for them. The housing corporation did not promise other temporary renters any relocation options. Yet, some were told that it might be possible to arrange other temporary housing if any such units were available in the corporation's stock at the time they had to move out. This raised the expectations of these renters about getting another house from De Alliantie. In the end, only a few did get help; these were the renters who had had good contacts with the housing corporation for years.

All in all, the differential treatment by the housing corporation affected the experiences of displacement that different groups of renters had as many renters accepted the roles and rules defined by the regulations.

## **6.2 Residents' experiences of the urban renewal policy and displacement pressure**

To understand the residents' experiences with the urban renewal policy, I asked for their opinions about the discourse of the municipality and the housing corporation regarding the necessity/urgency of urban renewal at the Ceramplein and VDP blocks. Specifically, I asked whether they approved or disapproved of the current renewal project and why; who they thought would benefit or lose; about their opinion of the information and provisions provided by the housing corporation; and about the participation possibilities during the process. I also inquired about their experience of living under the threat of displacement. Their responses will be covered in the discussions on 1) changes in the neighborhood; 2) the appropriation strategies of the housing corporation; and 3) the residents' worries.

### **6.2.1 Residents' opinions about the discourse regarding urban renewal in Indische Buurt**

In the policy discourse, Indische Buurt is known as one of the Netherlands' 40 problem neighborhoods. The physical and social rehabilitation of the area is pursued in tandem by the municipality and the housing corporations that own the social housing stock in the neighborhood. When asked about the policy discourse that labels Indische Buurt as a problem neighborhood, the residents expressed diverse opinions.

Some regular renters from both the Ceramplein and VDP block approve the usage of that label. These renters, all native Dutch, point to the concentration of poor people and ethnic minorities – especially Moroccans – and the bad state of housing as what makes Indische Buurt 'a problem neighborhood'. The group of residents who perceived it as a problem neighborhood overlaps with the group who perceived it as a migrant (Moroccan) neighborhood, as discussed in section 5.2. of the previous chapter.

Mr. N, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter from Ceramplein, agrees that Indische Buurt is a problem neighborhood. According to him, there are a lot of poor people, people that have disadvantages and a migration background. He claims that they are and/or feel excluded and that, in order to combat this, the neighborhood needs special attention. Likewise, Mrs. SG, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, asserted that the neighborhood suffers from diverse problems and said it is necessary to name the problems and approach them seriously:

*If there are problems, don't be afraid to name them and take care of them, don't turn them around and touch them with silk gloves. (Mrs. SG, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block).*

Another resident who approves of the label is Mrs. K, another middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from Ceramplein, though for different reasons. She thinks that the problem neighborhood designation allows the politicians to 'pimp the neighborhood' and that a neighborhood automatically gets better if they undertake renovation. As a result, the prices increase and people take better care of their property, which would help Indische Buurt recover from its dilapidated conditions.

In the same vein, Mrs. K, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, agreed that the label was used for the neighborhood. She hoped that Indische Buurt would revitalize through the renovation of the houses, which would attract a 'new kind' of people.

On the other hand, others thought that Indische Buurt was not a problem neighborhood at all. Some of them asserted that they never experienced problems and that therefore it cannot be a problem neighborhood. Others argued that while there are problems that need to be tackled, this does not mean that Indische Buurt is a problem neighborhood.

Mrs. MT, a lower-class, Turkish, regular renter from Ceramplein, got very upset to learn that the politicians refer to Indische Buurt as a problem neighborhood:

*If they say problem neighborhood, that is not true. Instead of calling it a problem neighborhood, they better do something about the problems. If they provide better education, more facilities and renovate the houses nicely, there would not be problems. I mean, problem neighborhood, they let the problems exist; they neglect this neighborhood. If they had not neglected it before there would not have been problems. (Mrs. MT, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Mr. HM, a Moroccan lower-class renter from Ceramplein, sees it the same way: politicians created the problems. In his view, problems concentrate in some neighborhoods, which get to be renovated later on. Yet, politicians do not solve the problems. They displace them to other neighborhoods, which has already happened in Amsterdam for years. And now he thinks it is the turn for Indische Buurt.

Likewise, Mr. IT, a lower-class, Moroccan, regular renter from the VDP block, asserted that there may be problems but that these do not make it a problem neighborhood. He also underlined the deficiency of the government policy that was supposed to solve the problems. According to him, if there are a lot of people with a low income in the neighborhood, maybe it is the government policy that is problematic rather than the people, who work very hard to feed their families on a minimum income.

Likewise, Mr. I, a lower-class, Moroccan, regular renter from the VDP block, gets upset that 'his neighborhood' is called a problem neighborhood. He says that Indische Buurt is a small neighborhood where everybody knows each other and there are hardly ever problems.

To shift to the views of temporary renters, most of them thought it was not at all a problem neighborhood. As most experienced no problems there, they were shocked to hear that, in the political discourse, Indische Buurt was considered to be a problem neighborhood. This is expressed in Ms. RN's reaction:

*Is this [neighborhood] one of them? No, you must be kidding.* (Ms. RN, native-Dutch, temporary renter, Ceramplein)

Besides, the temporary renters, who are mostly foreigners, had the chance to approach the issue from a comparative perspective as Mr. DD, who was originally from the U.K., argued:

*If you compare this [neighborhood] to what would be a problem neighborhood in England I think it is a nice neighborhood. You do not feel threatened walking around. It does not feel like there is a lot of crime. Probably I am not aware of everything but that seems like an overreaction in any way.* (Mr. DD, student, Western migrant, temporary renter, Ceramplein)

Another temporary renter, Mr. DR, thought the same way and argued that this policy discourse was nothing but an excuse for gentrification. He presents his standpoint at length:

*From my understanding this whole Vogelaar thing, correct me if I am wrong as I am not Dutch, in my understanding is really sort of a scam that the state is running, they pick these places with a high density of low-income people and they use this as an excuse to improve. But that improvement does not improve it for the low-income people that are living there, it just moves them around, scatters them around, you know. I have not looked at it on a map but I am willing to bet these Vogelaar neighborhoods are all like strategically placed in places like, you know, the developers want to get their hands on. That is my sense of it you know, as far as I am concerned all the renovations that De*

*Alliantie is doing is not helping the problems. Like affordable housing is a big problem for everyone but you know these renovations are not making more affordable housing. They are making like bigger places for fewer people at higher prices so I mean, who does that help? (Mr. DR, student, Western migrant, temporary renter, Ceramplein)*

These comparative perspectives were widely shared by other international students. Furthermore, most respondents thought that labeling Indische Buurt as a problem neighborhood would stigmatize it and the people living there, as Mrs. C, a Turkish, regular renter from Ceramplein, puts it:

*If you name it as a bad neighborhood, it would get stigmatized in time. But if you ask me it is not a problem neighborhood. (Mrs. C, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Ms. TC, a temporary renter from Ceramplein, argued that stigmatizing a neighborhood would affect the people living there:

*Well, I think if you use a term like problem neighborhood you will put a stamp on the people living there. That might be a problem, I think. Also for how these people perceive themselves. (Ms. TC, student, Western migrant, temporary renter, Ceramplein)*

All in all, most renters think that Indische Buurt is not a problem neighborhood and find the term ‘problem neighborhood’ stigmatizing. There are problems in the neighborhood, yet this does not make it a problem neighborhood. Some, though, reproduced the stigma from below and think that it is a problem neighborhood due to its many problems and problem people.

### 6.2.2 Motivations behind dis/approval of the project

Each and every regular renter and most of the temporary renters declared that renovation was needed as the houses were quite old and badly maintained. Ms. TC said that she doesn’t invite anyone to her house because of the bad conditions, and that was the reason I had to interview her at a café in the neighborhood. She was talking about the issue:

*Well they need to do something about this house because, let’s put it this way, if I would find a house like this in Sweden, no one would live in it, they would not be allowed to. It would be banned. It is not healthy at all. Sometimes I wonder about the families with children. Wow, I am worried for myself, I would be very worried and not feeling good if I had children living there. (Ms. TC, student, Western migrant, temporary renter, Ceramplein)*

As some regular renters felt stuck with their housing – e.g., too small, badly maintained – they approved of the renovation project, as it would result in a higher use value to live in a renovated or new house. Among these people, it was common to strategize and wait for the renovation<sup>32</sup>. Once these renters had learned that there would possibly be a renewal operation in their block, they prolonged their residence and waited till the renovation was formally announced. Mr. I, a lower class Moroccan, regular renter from Ceramplein, called it a ‘once-in-a-lifetime chance’. Likewise, when he learned years ago about pending renovation in the block, Mr. IT, a lower class, Moroccan, regular renter from the VDP block, thought he would just sit tight (‘ik ga lekker wachten’) till the renovation took place, through which he would get the chance to move to a bigger and better house.

Even though renovation was inevitable and not at all a surprise for most renters, some regular renters from Ceramplein complained that they were not able to return to the renovated complex. They disagreed that current project was to be implemented, as either the housing corporation declared that there were no suitable houses in the to-be-renovated complex that would match their demands or the new houses were too expensive for these renters. Even though their demands to return were not satisfied, they still were positive about the renovation plans, as they were offered priority status to use in the social housing system while searching for relocation housing. Any alternative housing they could find would surely be satisfactory and in better condition. Almost all agreed that renovation was necessary. To the extent that there were possibilities for the renters to go up the ladder in the housing market, they thought that the renovation was necessary. Despite this fact, some did not approve of the current renovation plans as they could not return to the original block. As for residents of the VDP block, there were a few renters who wanted to return to the block but in the end couldn’t. Mrs. U, a lower class, regular renter of Turkish origin, was one of them. She complained that the rents in the renovated block were too high for her household to return. Besides, she wanted to move to a newly built building rather than a renovated old one. Mrs. YE, a lower class renter of Moroccan origin, was another regular renter who wanted to relocate to the original block after renovation. Yet, it was not clear if she could get a house that would be big enough. In the end, she did not want to move twice and decided to move to another house, the condition of which was quite good. Even though these renters were not satisfied about the relocation offers, in the end, they went along with the renovation as it was needed and they could benefit from it.

The temporary renters of Ceramplein did not know much about the content of the renewal plans, as they had not been informed. As an exception, a few did find out about the plans through their neighbors. These temporary renters were opposed to the project because the houses would no longer be available to students and would be too expensive for the original renters.

All in all, the residents’ approval as well as disapproval of the project was based on its use value. While some agreed that the project would be implemented as it would bring about increased use value to live in a renovated or a new house, others disapproved of the

current project as they could not return to their original houses after renovation. The latter felt satisfied later with their new relocation housing, which offered more use value.

### 6.2.3 Residents' opinions about who will benefit from the project

*I cannot return. New houses are too expensive, they are like 600 Euros. I cannot pay such a high rent.* (Mr. I, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Some renters could not return to Ceramplein, even though they wanted to; either it was too expensive or there was no suitable type of housing in the to-be-renovated block. In the VDP project, though, most of the renters who wanted to return could relocate to the renovated block, with the exception of only two renters.

Many respondents from the Ceramplein block (eight out of 13) thought that moving out gave them a chance to move to better housing, as they had suffered from the bad state of their housing (too small, too old, etc.) before displacement. They felt privileged to have priority status as the result of this renovation operation, which gave them the chance to look for and move to a better house.

On the other hand, some thought that it was a forced move, as they did not want to move out of the block. They all wanted to return to the renovated block but that was not possible. Yet, as some of these respondents could find better houses using their priority status, later on they thought that this renovation process became a chance for them to move to a better house. Mrs. KD, a lower class, Moroccan, regular renter, was the last to leave the complex at Ceramplein as she could not find a relocation house for her large family. While she thought they were forced to move, she also thought it was a chance for them to get a bigger house in better condition.

Considering the bad state of the housing at Ceramplein, many respondents argued that the renovation would be beneficial to all residents in the sense that they would no longer live in badly maintained houses with improper insulation, dampness, etc. Yet, most also thought that this renovation would benefit some but not all. As the number of social housing units was cut down to one-fourth and the houses would become expensive after renovation, not everyone can return to the square. The households who wanted to return but could not – especially large, lower-class families, households that are very much attached to their houses and neighborhood – were not beneficiaries. On the other hand, potential renters in the social housing sector, namely persons who are searching for a house in the social sector, are also among the losers, as the project cuts down on the amount of social housing in the stock in order to make expensive market rentals available. This results in exclusionary displacement, as Marcuse (1986) calls it. For some, such as Mrs. Z, a middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter from Ceramplein, it was totally understandable that *'progress brings about victims'* and some would be displaced or excluded.

On the other hand, some respondents stated that for the residents who already had plans to move out yet were stuck with their houses as they could not find anything affordable or suitable, the project was beneficial because they could get the houses they wanted using their priority status. Another point that some respondents made is that the project would be beneficial to the neighborhood at large, as the corporation would renovate and, in the words of Mrs. K, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, “*pimp the neighborhood, which is a positive development for the neighborhood.*”

As for the residents of the VDP block, all of them were enthusiastic about the renewal operation as they thought the building urgently needed renovation. The majority of these renters perceived the renovation as a chance to move to a better house. On the other hand, there were a few renters who thought it was a forced move. For instance, Mr. CK, a lower class, Surinamese, regular renter from the VDP block, asserted that the landlords can do whatever they want while, as a renter, “...[y]ou have no choice, but to move and to cooperate.”

For Mr. B from the VDP block, it was a forced move; he asserted that:

*When we first heard that we had to move out, we thought “Again? Are we to move again?” but you are obliged to, you know. Have no other choice. It was not by our will so it was forced. It was because that they were to renovate the building.* (Mr. B, non-Western migrant, lower-class, regular renter, VDP block)

Many agreed that the renovation was beneficial for the renters as they could get houses in better condition. For the ones who already had plans to move out, this was an invaluable chance. Likewise, the adults living with their parents could also get semi-priority status, which gave them a chance to get an independent house. The son of Mrs. YE, who used to live with his family before the renovation, could move to Amsterdam North with his priority status, with which he was very satisfied:

*It was a big chance for me. I would have to wait for another 10 years to get something in the Woningnet.* (Son YE, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP block)

Not all respondents thought that the renovation was beneficial to all. Mrs. L, a middle-class regular renter of Kurdish origin, talked about why she thought that some would be excluded:

*The negative side of it is that the rents got higher. Not everyone can stay put in the block. Households with low income cannot make it, for instance for families on benefit, it is not possible to pay this rent.* (Mrs. L, middle-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP block)

Likewise, Mr. B, a lower class regular renter of Turkish origin, also thought that renovation made it more expensive for lower-class renters to stay put in the block and that the ones who could not afford had to leave. In his view, it is good for the renovation to take place, yet the new rents should not be high because that would exclude some people from the block, which was the case with the VDP renovation.

As for the temporary renters of Ceramplein, many perceived their moving as a forced move since they had no other choice. For some it would have been perfectly fine to stay longer in the same houses, at least till the end of their studies, as it was very hard to find alternative housing. As these people did not get any allowance for their relocation, the 'forced' nature of moving out was clearer to them. Yet, few thought it was not a forced move as they had already known that the house would be renovated before they moved in. While some perceived the renewal as a chance to move to a better house, some did not think that they would get a better house.

Even though most temporary renters did not have any idea about the conditions of the project, many thought a renewal would be beneficial for the regular renters because the quality of the housing would increase after the renewal. On the other hand, others thought that not all would benefit from the renewal as the rents would get higher, which makes it unaffordable for some to return to the original block.

#### 6.2.4 Satisfaction with resident participation, information, guidance and provisions provided during the process

To start with Ceramplein, some regular renters learned about the pending renovation when they moved into the block in the first half of the 1990s. Others found out through rumors and/or from their neighbors. Temporary renters heard about the renewal from the housing corporation either when they moved in or later through a letter from the housing corporation. Some, though, had heard about it from their neighbors.

Some regular renters complained that all renters should have been informed in advance. As Mr. N, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter argued, the housing corporation changed the composition of the residents over time. Many had left and there were only 25 (out of 47) regular residents in the Ceramplein block when the renovation was announced. The rest were temporary ones, namely, anti-squatters and students with campus contracts.

In the spring of 2008, the housing corporation, De Alliantie, sent all the remaining regular renters a letter to inform them about their plans to renew the block and invite them to an information meeting. The plan was to put small housing units together to make bigger ones, which would decrease the number of social housing units and introduce some new market-rate rental housing into the block. This plan was communicated to the regular renters during the information evening. Among those who attended, the opinions about the meeting were diverse. A few were satisfied with the information provided, while others were not and claimed that the housing corporation did not provide clear information. Mr. R, a middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, complained that the real plans for the

building were not announced at the meeting. He wanted to return to his original house, but the housing corporation could not guarantee that he would be able to do so, as his flat might be transformed into a bigger house. Likewise, Mrs. K, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from Ceramplain, also asserted that the housing corporation did not provide clear-cut answers about the possibilities to return to the renovated block.

Some others thought that there was no real participation and the meeting was just informative. In Mrs. Z's words:

*The meeting was informative, but it was not something that people could have influence on. It was something that people would get to know about the plans of the housing corporation but nothing more... They might have made a folder and put it in the mailbox. That would be the same. It is about the feeling of influence the people get. Feeling that what they say matters.* (Mrs. Z, middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplain)

According to Mr. N, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, the format of the meeting was problematic. The housing corporation presented its plans, arriving with more than 20 professionals, and there were only a few residents. Besides, the residents did not know much about technical details such as maintenance and subsidence and they could not ask much about the renewal. Moreover, there was not much scope for the residents to give their opinion about the plans, nor were they active in the decision-making process. In short, there was no real resident participation at this meeting, according to the residents who attended it.

As for the VDP block, more than half of the respondents had learned about the plans for renewal when they moved into their houses, some as early as 1994. Yet, others did not know till the housing corporation sent them a letter announcing the plans for renovation in 2003.

After the letters were sent, the housing corporation organized a residents' meeting to communicate the plans. Less than half of the respondents attended this meeting. Among those who attended, there were some who were not satisfied with the information provided at this meeting, such as Mr. ES, who attended two meetings for residents but was not satisfied with them:

*They could never tell you what/where/when. The meeting was not specifically about the renovation at Atjehstraat but about the renovation of the entire block (Molukkenstraat, Balistraat, Atjehstraat). As such there was much difference in quality between different parts of the street.* (Mr. ES, middle-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP block)

Mr. ID, a non-Western, lower-class, regular renter, also reported that renters in general were not satisfied with the plans as presented at the information meeting. As the plans were postponed for a long time, some renters did not trust the housing corporation anymore.

Even though there was uncertainty about the renewal projects in the beginning, most of the regular renters from both the Ceramplein and VDP blocks declared their satisfaction with the information they received in the later stages of the project. They thought the written documents such as folders were informative enough. However, a few complained that the information provided by the housing corporation was unclear and piecemeal.

As for the temporary renters, they were informed by the housing corporation either when they moved in or later on in a letter. Some had heard about the renewal from their neighbors not from the housing corporation. Ms. VD, a native-Dutch, temporary renter, said that she had to go after the information herself after she learned from her neighbor that the block was to be renovated. She called the housing corporation to ask for more details yet the corporation did not provide any further information. Mrs. BP, a non-Western, temporary renter, had no idea about the renewal when she moved in: "*All I know is that we had to move out in December*".

Regular renters received house visits from professionals at the housing corporation and/or the municipal agency called the OGA, who helped them find relocation housing. Most of the regular renters were very satisfied with the tailor-made approach of these professionals, who were very responsive and helpful.

There were only a few regular renters from Ceramplein who were dissatisfied about the house visits. For instance, Mrs. Z, a middle-class, Western migrant, found them too intrusive. She felt as if she was being checked on by this professional. According to her, it would be more appropriate if the one-to-one talk would have taken place in an office of the housing corporation rather than at individual renters' houses. Mr. N, who was middle-class and native-Dutch, was another renter who was not satisfied with the house visit. He said the professional from the housing corporation provided too much information, which was hard to grasp at once. Then he expected to get the information in a clear-cut, written format, yet this never happened. In his view, the housing corporation should have provided more clarity with written documents.

Even though the regular renters had the right to return to the renovated block, at least on paper, in practice that was not possible. There were not enough social housing units to relocate each and every renter who would want to return.

As for the regular renters' satisfaction with the way the housing corporation, De Alliantie, managed the renewal process, at Ceramplein almost half of the regular renters were satisfied. Their satisfaction was mostly due to the tailor-made support they received from the professional at De Alliantie who helped them during the process. Some were neutral about the performance of the housing corporation. Even though they were helped well during the process, they were not satisfied about certain things: the neglect of the

maintenance of the houses, uncertainty about the plans, and that not everyone could return to the renovated block.

On the other hand, some regular renters were totally dissatisfied with the way the corporation managed the process. One of these renters was the family KZ, a lower class, Moroccan family who could not return to the original block as there was no suitable housing for them in the renovated block. Even though they had a priority status, it was hard for the family to find a suitable house because of the acute shortage of dwellings for large families in Amsterdam. Son KZ said that the process was like a tug of war (*touwtrekkerij*) where they endlessly had to pull the rope to get what they wanted from the housing corporation, which was exhausting for the family.

Likewise, Mr. N, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, was not fully satisfied with the housing corporation, as De Alliantie cut back the number of houses in the social sector, thereby creating scarcity. Even though the objective of the housing corporations is to provide affordable housing in the social sector, the housing corporation was providing expensive houses instead. The houses in the block would be rented for 1500 Euros, more than twice as much as what he will pay after renovation, and he feels strange about this. Another renter who was dissatisfied with De Alliantie is Mrs. Z, a middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, who sued the housing corporation because she was not offered a suitable house in the renovation block even though she wanted to return. She won the court case and the housing corporation had to offer her a relocation house in the renovated block. Besides, the housing corporation had to compensate her for the relocation costs and the moving itself was arranged by the corporation. She was tired of this long-lasting struggle with the housing corporation and underlined that they did not help her at all.

The majority of the regular renters at the VDP block were satisfied with the housing corporation regarding the way it managed the relocation process. Their satisfaction was mainly due to the tailor-made nature of the house visits, during and after which they were helped well and could ask their questions of the professionals in charge. Some renters, though, were not satisfied, as the process took a long time, during which there was no



*Photo 6.3.* Moving Process at Ceramplein (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

maintenance on the houses, and as there was a lot of uncertainty involved. Even though the corporation was responsive and helpful, according to Mr. ID, the corporation was not really helping the renters. The corporation has its own plans and for that the renters should move:

*They provide you money and you need to move... They help themselves. That is not real help.* (Mr. ID, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, VDP block)

Mr. M, a lower class, native-Dutch, regular renter, complained that it took four years for the corporation to actually start the renovation after the announcement, which was too long for the renters to wait. Likewise Mr. IT, a lower-class Moroccan renter, mentioned that they suffered from the lack of maintenance during the process, as the corporation did not do anything serious about the upkeep.

Mrs. KO, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, was relocated temporarily to a house 'by mistake', where there would also be a renovation operation. She was troubled by the noise, dust and another renovation operation that was going on. She was offered working space in the same street by the housing corporation, where she could install her workshop. Even though the housing corporation tried to compensate her for their 'mistake', the entire process was very tiring and stressful for her.

As for the satisfaction of temporary renters from Ceramplein, most were satisfied with the housing corporation, while some complained that there was not enough information provided about the renewal. Temporary renters in general expected very little from the housing corporation, as they knew that temporary renters had very few rights. There were no relocation consultations or allowances for these renters. The only form of allowance provided for the temporary renters was that the rents were decreased for the last couple of months, as there would be renovation in the block. As stated above, only the renters with campus contracts were offered relocation housing.

### 6.2.5 Residents' experiences of living under the threat of displacement

The residents of both Ceramplein and the VDP block had lived under the threat of displacement for years and experienced pressure and harassment during the process of displacement. In this section, I will focus on how the residents experienced the changes in the blocks after they had been designated as renewal blocks. I will also discuss the appropriation strategies of the housing corporation. Last, I will discuss the worries that the residents had while living under the threat of displacement.

#### *Residents' experiences regarding the changes in the blocks*

Most of the respondents complained that the housing corporation had not done any tangible maintenance for the last five to ten years. For instance, the Ceramplein block suffered from subsidence, and dampness was also a problem. In addition, the houses were

badly insulated; there was no double glazing and the window frames and doors were too old.

*Walls are so moist that the wall papers are sticking out. The windows, for example, when it rains, I have to put towels around the frames. Otherwise, the rain is inside.* (Mrs. MT, non-Western migrant, lower-class, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Whenever there was a need for minor repairs, such as a broken light fixture in the hallway or a broken sink in the kitchen, the housing corporation would come and fix it but it did not do anything about the structural maintenance of the block, as Mr. HM recalled:

*They would not do anything unless it is life threatening.* (Mr. HM, non-Western migrant, lower class, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Likewise, Mrs. BD, a Moroccan lower-class, regular renter, added that the house became worse and worse over time. If the housing corporation had not neglected it through years, such a big renovation would not be needed.

As for the VDP block, almost all residents complained about the bad state of the houses. There were a lot of problems such as leakage, dampness, rotting window frames, broken staircases and bad insulation. As Mr. BE, a Moroccan lower class, regular renter, said, due to neglect by the housing corporation, the houses were not houses anymore; they were ‘*more like caves*’.

Mr. IT, a lower class, Moroccan, regular renter from VDP block brought his complaint about the lack of maintenance to the attention of the Neighborhood Rent Team<sup>53</sup>, which came to check the house to see if the housing corporation had neglected the maintenance. The team decided that the window frames, shower and toilet were under-maintained and decreased the rent of Mr. IT by 110 Euros. He then paid less rent for the last three years he stayed in this house.

Likewise, most temporary renters complained about the lack of maintenance in the block. Yet, as it would be very difficult for them to find alternative places to move to, some were totally comfortable about staying put in these houses, even though they were poorly maintained. This illustrates the precarious position they have in the Amsterdam housing market.

In short, renters from both blocks complained about the bad maintenance. This helped the housing corporation to gain residents’ consent for renewal and for moving out of the block as soon as possible. Neglect of maintenance indeed played a central role in making renovation legitimate in the eyes of the residents, especially since it was the regular renters who had suffered from it for years. This finding is in line with what Huisman (2011) discusses in her research. Furthermore, the renters who could afford to move had already done so in the course of time, as their neighbors reported.

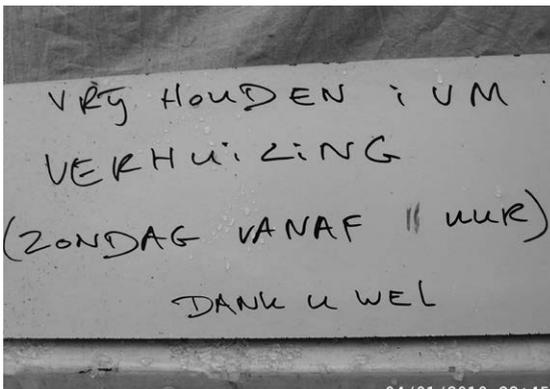
Among other changes, the renters experienced the moving out of the neighbors, which coincided with increasing vacancy and decreasing safety in both blocks. These changes made it very unpleasant to live in the to-be-renovated blocks. Due to these factors, the renters wanted to move out as quickly as possible. As the vacancy increased in the blocks, the very last residents, who were still looking for relocation houses had a problem with mice and the blocks in general became unsafe, as Mr. HM from Ceramplein complained:

*The last two months, I had a weird feeling. It felt unsafe as the house was not livable anymore. Someone fell down through the floor into the house downstairs... I have children, you know, and it was very unsafe.* (Mr. HM, non-Western migrant, lower-class, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Likewise, Mr. IJ, a middle-class, Western migrant who was among the last renters to move out of the VDP block before renovation, also suffered from the dirt and mice as people moved out of the block. The streets were also very messy, littered with the stuff people left behind while moving out. It was not pleasant to live in a to-be-renovated block.

Mrs. Z, a middle-class, Western migrant from Ceramplein, talked about another issue: that there was less social control, as many neighbors were leaving and it was not possible to get to know the newcomers. Many houses were empty in the end and it felt very unsafe. Mrs. Z was among the last residents to move out of the Ceramplein block before the renovation started. She also complained that it felt very unsafe, especially at night with all the empty houses in the block. Moreover all the mice from the vacant houses had rushed into her apartment. Under these conditions, she hurried to find a house to relocate to.

In the VDP block, the housing corporation had started the renovation while some renters were still in their houses. Mrs. YE, who is a lower class, Moroccan regular renter, was among the last residents to leave the block. She was very much bothered by the construction work, mainly by the noise and dust but also by the unsafe feeling. The latter



**Photo 6.4.** Moving Process at Ceramplein (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

was due to the fact her neighbors had moved to their temporary houses and other people she didn't know moved in the block.

Another grievance was that the housing corporation had changed the resident profile over the blocks in time. Due to bad maintenance, among other reasons, many of the regular renters had moved out, some even years before the renovations were announced. Rather than putting in some regular renters, the housing corporation put in some temporary renters (anti-squatters and students/PhD researchers with campus contracts), which changed the atmosphere of the block entirely. The newcomers were mostly young international students who did not have much contact with the regular renters. This created social distance within the blocks and some renters felt less at home. For example, Mrs. KO, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, complained that the change in the block was drastic: unfamiliar people were living around her, some places got squatted and one apartment was burned out. Some renters also missed their neighbors who had moved out of the block over time. Mrs. AD, a lower class, non-Western, regular renter, for example, was unhappy that her best neighbors had left the block and did not want to come back to the renovated block.

As for temporary renters, they did not feel much pressured as they had expected to move out of the block. The only pressures they felt were due to the bad state of the housing and, among those with a relatively longer duration of stay, due to the unsettling feeling that arose as their neighbors were moving out from the block.

#### *Appropriation strategies of the housing corporation*

The housing corporation put pressure on some regular renters to speed up the relocation process. Especially the very last renters in the blocks felt this pressure. As the period set for relocations was almost over, or had passed, the corporation put pressure on them to hurry up and find a relocation house. Son KZ from Ceramplein was helping his Moroccan, lower class and large family to find a relocation house, which was very hard. He complained that the corporation wanted to move them to temporary housing till they could find their relocation housing. The family rejected this idea, as it was too challenging for the elderly parents and their handicapped daughter to move twice. Yet, as they stayed put in their old house to look for a relocation house, they had more and more stress:

*The time is almost up and we have to move. It is a big pressure. And people from De Alliantie are also putting pressure.* (Son KZ, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)

Son KZ was not satisfied about the way they were treated by the housing corporation. During one of the house visits, the person from the housing corporation told them to 'do your homework', which meant that they had to look for a house. The family had been searching for a house for long time, but it was not easy to find something due to the

scarcity of large housing in the market. Son KZ thought she was very patronizing, as if talking to a child who did not do his homework.

Likewise, Mr. BE, a lower-class, Moroccan, regular renter who used to live in the VDP block with his large family, complained about the same problem. He said that the corporation pressured them to find housing as soon as possible, whereas it was very hard for the family to find a dwelling that would be big enough for them to relocate to.

Another source of pressure was that the housing corporation used its power over information and time in a way that created uncertainty and anxious waiting. To start with, waiting years for the renewal to take place was the shared experience of the renters from both blocks. The rumors of renovation or demolition were circulating for a long time but no one knew anything concrete about the plans of the housing corporation. Some of the renters were told that there would be renewal in the block in the near future as soon as they had moved in (the early 1990s for Ceramplein and mid-1990s for the VDP block). Others heard about it from their neighbors as the rumors spread. Some renters from the blocks even called the housing corporation, De Alliantie, to ask about the prospective plans. But they could not get information for years, having to wait till the housing corporation organized general information meetings for the renters in 2003 and 2008 for the VDP block and Ceramplein, respectively.

Mr. ES, a middle-class regular renter from the VDP block, said in a complaining tone that he called the housing corporation many times to ask about their plans for renewal. But they could not tell him anything specific and it was all unclear.

At Ceramplein, the implementation of the project was delayed for some months because the housing corporation could not relocate all the renters within the relocation period. As Mr. NN, a Turkish, lower class, regular renter from Ceramplein, complained, even a year after he moved out, the renovation of Ceramplein had not started. He thought that this was not fair to the renters who had rushed to move into relocation housing within the relocation period.

Some others suffered from another issue related to uncertainty. Since the rumor of renovation had been going round for years, they did not put much time and effort into keeping up their houses anymore; they thought they would soon be moving out. Thus, planning blight occurred. This 'on-hold' situation decreased the quality of their stay in their houses, as they chose to maintain the status quo rather than making their housing nicer to live in. Mr. W, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, talked about the uncertainty that left its mark on their stay:

*It was really the first year we moved in that they [the housing corporation] were planning it [renovation]. And every year it kept on and on and there was the possibility of a renewal and I remember having this conversation with friends and neighbors: "Well you know, we are not going to do anything, because it is going to be renovated." (Mr. W, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

Mr. M from the VDP block, who is a lower class, native-Dutch renter, mentioned that for years the housing corporation did not do any maintenance. Nor did he put any effort into making his house better. But the quality of his house deteriorated, and he did not like staying there anymore.

The housing corporation did not initially announce any concrete plans. Therefore, the residents did not know if they would be able to return to their original house/block. Mrs. T, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the Ceramplein block, thought that this was a deliberate strategy of the housing corporation. She believed that they wanted to allow only a small number of residents to return to the renovated block. As people could not bear the uncertainty, they wanted to move to another house using their priority status and leave this whole process behind them. For instance, Mr. R started to search for another house to get rid of this uncertainty and moved to his new house around the corner of Ceramplein. In his words:

*We had to get out but they did not make the plans about how they were going to rebuild it. If my house would be two floors, that was not sure. That is why I came here, you know if it is unsure this is just an attractive possibility for me. I will say yes and leave and that is what I did.* (Mr. R, middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter Ceramplein)

The information was provided in chunks rather than in a comprehensive package as Mr. N remembered. This way the corporation could retain control over the process and affect the decisions of renters about relocation. Mrs. PE talks about this:

*They were pushing everyone to move out and to start looking for another apartment by means of Woningnet, although there was still lots of time.* (Mrs. PE, lower-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)

There was also uncertainty about when the renovation would be completed and when renovated houses would be delivered to the renters who would move back to Ceramplein. Besides, these renters also did not know the details of their houses. For instance, Mr. HM, a lower class, Moroccan, regular renter from Ceramplein, asserted that it was not clear to him what the roof terrace would look like or how the French balcony would be constructed.

In contrast to the anxious waiting of many renters, as mentioned above, some renters strategized about their stay at Ceramplein and the VDP block after hearing rumors of the renewal. Even though they wanted to move out of their houses, they just waited for the renewal to be formally announced. They knew that they would be given extra rights and privileges to get better housing that would fit their needs and preferences. Mrs. BD, a lower-class, Moroccan, regular renter from Ceramplein, was one of them. When she heard about the renewal from her neighbor some years ago, she called the housing corporation to ask about it. She was told that it would not take long for the corporation to start the

renewal. Even though she did not know when exactly this would happen, she decided to wait in order to get priority status and then be able to move to a bigger, better-maintained house. Likewise, Mr. YU, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, was waiting for the renovation of the VDP block from the time he moved in as the housing corporation had told him informally that such a renovation would take place soon. He decided to stay till it happened, which took 11 years of waiting in uncertainty.

Uncertainty and anxious waiting are intrinsic to the situation of the temporary renters as they often do not know how long they can stay in their temporary housing. Temporariness often brings about uncertainty regarding how long these people can stay in their houses. Few of the temporary renters were informed about when the renewal would actually start. For instance, Ms. TC, a temporary renter from Ceramplein called the housing corporation to find out if there would be any extension to her contract, which was going to end in couple of months, yet she could not get a reply:

*I wanted to find out if I had to move out in September or not. I called them five times. The first two times, the person on the phone said we cannot give you any information like that. What? I live here, I need to know. 'But we cannot give that information, you will get a letter'. I would like to know because finding a house in Amsterdam is so hard and you know the plans already and so you might as well tell me, you know. And the fifth time I called, there was a woman who was nice enough to tell me that I could stay more. (Ms. TC, student, Western migrant, temporary renter, Ceramplein)*

Living in uncertainty put many temporary renters like Ms. TC under stress; they simply wanted to know if they could stay longer or when they had to leave. There were some who postponed their plans to visit family or to travel, as they did not know when they would need to move out of their houses.

Besides, there is uncertainty whether these temporary renters would be able to find a house to relocate to, as the housing market in Amsterdam is very tight and the prices are high. Most of them are dependent on the housing corporations to find alternative housing. The housing corporation might show them another temporary unit at another renovation or demolition block. On the other hand, for some, uncertainty meant that they could stay longer in their current houses. These renters were all young, low-income and international students. They were happy with this arrangement, as they had low rents. Thus, some were not at all bothered by the uncertainty.

#### *Residents' worries regarding displacement process*

The renters of Ceramplein and the VDP block were worried about several issues regarding this renewal process: paying higher rents, finding a relocation house, leaving the neighborhood, losing social contacts and the physical aspects of moving out were among these worries.

*Increase in rent:* Many regular renters of Ceramplein and some from the VDP block worried about a prospective increase in their rent, as an affordable rent was very important for their survival. Even though some renters needed bigger and/or better-quality housing, they stayed put in Ceramplein and the VDP block for years as they could not afford to pay higher rents. Now that these renters had to move out, they worried about the prospective rent increase.

There were three groups of renters who worried about a rent increase. The first consisted of renters with incomes slightly above the ceiling for getting a rent subsidy; they would have to pay the increased rent from their own pocket. Secondly, renters who had low incomes, which meant that they could get more rent subsidy to compensate for the rent increase, felt insecure too. They were worried by the thought that, in the near future, rent subsidies would be curtailed or totally abandoned, considering the budget cuts the government is involved in. Finally, regardless of their income levels, the renters, who had no idea about rent subsidy regulations, also got worried about paying higher rent after renovation.

As for the temporary renters, most were worried about paying more rent, as many of them had low incomes and were not eligible for rent subsidy. Ms. PL, an international student at the University of Amsterdam, was concerned about a possible increase in her rent after moving out of Ceramplein, where she has temporary housing:

*I am pretty much sure that I need to pay more... It is a fact but it is still a worry because I cannot pay, as I said. My upper level is 400. Even that is already too much.* (Ms. PL, student, temporary renter, Ceramplein)

*Finding another house:* More than half of the regular renters in Ceramplein were worried about finding another house, whereas few renters from the VDP block were worried about this issue. The renters in Ceramplein shared the worry that they would not be able to find a suitable and affordable house, as Mr. HM put it:

*I worried about where I would end up and whether I would find something in such a short time.* (Mr. HM, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)

It should be noted that the large families from both blocks were more worried about finding suitable housing. They immediately experienced the scarcity of dwellings for large families. This point is underlined by Son KZ, who was helping to find a house for his elderly parents and siblings, one of whom was handicapped. The lower-class Moroccan family could not find a four-room apartment on the ground floor even though they searched hard. He complains that "...there is no way we can move under these circumstances".

The second group who were quite worried consisted of ethnic minority families. Most of them were less knowledgeable about their rights and felt dependent on the authorities to find a house. On the other hand, their dependence was also a reason for some of these families not to worry at all, as they got substantial support from the institutions during their relocation process.

For instance, Mr. ID, a lower class, non-Western migrant who used to live in the VDP block, was worried that he would not be able to find a suitable house, as it was hard to get an affordable dwelling in the social housing sector. Initially, he did not know about the priority status he would get, nor did he know about the rent subsidy for which he could apply if he ended up with a higher rent. Till the time he found out about these issues from the housing corporation, he was very worried. Even after that, he felt stressed, as he could only respond to three houses at a time and the housing corporation put pressure on him to find a house as soon as possible.

The number of residents who were anxious about finding a house was relatively low in the VDP block. This can be explained by the fact the residents of the VDP block were better informed about their rights. That may reflect the higher educational levels among these residents. Another explanation could be that there were more houses in the renovated block that the displaced could return to.

For temporary renters, finding a relocation place was even more difficult. Most were not offered any relocation housing, except for those with campus contracts. Especially the temporary renters with a very low income were very worried about the situation. As Ms. TC said, finding a house in Amsterdam was a 'nightmare':

*If I had enough money it would be no problem to find a house. I could buy a house. But if you are a low-income person, finding a house in Amsterdam is a nightmare. And it, of course, makes you feel very insecure.* (Ms. TC, student, temporary renter, Ceramplein)

*Leaving the neighborhood:* More than half of the regular renters from Ceramplein and a few from the VDP block were worried about leaving the neighborhood as they were very much used to living there. The central location of the neighborhood, social ties in the neighborhood, working in/close to the neighborhood, a possible change in the children's schooling, and being attached to the neighborhood were among the reasons these residents gave for being worried about leaving the neighborhood. Especially among the ethnic minorities, i.e., the Turkish and Moroccan households, people were worried about having to leave the neighborhood. They were more grounded in the neighborhood, as discussed in Section 5.2.3. in the previous chapter. The rest of the renters did not worry. Either they knew that they would not leave the neighborhood or, to the contrary, they wanted to leave and this was their chance.

More than half of the temporary renters at Ceramplein did not worry about leaving the neighborhood. They were not attached to it and were used to changing houses and

neighborhoods. For some, though, leaving the neighborhood was problematic. The location was very convenient with respect to their work and the university and they felt attached to the neighborhood.

*Losing social contacts:* Half of the renters in Ceramplein and a few from the VDP block did worry about losing their social contacts. These renters were of Turkish or Moroccan origin and had strong networks in the neighborhood, as discussed in Section 5.2.3. regarding relations in the neighborhood. The presence of their family, neighbors and acquaintances is the main reason for their strong attachment. Solidarity ties between family members and neighbors make these renters feel very grounded in the neighborhood. Visiting each other for coffee or dinner, exchanging information about Dutch institutions, lending gadgets and goods when needed – all are common practices among these people. They need these solidarity ties to survive or to make life easier. Among family members, the ties are even stronger. They support each other by looking after each other's children, borrowing and lending money, etc. Being close to these contacts helps them in their social economic survival as they construct and live in their 'small village'. That is why they feel so anxious about losing these contacts if they are to be displaced.

Especially for immigrant women who don't speak Dutch, it is very important to be in a neighborhood like Indische Buurt. There are many other people from their country of origin with whom they can speak their own language and sustain their culture. Especially for elderly immigrant women, this is crucial. Mrs. C, a 78-year-old Turkish woman who cannot speak a word of Dutch, spoke about this point:

*In Indische Buurt, it always felt as if we were in Turkey. We had Turkish neighbors next door, another one opposite to our house. For instance when I was going out, I always felt as if I was in Turkey. I did not feel like a foreigner at all. (Mrs. C, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Immigrant women are more attached to the neighborhood, as they have many strong ties there. They said they would feel alienated in other neighborhoods and that it would be hard for them to have such relations elsewhere. This is indeed the reason they are worried about losing their social contacts and leaving the neighborhood.

To the contrary, some residents were not at all worried, as they did not have any close contacts in the neighborhood. These were mostly native-Dutch, middle-class persons. Nor did the temporary renters worry about losing contacts, as they didn't have any in the neighborhood either.

*Physical moving out:* For some it was very stressful to deal with the move itself, especially those who had to move twice or the elderly. Mrs. PE from the VDP block was one of the latter. For her it was very difficult to pack things, up as she had back problems and was too old to handle the physical challenges of moving. Likewise, for international students, who

were in Amsterdam for a limited period of time, the move itself was problematic; it would not be worth it, due to short duration of their stay. Ms. SR spoke about this point:

*I am worried about putting everything into boxes again and how shall we get these to the new place? And how do we find a new place? But I mean if we have something, we have to get it there and we have to start anew and unpack everything. It does not last too long again because the study is not long. It is always starting anew.* (Ms. SR, student, temporary renter, Ceramplein)

Even though there were some renters who were very worried and stressed during the process, others declared that they had no worries. The share of renters with no worries was much higher in the VDP block than in Ceramplein, as the VDP renters were better informed during the renewal process. Some of these renters were not worried; they saw this renewal as a chance to move to a better house and neighborhood, while some had no worries because they knew that renters had strong rights during this process.

### 6.3 Impacts of displacement

Before starting the evaluation of the impacts of displacement as experienced by the renters, I first want to discuss where the renters of Ceramplein and the VDP block moved to.

Among the ones interviewed at Ceramplein, most (nine out of 13) stayed within the neighborhood. The others moved out to different neighborhoods such as Amsterdam North, New West, Center and Southeast. Among the ones who stayed in the neighborhood, more than half (five) returned to the renovated block at Ceramplein.

As for the VDP block, 24 percent of all the displaced renters returned to their original block, while 40 percent stayed within Indische Buurt and another 21 percent moved within the borders of district East. As Figure 6.1. shows, Amsterdam Center (five percent), Amsterdam South (three percent), Amsterdam North (one percent) and Amsterdam West (one percent) were the other districts that renters moved to. Another five percent moved out of Amsterdam.

All in all, most of the renters from both blocks stayed put in the neighborhood, though not necessarily in the original housing block. Other renters chose to move to different parts of Amsterdam. As for the temporary renters, I could reach nine out of the 12 for follow-up interviews, and only one of them was living in Indische Buurt. While two of them had stayed in the east of Amsterdam, five others had moved to other neighborhoods (Westerpark, New West, Center, Bos en Lommer, Bijlmermeer). One moved to Delft for her studies. Two of these nine temporary renters moved back to their country of origin after finishing their studies.

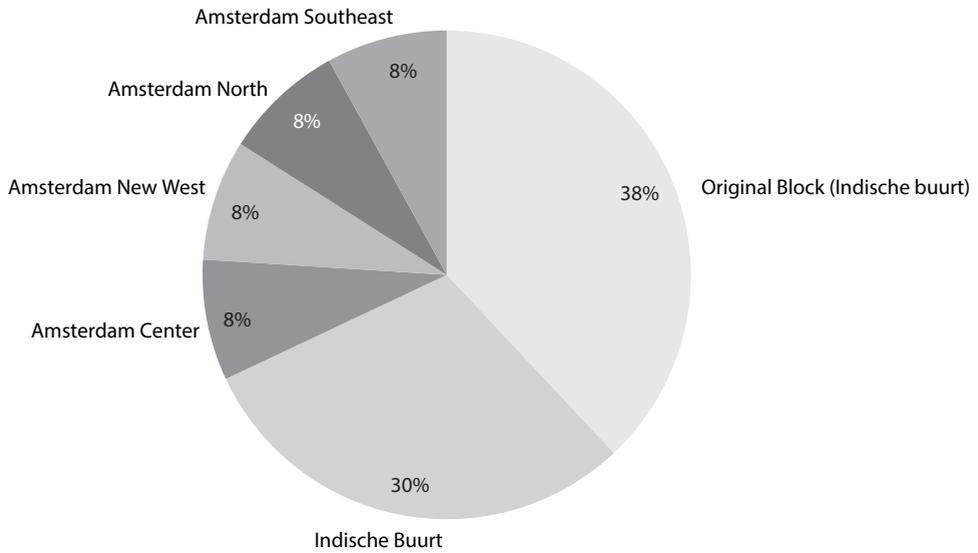


Figure 6.1. Relocation neighborhoods of Ceramplain residents (% n=13)

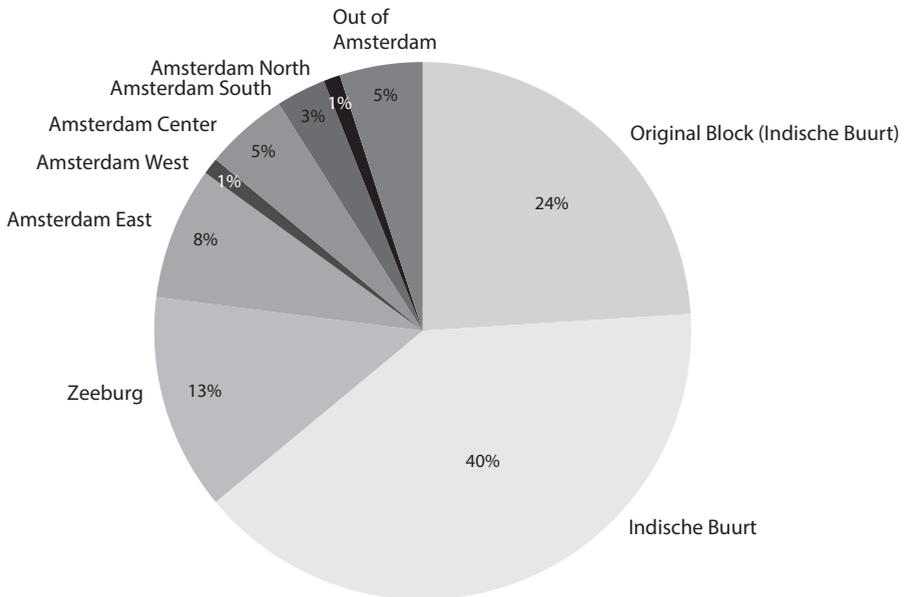


Figure 6.2. Relocation neighborhoods of Van der Pek block residents (% n=76)

After mapping where the displaced had moved to, let us now focus on the impacts of displacement.

*Impacts on economic situations:* All of the renters at Ceramplein and the VDP block had an increase in their rents after relocation. Most had a very low rent before the renovation, and the increase doubled or tripled the amount, which put an extra burden on their household income. While the lower-class renters could take this increase in their stride by applying for more rent subsidy, some other households with incomes slightly higher than the ceiling for rent subsidy were worse-off financially, paying the increase out of their own pockets. For others, the increase in rent was not a problem, as they had enough resources to pay it.

Likewise, their service fees and water bills were higher in their new houses. In most cases, their energy expenses decreased due to better insulation. Those who moved out of the neighborhood paid more for groceries, as shops in the new neighborhoods were more expensive than the ones in Indische Buurt. All in all, household expenses increased for all renters after and due to relocation. One consequence was that renters with a low income became more dependent on rent subsidy to afford the increased rent. Another consequence was that one-third of the respondents from Ceramplein and approximately one-fourth of those from the VDP block declared that it was hard to make ends meet after relocation due to the higher expenses. Half of these households from Ceramplein and one-third of those from the VDP block earned slightly more than the maximum income allowed for rent subsidy and were therefore not eligible for it.

As for the temporary renters, almost all had an increase in their rents, from which some of them suffered as it became harder to get by. The latter group comprised mostly of students, who had to take a new part-time job alongside their studies to compensate for the increase; others asked for some extra money from their families.

*Improvements in housing conditions:* Almost all of the renters of Ceramplein and the VDP block saw their housing conditions improve after relocation. Better insulation, central heating, a bigger living space, a separate bathroom were some of the qualities that renters counted among the improvements. Most had suffered from deteriorating conditions for years, and after that experience these improvements were very much appreciated, as Mr. NN from Ceramplein said:

*This house is light and bigger. In the old house the stairs were very narrow; it was problem for us to go up and down. But here it is comfortable for elderly people like us. (Mr. NN, non-Western migrant, lower-class, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Likewise, Mr. N, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from Ceramplein who got a five-room apartment in the renovated block at Ceramplein, was very satisfied with the fact that there are two separate bedrooms for his children. The condition of the new house is much better compared to the old one, as discussed in the excerpt from the field notes in

Box 6.1. Just like Mr. N, all other large households of Ceramplein and the VDP block were very satisfied with the bigger and better houses they could move into after the renovation.

Only one renter was dissatisfied with the new house she got in the renovated block at Ceramplein. Even though Mrs. BD, a lower class, Moroccan, regular renter, is happy that they now have more space, she complains about the stairs in the house. It is hard for her to go up and down the stairs the entire day with her baby.

Among the renters who moved back to the VDP block after renovation, there were some who complained about some deficiencies in the newly renovated houses, such as the lack of double glazing in some doors and windows, drafty doors and drafty walls, etc.

As for the temporary renters, almost all had improvements in the condition of their housing. Most attributed this improvement to the very bad housing conditions at Ceramplein before the renovation. Mr. OA, lower class temporary renter, who had moved into his friend's flat to couch-surf, is the only one who had no improvement in his housing conditions. His precarious situation is discussed in Box 6.2. below.

In general, the housing conditions of the renters both at Ceramplein and the VDP block improved after their relocation to their new houses.

*Satisfaction with new neighborhood/neighbors:* Many residents were satisfied that they could stay put in the neighborhood after the relocation. These renters wanted to stay in Indische Buurt as they felt attached to the neighborhood and/or had social contacts such as family, neighbors and friends whom they did not want to leave behind. Many of these renters could continue their existing social relations in the neighborhood. It was especially the Moroccan and Turkish households who tended to relocate within the neighborhood,

#### **Box 6.1. Mr. N's satisfaction with housing conditions of the new house**

February, 2013 – This spacious living room was decorated with colorful birthday decorations with balloons and streamers ... It was his daughter's birthday yesterday, as Mr. N told me. In the old house having a party was not really possible but now he could afford these basic things as they had more space and he was happy about this. They had five rooms, two big balconies and a big roof terrace. Everything was new; his three children had their own rooms. This house was incomparable to the old house which was very small, badly maintained and poorly insulated. He had wanted to move out of the old house before he learned about the renovation plans. Yet, he could not because he could neither find affordable alternative rental housing nor buy a place. Thus, they were stuck in the old house. And now everything was different and nice. (*From Field notes, Ceramplein/Amsterdam*)

and they relocated to the blocks and/or parts of the neighborhood with a relatively higher concentration of immigrants.

Most of the ones who moved out of the neighborhood were middle-class and native-Dutch residents. They were satisfied with their new neighborhood and their relations there. One of these renters is Mrs. T, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter from Ceramplein, who moved into a semi-detached house with a garden in Amsterdam North. She thinks the new neighborhood is calmer and much nicer than Indische Buurt.

*I feel quite at home here. Look at the plant. I got this from the neighbor across the street. They are watching out for you but they are not really in your house or something. It is nice that people watch for each other but it is not too much so I can live my life. This is nice for me.* (Mrs. T, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, Ceramplein)

### **Box. 6.2. Precariousness in the housing market: Mr. OA's couch-surfing**

November, 2012 – Mr. OA was an anti-squatter at Ceramplein before he was displaced. Today we talked with him to learn about his new place and how his life changed after displacement. He searched for a house for quite a long time but could not find anything and moved to a friend's house in Bijlmermeer to live there for some time. He said he did not want to go on with being an anti-squatter as he thought it was too costly and didn't think it was worth it. When he moved into the flat in Ceramplein, he had to make investments to make the space livable as it was too old and drafty. His house indeed was very different than other houses in the block, as he had put in a new floor, curtains, furniture which made the old house look better. Yet, in a year he had to move leaving all the investment behind. He said, 'Being an anti-squatter again? No, not again. It is a waste of time and money.' He said that the housing corporation is the only party that benefits from this. They don't get the squatters so it will not cost them money to get the squatters out when they want to start the plans. In the meantime you are just a guard [he used the words *toezichthouder* and *bewaking*] and also you have to pay quite some rent. He paid about 250 Euros and had about 100 Euros in extra costs for that old drafty house.

His stay at the friend's house was temporary and he was searching for a solution to his housing problem, but there was not much option for him as he had not been on the waiting list for social housing long enough to qualify soon, nor did he have enough income to rent or buy something in the housing market. (*From Field notes-Ceramplein/Amsterdam*)

Mr. G, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, moved out of the neighborhood to IJburg. He feels more at home there and is happy that he can communicate with his neighbors more easily. There are more renters, like Mr. GJ, who could move to a neighborhood they liked. These renters were quite pleased about their relations with their new neighbors compared to their relations in the old neighborhood. Mr. ES, a middle-class, regular renter, for example, has much better relations with his neighbors in IJburg than he had in Indische Buurt. They make small talk in the street; they know who lives where and even the names of each other, which was not the case back in Indische Buurt.

Mrs. C was the only Turkish renter who moved out of the neighborhood. This lower class elderly Turkish woman wanted to be closer to her sons, who lived in New West. As she was very much attached to Indische Buurt, she missed her old neighbors. She had contact with the new neighbors at her new place but the relations were not as good as they used to be at Ceramplein.

As for the ones who could stay put in the VDP block, they were mostly satisfied about their relations with their neighbors. On the one hand, they had closer relations with the neighbors who had also returned to the renovated block. On the other hand, especially some middle-class residents, consisting mostly but not exclusively of native-Dutch renters, were quite satisfied with the change in the composition of renters in the block. The inflow of the Dutch renters and the recent change in the neighborhood were very much appreciated by this group. For some, the change was positive because the neighborhood was getting more mixed, while others noted that there were fewer problems and that more 'decent' and 'socially capable' people were moving into the neighborhood.

Mrs. H, for example, now has more contacts in the newly renovated block with her middle-class neighbors who have moved into the block. She has nice chats with them and even tried to organize a garden party with others, whereas before the renovation she barely had any relations with her neighbors. She says that:

*Before the renovation, we did not have this many competent or motivated people here, who perhaps did not speak the language or were unmotivated or scared and they gave little reaction if someone tried to start a neighborhood action.* (Mrs. H, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)

Likewise, Mrs. PE, a lower class, native-Dutch renter, appreciated the class change in the block. Even though she does not have more or better relations with the newcomers, she thinks that the new young middle-class families are more decent than the immigrant families with many children or than the hippies who used to live in the block before the renovation. Others, though, had very limited or no relations with the newcomers.

As for the renters of Ceramplein, those who returned after the renovation declared that they had closer relations with the renters who had also returned to the block. As

Mr. N, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, mentioned, going through the same process of displacement and renovation made these renters closer. Likewise, Mr. HM declared that the neighbors talked about the renewal process among them and asked each other about various things. Now in the renovated block, their children play together and they visit each other. Yet, these people also said they had very restricted or no relations with the newcomers, who were mostly young professionals or dual-income couples with or without children. Mr. HM was explaining that there is a visible class change in the block due to the inflow of people with their own businesses and high incomes who have replaced the old lower class renters.

The limited social contact between the old residents and the newcomers was mentioned more often by residents of Ceramplein than by those of the VDP block. Though there is a need to investigate this issue further, I can venture two possible explanations for this. The first is the physical divide within the block that makes contact harder. The second is the differentiation in class backgrounds within each block. While the VDP block had/has more middle-class residents who feel at ease with the newcomers, themselves middle-class professionals and young couples with or without children, most of the Ceramplein residents have/had a working-class background, which made it relatively harder for them to connect with their new middle-class neighbors.

As for the temporary renters, most of them moved out of the neighborhood. While most declared that they were satisfied with their new neighborhoods, they also said they missed Indische Buurt. Most had little or no relations with their new neighbors.

*Access to work and health services:* Most of the renters from Ceramplein as well as those from the VDP block did not experience any change in their access to the health services, since they had remained in or close to the neighborhood. Among those who did move out of the neighborhood, few had problems regarding their access to health services or to their new doctor. Some others had to change doctors yet said they had no problems at all. Mr. M, a lower class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, was the only one who suffered from moving far away from the hospital, as he has a chronic illness for which he has to go to the hospital regularly. Now that he lives very far away from the hospital, it is harder for him to get there. Yet moving to this house was his own choice, so he does not complain.

Likewise, the renters' access to their workplace did not change, as they stayed in or close to the neighborhood. Among those who moved out of the neighborhood, only one renter from Ceramplein was farther away from her work, so she had to cycle 40-45 minutes to get there. Yet, she was looking for a closer workplace and she did not complain about the current situation.

As for the VDP block, Mrs. J, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, and her husband had the same problem. Both now had a much longer commute, so they recently bought a car to solve this problem. Other regular renters ended up closer to their workplace.

As for the temporary renters, most came to live closer to their workplace.

*Remaking of boundaries between different social groups:* The renewal process at the Ceramplein and VDP blocks not only changed the physical and social make-up of these blocks but also brought about the redrawing of boundaries between different groups. In other words, this process of renewal operated as a catalyst to strengthen and/or redefine the social boundaries between different groups as they went through the process. In this section I will discuss the remaking of the boundaries along the lines of ethnicity, tenure and class.

*Ethnic divisions and bonds:* Some native-Dutch residents both from the VDP block and Ceramplein were engaged in re-making their boundaries based on ethnicity, mainly with respect to Moroccan and Turkish immigrant groups. The divide between native Dutch and immigrants was reproduced by these residents along two lines: 1) non-ethnicized; 2) ethnicized and stigmatizing. In the non-ethnicized view, immigrants were viewed as people with inferior qualities, but those qualities were not explicitly attached or related their ethnicity. In contrast, the ethnicized and stigmatizing view casts other ethnic groups (mostly Moroccans) as problematic with clear reference to their ethnicity.

To start with the former, some native-Dutch renters appreciate the arrival of the newcomers to the neighborhood, after which they indirectly redraw their ethnic boundaries. In the view of Mrs. PE, who is a lower class, native-Dutch, regular renter from the VDP block, “the new young families that came to live” in the neighborhood are more “decent” than the large immigrant families and hippies that have now moved elsewhere.

Likewise, Mrs. H, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, appreciates the incoming students who have replaced mostly immigrant families:

*They started with the renovation of Berlage Block nearby and **other better public** were placed in and when they started to work on the Muiderpoort station, things started to change into better. It indeed started to improve only with the renovation of Timorplein and the arrival of nice facilities like the Stay Okay hostel, film house, café and restaurant. (Mrs. H, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block) (boldface mine)*

Mr. YU, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, also appreciates the newcomers, describing them as ‘civilized’ and ‘more communicable’ compared to the displaced residents.

*Although everyone has a right to live where s/he wants, there was a bit too much of the same sort... The neighborhood got improved due to all sorts of renovations done, now it is with less mess and more people that are more easily approachable. (Mr. YU, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

These renters were basically happy about the dispersal of the immigrants from whom they indirectly distanced themselves. They were satisfied that more people like themselves had come to live in the block. By referring to these newcomers whom they appreciated as

more 'decent', 'approachable', 'civilized', etc., they could redraw their group boundaries. On the other side of the line were the 'less decent', not 'easily approachable' residents, who are mostly immigrants and constitute a 'worse public'.

For other native-Dutch residents who did not feel at home in Indische Buurt because there was a concentration of immigrants in the neighborhood, renewal was a chance to move away. For instance, Mr. Y, a middle-class, native-Dutch renter, said that there was always a social distance with the migrants, who were mostly minorities. Now he has 'real Amsterdammers' as neighbors with whom it is easier to make contact. He has people like him around in his new neighborhood, which lies in the center of Amsterdam.

There were a few native-Dutch respondents who not only complained about the composition of the neighborhood but also used a patronizing or stigmatizing tone about the immigrants. For example, Mrs. T, a middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter from Ceramplain, argues that "Moroccan people in general are real problem people." She starts the conversation by saying that normally she does not talk about these things, as many people have a lot of prejudices about Moroccans and she does not want to confirm these prejudices. Yet, she goes on to say that she has experienced Moroccan culture from close by through her encounters with her neighbors. She mentions that she witnessed some Moroccan neighbor's children growing up and these children broke into their neighbors' houses. She ends the conversation by declaring that she is happy that she is rid of these problems, now that she could move out of the neighborhood.

For Mr. M, a lower class, native-Dutch, regular renter, it was "very hard to live among them." He mentioned that the houses in the neighborhood were very cheap, which was also the reason for him to move into the neighborhood. Immigrants became more and more concentrated over time, and even the Dutch in the neighborhood were 'the rabble' of his own people. He was bothered by the changing culture in the streets, with people staying out in the street until night, which was a nuisance for him. He felt alienated, as he did not understand their language. Besides, he felt threatened by the immigrant youth hanging around in the streets. As he said:

*If you approached a kid about something, soon you would have a bunch of – perhaps 10-children around you that you felt you might get beaten up. I thought it was severe. (Mr. M, lower-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

It was not only the native-Dutch residents who were engaged in boundary-making. Some Turkish interviewees also redrew their social boundaries with other ethnic groups, especially with Moroccans.

Mrs. MT, a lower class, Turkish renter, for instance, claimed that she could not state her demands during the resident meetings. The reason was that some Moroccan renters kept the representative of the housing corporation occupied so long that she could not even talk with this person.

*There were some Moroccans; they even did not let us say a word. They said 'I want it like this, like that'. They constantly occupied the woman from the housing corporation. There was also a man, to whom they constantly asked questions. I want it like this, I want it like that. They would almost draw the plan of the house they wanted. The representatives could not find a moment to deal with our questions, demands. (Mrs. MT, lower class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

Even though she and her husband lacked the necessary proficiency in the Dutch language to ask questions, she blamed the Moroccan neighbors for being dominant and greedy, which prevented them from asking questions.

Mr. C, a Turkish, lower-class renter, distanced himself from 'the foreigners' (yabancı), by which he meant the Turkish and Moroccans, as they do not claim their rights. He thinks the housing corporation pays more attention to the Dutch residents. The Dutch are also more interested in claiming their rights, which he appreciated a lot. He says:

*If there were five Dutch residents and two foreigners, the conditions would be different. They [the housing corporation] pay more attention to them [the Dutch]. The Dutch also affect the decisions more. But our foreigners would say 'I don't care, whatever they give to me is fine'. (Mr. C, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

*Tenure: Ties that bind and divide:* Tenure functioned as a dividing line between regular and temporary renters during the process of displacement. As covered earlier in this chapter, the authorities treated different groups of renters differently based on their tenure status. The rules and roles are well defined and institutionalized in the Dutch case, and the renters have accepted these roles and rules.

The housing corporation allocated units only to temporary renters when there was a vacancy in the block; with few exceptions, these temporary renters did not mind the pending renewal. The regular renters had to deal with the change that the influx of temporary renters brought to the social composition of their block. As the number of temporary renters increased, the social distance in the block increased before the renovation got started. Quite a few of the regular renters no longer felt at home when their old neighbors moved out and were replaced by these newcomers. With few exceptions, the regular and temporary renters did not have much interaction.

Tenure played a connecting role in two respects. The first is that some regular renters came together at the residents' committees in the two blocks. Being on the same committee throughout the process of displacement, they had stronger relations with each other. The second is that there were relatively stronger relations among the renters who moved back to their original blocks after displacement.

*Class as a cohesive factor:* The resident committees, both at the VDP block and Ceramplein, consisted of middle-class, regular renters who were all native Dutch. Not

only did they have a similar class background but their demands regarding the renovation of their blocks were similar too. They all wanted to stay put in the block and in the neighborhood; they were all happy about the direction of the change in the neighborhood, notably the influx of Dutch households and the new entertainment and cultural facilities. The satisfaction was stronger at the VDP block, as the middle-class renters were interested in how the monumental block would be renovated; they thought it would be nice to live in a monumental building after renovation.

Class did not operate as a dividing line between the existing renters of the VDP and Ceramplein blocks. This can be explained by the egalitarian rules for relocation that characterize the Amsterdam context. Those rules guaranteed that every regular renter would be relocated to alternative housing and compensated for the costs of the relocation, regardless of one's class background.

However, we should not overlook the emerging physical and social divide at Ceramplein between the old residents, who are lower class, and the newcomers moving into the private rentals, who are from the middle class. There was no direct tension, but there was no encounter between the old and the new residents. The fact that there is less of a social divide at the VDP block than at Ceramplein may be related to two conditions. First, the old residents who returned to the block were mostly of the same class background as the newcomers. Secondly, the VDP block is not physically divided into social housing and private rentals but is mixed. The mixing of tenures may provide more opportunities for encounters between different types of renters.

## **6.4 Household and collective strategies**

Renters developed some strategies to deal with the negative impacts of this process, mostly at the household level. There was a lack of collective strategies.

### **6.4.1 Household strategies**

Even though all regular renters had strong rights for relocation and were offered compensation to ease the process, some still had to get support from the organizations in the housing field and/or from their family, friends or neighbors.

To start with the institutional support, most of the regular renters got help from the Development Agency of the Municipality of Amsterdam (Ontwikkelingsbedrijf Gemeente Amsterdam – the OGA). The OGA is responsible for assisting residents in renewal areas with their relocation if they are not going to return to their original houses after renovation. This agency provides the residents with information about their relocation rights and helps them find suitable relocation housing in the social sector. Most of the respondents from both Ceramplein and the VDP block were satisfied with the support they received from the professional who paid the residents house visits and helped them find a house. Besides turning to the OGA, a few renters asked for support from the Rent

Team (Huurteam) of the Neighborhood Housing Support (Wijksteunpunt Wonen-WSW), which is an independent organization advising renters on their housing rights. These renters were also satisfied about the support they got from the rent team.

As for the temporary renters, most of them had no idea about where they could go for help. Most did not ask for help from any organization. Some did not need any support; others could not ask for it as they did not know there were any organizations they could seek support from. The housing office at the university and the student housing corporation (DUWO) were the sole institutions that some could turn to recruit for help in finding a house. For others, the contact person at the housing corporation, De Alliantie, was the only source. A few of the temporary renters had good contacts at the housing corporation, which helped them to get another flat as temporary renters. Box. 6.3. gives the storyline of one of these temporary renters. Only one temporary renter had received support from the Rent Team about her housing rights.

In the process of relocation, regular renters in particular are surrounded by organizations to support them. About certain issues, though, regular renters sought support from their family, friends and neighbors. To start with, almost all regular renters of Ceramplein and the VDP block got help from either friends or family with moving their

**Box. 6.3. Having good contacts counts: Ms. XI was offered another flat after displacement**

*June, 2012* – Ms. XI, who had been renting from De Alliantie for seven years, had a good contact at the housing corporation, who helped her to find houses. Before being displaced she had looked for housing for months but could not find anything. In the end she called him to ask if there was anything available for her to relocate after displacement. He said he would look for some place for her but it was uncertain that some suitable housing would actually be available for her. “That uncertainty was difficult to bear,” she said. She was looking for a place desperately and waiting for the call from the contact at De Alliantie. But just three weeks before she had to move out he called her to say that there was something for her. First it was another house which was not in good condition, and later the housing corporation decided that it was better if she did not move there. They offered an alternative flat which was also in a demolition block. This was the third house in a row she got from the corporation in seven years and having long-term relations helped solve this problem, she thinks. Yet, uncertainty has been a fixed element in this relation, as she did not know till the last moment if she would get another place to move. It is hard, she says but she is happy to have this contact. (*From Field notes, Ceramplein/Amsterdam*)

stuff to their relocation house or temporary relocation house. For a few households from Ceramplain and also for some from the VDP block, the family's help was crucial. These were all elderly people with poor proficiency in Dutch and their children helped them through this process. A few of the temporary renters of Ceramplain recruited support from their family regarding the practicalities of moving out of their houses.

Understanding the documents was not a big problem for most. Yet some families of Turkish or Moroccan origin who had insufficient Dutch asked neighbors and friends about things they could not understand. Likewise, the temporary renters, who were international students, had difficulty understanding documents regarding their housing situation. These renters asked for help from their friends, neighbors and flat mates. Among the temporary renters, many asked their friends for help in finding an alternative house. Finding a relocation house was a big problem for many. As they didn't receive any formal support, seeking support through their informal social networks (e.g. friends, colleagues, and acquaintances) was almost the only way to tackle it. As Ms. LP, a low-income international student, said, the strategy that temporary renters used to find a house was simply to tell everyone they know.

For some it was very important to stay in the neighborhood, as they did not want to lose their social networks. Especially for the women of Turkish and Moroccan origin from both project areas, this was crucial. They were very much grounded in the neighborhood with their social relations, as Mrs. MT, a renter of Turkish origin from Ceramplain, underlines:

*All my friends, my best friends are very close to me. I am also so much used to being here. This is why I don't want to move away from here. The housing corporation showed houses in other streets. There was one in the Niasstraat in the neighborhood. Indeed it was a big house but even that was too far away for me.* (Mrs. MT, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplain)

Another point is that these women were able to speak their own language within their close network in the neighborhood, which helps them feel at home. Thus, it was a household strategy for these renters to stay put in the neighborhood to keep their social contacts intact.

As mentioned above, the rents increased as the result of the renovation project. To bear this burden, some renters had to ask for more rent subsidy, which was another household strategy. This option was not open to all of them, though. The renters whose income was slightly higher than the maximum allowed for rent subsidy, they could not ask for it and therefore had to bear the increased costs themselves. Likewise, temporary renters had to bear the burden of increasing expenses due to relocation as they were not eligible for a rent subsidy.

While some regular renters started to cut back on household expenses such as vacation, others tried to economize on food and clothing. For instance, Family GN, a lower class, non-Western migrant household from the VDP block, started to look for discounts all the time due to the increase in the expenses after relocation. The family postponed buying some necessities such as clothing to get them during the sales. The family also saved on food by going to cheaper supermarkets and grocery stores. Some temporary renters also had to economize to be able to pay the increased rent. 'Living at the minimum' was the strategy of some international students with very low budgets. Besides cutting back, some had to take part-time jobs to make ends meet.

Despite the financial difficulties, no respondent had to borrow money. There was only one exception, a renter from Ceramplain, an elderly Turkish woman, who had to get financial support from her sons to make ends meet due to the increased expenses.

A lower-class Turkish household from the VDP block used another household strategy: to join households. The elderly couple, Mr. and Mrs. CK., first moved to their relocation rental but they were not satisfied with the house and found it too expensive. The couple decided to move in with their son, in the same neighborhood, to avoid the expense of a house they did not like. Their son's house was barely big enough for them all, as it was now a seven- person household, yet the elderly parents were satisfied with the solution.

#### 6.4.2 Collective strategies: Resident platform?

Neither the regular renters of Ceramplain nor those of the VDP block have taken any initiative to collectively deal with the process or to resist the renewal plans. When asked, many renters thought that forming a grassroots renters' organization and acting collectively would have helped individual renters to go through this process more smoothly. Now the question remains, why did the renters not organize themselves and why was there no resistance? Some possible answers could be extracted from the interviews.

To start with, the housing corporation initiated the resident platforms in both blocks with the stated aim of ensuring resident participation. The formation of such platforms was announced in each block so that any residents who were willing to actively participate in the process could join. In each project, four to six residents volunteered to be on the platform. While the resident platform of the Ceramplain met only twice, the one of the VDP block came together more often to talk about and decide on certain issues. Neither of these platforms reported on their meetings to the residents who had not joined. As an exception, the resident platform of the VDP block once tried to give feedback to the other residents but they were blocked by the housing corporation, as Mr. YU from the platform recounted:

*As the platform, we once sent a newsletter around for all residents, but De Alliantie was for some reason unhappy with this initiative as it was done without informing them. They rather liked to deal with everyone directly. So the platform didn't continue with it. (Mr. YU, middle-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

There was a clear problem of representation. Most renters did not know that such resident platforms even existed, although, at least on paper, these platforms were representing them. In the beginning, the platforms attracted the renters who were eager to participate in the process, but later on they did not function at all. Mrs. PE from resident platform of the VDP block tells about her experience and the influence of the platform on the plans:

*I became part of the residents' platform. So I was one of the people whose opinions were asked. Yet, as such we had a little bit of influence on the process. I don't think that people that were not in the platform had any influence on the plans, nor we could do so much for them. Although in the platform our opinions were asked, in the end the corporation would be always right. Our part was getting the information clear for the 'rank-and-file', seeing through their floor plans, etc. – and we could show sometimes little mistakes or small things like electricity plugs that had to be in other places on the wall etc. but the plans themselves were already all thought out. (Mrs. PE, lower-class, native-Dutch, regular renter, VDP block)*

The platforms in both blocks could make only small changes regarding the internal design of the houses such as pargetting in walls, chimneys in the bedrooms, location of non-load-bearing walls. In this sense, the platform used up the energy of those renters who had the capacity to and would potentially organize residents at the grassroots level.

Renters talked about the process informally when they met in the streets or when they needed help to understand the documents. Even though the process was not smooth for all, and was indeed strenuous for some, no collective action was taken. It can be asserted that by initiating resident platforms, the housing corporation co-opted the eager residents and thereby suppressed the potential collective action. The participating renters were those with the potential to organize collective action and to lead grassroots mobilization. It can be said that their co-optation eliminated the chances for such a mobilization.

Yet, many regular renters think that if such a resident group would be formed, it would be beneficial to the renters. In the words of Mrs. KZ, "together they would be stronger". Yet, this was not the case. As Mrs. BD from Ceramplein put it, each and every renter went through the process individually and thought of themselves only. In other words, the problem of relocation, which was a collective problem, was individualized by the interference of the housing corporation, so every household had to deal with the process individually.

Very few renters thought that a grassroots organization of the renters would not have been helpful. They thought it was very hard to challenge the power of the housing corporation. As Mrs. C explained:

*If the housing corporation and the municipality decided for the renewal, it is hard to change it. Whatever the renters do, they would just go on with their plans. (Mrs. C, lower-class, non-Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

There may be another reason why there was no resistance. Individual renters have strong rights regarding relocation, and most opt to utilize and retain these rights. As mentioned earlier, some renters waited a long time to use these strong relocation rights as a springboard to a bigger and better house. That is why these renters focus solely on how they can get the most out of the situation; they act strategically to get the house of their preference. This, on the other hand, estranges them from any collective action. Besides, the consent for renewal is constructed by the bad maintenance that the renters were exposed to for many years. This too breaks their propensity to resist these projects. Mrs. Z was talking about why renters of Ceramplein did not organize themselves:

*If we had organized a resident group that could really help us to change some things. But people do not organize that fast because the conditions are still quite all right. It is not bad enough for us to organize a strong stand. If the situation was worse, then people could really stand up. Now they do not bother to make something out of it. A lot has to happen for people to organize these days. (Mrs. Z, middle-class, Western migrant, regular renter, Ceramplein)*

The temporary renters of Ceramplein, on the other hand, did not know whether any residents' organization existed or not. Yet more than half thought that if the residents would have been organized, it would have been beneficial to the regular renters. However, they thought that such an organization would not be helpful to the temporary renters, since their rights are limited. A few argued that such a resident organization would not be helpful because the housing corporation, as the owner of the block, had decided to go ahead with the renewal, and it would be hard for the residents to change that plan.

## **Conclusion**

The privatization of the social housing stock lies at the heart of urban restructuring in Amsterdam. Indische Buurt, one of the 40 problem neighborhoods in the Netherlands, is a neighborhood where this privatization has taken place at a high rate. While the district government together with the city council promoted gentrification through the restructuring of public space, notably by the insertion of emblematic projects like Javastraat Wereldwonen to boost the image of the neighborhood, housing corporations invested in the built environment to change the composition of the neighborhood (to make it socially mixed) and to solve the physical and socio-economic problems. The latter intervention has brought about displacement of the residents. This chapter has focused on how the residents

of Cerampléin and the VDP block experienced the process of displacement as two renewal projects took place in Indische Buurt. Some of the findings of this study are in line with the existing literature while some suggest new directions for research.

Most of the residents support renewal in their blocks. Most see renewal as a chance to move to a better house. The deteriorating housing conditions that they suffered for years before the renewal, together with the tight social housing market in Amsterdam, are the factors that helped build the residents' consent for the renewal operations, as Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark (2014) also underline. Even the renters who saw it as a forced move agreed to go along with the renewal procedures to the extent that it opened up possibilities for them to move up the housing ladder.

There was a long process of decline in both blocks before renewal started, and the residents had to live under the threat of displacement. The changing profile of the block, regular renters being replaced by temporary ones, and the deteriorating housing conditions, due to insufficient maintenance and problematic physical and hygienic conditions, put pressure on the residents to move out. On top of such pressure, uncertainty and anxious waiting also inscribed the displacement experience due to the way the housing corporation managed information and time during the entire process, e.g., pressuring the last residents to find a relocation house.

As for participation, information, guidance and provisions, there are well defined regulations about participation, and the renters were invited to join the residents' committee. This invited participation empowered them to take part in some minor decisions such the color of the tiles in kitchen, thereby narrowing their political space and imagination. As Huisman (2011) also found, here too there was no real participation, given the power asymmetries involved in the process. On the other hand, the precariousness of the temporary renters was a barrier, making these residents reluctant to participate in the renewal process.

Even though there are generous relocation benefits for displaced residents in Amsterdam, not everyone could make use of them to the same extent. Those with migration backgrounds encounter the most hardship in realizing their rights, in line with what Kleinhans (2003) suggested earlier. For most of the renters, there was satisfactory professional support, though some were not satisfied with it.

Regarding the impacts of displacement, this study confirmed the findings of Kleinhans (2003), who found that it is actually not the lower class residents, who are economically worse-off after displacement. Their increased rent is compensated by their eligibility for rent subsidy. Rather, it is the households with an income slightly above the upper limit for rent subsidy who are most affected financially; they have to pay the rent increase out of their own pockets.

This study also found out that most residents experience improvements in their housing conditions, as suggested in the literature on the Dutch case (notably Kleinhans 2003, Posthumus et al. 2012).

Most stayed in or close to the neighborhood, which is another finding in accordance with the literature (Bolt and Van Kempen 2010, Kleinhans 2003, Slob et al. 2008, Posthumus 2013). They were satisfied that they could stay put and continue their social networks. In line with what Slob et al. (2008) suggest, the Turkish and Moroccan residents who did not return to their renovated blocks moved to areas with a relatively high concentration of non-Western minorities and a social housing stock.

Through the process of displacement, social boundaries between different groups of residents have been remade, as Blokland (2003) and Gans (1982) have also underlined. Ethnicity operated as a dividing line, as middle-class, native-Dutch residents redrew their social boundaries with the ethnic minorities through the urban renewal process. Another dividing line was tenure, as the regular and temporary renters accepted their differential roles as clearly defined by the regulations.

Class – together with ethnicity – operated as a cohesive force regarding the formation of the residents' committee, as middle-class, native-Dutch renters volunteered to serve on the committee and thereby to take part in the decision-making process.

Regarding the household and collective strategies, renters received support within their social networks, which they used together with the institutional support to deal with the negative impacts of displacement at the household level. Staying in the same neighborhood so as not to lose one's social networks and minimizing expenses were other household strategies. As for collective strategies, there was no collective organization in the Amsterdam cases. This can be explained partly by the co-optation of the residents through residents' committees formed by the housing corporation. In part, it can also be explained by the precarious situation of the temporary renters who are dependent on the housing corporations to get relocation housing. This explanation is in line with the findings of Huisman (2013) and Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark (2014).

The chapter has thus presented many findings that are in line with the literature regarding the three different dimensions of the displacement experience. This chapter also showed that all these dimensions should be taken into consideration to gain insight into the residents' displacement experiences. Drawing upon the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, the findings presented here suggest that the privatization and commodification of social housing is the main policy tool that enables accumulation by dispossession to work through urban renewal in Amsterdam.

Urban restructuring based on privatization of the social stock redistributes the urban space and resources from the public to the private sector and from the lower to the middle class. The resulting displacement is routinized and exclusionary. The displacement is routinized because the strong rights of the renters, together with the long period of deterioration in the renewal areas and the invited participation during the renewal process, help construct consent among the renters with regular contracts and, as a result, there is no contestation. The displacement is exclusionary because it restructures the housing stock in a manner that access to social housing becomes harder for those

outside the social housing system. Besides, dispossession often does not hit the regular renters hard, thanks to the relocation policy. It is generally not the lower-class renters who bear the extra costs, as they can get rent subsidy, which is not available to renters with an income slightly above the ceiling for rent subsidy. Among the lower class, though, it is the ethnic minorities, especially the Moroccan and Turkish residents, who have the most difficulty going through the process due to problems such as low language proficiency or the shortage of large-family dwellings in the social housing stock.

## Chapter 7

# Urban Policies and Gentrification in Istanbul

Istanbul grew enormously with the rural-to-urban migration that took place from the 1950s on. This chapter examines that development and the corresponding urban policies. But before delving into that topic, I will first provide a brief overview of the administrative structure and the division of labor among the tiers of government.

In Turkey, the municipal system consists of metropolitan and district authorities. The metropolitan municipality is responsible for issues concerning the entire city such as providing and maintaining the infrastructure and making the budget. The metropolitan municipality is governed by the metropolitan mayor and the municipal council and they are all elected every five years. District mayors govern the district municipality together with the municipal councils at the district level. The district municipality is responsible for issues such as the maintenance of infrastructure at the district level, public hygiene and urban renewal. Besides this two-layered municipal system there is also a provincial administration, headed by the Governor of Istanbul Province, which is appointed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The provincial administration is responsible for the construction and maintenance of schools, state buildings and roads. Besides, it has duties in the preservation of nature and culture.

Three phases in the urbanization of Istanbul and its corresponding urban policies will be examined here in detail. Istanbul experienced three waves of gentrification in relation to but not exactly corresponding to these three phases, a topic that will be investigated in second part of this chapter. The gentrification and the concomitant displacement resulted in grassroots mobilizations, especially in the later waves of gentrification, and these mobilizations will be discussed in the last part of this chapter.

### **7.1 Urban policies and development in Istanbul**

#### **7.1.1 Urban expansion and populist clientelism:**

In the era of inward-oriented developmentalism prior to the 1980s, the state regulated and protected the internal market against external competition through the imposition of import levies and subsidies for import-subsidizing industries (Kepenek and Yentürk 2001). Public resources were mainly channeled into industrialization rather than urbanization and urban development (Sönmez 1996). Istanbul functioned as the industrial growth pole of the country as it hosted major state-subsidized industries.

With the lack of formal mechanisms for social housing and employment, the occupation of public land and the construction of squatter housing (*gecekondu*) served

as an ad hoc and cheap solution to the housing problem of the migrants. Another ad hoc solution was to occupy the abandoned building stock in inner-city historical neighborhoods. These ‘illegal’ neighborhoods were in time legalized and some even got municipal services right before the election times in exchange for the votes of the *gecekondu* people. This populist way of income redistribution, which was based on turning a blind eye to the appropriation of the public land by the migrants, constituted the non-formal face of Turkey’s welfare regime (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001, Keyder 2000). It also kept many inner-city historical and *gecekondu* neighborhoods out of the formal housing and land markets, which hindered their redevelopment despite the considerably high rent gaps (Bartu and Kolluoğlu 2008, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010).

The earlier migration was a chain process. The single men and young couples who arrived in the city first brought their families over after they had solved their housing and employment problems (Şenyapılı 1998, Şen 1996). Solidarity networks<sup>54</sup>, ties based on kinship, family and townsmanship, paved the way for the newcomers to access informal housing and employment. In short, the appropriation of public land and the formation of squatter neighborhoods accompanied by informal employment and social solidarity networks served as significant means for the migrants to socially and economically integrate themselves into the city (Erder 1996). On the other hand, the incoming population constituted a cheap army of labor for the growing state-subsidized industries in the city and thereby eased capital accumulation.

As available public land could be appropriated by the migrants, the urbanization process of Istanbul prior to the 1980s was ‘smooth’ and ‘integrating’, as Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) call it. That is to say, the urbanization of Istanbul in this developmentalist era rested upon a sort of ‘societal consensus’ between different actors, all with different political, economic and social interests invested in the city. This ‘consensus’ was hegemonic, unequal in nature, so the urbanization of Istanbul was uneven.

### 7.1.2 Early neoliberal urbanization: 1980-2000

In 1980, Turkey adopted a neoliberal economic model, replacing its national developmentalist strategy based on import-substituting industrialization. After the military coup in 1980, the liberal conservative government (ANAP-Mother Land Party) – under the strong entrepreneurial leadership of Prime Minister Turgut Özal – began implementing the structural adjustment reforms that rely on the liberalization of trade and financial markets, enhanced capital mobility and commodification to integrate the national economy with global markets (Boratav 1991, Şenses 1994, Yeldan 1994). In this transition to an open economy, state support and subsidies were reoriented from the industrial sector towards tourism, export-import, finance and the real estate sectors, while infrastructure investments in telecommunications, energy and transportation were prioritized to form the basis of the new services economy (Kepek and Yentürk 2001, Sönmez 1996).

In this neoliberal political economic context, Istanbul emerged as the foremost center for the articulation of the national economy with global markets as the result of its privileged location on the continental transportation routes and strong economic base hosting the largest capital groups in Turkey. These historical and local contingencies have triggered the formation of coalitions among the economic, political and cultural elites to globally position the city in the world economy, which produced and circulated the rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city as a significant channel for national economic development (Geniş 2004, Öktem 2005). The global city discourse and rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city were also widely discussed by some academics, who asserted that this project was a ‘new development strategy’ and discussed different political economic strategies and ways to make the city a global one around the renowned question of “How to sell Istanbul?” posed by Keyder (1993) (see Keyder 1993, Keyder and Öncü 1993, and for a critical perspective see Ercan 1996; Öktem 2005, 2006).

With the neoliberal economic policies thus mobilized, the city’s economic base gradually shifted towards the services. Public investment and subsidies declined in manufacturing sector in this period. The private sector reoriented its investments towards tourism, real estate, banking and finance as well as import and export activities (Sönmez 1996). The changing profile of the city’s economy was also marked by the increasing international capital investments – especially in the banking and finance sector through joint ventures with Istanbul-based capitalists – and increased international trade (Özdemir 2000).

The city’s steady emergence as the primary business and finance center of Turkey became evident. Istanbul had the country’s largest share of corporate headquarters, finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE), media and advertising companies with an orientation to global markets. In tandem with these developments, the share of services employment in the city’s labor force steadily increased. There emerged a new group of highly paid professionals, managers and technicians who were employed in the growing FIRE, media and advertising sectors (Aksoy 1996). This differentiation in the middle class began making an imprint on the cultural life as well as on the urban form as this high-profile group adopted new consumption patterns, lifestyles and political affiliations that reflected their counterparts around the world (cf. Aksoy and Robbins 1996, Keyder 1999 among others). On the other hand, in the lowest ranks of the city’s service sector, employment in personal and domestic services grew relatively strongly, mainly in casual, low-paid, short-term, informal jobs (Keyder 1999, 2005, Sönmez 1996).

Though the share of manufacturing employment in the city slowly declined over time with the large-scale industrial investments shifting away from the city, small-scale manufacturing, especially in the textiles sector, remained the major source of income for large segments of the population concentrated in squatter and poor neighborhoods (Sönmez 1996, Aksoy 1996). These changes in the economic base of the city were accompanied by developments such as decreasing public-sector employment and the

increasing extent of the informal sector with the contraction of the formal sectors, etc. In this period, Istanbul also experienced the internationalization of informal employment in major informal sectors like textiles, construction and domestic work, as it emerged as a destination for migrants from the ex- Soviet Bloc, the Balkan, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa, especially after 1990 (Sönmez 1996, Yüksekler 2003, Duymaz 1995).

The city's population kept growing in this period – from 4.7 million in 1980 to 7.3 in 1990 and to 9 million in 2000 (Osmay 1998). Though migration has always played a significant role in the socio-spatial development of Istanbul, the reasons and impacts of the migration process – at both the social and the individual level – changed drastically after the mid-1980s but especially in the 1990s (Erder 1997, Şen 1996).

While the driving force of chain- type migration – voluntary migration<sup>55</sup> – prior to the 1980s was economic, the major reason for the forced migration<sup>56</sup> in 1990s was political, though it coincided with worsening economic conditions in these regions. The armed conflict between the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and the Turkish army, which began in 1984, resulted in a mass migration flow from the southeastern and eastern regions to the big cities, including Istanbul. This process – as discussed by Erder (1995, 1996, 1997), Şen (1996, 2002) and Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) – has been characterized by the migration of entire families. The result is a complete rupture from the place of origin, severe impoverishment due to loss of property in the hometown, traumatic memories due to village evacuations, terror experiences, a cessation of use of solidarity networks, kinship and family ties to find housing and employment, etc. (Erder 1995, 1997).

Unlike the early migrants, who could integrate in the city by mobilizing their solidarity networks to access employment and housing, the forced migrants faced harder conditions when trying to incorporate themselves into the city: severe impoverishment resulting from the conditions of forced migration, erosion of formal welfare mechanisms, decreasing chances for land occupation and *gecekondu* formation due to increasing commodification of land and housing, shrinking in/formal employment chances under crisis conditions, etc. They could attach themselves to the city in positions with the lowest economic and social status by getting employed at the lowest ranks in the informal labor markets and ending up as renters in squatter neighborhoods or in dilapidated inner-city neighborhoods such as Tarlabaş, the neighborhood selected for the case study in this research (see Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001; Şen 1996, 2002; Yılmaz 2008; among others). All of these factors worked together to bring the forced migrants to the fore as the “prominent ‘absolute poverty group’ in the city” (Şenyapılı 2004).

Accompanied by the severe conditions of forced migration and continued demographic pressures in the city, the reconfiguration of the city's economy and labor force through new economic policies heightened the socio-economic and spatial inequalities in the city. The emergent and unprecedented income polarization intensified with each successive crisis, which worsened the unemployment rate and real-income levels. The gaps between different income groups increased, which was evident in that the share of total urban

income going to the wealthiest 20 percent increased from 57.6 percent in 1986 to 64.1 percent in 2000 (Sönmez 2001).

In this period, the state's approach to urbanization and urban development underwent a significant change. A competitive socio-spatial and economic restructuring became a primary policy target, underpinning the growing political- economic importance of Istanbul in particular. Urban development, hitherto supported only in relation to industrialization targets, emerged as an important policy and investment area into which public resources were channeled (Kurtuluş 2003, Keleş 1990, Geniş 2004). The state embraced a facilitating approach in the creative destruction of the city's built environment to make the city a magnet for domestic and international investments (Keskinok 1997, Öktem 2005).

Through the supply of infrastructure, financial subsidies and credits, releases in land regulations, allocation of public lands, subsidizing investments through public private partnerships, etc., public authorities helped to open up fresh spaces for capital accumulation in commercial and residential urban development (see Sönmez 1996, Taşan-Kok 2004, among others).

Given the enabling attitude toward economic enterprise at the central and local levels, the capitalist sector became more assertive in claiming that certain places with privileged strategic locations and high environmental qualities should be secured for investment purposes (see Ekinci 1995, Sönmez 1996, Kurtuluş 2003, among others). The need for opening up legal land to meet these market-driven demands triggered privatizations, commodification of urban public lands and/or the relaxation of development regulations and halting of city plans.

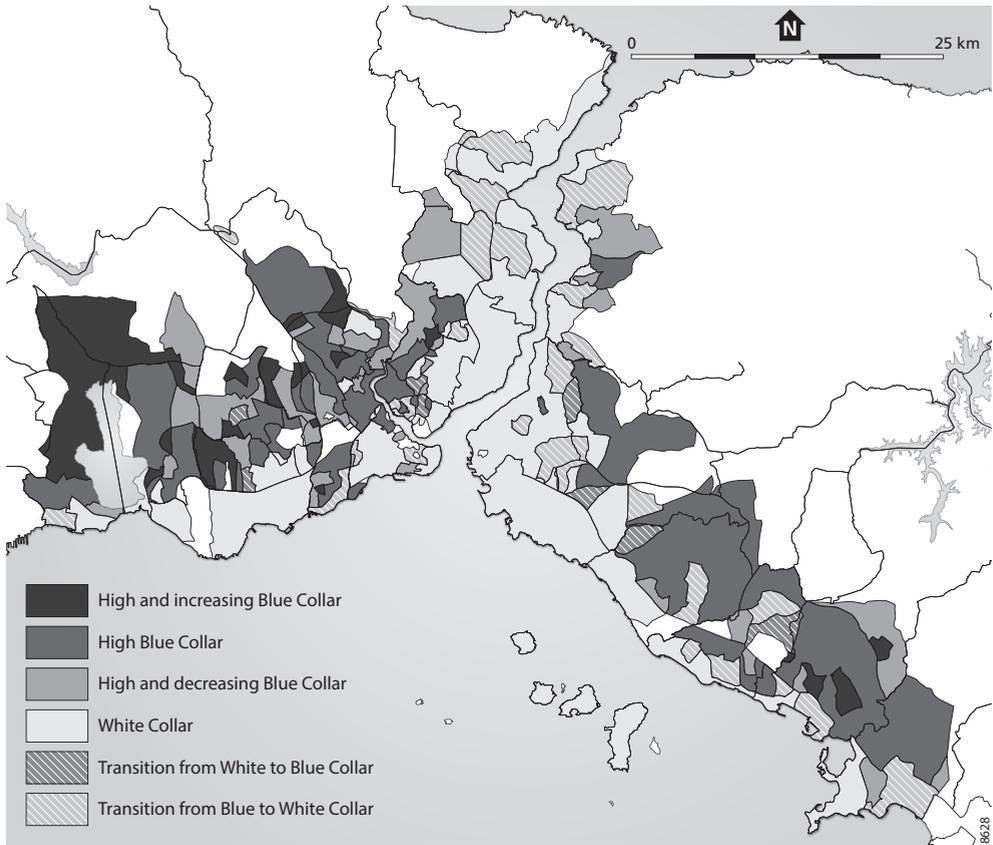
Besides, in this period, the state departed from its 'non-interventionist' approach in the housing market with the introduction of the Mass Housing Fund in 1984 (see Baharoğlu 1996, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001, Keleş 1990, Keyder and Öncü 1993, Tekeli 1991). While the fund aimed to finance large-scale housing projects for lower class households directly or through the subsidized credits given to municipalities and housing cooperatives, it also offered long-term subsidized credit to homebuyers. The policy gained the political support of the lower segments of the middle class, who were now offered chances for upward social mobility through homeownership (Keyder and Öncü 1993). This new interventionist approach in the housing market paved the way for groups with big capital to enter the housing production sector. It thus brought about the further commodification of urban land and housing in line with the structural adjustment and stabilization programs. Meanwhile, it also increased speculative land development in the city by transferring urban resources to certain interests such as speculators, mafia-like groups and large-scale investors (Kurtuluş 2003). Thus, the state's increased responsiveness to the demands and claims posed by newly emerging actors in the urban land and housing markets characterized its new facilitating approach towards market-driven urban development (Keyder 2005).

Especially after the 1984 municipal elections, the metropolitan municipality of Greater Istanbul engaged in entrepreneurial interventions. Several large-scale business, tourism and services projects were launched throughout the 1980s and 1990s with direct or indirect central and local government intervention to open up fresh spaces for capital accumulation in commercial urban development (see Taşan-Kok 2004, Sönmez 1996, Ekinci 1994 among others). Secondly, tourism-led revitalization projects and interventions in the historical urban cores were aimed at image-building and upgrading to secure Istanbul as a historical and touristic city (Gürler 2003).

The changes in housing policy and the plans for squatter housing redevelopment triggered the transformation of squatter neighborhoods into ‘apartmentalized’ ones (see Erder 1997, Şenyapılı 2004) or into middle class neighborhoods. Some squatter neighborhoods with less privileged locations remained untransformed and subject to further decay (Kurtuluş 2006). Besides these three types of project-led (re)development initiatives, – namely, projects for commercial developments, tourism-led revitalization projects and projects for the transformation of *gecekondu* areas –, which were marked by an active involvement of the state, the transformation of residential landscape of the city was also pursued through large-scale middle-class housing projects, which were promoted by the housing policy and squatter redevelopment plans.

This was accompanied by the simultaneous process of gentrification, which started sporadically in the central historical neighborhoods and in neighborhoods with privileged locations along the Bosphorus coastline (Uzun 2001). Earlier rounds of gentrification in the 1980s and 1990s were initiated by individual gentrifiers. Active involvement of the state was absent in the beginning but began with the insertion of rehabilitation projects for historical sites in the late 1990s. The central and local governments provided crucial yet indirect support through the provision of infrastructure and restoration of public spaces (Şen 2005). Yet, the pace of this gentrification was slow due to the institutional, legal and economic barriers, which brought to a halt the recapitalization of historical neighborhoods. Among these barriers were the weight of the bureaucracy involved in any renovation in highly regulated historical conservation areas (e.g., getting permits from conservation committees), the complicated ownership structure due to abundant informalities in housing market (e.g., squatting) and unknown owners – due to the flight of the minorities and the concentration of marginalized groups such as sex workers and recycling workers.

To recapitulate, let us briefly mention some of the results of this neoliberal restructuring through urban projects. The transformation of Istanbul was highly uneven, piecemeal, and speculative. Gated communities, gentrified neighborhoods, business centers and shopping malls mushroomed alongside poor neighborhoods. Poor neighborhoods with privileged sites turned into middle class neighborhoods, indicating the colonization of privileged sites by the affluent.



**Figure 7.1.** Changes in economic activity profiles of neighborhoods, Istanbul (Güvenç, 2005)

Güvenç's study (2005) reveals the shrinking geography of working-class neighborhoods along the Bosphorus coast line. These turned into white-collar neighborhoods within ten years as a result of the policy initiatives and projects undertaken in this era, as Figure 7.1 shows.

The populist framing of the interventions in urban land and housing markets through granting amnesty in the case of squatter neighborhoods and through providing subsidy on homeownership had secured widespread support for the implementation of policy (Keyder 1999, Keyder and Öncü 1993). However, this populism has been shown by scholars to come to an end, as meeting the market-driven demands posed by the capitalist sector in the urban land and housing market becomes a priority for the local and central governments to realize the recapitalization of the public lands, especially under the conditions of scarcity of urban lands and financial austerity (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001, Keyder 2005). Thus, the commercialization of urban land and housing meant a steady dismantling of chances to appropriate public lands and/or to access *gecekondu* land or

build informally for newcomers after the 1990s. Those affected were mostly the forced migrants, who ended up as renters and lowest-rank informal/marginal workers as they entered into the hierarchy of poverty-in-turns at the lowest ranks (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001, Keyder 2005).

As Kurtuluş clearly states, this neoliberal urbanization experience was marked by the transfer of resources and income from lower to higher class and from the public to the private sector (Kurtuluş 2006). While this line of development increased the urban and environmental risks that the city and city-dwellers are exposed to today, the expansion of the geography of gentrified neighborhoods, gated communities and prestigious business centers still puts pressure on the surrounding, as yet untransformed neighborhoods.

### 7.1.3 Urban transformation projects and state-led gentrification

It was only in the early 2000s that the state fully abolished its populist-clientelist approach to urban policy and embraced a totally neoliberal one, which prioritized the re/capitalization of the built environment (Bartu and Kolluoğlu 2008, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, Sakızlıoğlu 2007). The convergence of several developments – a devastating economic crisis, the accumulated problems of ad hoc and speculative urbanization and the political victory of the liberal-conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP)<sup>57</sup> – created the impetus for a sharp neoliberal shift in the early 2000s.

After becoming a one-party government, the AKP combined the need to address housing problems and urban risks with its economic growth targets to create ‘livable’ cities with competitive advantages. Housing production and urban (re)development emerged as the main growth sectors that the government encouraged so as to ease the crisis situation, to overcome budget deficits, attract domestic and international capital flows through the real estate sector while creating employment and ensuring the competitive restructuring of the city’s spaces and economies. That is to say, competitive urban (re)development became the main ingredient of the government’s urban and housing policies while, in time, real-estate developers and large-scale investors would become the government’s partners to implement these policies.

Urban transformation emerged as the main growth sector that would help ease the crisis situation by attracting capital flows into the real-estate sector. With this strengthened market orientation, the central government launched programs for the transformation of squatter neighborhoods, the creation of touristic cities through renewal in historical inner-city neighborhoods and flagship projects, the recapitalization of the built environment and public lands by means of emblematic projects, etc.

The Justice and Development Party, which ruled both at the central and the local (Istanbul) level in this period, urged the authorities to prepare the legislative and institutional infrastructure for urban transformation at a massive scale. As a part of state rescaling, local governments (both the metropolitan city and district levels) have been empowered in their urban transformation activities. Especially in districts where the

strategic fit between district, metropolitan and central governments existed as AKP ruled at all three levels, urban transformation projects proceeded quickly.

The Directorate of Urban Transformation was established in 2002 under the Istanbul metropolitan municipality. A new autonomous planning and design center, namely the Istanbul Metropolitan Planning Center, was also founded to lead the new urban transformation. Likewise, Kiptaş (Istanbul Public Housing Corporation), which is municipally owned, has been mobilized to take part in the transformation of *gecekondu* areas by producing new housing units for the residents in to-be-transformed areas. This corporation was also involved in urban renewal projects in the historical inner-city neighborhoods.

While local governments have been empowered, a strong centralization tendency was also evident in this phase. As the first manifestation of this centralization tendency, the Mass Housing Administration (MHA) has been activated to transform the *gecekondu* neighborhoods through a new Squatter Transformation Program and Social Housing Program resorting under the central government. Armed with strong public powers to make use of public land stocks for its operations and to intervene in *gecekondu* areas for the sake of its transformation activities, the MHA has played a key role in the transformation of squatter neighborhoods. It has also extended its range of activities by engaging in renewal projects for historical sites in Istanbul. MHA gets involved in income-sharing partnerships with the private construction companies, through which it recapitalizes its land stocks and makes a profit from the production of luxurious housing and villa projects. While such a profit-based engagement is backed mainly by the need to compensate for the losses incurred from participating in housing projects for the lower class, it has important consequences for the distribution of urban land and income among different classes. Addressing housing need through economic revitalization, MHA transferred large amounts of economic resources<sup>58</sup> into the urban re-development sector during the period 2003-2006 to stimulate the sector. This sharp market-driven tendency and strong agency of MHA in the real-estate markets signifies that the state has speeded up its retreat from its populist political stance in urban land markets by putting its more 'valuable' land stocks in the service of the market-driven demands of large developers in the urban land and housing markets.

The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization was established in 2012, as another manifestation of the centralization tendency in this period. The ministry was given very strong powers regarding urban transformation, (re)development rights, expropriation, licensing, strategic planning and housing production. Indeed, by creating this new ministry, the central government announced that it wanted full control over the urban development and transformation.

Simultaneously, the central government enacted a series of laws to reconfigure the legal infrastructure of urban transformation. Among these legislative documents, there are four general urban laws. Two of them, namely the Law of Metropolitan Municipalities

(2004, no. 5216) and the Law of Municipalities (2005, no. 5393), entitle metropolitan municipalities as well as district municipalities to designate project areas and undertake projects for purposes of redevelopment, restoration, preservation and development. These laws were strengthened later on when a new law (2010, no. 5998)<sup>59</sup> enlarged the powers of the metropolitan municipalities to designate 'urban transformation and development sites' in urban sites within their jurisdiction to produce housing, industrial and commercial sites<sup>60</sup>.

As for the other two general urban laws, these were the MHA law (2008, no. 5793) and the law decreeing the establishment of the Ministry for Environment and Urbanization (2012, no. 648). While the former armed the mass housing administration with the powers to regulate the use and the (re)development of public urban lands, the latter centralized the power to regulate urbanization in the hands of a newly established ministry with strong authority regarding urban transformation, (re)development rights, expropriation, licensing, strategic planning and housing production, among other activities.

As for the specialized laws regarding urban transformation, I will mention three of them here. First, the law concerning the Northern Ankara Entrance Urban Regeneration Project (2004, Law no. 5104) was the first legislation to deal specifically with regeneration. It took a piecemeal approach, having been prepared and enacted only for specific areas in Ankara, namely the northern entrance to the city and its surroundings – the Esenboğa airport and its vicinity (Erman 2009).

Secondly, the law on the transformation of disaster-prone areas (no. 6306) that was enacted in 2012 regulates the transformation of areas that are under risk of disaster. It gives the central government, specifically the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, almost unlimited authority to designate parts of the built environment as well as the un-built environment, such as meadows and cultivated areas, which are prone to disaster as transformation areas and implement projects to restructure these areas so they will become free of disaster risk. It overrides all previous legislation that serves the purpose of protecting the natural and cultural environment. The law also limits the right to protest the projects, at least to a large extent. While objection to the designation of such transformation areas is restricted, there is no legal recourse for parties to suspend the execution of the transformation projects.

Thirdly, legislation for the Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (2005, Law no. 5366) was enacted in 2005 to enable the renewal of historical urban sites. I will analyze this new renewal law in detail, since it provides the legal basis for urban renewal in Tarlaşaşı.

#### *Legislative basis for urban renewal at historical urban sites*

Covering the historical sites of the city in its scope, the new law facilitating urban renewal has three aims (Law no. 5366, article1). The first is to conserve real properties of cultural and historical value through revitalization, reconstruction and rehabilitation, especially in

dilapidated areas. The second is to decrease and/or mitigate the natural risks that these real properties bear. And the third is to develop commercial, housing, social and cultural facilities

This law permits the local administrations to designate renewal areas at dilapidated historical sites of the city that lie within their jurisdictions. Once approval has been obtained from the special area conservation committees and the Cabinet, the local administrations can take charge of preparing and implementing the projects and plans to reconstruct and restore these areas.

Under the law, the local administrations can aggregate property rights in the project areas, transfer the property rights to another area, allocate property rights for only one part within a multi-unit building – e.g. a story in a single building –, and expropriate the properties of owners, who do not agree with the terms and conditions of the proposed projects.

Besides, all the property of the Treasury is transferred to the use of local authorities for rehabilitation purposes, according to the law. More public funds from the national budget<sup>61</sup> is allocated for renewal. Likewise, all the expenditures incurred in development process within the project area are exempt from taxes and duties<sup>62</sup>. On the other hand, the law makes exceptions for the local administrations. They are exempt from certain aspects of public law – e.g. the procedures for public bidding. In other words, the local administration can wield all public authority and power but is exempt from the responsibilities and restrictions under public law.

While arming the local governments with strong powers and rights, the law does not clearly frame the public duties and responsibilities to protect the residents' rights to housing and access to decision-making. As the only mechanism for participation, it provides for meetings to be held by the local administration with property owners and/or local residents to inform them about the targets and implementation of the projects. That is to say, property owners – but not necessarily the other tenure groups – can give their opinion on the proposed projects. However, it does not specify any mechanisms or measures to ensure the participation of the property owners or the local residents in each and every phase of the process – such as the designation of the renewal areas, the planning and the implementation phase. In this respect, the law leaves the crucial issue of access of local residents to the decision-making process at the mercy of local governments.

Furthermore, social policy measures such as relocation plans and, rent provisions are not covered at all. Likewise, renters are not considered to be 'rightful' parties to the process of urban renewal, and their rights are not recognized under the law.

As for another issue, the local authorities' right to expropriate the properties in the designated areas is indicative of the strengthened hand of the local administration to intervene in the property ownership structure.

The law also encourages corporate agents by facilitating activities of public-private partnerships in the urban renewal field. Thereby, local municipalities take on a new role

as powerful mediators between the private investors and the property owners concerning the project initiations, property rights, finance and implementation. This paves the way for developers, investors, builders and financial institutions to get involved in the process as early as the planning stage.

The corporate agents, as private partners, will not only be able to enjoy the benefits of the powers of the local administrations to intervene in the urban space through the use of planning rights, expropriations, land-use decisions etc. but will also have easy access to subsidies, tax concessions and other public funds and incentives.

#### *Categorization of the emergent urban transformation projects (UTPs) in Istanbul*

While all of the realignments in the institutional and legal infrastructure were done, there has been an inflation of project proposals and implementations; i.e., numerous landmark projects, urban renewal projects etc. have been devised by different public agencies. There are four main categories of urban transformation projects<sup>63</sup>. The first one covers the transformation projects for squatter neighborhoods and neighborhoods with high levels of earthquake risk. The second type includes the renewal projects for historical sites of the city. The third type consists of flagship prestige projects, mainly for landmark places in the city. Lastly, there are transformation projects for industrial sites.

#### *Main elements of the emerging urban transformation agenda*

The central government aims to competitively reposition Istanbul as a global city by pursuing a visionary and planned redevelopment. For this purpose, public authorities take fully neoliberal measures to restructure the city through urban transformation projects, which are presented as 'the mediated objective' to start a 'civilization sprint' turning the urban crisis condition into an invaluable opportunity (Annual Activity Report of Urban Transformation Directorate 2005).

Project proposals and implementations empower 'heritage' and cultural tourism at key historical sites of the city such as the Historical Peninsula districts, Fatih, Eminönü, Süleymaniye, the Beyoğlu-Galata area, Besiktas and Kadıköy. Yet, this implies the displacement of the local residents. These types of projects have been severely criticized by urban experts<sup>64</sup> on the grounds that they potentially result in commercialization of the local history and culture, privatization of public spaces, damage to the historical heritage and ultimately state-led gentrification and displacement of the poor.

Another aspect of the transformation agenda is that it is blended with strong place marketing efforts to capitalize on urban space, as evident in the introduction of landmark projects – e.g., Galataport, Haydarpaşa – and the organization of international architectural design contests, for which 'world-class' architects compete for prestige projects. This place marketing approach helps to close rent gaps in the city.

It is mostly private firms engaged in UTPs that benefit from the closing of these rent gaps. Furthermore, they receive tax concessions and can make use of strong public

powers such as expropriation, as a guarantee that the implementation would not run into interruptions. On the other hand, there is no universal relocation policy for the displaced residents. No single law regarding urban transformation provides a clear-cut relocation policy for the local authorities to follow when implementing their projects. Lacking a legal guarantee for the rights of the residents living in urban transformation areas, the public authorities and their private partners mostly determine who gets what in the way of provisions. Most of the time (in/formal) renters are not considered rightful parties by the project implementers.

Furthermore, different laws apply to different urban transformation areas and that diversifies the provisions provided for the local residents. As a result of these implementations, local residents become economically and socially worse-off, as they lose their social solidarity networks, have to pay increasing rents and commuting expenses etc. (Kuyucu 2009, Bartu and Kolluoglu 2008) Likewise, the historical centers (such as Tarlabaşı and Sulukule) and neighborhoods with privileged locations (particularly Gulsuyu-Gulensuyu and Sariyer gecekondu areas, with their beautiful Bosphorus views) are reserved for the middle and higher class as well as the tourists. The poor who were living in these areas are relegated to living on the periphery, where low-quality mass housing estates are produced for them. Thus, one can assert that the economic and residential hierarchies in the city are being rewritten through the implementation of the urban transformation project.

The key agents of the housing and real-estate markets have started to put pressure on the government to make further legal realignments that would speed up the process. They can exert such pressure because they constitute the strongest and best organized interest group regarding urban transformation. Under the leadership of the Association of Real Estate Trust Companies (GYODER), several meetings and conferences have been organized emphasizing the inevitability of urban transformation.

Another striking development is that the (moderate Islamic) capital groups<sup>65</sup> that are politically close to the AKP began entering into the sector and/or extending their investments by undertaking large-scale commercial and residential projects around the city (Öktem 2006, Gürek 2008). This can be seen as the infiltration of clientelist relations in neoliberal policy-making for urban renewal. At the same time, the strong coalition between the political and economic elites, as they have the same political orientation, makes the government's urban transformation agenda more cohesive.

Most of these projects have met with contestation and protest by neighborhood residents (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). The formation of a counter-space against the neoliberal urban transformation projects resulted in halting and/or pausing some projects and increased the bargaining power of the residents to some extent. Yet, in most cases, the contestations against state power were quite fragile due to the brutal police violence and the public authorities' tactics to divide the resisting groups. For instance, the authorities resorted to offering more compensation to property owners with a wide social network to

convince them to sell their properties, which induces the ones in their network to sell as well; and constant intimidation by the municipal police and the tax office. Furthermore, the dividing lines of ethnicity and property ownership also functioned as factors that made the mobilizations fragile.

In the 2000s, Istanbul has witnessed the boom of urban transformation projects, which spurred a round of state-led gentrification in the disadvantaged *gecekondu* and inner-city neighborhoods. Yet, these projects have been contested by the emergent grassroots mobilizations in the neighborhoods.

## 7.2 Three waves of gentrification in Istanbul

Istanbul has experienced three waves of gentrification, similar to those discussed by Hackworth and Smith (2001), from the 1980s onward. The first wave started in the early 1980s. The neoliberal restructuring process laid the groundwork for the emergence of highly paid professionals, managers and technicians who were employed in the rising services sectors. They acquired new and distinctive cultural and consumption patterns resembling those of their counterparts around the world. Thus, a pool of potential gentrifiers emerged in the city (cf., İslam 2005). Some members of these groups, together with the cultural elite, became attracted to the idea of living in historical neighborhoods in the inner city or along the Bosphorus coastline. Those locations offered high environmental amenities and easier access to the central business districts. Those groups then played an active role in the gentrification of neighborhoods in those areas: Kuzguncuk, Arnavutköy, Ortaköy (neighborhoods on the Bosphorus coast), Cihangir, Asmalimescit, Galata (in the historical cultural and commercial centers of Beyoğlu-Galata) and the Fener-Balat neighborhoods of the Golden Horn. All these areas had some things in common: all had experienced deterioration and devalorization with the inflow of immigrants following the outflow of non-Muslim minorities over time (for case studies of these processes, see Behar and İslam 2006, Ergun 2003, İnce 2006, İslam 2003, 2005, Keyder 2000, Şen 2005, Uzun 2001). This first wave of gentrification is characterized by the fact that the process started spontaneously on the initiative of individual gentrifiers. However, as stated above, the indirect role of the state and state agencies was significant regarding the creation of conditions for gentrification in these neighborhoods throughout the 1980s till the late 1990s (cf. İslam 2005). National regulations to protect natural and historical assets, in combination with the municipality's tourism and culture-led revitalization interventions in the historical cores and initiatives to revitalize the inner-city centers along with the provision of infrastructural investments played a crucial role in the setting the stage for gentrification. Together, these factors explain the speed and extent of gentrification processes in these neighborhoods. To exemplify the role of the state in gentrification, the pedestrianization of the main axis Istiklal Road – Beyoğlu, as discussed above, fueled gentrification in adjacent neighborhoods, namely in Cihangir, Asmalimescit

and Galata (İnce 2005, İslam 2003, Uzun 2001). Likewise, the tourism-led rehabilitation project for Ortaköy Square that was initiated by the municipality, as discussed above, gave new impetus to the gentrification process in Ortaköy, as commercial gentrification increased after the project (Ergun 2003, İslam 2005).

The state promotion of and direct involvement in gentrification began in the late 1990s with the announcement of an EU-funded urban rehabilitation project for the Fener-Balat district in the Golden Horn. It was implemented by a partnership of the district municipality, namely Fatih Municipality, UNESCO and some private actors. Though aimed at the physical and social rehabilitation of the area, this project was the slow but steady driving force of gentrification in the area (Ergun 2003, İslam 2005). In İslam's words, it "proved an appropriate recipe for gentrification: it acted as a catalyst and helped gentrification occur earlier than it would without any outside interference" (İslam 2005, p.130). Whereas the site-specific physical interventions to revitalize historical centers played a crucial role in the earlier instances of gentrification, the second wave of gentrification in Istanbul started with the urban renewal project in the Fener-Balat district. It was the harbinger of intervention by state agencies and supranational institutions in gentrification.

The third wave started in the 2000s, when the state embraced a radical neoliberal approach to urban (re)development. It is 'radical' in the sense that gentrification is not just promoted or facilitated but aggressively pushed through intense governmental intervention. In the previous rounds, the residents had to deal directly with their landlords; in this new phase, they have to deal directly with state agencies. Istanbul of the 2000s suffered from what Lovering and Türkmen (2011) call the 'bulldozer approach' to urban transformation in the disadvantaged *gecekondu* and inner-city historical neighborhoods that were targeted for gentrification. In neighborhoods such as Sulukule, Tarlabası, Ayazma and Başbüyük many have been displaced and dispossessed of their houses, jobs and social networks (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, Kuyucu 2009, Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014).

### **7.3 Collective strategies against displacement: Grassroots mobilizations against urban transformation projects**

The drastic shift in urban policy that favors the recapitalization of urban space brings to light all the constraints in the political system that trigger and shape the collective action that is undertaken by the people living in these neighborhoods. The decisions on urban transformation projects are taken from the top down, so there is little or no scope for participation by the residents in the decision-making. Their consent is only asked for after all of the decisions have been made, which reveals the power asymmetries involved in decision-making on urban renewal. Nevertheless, before, during and after my fieldwork, grassroots mobilizations against urban transformation have taken place. They were strong, compared to such actions in Amsterdam. It is important to take these mobilizations into

account, as they also engulfed Tarlabaşı and had an impact on how urban renewal took place and was experienced there.

Resistance to this massive round of urban restructuring started in the *gecekondu* and inner-city historical neighborhoods where such transformation projects are carried out. Both the extent and nature of the grassroots mobilizations in each of the neighborhoods are different due to the particular configuration of a neighborhood (notably, its class and ethnic composition, the property ownership structure and its socio-political history) and the strategies of the actors involved in the urban transformation (e.g., tiers of government, the private sector). For instance, the state's reaction to the residents' protests is an important factor in the way the mobilizations are shaped. Most of the protests organized by the residents have been met with state repression, which in turn has shaped their actions. The use of tear gas, water cannon and physical violence by the police has been widespread.

During my fieldwork, activists attempted to bring together grassroots groups from different areas. Their goal – a unified urban movement resisting the urban transformation agenda of the central and local governments – would eventually be realized during the Occupy Gezi mobilizations. But at the time of my fieldwork, the resistance to urban transformation projects was fragmented, as resident groups were mostly involved in grassroots resistance within their own neighborhoods (Türkmen 2011). Internal tensions and divisions were abundant. For instance, it is common to come across claims of 'rightful' or 'deserved' property ownership in historical inner-city areas, as distinguished from the *gecekondu* dwellers' unauthorized 'invasion' of the land. This standpoint is well conveyed by a respondent, Mr. M:

*We are not like 'gecekondu'lu<sup>66</sup>, we did not get our houses free; we earned everything ourselves and bought our houses. We have our title deeds. It is our property (Mr. M, middle-class, property owner, Tarlabaşı).*

Divisions also exist within the grassroots mobilizations. Their initiators are usually property owners, who align themselves around neighborhood organizations. The involvement of other tenure groups in these struggles is often limited, as the property owners prioritize and frame their own campaign around exchange value. Even when such involvement does take place, the interests of the renters and squatters remain of secondary importance and these parties run the risk of marginalization as the struggle goes on. Differences between groups defined by symbolic boundaries or property relations are (re)created and (re)used by the public authorities. The clientelistic and selective offers of allowances that local governments and their private partners make to some but not all of the residents have served to divide and rule the constituencies of the mobilizations. There is no uniform relocation policy that applies to everyone who is faced by the threat of displacement. Even in those cases whereby residents are offered relocation housing, their

needs, purchasing power and expectations are not taken into account. Thus, the 'relocation options' mean 'no options' for most. The public authorities consider only the property owners to be the 'rightful' parties and choose to selectively include them.

Although the obstacles to a strong and unified resistance were largely in place during my fieldwork, a large number of neighborhoods had undertaken collective actions against the urban transformation projects. The mobilizations were partly facilitated by the existence of informal networks in the neighborhoods such as the ones among townsmen, religious networks and ethnic networks; these networks served as enabling factors for collective action. Residents tapped into the political infrastructure of the existing left-wing organizations that are still operating, especially in the *gecekondu* neighborhoods. The latter are known to be seedbeds of working-class movements, and this (residential) grounding of dissent has had an impact on the current mobilizations, though to varying extents. In some instances, using the infrastructure of already existing political groups or parties helped create an effective campaign. In other instances, however, plugging into that ready-made infrastructure only exacerbated the divisions between different groups of residents (Ergin 2006). In addition, relations had developed across neighborhoods between professional and activist groups. These linkages not only added to the tactical repertoires of the neighborhood associations but also helped the mobilizations develop through the recruitment of expertise. Several platforms, experts, NGOs and activist groups participated – though to a different extent – in the grassroots mobilizations of the neighborhood associations. Their participation helped the local resistance to run effective campaigns using the resources of these external groups – e.g., their time, expertise, social and cultural capital (İslam 2009). The role of activists, experts and academics, most with middle-class backgrounds, as brokers is of crucial importance here. These actors can form a bridge between the local interests and the other scales of contention using their invaluable resources. Demonstrations, human blockades against demolitions, judicial battles and soliciting support from supranational organizations (like the United Nations, the European Union or Amnesty International) to challenge state power are among the most commonly deployed tactics in their repertoires of action. In some neighborhoods, with the help of professional organizations and experts, petitions were sent to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and UNESCO to circumvent the authority of the local and central governments. These mobilizations formed an important background to and element of displacement in *Tarlabaşı* as the neighborhood became one of the settings where activists and authorities clashed over urban renewal.

## Summary

This chapter examined the urbanization of Istanbul with respect to the evolution of urban policy and gentrification. By so doing, the chapter sets the historical and political stage for the discussion in the upcoming chapters of not only the case study of state-led

gentrification in Tarlabası but also of how accumulation by dispossession works through urban renewal in Istanbul in the 2000s in general.

As set forth in this chapter, urban policy in Istanbul evolved from the populist clientelist policies before 1980 through the gradual neoliberalization of urban policy during the 1980s and 1990s and eventually came to represent a radical neoliberalization after 2000, which signified Istanbul's uneven development over time. Gentrification, which is part and parcel of this uneven development, was experienced in three waves, as in some other cities (Hackworth and Smith 2001). Yet, the pace of gentrification was rather slow in Istanbul's case – due to limited amount of gentrifiable stock, the complex regulations regarding urban conservation and the limited demand by the middle class – and the role of the state has been strong (İslam 2005). The third wave is marked by the direct involvement of the state in the gentrification of disadvantaged neighborhoods through the urban transformation projects devised for these areas.

The AKP has pursued the urban transformation agenda steadily, thereby causing the displacement and dispossession of many. Yet, instances of state-led gentrification have been met by grassroots mobilizations that challenged the widespread dispossessions. The grassroots mobilizations could not be successful in stopping urban transformation projects. Nonetheless, in some project areas they could delay the implementation, and some groups of residents received better compensation as a result of the negotiations held with the authorities. Party politics also played a role to stop or hinder the implementation, especially before elections by tilting the power imbalances.

To sum up, with the shift in urban policy in the 2000s towards radical neoliberalization, the urban transformation and gentrification of the disadvantaged neighborhoods became the main ingredient of urban policy. That policy brought about the widespread displacement and dispossessions that are contested by the displaced all around the city.

## Chapter 8

# The Neighborhood<sup>67</sup> Setting and Urban Renewal Project in Tarlabası/Istanbul

### 8.1 The setting of Tarlabası

#### 8.1.1 Location: Where is Tarlabası?

Tarlabası is a socio-spatially deprived inner-city neighborhood in the northern part of Beyoğlu, which is the historical, cultural and commercial center of Istanbul. Tarlabası lies on both sides of Tarlabası Boulevard, the main axis of the area.

There are forty-five administrative neighborhoods in Beyoğlu. Tarlabası is not an administrative unit itself but is the name of the area that is consisted of eight neighborhoods in Beyoğlu, all of which are located in the northern side of İstiklal Road. From west to east, these are Sururi, Kamer Hatun, Kalyoncu Kulluğu, Hüseyin Ağa, Bostan, Çukur, Bülbül and Şehit Muhtar.



Figure 8.1. Location of Beyoğlu in Istanbul



**Figure 8.2.** Location of Tarlabası and Tarlabası Renewal Area in Beyoğlu

This study focuses on three of these neighborhoods, namely Bülbül, Çukur, and Şehit Muhtar, as the Tarlabası renewal project area lies within their borders. Bülbül, which is situated in the north of Tarlabası towards Dolapdere Street, hosts a heterogeneous population and is distinguished by its concentration of small-scale manufacturing workshops. Çukur is mainly a residential quarter, with the Beyoğlu Police department on its western border. The quarter has some important landmarks such as the Greek Orthodox Church. The northern part of Şehit Muhtar, which is included in the renewal area, is mainly a residential area with some commercial use along Tarlabası Boulevard.

### 8.1.2 Tarlabaşı in time: A brief history of an 'island of decay in a sea of renewal'<sup>68</sup>

Tarlabaşı was covered with plantations and vineyards throughout the 16th century and 17th century (Akin 1998). Its settlement began in the mid-19th century with the expansion of Pera (the ancient name of Beyoğlu) towards its northern end.

In the context of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the 19th century, which brought about the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent Westernization reforms by the Ottoman governments, Pera together with Galata formed the locus of the Westernization initiatives (Akin 1998). They emerged as the Ottoman Empire's crucial gate to Western politics, economies and culture, thanks to the foreign trade and finance sector as well as the diplomatic relations that had been well established there for centuries.

The high concentration of non-Muslims in Pera and the increased value attached to 'Western' education, art, culture and lifestyle enabled Pera to enjoy its increasing importance as the modern and Western face of the Ottoman Empire all through the 19th century. The social and cultural life in the district was revitalized with the gradual proliferation of foreign (French, Greek, Italian, etc.) institutions like schools and hospitals but also of culture and entertainment venues such as cabarets, patisseries and bookstores.

Due to the increasing population and the demand for housing in Pera throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the settlements expanded gradually towards the northern parts of the district. Tarlabaşı – together with Tepebaşı and Dolapdere – had been affected by this expansion of the old center and gradually developed into a residential area. While Pera served as a residential area for the high class in the second half of the 19th century, as Üsdiken (1998) mentions, Tarlabaşı was hosting middle- and lower-middle-class residents who could not afford the rising rents in Pera. Especially with the revitalization activities following the Pera fire in 1870, residential and commercial expansion in Tarlabaşı accelerated. The neighborhood was characterized by its moderate architectural design and the mixed population consisting of minority groups – Greek, Jewish, Armenian – and Muslim people as well.

After the establishment of the Republic, Beyoğlu lost its initial vitality as the embassies moved to Ankara, the new capital; yet, it kept its mixed population. A series of political events taking place after 1940, however, affected the demographic and socio-spatial structure of the district in general. With the imposition of a wealth tax<sup>69</sup> in 1942, which put a heavy burden on especially the minorities<sup>70</sup>, the demographic characteristics and the property ownership structure in the district changed drastically. Non-Muslim minorities had to sell their property to pay their taxes, which resulted in the decline of the minority population. Following the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, the Jewish population in the district declined. In 1955, the September 6th and 7th revolts against minorities and the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 accelerated the outflow of the Greek population from the area.

As a result, a dramatic change in the population of Beyoğlu and Tarlabaşı was experienced. The outflow of non-Muslim groups was gradually matched by the inflow of migrants from the rural parts of the country, increasingly after the 1960s. Some of the

abandoned properties of the non-Muslims were sold and/or rented to the new migrants. Other buildings were squatted in the absence of social housing and employment programs to accommodate the migrant flows to the city. As revealed in the research by Enlil and Dinçer (2003), from the late 1950s on, especially Tarlabaşı remained a very attractive destination for the migrant population.

The most significant planned intervention that has shaped the socio-spatial characteristics of Tarlabaşı today was the widening of Tarlabaşı Street in 1986. Based on the Beyoğlu Restoration Plan that was initiated by Istanbul's first entrepreneurial mayor, Bedrettin Dalan, a massive amount of demolitions<sup>71</sup> was realized on Tarlabaşı Street, destroying the historical fabric of the neighborhood (Ekinci 1994). This plan laid the groundwork for the revitalization of Beyoğlu by closing the main axis, Istiklal Road, to through traffic and creating a new transportation axis through Tarlabaşı (Bartu 2000). Besides, the operation was intended to upgrade the transportation infrastructure of the city for the establishment of the new CBD – in the Levent/Maslak districts – and to link the traffic route from Tarlabaşı to that new business center.

Despite opposition<sup>72</sup> and legal investigation of the demolitions, the plan was legitimized as a means of “cleansing the area from prostitutes and drug smuggling activities” and was completed in 1987 (Üçok 1987, pp. 78-79; cited in: Bartu 2000, p. 48).

The widening of Tarlabaşı Street in 1986 created a socio-spatial barrier between the impoverished Tarlabaşı and the affluent part of Beyoğlu. Tarlabaşı Boulevard has since then operated as an “urban frontier” (Smith 1996). The municipality's revitalization interventions in the 1990s spurred gentrification in adjacent neighborhoods such as Galata, Asmalımescit and Cihangir. Meanwhile, Tarlabaşı became home to the forced Kurdish migrants escaping armed conflict in the southeast and east of Turkey as well as to groups displaced from adjacent gentrifying neighborhoods. The latter included marginal groups like recyclers and transvestites.

### 8.1.3 Physical characteristics of and infrastructure in the neighborhood

İlhan Berk (1990), a famous poet, described Tarlabaşı as a labyrinth furnished by very narrow streets with a lot of dead ends. Tarlabaşı is characterized by its 19th and 20th century building stock, which has a high historical and architectural value and distinctive Ottoman and Mediterranean architectural features such as courtyards and terraces (Ünlü et al. 2000). The buildings are rather small (between 50 to 100 square meters plot size) and moderately high (average 3 or 4 stories).

Tarlabaşı is home to important registered buildings of historical value such as the Greek Orthodox Church and the Syrian Church. It is included in the Beyoğlu historical conservation area, which was established in 1994. As the result of the conservation policy, new construction and demolition are strictly forbidden in the area, whereas renovation can be done after special permits are granted by the local conservation committee, which is appointed by the central conservation council working under the Ministry of Culture.



**Photo 8.1.** A monumental building on Sakızağacı Street in Tarlabaşı (Photo by Nejla Osseiran)

Most of the buildings are subdivided to make efficient use of the internal space. Especially large and extended families use this method to create more private space for members of the family. Some property owners also do so to rent the subdivided parts to ‘newcomers’, especially to their relatives, acquaintances and townsmen. Likewise, commercial premises such as workshops and manufacturing spaces are extended in this way. Some owners enclose external parts of the building, such as terraces or balconies, to serve as interior space. Illegal construction of additional stories is common, especially on the main axes. In short, the built environment is highly modified by the users in the quest for more space, especially for large families and for the extension of production spaces. This also generates extra income for some, which is a very important consideration. Besides, this subdivision activity is also performed informally by the people who squat empty buildings and rent these places out after subdividing them (interview with muhktars<sup>73</sup>, 2010).

The property ownership structure is complicated. Fragmented ownership and unknown owners are common, especially in areas with a concentration of registered historical buildings – mostly around Tarlabaşı Boulevard. The registered buildings of high historical value are mostly the properties of Non- Muslim minority – Greek and Armenian – foundations. Other than privately owned buildings and minority foundations’ properties, there are also buildings that are publicly owned.

All these complexities make it hard to undertake any renovation for the buildings in the neighborhood. Besides, the high level of physical decay is related to a high vacancy rate; this is complicated by the bureaucratic procedures required to undertake even simple repair work, but also by the residents’ low income levels. In light of informal talks with residents in the neighborhood and information supplied by the neighborhood governors (mukhtars), it can be assumed that the property owners do not undertake major repairs because of the low rental income they get from their properties. Moreover, the renters have difficulty paying their rent regularly because of their precarious employment status, low wages or unemployment.

Tarlabaşı has relatively better physical infrastructure than other disadvantaged neighborhoods. Electricity, water and natural gas connections are available. Yet, these systems are quite old and are often malfunctioning (Yılmaz 2008). While the main arteries such as Tarlabaşı Boulevard and Sakızağacı Street are fairly well maintained, the side streets often lack maintenance, e.g., broken pavements, malfunctioning sewage system. As the streets are very narrow, garbage collection is often problematic. Since there are very few public spaces or open areas in the neighborhood, these narrow streets become the locus of social interaction and entertainment (Yılmaz 2008).

Tarlabaşı is very well connected to the rest of the city and with a lot of transportation facilities in Taksim. Metro and bus lines provide direct transportation to the rest of the city.

As for the social infrastructure, there are four primary schools within a kilometer of the neighborhood, where most of the children who attend school (86.6 percent) go. While the quantity is good, the quality of those schools is less so. The residents try to send their children to schools outside the neighborhood yet still in Beyoğlu to get a better education. In contrast, the medical facilities in Tarlabaşı are good with many hospitals and health care centers located in the Taksim area.

#### 8.1.4 Socio-economic characteristics of the neighborhood<sup>74</sup>

While the estimated population of the entire Tarlabaşı neighborhood is approximately 40,000 people, 2200 of them live in the designated renewal area<sup>75</sup>. According to a recent survey – conducted by a consultancy firm hired by the municipality – of the renewal area, the average household size is 4.17 persons. Whereas single-person households are reported to comprise 16 percent of all households, large families (with 10 or more members) constitute five percent of all households (Kentsel A.S. 2008).

The same survey provides further information about the household structure. Half of all households are nuclear families. While 13 percent of the households are extended families (joint households of two or three families and households with the long-term residence of relatives of one of the spouses), 16 percent are single-person households. Nineteen percent of the households consist of multiple individuals, mostly young single men, who came to the city to work. The dwellings that these single men live in are known as bachelor houses.

Of the 442 households in the renewal area, 417 had migrated to Istanbul. The survey reveals that 54 percent of the households arrived in Istanbul after 1990, whereas the ones who migrated between 1970 and 1990 constitute 19 percent of all households, as the Table 8.1 shows. Only eight percent arrived in Istanbul between 1950 and 1970<sup>76</sup>.

As the survey results<sup>77</sup> presented in Table 8.2. suggest, 40 percent of the households have resided in their current housing for less than five years and only nine percent for more than 20 years. As for the residence duration in Tarlabaşı, 28 percent have lived in the neighborhood for less than five years, whereas 15 percent have lived in Tarlabaşı longer than 20 years.

**Table 8.1.** The percentage of migrants by year of migration (Kentsel A.S. 2008)

Year of Migration	%
After 2000	29.3
1990-2000	24.2
1970-1990	18.9
1950- 1970	7.9
Before 1950	0.2
Unknown	19.4
Total	100

**Table 8.2.** Households' duration of residence in their current housing and in Tarlabası (percentages) (Kentsel A.S. 2008)

Duration of Stay	Current House	Tarlabası
Less than 5 years	40	28
5-10 years	25	24
10-20 years	14	21
20-40 years	8	12
40-60 years	1	2
Above 60 years	0	1
Unknown	12	12
Total	100	100

Of the residents in the Tarlabası renewal area, 52 percent migrated from the East and South East<sup>78</sup> (Kurdish), 15 percent from the Black Sea region, 11 percent from Marmara (Roma) and the rest from Central Anatolia, the Aegean and the Mediterranean regions. As the survey reveals, there are only 47 people of Armenian or Greek origin. There are officially 50 (but in reality more than 150) international migrants from Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, Romania, Bangladesh, etc. in the Tarlabası renewal area (Kentsel A.S. 2008). As for the tenure structure, 75 percent of the households are renters, while 20 percent are owner-occupiers and five percent do not pay rent (Kentsel A.S. 2008).

There is a very strong link between the residence and workplace, which means that people live close to their place of work (Kentsel A.S. 2008). One-third of all local workers live in the renewal project area, which means that they are under threat of losing not only their jobs but also their houses. Another nine percent of the workers live in Tarlabası but not in the renewal area.

As for the owners of small businesses, half of them migrated to Istanbul between 1970 and 1990. Concerning their birthplaces, 35 percent of them were born in East or South East Anatolia; the rest were born in Marmara, Central Anatolia and the Black Sea regions (25, 21 and 17 percent, respectively). Twenty percent of the small business owners live in the Tarlaabaşı renewal area, which means that they are under a double threat of losing both their jobs and their houses. In addition, some residents use their basements to prepare the food that they sell in the streets (e.g., mussels-sellers), whereas others use their workplaces as a place to sleep (e.g., recycling workers stay at their storage space). These people also are under double threat.

Residents of Tarlaabaşı suffer from severe social problems such as extreme poverty, crime, unemployment, child labor and territorial stigmatization. In the following, I will focus on three processes that have shaped the social and economic geography of Tarlaabaşı: migration, poverty and stigmatization.

#### *(Forced) Migration*

Tarlaabaşı has sheltered migrants for years. During the early period of the rural-to-urban chain migration, this inner-city neighborhood served as a settlement for transients, mostly single men and young couples. Due to its central location, affordable rent levels and abandoned housing stock – due to the flight of the non-Muslim residents<sup>9</sup>, Tarlaabaşı has always attracted newcomers. The properties of the non-Muslims were sold or rented to the newly arriving ones, some of whom occupied the abandoned dwellings in the neighborhood. As Table 8.3 shows, the early arrivals were from Central and East Anatolia and the Black Sea and Marmara regions. Specifically, these migrants came from the cities of Sivas, Tunceli, Konya, Kayseri, Erzincan, Kastomonu, Sinop, Rize, Edirne, etc. (interviews with mukhtars, April 2010).

Though migration has always played a significant role in the socio-spatial making of Tarlaabaşı, its characteristics changed with the vast amount of forced migration from the southeastern and eastern parts of the country after the 1980s. Tarlaabaşı has been one of the neighborhoods where forced migrants concentrated. The reasons were the presence of early migrants, who were also Kurdish, the low rent levels, an abandoned building stock and its central location, which offers easy access to informal job opportunities in the city center.

While the reasons for chain migration were mostly economic, the main reason for the forced migration after 1990 was political – the armed conflict between the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and the Turkish army in the southeastern and eastern parts of the country. That conflict forced people, mostly of the Kurdish population, to migrate to urban areas, mostly to big cities like Istanbul, Diyarbakır, Mersin, Adana and Van. Based on the works of Erder (1995, 1996, 1997), Şen (2002), and Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001), forced migration has several characteristics: the migration of entire families; severe impoverishment due to loss of property in the hometown; complete break from the place of origin; traumatic

**Table 8.3.** Tarlabası population with respect to arrival periods and regions of origins (Enlil and Dincer 2003, p.422)

Regions	Arrival Period					Total
	Before 1960	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	after1990	
Central Anatolia	13	33	44	13	15	23
East Anatolia	12	13	6	20	15	14
South East Anatolia		20	13	53	44	32
Black Sea	18	13	18	7	6	13
Marmara	38	13	13	7	12	14
Mediterranean		7	6		2	3
Aegean					6	2
Total	9	17	18	17	39	100

memories due to village evacuations; terror experiences; not being able to use solidarity networks or kinship and family ties to find housing and employment; and so on.

Forced migration started in 1984 and reached its peak in the 1990s. Most of the forced migrants were from the cities of Mardin, Siirt and Batman.

International migration is another process determining the socio-demographic characteristic of the neighborhood. Its international migrants are mostly from Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Iran, Afghanistan, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia. These migrants tend to have informal work and have no rental contracts and most of them lack papers; all in all, these situations frame their marginalized position in society. The single migrants usually rent and share flats that are not in good condition. They often live in crowded flats; not only is it cheaper to do so, but not many landlords rent their flats to international migrants.

In short, the residents of Tarlabası live under dire conditions, which are related to the changing face of poverty in the neighborhood.

### *Poverty*

From the 1950s on, migration and poverty<sup>80</sup> have been two intertwined factors shaping the socio-economic geography of Istanbul as well as Tarlabası. In the absence of a strong welfare state, social solidarity networks based on kinship, family, townsmanship and engagement in informal activities in the housing and labor market have enabled the migrant populations to attach themselves to the city. Yet, the conditions of poverty have changed over time for different groups of migrants (see Erder 1996, 1997; Erman 1998; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001; Rittersberger-Tılıç 1997; Şen 1996; Şenyapılı 2004).

To start with, there is a difference between the conditions of poverty between the early migrants to inner-city historical areas like Tarlabası and their counterparts in gecekondü neighborhoods. Gecekondü migrants gained economic returns from home-

ownership as the *gecekondu* settlements were legalized in the course of time; they were even granted extra development, rights thanks to the amnesties (Şen 1996, Keyder 2005, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). They were socially mobile as they could appropriate ground rents through these amnesties, which eventually helped them to turn their poverty over to the newcomers. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) called this type of poverty among *gecekondu* migrants 'poverty in turn'<sup>81</sup>. However, the migrants living in inner-city historical neighborhoods had little if any chance of upward mobility, as they could not build *gecekondus*. Instead, they settled in empty buildings in historical districts, either as squatters or by paying rent.

Due to the presence of vacant buildings to squat and cheap dwellings to buy or rent, *Tarlabaşı* served as an entrance to the city for these early migrants. This pathway did not offer as much economic return as the amnesties offered to *gecekondu* settlers (Enlil and Dinçer 2003). Yet, the early migrants of *Tarlabaşı* could find ways to derive some extra income from the built environment by subdividing their places and then renting them out to relatives or acquaintances. Among the early migrants, there were some who could strengthen their economic position by getting plugged into informal employment markets and becoming residentially mobile. Among the places these people moved to are the neighboring districts of *Elmadağ*, *Feriköy* and *Kurtuluş* and the *gecekondu*/peripheral neighborhoods of *Bahçelievler* and *Maltepe* (Danış 2005).

Yet, the limited nature of this residential mobility has been shown by some authors. As Enlil and Dinçer (2003) suggest, the early migrants, those who arrived before the 1990s, constituted half of the households in the entire *Tarlabaşı* area. A rather recent figure indicates that 53 percent of the households are latecomers to the city – i.e., they migrated after 1990 (Kentsel A.S. 2008). These figures reveal that *Tarlabaşı* remained a permanent home for the early migrants, whereas it was expected to be a transitory shelter for them. The limited chance of upward social mobility is also evident in Güvenç and Işık's findings. In their unpublished work (1999) based on 1990 census data, they state that the inner-city neighborhoods were home to the poorest groups in the city.

Secondly, the conditions of poverty worsened during 1990s, in a context shaped by the subversive effects that the neoliberal structural adjustment policies have on the urban poor at large and by the strain of forced migration. Due to the specific conditions of forced migration – e.g., the lack of material support to survive, further loss of properties in the villages, lack of preparatory time to find a job and housing, etc. – the post-1990 migrants took their place at the bottom of the hierarchy in the informal labor and housing markets (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). *Tarlabaşı* has hosted growing numbers of forced migrants from 1984 on and has thus become a concentration of 'absolute poverty groups' in the city (Şenyapılı 2004).

The severe impoverishment of the neighborhood can be depicted by presenting a set of data<sup>82</sup> on income, education, employment level and tenure status. All together, the emerging picture can help us understand the conditions of poverty in the neighborhood.

To start with income and employment, more than 60 percent of the households have an income between the poverty line<sup>83</sup> and the hunger line<sup>84</sup>, whereas another 15 percent earns an income below the hunger line. While 11.5 percent of the household heads are unemployed compared to 11.2 in Istanbul, most have low-qualified, insecure jobs that barely pay enough to get by. That is indeed the reason that some household heads have more than one job. Even having multiple jobs does not guarantee that the households will have an income above the poverty line.

The access to formal employment is very restricted, and only one percent of the household heads have a qualified job. While 92 percent of the household heads have unskilled, insecure and poorly paid jobs, only 19 percent of all household heads get health insurance through their work (Kentsel A.S. 2008).

Most of the employed have service-sector jobs (29 percent have jobs such a waiter, cleaner, barman, security personnel). While 22 percent work in the textiles and construction sectors, those with marginal work, such as street workers and recycling workers, constitute a rather large proportion of the employed. As Table 8.4 suggests, four percent of the household heads are transvestites, whereas one percent are housewives (Kentsel A.S. 2008).

Most of the households (around 90 percent) have requested and received poverty papers from the neighborhood governors (mukhtars) (personal interviews with muhktars, April, 2010). Accordingly, many households receive social assistance – in the form of cash, educational aid, food, clothing, coal, etc. – from governmental bodies such as municipalities (Beyoğlu and Greater Metropolitan Municipalities) and city/

**Table 8.4.** Household heads by employment sector (percentages) (Kentsel A.S. 2008)

Employment sector	%
Service-sector workers (barman, cleaner, etc.)	29
Workers (textile workshops, construction sector, etc.)	22
Artisan (shoemaker, carpenter)	2
Self-employed	4
Others (street workers, recycling workers, etc.)	19
Transvestites/sex workers	4
Housewives	1
Qualified work (teacher, engineer, tourist guide)	2
Artist (musician, writer)	1
Retired	5
Unemployed	11
Total	100

district governors. This reflects the high rate of green card<sup>85</sup> holders (90 percent) in the neighborhood (personal interviews with the mukhtars, April, 2010).

Very low educational levels (high illiteracy rates together with a high percentage of people with little or no education) typify the neighborhood. There is also a high drop-out rate among schoolchildren. Child labor appears to be a common strategy for the households to earn some extra income, yet, in long term, it closes the door for social mobility by depriving these children of a proper education (Yılmaz 2008).

Another important factor of the poverty in Tarlabası is that, due to persistent poverty, the social solidarity networks<sup>86</sup> are the main channel for information exchange (about social assistance, cheap rent, etc.). As people have very limited resources themselves, these resources are not often exchanged (Ocak 2002). In this respect, help with finding a job or borrowing money is less likely to happen among the poor, whereas they would show solidarity in sharing information, e.g., about ways to get resources from organizations.

There is, of course, an exchange of essentials like food and clothing among the very poor households and those with relatively more stable incomes/jobs. For example, single mothers with many children and the elderly who live alone are the ones who get support from their neighbors and townsmen. Mrs. N, a Kurdish mother of six children with an imprisoned husband, has very little income. To get by, she feeds her children with the left-over food her neighbor brings from the restaurant where he works. She also gets some support from her family. She talks about how it feels:

*If they help me, I take it with gratitude, if they do not I cannot really ask for it. People also do not have treasure you know, everyone is poor here. (Mrs. N, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)*

Related to the last point, for hardships they would encounter, e.g., when one could not find a job or gets fired from work, in the past the families could rely on the informal support of the family, kin and neighborhood community. Yet, given the level of economic hardship prevailing in neighborhoods such as Tarlabası, it is gradually becoming impossible to turn to these networks for support. To survive, these families have to resort to the labor of their children and women, to more precarious and informal jobs or even to criminal activities, which in long run only increases the likelihood of further impoverishment.

This is a good point to discuss gender issues. For Kurdish women, most of whom have a low level of education, employment is not easily accessible. More importantly, women's employment outside the house is not considered appropriate within the patriarchal family structure of this group. Most of the times, though, women work at home, for instance doing piecework, e.g., in textiles and electronics, and preparing mussels, or they are engaged in income-generating activities such as making and selling handicrafts.

Households with a strongly patriarchal structure that restrict the employment of women outside the house often consider child labor more appropriate.

Another factor that affects poverty in Tarlabası is the increasing pressure on family labor and street work, which are the most common forms of employment. The reasons for this pressure are multiple. First of all, even in Tarlabası, small neighborhood shops (butchers, grocers, etc.) cannot compete with the big supermarket chains that are gradually opening on Tarlabası Boulevard and around the area. Another pressing factor is that street vendors are swept off the streets by more policing or control of the public spaces in Beyoğlu. Mrs. L mentions that the municipal police confiscate everything on her husband's stall twice a week, leaving them with no income on those days. Due to rather stricter policing in public spaces, beggars, and sex workers as well as children selling goods are removed from the street, and that has an impoverishing impact on household income.

It is important to note that the informal labor market in Tarlabası is very closely linked to the informal housing market. For instance, many workplaces on the ground floors of residential buildings are operated by the owners of these buildings or their family members. In the same vein, some residents prepare the street food in their houses, which are mostly informal rentals. It should also be noted that the informal workers working in and close to Tarlabası live in informal housing.

Tarlabası is getting more and more fragmented along class and ethnicity lines. For years, the neighborhood population was heterogeneous; its fragmentation started with the rise of neoliberal policies after 1980 with processes such as the following: the precarization of (informal) labor; the increasing number of marginalized workers (sex workers, paper and metal recyclers, street vendors), increasing pressure on street workers, sex workers and family labor. Other sources of fragmentation are the decreasing capacity of informal activities to prevent and/or cope with poverty and the weakening of social solidarity networks. Moreover, the gradual erosion of place attachment, spatial and ethnic stigmatization from above – in political and journalistic discourses – accompanied by (mostly ethnic) stigmatization from below – which works through the mutual distanciation of residents from the ‘evil other’, who is responsible for the problems in the neighborhood – are other processes that lead to the fragmentation of the population of Tarlabası.

This ‘splintering of the poor’ has repercussions when it comes to the political representation and organization of the poor. As Wacquant (2008) puts it, the poor get “disconnected from traditional instruments of mobilization and representation of constituted groups and, as a consequence, deprived of a *language*, a repertoire of shared images and signs through which to conceive collective destiny...” (p. 245). This “accentuates the objective fragmentation of today’s urban poor” (ibid. p.245-6).

Poverty has always been widespread in Turkey, where it was conceptualized as ‘integrated poverty’ (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). Considering the extreme levels and changing characteristics of poverty in the inner cities, recently some scholars introduced

the concepts of ‘new poverty’ and ‘underclass’ to explain the phenomenon. Differentiating among the urban poor in Turkey, specifically in Istanbul, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) state that the inner-city poor, like those in Tarlaabaşı – in contrast to the poor in the peripheries – have commonalities with the ‘underclass’ in advanced capitalist countries (ibid. p.39). According to these authors, their conditions match the definition of the ‘new poor’, who have been economically, socially and politically excluded and ‘driven out from the system’, ‘exposed to chronic poverty’ and ‘lost their survival chances’ (ibid., pp. 66-73).

In her study on Kurdish forced migrants in Tarlaabaşı, Yılmaz (2008) agrees with this argument in the sense that extreme levels of poverty prevail in the neighborhood. However, the author refuses to see the Tarlaabaşı poor as a ‘hopeless, non-dynamic group’; hence, she refrains from using the term ‘underclass’. She argues that poverty among the Kurdish poor in Tarlaabaşı is still an ‘integrated part of the socio-economic system’ (Yılmaz 2008, p. 9). She emphasizes the survival strategies of the Kurdish poor that prevent them becoming the drop-outs of the system. Among these survival strategies, she mentions residing in Tarlaabaşı, which enables people to spend less on rent and have easy access to informal employment in the city center; secondly, she mentions the mobilization of child labor as one of the ‘income maximizing strategies’ of the Kurdish poor. In addition various expense-minimizing strategies such as the domestic provision of basic needs and the collection of external aid are of great importance for survival. While these mechanisms do enable a household to survive and get integrated into the socio-economic system, the author emphasizes how difficult it is, especially for the forced migrant Kurds, “to be integrated with the same means” in the long run. An unfavorable combination of the deepening poverty under neoliberal policies, which brings about the weakening of the social solidarity bonds and people’s capacity to cope with poverty, and the Kurdish ethnic origin, which is a source of stigmatization and discrimination, makes it possible to argue that “the involuntarily migrant Kurds are the primary candidates to suffer from the exclusionary integrated poverty and become the so-called ‘underclass’ of Turkey, defined in a structural way” (Yılmaz 2008, p. 1).

To conclude, with the changes taking place in the neoliberal era, poverty changes its character and becomes exclusionary for the least privileged in the socio-economic hierarchy, especially for those living in inner-city neighborhoods such as Tarlaabaşı (Yılmaz 2008). Spatial and ethnic stigmatization leaves its mark on the exclusionary nature of the emerging poverty in the neighborhoods.

### *Crime and Territorial Stigmatization*

Crime and sex work are important aspects of social life in Tarlaabaşı. From the 1980s on, Tarlaabaşı has been the ‘backstage’ of Beyoğlu, where all the ‘dirty’ jobs of the glorious entertainment center are done: drug-dealing, burglary, sex work, etc. These activities take place mostly in the main commercial streets, whereas the residential inner streets are known to be safer (Ünlü et al. 2002). As the residents of Tarlaabaşı told me many times,

crime is oriented to outsiders, while Tarlabası people are not affected most of the times. As unemployment and poverty become widespread, illegal activities appear as a way to generate income among the lower classes. As a social worker in Tarlabası argued during our interview, Tarlabası youth, getting ‘squeezed’ between the two drastically different socio-economic and cultural environments of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası, sometimes become involved in illegal activities as “a way to get what they cannot get with their own resources” (interview with a social worker, February, 2006). Due to the push factor of poverty and to the fact that illegal activities are widely present as a “normal part of the life in Tarlabası”, it is easy for the youth to become involved in illegal activities.

Sex work is a highly visible aspect of the night life in Tarlabası streets. There are two factors that explain why the neighborhood is known as a place for sex work. First, the people who were displaced from the nearby gentrified neighborhoods like Cihangir moved to Tarlabası. The central location of the neighborhood, and especially its proximity to Beyoğlu, which is known for its lively night life and entertainment venues, is another attraction factor. Late at night, the avenue hosts sex workers, while the bars and pubs that are known to be specifically for sex work are abundant in the neighborhood.

In itself, the existence of illegal activities and sex work is only part of the reason why the Tarlabası population is subject to socio-spatial stigmatization. This strong stigmatization may be read in the highly visible presence of the armored police vehicle constantly parked in front of the Security Directorate of Beyoğlu, which is located in the Çukur quarter facing Tarlabası Boulevard. The neighborhood is on the police department’s ‘kurtarılmış bölgeler’ (rebel zones) list, which consists of ten neighborhoods in Istanbul with high rates of crime but especially a high concentration of ‘criminals’, according to the police. Being among these stigmatized neighborhoods means there are frequent home searches during the operations to round up drug-dealing gangs, ‘illegal’ international migrants, etc. The effects of these frequent operations and random police raids of the houses, which put a stigma on each and every resident in the neighborhood, are severe. This not only causes unrest among the residents, who are symbolically attributed a criminal status, and has negative psychological effects on the children, but it also decreases the residents’ trust of the security forces and of the state at large.

To flesh out that statement, I will recount an episode that Mrs. SD told me about during our interview. Mrs. SD, a lower-class Kurdish renter whose husband works nights as a taxi driver, was home alone with her kids when the police pounded on her door in the middle of the night shouting, “Open the door.” She got very nervous and afraid, not knowing what to do. She said she did not want to open the door as she was alone and asked them who they were looking for. The police started to force the door and threatened that they would break it open if she did not open it. She opened the door slowly and the police stormed inside, going to different rooms looking for someone. Mrs. SD could do nothing but stand there with her crying baby in her arms. Then the police asked for her identification and wanted to know if she knew the guy in the photo, about whom she had no idea. After

checking her ID number on their ID-machine, the police officer said, “Ok, this is not the place we are looking for” and without saying anything, they left. Mrs. SD said she stood there with her baby in shock, looking at the police officers. Then she came to herself with the cry of one of her kids, who was awake now, thanks to the police officers. This type of home searches, even with no legal basis, is quite common, and the residents get severely intimidated.

Tarlabaşı, as represented in the popular media, has the reputation of being a space of disorder, with all kinds of illegal activities, prostitution and violence. In this regard, Ocak (2002) argues that Tarlabaşı is characterized by its very near location to the old city center in physical terms but also by being very far away in cultural and social terms. Besides, there is a deeper ethnic stigmatization associated with the Kurdish, Roma and African community. While the Kurdish are stigmatized as ‘terrorists’, the Roma are stigmatized as ‘thieves’ and the Africans as ‘drug-dealers’. These stigmas are also reproduced by the residents themselves. As Wacquant puts it:

*The acute sense of social indignity that enshrouds neighborhoods of relegation can be attenuated only by thrusting the stigma onto a faceless, demonized other – the downstairs neighbors, the immigrant family dwelling in an adjacent building, the youths from across the streets ‘who do drugs’ or engage in street ‘hustling’ or yet the residents over on the next block whom one suspects of illegally drawing unemployment or welfare support.”*  
(Wacquant 2008, p. 239-40)

The early migrants, who identify themselves as Turks, recall the Kurdish as being ‘parasites’, ‘lazy’, ‘uncivilized’, ‘mountain dwellers’, who lack the manners of urban life, etc. Some of the Roma residents are fed up and angry with the Kurds, who are in the majority in the neighborhood, referring to them as ‘terrorists’ and ‘betrayers’. Likewise, according to the Kurdish people, African people are not ‘trustworthy’; they deal in drugs and are involved in ‘dark business’. This tendency to mutually distance oneself and one’s group from others further weakens the already weakened collectives in these derelict areas (Wacquant 2008). These stigmas are, of course, negotiated in daily life and are applied selectively, not to all but to some members of certain groups. The tensions among these different groups are contested and managed in everyday life, as people have to live together whether they like it or not.

Yet, this also reflects the lack of place attachment among some, who feel stuck in the neighborhood and want to move to better neighborhoods (Blokland 2003). They also blame the other ethnic groups for the deterioration of the neighborhood; it is always the other’s fault that the neighborhood is going down.

As discussed by Wacquant (2008), such a bad reputation of the neighborhood as a socially and spatially degraded place, infamous for its concentration of crime, violence, prostitution in the popular media and the public eye, imposes an extra symbolic

degradation upon the neighborhood and puts a stigma on its resident population at large. Accompanied by ethnicity-based stigmatization, this symbolic stigma creates the conditions for further impoverishment. Besides, it helps to create cleavages and tensions within the neighborhood, as the different ethnic groups and the old and new residents begin to accuse each other of being responsible for this bad reputation.

Another aspect of the socio-spatial stigmatization of the neighborhood is that, on the one hand, it has been reproduced by the media while announcing the current urban renewal plans of the local government. The headlines and news items such as ‘Tarlabaşı is saved<sup>87</sup>’, ‘Tarlabaşı as the ‘blighted area for pickpockets, glue-sniffers<sup>88</sup>’ strengthened the already existing stigmas. On the other hand, this bad reputation has been adopted and embraced by the local government and used to legitimize urban renewal activities, though at the expense of the interests of some groups (Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014). Tarlabaşı is referred to as ‘gangrene’ (Sezer 2005) and as ‘a poisoned princess<sup>89</sup>’ by the mayor to justify the intervention.

## 8.2 Tarlabaşı as a lived space: Tarlabaşı in residents’ perception

### 8.2.1 Whose neighborhood is Tarlabaşı?

On the official map of Istanbul, Tarlabaşı does not exist, as it is just a collection of eight neighborhoods. In the mental maps of many people living in Istanbul, it does not exist either; it is a no-go area, where all ‘criminal’, ‘unwanted’ activities take place. Yet it is home to the internally displaced Kurdish population, to the Roma community, to transvestites, refugees, recycling workers and non-Muslim minorities, among others.

This diversity in the population/users of the neighborhood does not come without conflicts, problems. Tarlabaşı is divided physically, as one of my respondents set forth, into ‘the front line’ of Tarlabaşı Boulevard and the rest of the neighborhood: ‘Tarlabaşı down

#### **Box. 8.1. Different Tarlabaşı’s: ‘Your time in Tarlabaşı is over. It is already 7...’**

*I interviewed an old shopkeeper in the cooling<sup>90</sup> sector yesterday. While I was passing by his shop after a couple of interviews today, he saw me and looking at his watch ‘You are still here? Your time in Tarlabaşı is over. It is already 7 (pm). Now, go ahead to Taksim square. Come on, be quick!’. I was shocked. When I asked the question why he said so, he replied that Tarlabaşı was different in the evenings and added ‘be quick’. And apparently ‘that something different’ was not for me. But for whom would it be? Whose neighborhood was Tarlabaşı anyway? These questions shaped my further queries in the neighborhood. (From my research diary, August 2008, Tarlabaşı)*

the hill'. It has different faces/users during the daytime and at night: textiles, cooling, shoe- and wig-making workshops, small-scale shops that serve many users during the daytime and accommodate all sorts of 'dirty jobs' at night, which my participants revealed to me in the earlier days of the research, as can be read in Box. 8.1 below. It has different social places and activities for different ethnic groups: a bar and a soccer tournament for African migrants, teahouses for Kurdish men, a hair dresser for transvestites, churches for minorities etc. Though these divisions regarding the use/appropriation of the neighborhood are visible, they are always negotiated; conflicts are resolved and compromises are found to sustain the norms and rituals of living together. The inhabitants' relegation to Tarlabası – due to socio-economic reasons – underlies this approach to living together.

In the following part, based on the interviews conducted and participatory observations made in the neighborhood, I will highlight different Tarlabası, as appropriated by different groups of the residents/users, to answer the question of 'Whose neighborhood is Tarlabası?' in the perception of Tarlabası residents/users. There are many Tarlabası in the perception of different groups, but here I will only discuss the three most commonly referred to: Tarlabası as 1) a 'civilized' non-Muslim minority neighborhood; 2) a Kurdish neighborhood; and then 3) a transvestite neighborhood.

### ***Tarlabası as a 'civilized' non-Muslim minority neighborhood***

Among the early migrants and non-Muslim minorities, there is a longing for the 'civilized' and 'glittering' Tarlabası, the non-Muslim minority neighborhood of the past. Mr. M, who was ten years old when his family migrated to Tarlabası in the 1960s, told about Madam Arus, who gave sewing lessons to his sister. He would go to her house with his sister every time and would enjoy the kindness of the lady, who always gave them candy and talked to them nicely. "We had come from our village," he said. "That kind of attention/kindness we had not seen even from our own parents," he continued, with the admiration in his eyes.

Likewise, Mr. T, an Armenian shopkeeper who was born and raised in Tarlabası, mentioned what a decent neighborhood Tarlabası was. He said it was not possible to go to İstiklal without a bow tie and a suit. Mr. AL was another shopkeeper who came to Tarlabası in the early 1960s with his parents; he talked about his teenage period. He and his friends would be waiting for the girls to get out of the Armenian school for girls. When the girls would come out of the school, the streets would smell of perfume, he said with a smile on his face.

The memories of the glorious past are signified by certain locations that are key to remembering/reconstructing the past: e.g., İstiklal Street and Ermeni Kız Lisesi (Armenian High School for Girls). The common element among the actors constructing these collective memories is their long duration of residence. That is what binds the early migrants and the non-Muslim minorities, who share the same collective memories associated with certain locations and people.



**Photos 8.2.** Tarlabaşı streets before displacement (Photos by Nejla Osseiran)

This collective memory also works to exclude the newcomers and to strengthen internal group dynamics, especially among the early migrants, as that shared history is contrasted with the ‘dirty’, ‘uncivilized’ present of Tarlabaşı, as the following excerpt reveals.

*Here was a place for non-Muslims for years but after 1988, there came a lot of people from Mardin, Siirt due to village evacuations. Thereafter things went bad. As you see in Çukur, they have been living in very small houses with crowded families of 8 people or so and they also feed animals, chickens and sheep in their houses. (Mr. YK, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

In the same vein, some non-Muslim minorities make reference to (forced) rules and norms, for instance, speaking only Turkish in public spaces, which were constructed or imposed by the majority (Turks) in the past. These rules are not obeyed ‘well’ by the newcomers (Kurds). Thus distancing themselves from these newcomers, some non-Muslim minorities strengthen their group identity. In the following conversation, Mr. T, who is an Armenian shopkeeper living for 40 years in Tarlabaşı, outlines the ethnic boundaries between the Armenians and the Kurds.

Mr. T- *As the minorities, we [Armenians] do not have any problems; also we didn't have any in the past. Yet, we are a bit shy in some regards.*

B- *You mean cautious?*

Mr. T- *Yes, we behave cautiously. For instance Kurds sing in the streets freely, they also talk Kurdish. I never understand their language; they talk among their own people. We,*

*for instance, do not talk Armenian in the street. We are careful about that, we are very cautious.* (Mr. T, lower-middle-class, Armenian, renter)

This brings me to the final point to be raised here: that power relations are intrinsic in the way a certain version of the past is repressed and forgotten. Here I refer to the nationalistic hatred of non-Muslims, which burst out in several discriminatory events that have been totally erased from the collective memory of Tarlabası as a non-Muslim minority neighborhood. While Tarlabası is remembered and reproduced as a non-Muslim minority neighborhood, neither the early migrants nor the non-Muslim minorities themselves mentioned anything about the violence directed at the non-Muslim minorities in Tarlabası during the past.

### ***Tarlabası as a Kurdish neighborhood***

From 1984 on, Tarlabası became home to Kurdish forced migrants due to the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army. These very traumatized and displaced migrants made Tarlabası their home and became a majority there in time. The concentration of the Kurdish community is also manifest in the presence of the headquarters of the official Kurdish party, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP).

Many Kurdish residents feel attached to Tarlabası and see it as their village, replacing the one they had lost forever, as expressed by Mrs. SL: “Here is like our village. I cannot go anywhere else.”

Yet some early migrants, especially lower-class Turkish renters, who feel stuck in Tarlabası see Kurds as the colonizers (of the physical and social space) in their neighborhood, as reflected in these two excerpts:

*They always talk Kurdish. I feel like a foreigner in my own country.* (Mrs. AY, lower-class, Turkish, renter, early migrant)

*Look, they wash their carpets just in the middle of the street as if it is their backyard. They even do not pay their water bill.* (Mr. Y, lower-class, Turkish, squatter, early migrant)

Likewise, some of these lower-class Turkish residents view their Kurdish neighbors as competitors for scarce public services, as indicated by Mrs. AY:

*Because of the Kurdish children, my children cannot get a good education. My children don't learn anything till they learn Turkish.* (Mrs. AY, lower-class, Turkish, renter, early migrant)

Some early migrants with relatively higher income level view Kurds as ‘mountain dwellers’. As Mr. D, who is a lower-middle-class property owner, told me, “*Down the hill*

*is full of mountain dwellers.*” Likewise, Mr. A was stigmatizing the Kurds as ‘partisans’, who were the enemies of Turks:

*In the past, it was better, there were non-Muslims: it was ok. Now there are Kurds, they become 5000 people in a minute. They run from here to there for demonstrations. The police come for whatever demo. Pepper sprays, smoke bombs, etc. Kurds would kill us if the Gypsies were not here. They are afraid of Gypsies.* (Mr. A, lower-middle-class, Turkish, renter, early migrant)

While some Turks stigmatize the Kurds, what they are doing is strengthening their group feeling and accusing others of being responsible for the deterioration of the neighborhood. ‘Tarlabası down the hill’ and the headquarters of the BDP are the places and locations that are referred to during this boundary-making process to mark the physical and social boundaries. ‘Tarlabası down the hill’ belongs to the Kurds, and the presence of the headquarters of the Kurdish party is used as a marker for this fact.

#### ***Tarlabası as a transvestite neighborhood***

Tarlabası has become a neighborhood for transvestites<sup>91</sup>, as they were displaced from neighboring gentrifying neighborhoods. As Mrs. O recounts, Tarlabası became a refuge for transvestites:

*I was living in Cihangir before. It became impossible to pay the rent there. Also the events in Ülker sokak<sup>92</sup>... So then I moved here.* (Mrs. O, lower-class, Turkish, renter)

It is often the case that transvestites, who are mostly renters, have established relations with their immediate neighbors, who are mostly shopkeepers. This may sometimes mean that the neighbors protect them, for instance in case of an attack by a client and/or some person who causes problems. Sometimes protection is even given against the police, who make sudden raids on the houses of transvestites. Drinking tea, playing cards, eating lunch, chatting on the street, etc. are activities they often engage in with their immediate neighbors. Yet, the relations do not go this well with some neighboring shopkeepers, who try to keep their distance from the transvestites. It can be asserted that there is a sort of shared consensus about the norms and rules of living together, which means that both parties do not bother each other. While transvestites do not ‘bother’ the customers of neighbors, the neighbors are acting in ways ranging from being protective to being helpful to keeping their distance. This is reflected in what Mr. K was telling about:

*These transvestites are very respectful towards the shopkeepers. They don't bother our clients. There is no problem.* (Mr. K, lower-middle class, Turkish, property owner, shopkeeper)

Transvestites are excluded from certain shops in Tarlabası, as Mr. A describes.

*I do not accept transvestites [dönme's] in my hairdressers'. I have decent clients, they get bothered by them. (Mr. A, lower-middle-class, Turkish, renter, early migrant)*

This is why transvestites have their own hairdressers, tea shops, tailors, wig-makers etc. where they are always welcome. Some residents see them as 'bad examples' for their children and do not approve of their presence in the neighborhood, as Mrs. H indicated in our interview:

*At night, I cannot walk with my daughter, neither with my son. I do not want them to see all this dirt. (Mrs. H, lower-class, Turkish, property owner)*

Despite the support they may get from some of their immediate neighbors, transvestites are not always welcome by all neighborhood residents. Furthermore, they are occasionally exposed to harassment by some neighbors and by the police. Mrs. O mentions that she does not feel safe after midnight, especially in the narrow streets, and adds that "even in daytime, I walk around very carefully. You never know who will do what in this neighborhood. You need to protect your ass from all the trouble around." The transvestites whom I talked to all told me about several cases of police harassment and said that it was a part of their everyday life to deal with police harassing them.

Even though the discrimination and harassment make life rather hard for the transvestite community, they still consider Tarlabası rather safe, affordable and welcoming for themselves. They have achieved a certain level of familiarity, as Blokland would argue (2003), with Tarlabası residents in the neighborhood. In Beyoğlu, Tarlabası is almost their last resort.

To return to the question of whose neighborhood it is, Tarlabası has a very diverse population. It is a Kurdish, non-Muslim minority and transvestite neighborhood, among



**Photo 8.3.** Tarlabası: a Kurdish neighborhood (Photo by Guillaume Poli)

many other attributions. In this respect, it is not easy to answer the question. Tarlabası is recycler's neighborhood, but also a Roma neighborhood. On the one hand, it is a non-minority neighborhood; on the other, as one respondent said, it is a Coni (a general name for African immigrants) neighborhood. Tarlabası is also known as the coolers' neighborhood. Many marginalized groups live and appropriate the neighborhood. Yet, no one is proud that it is their neighborhood, as they mostly are relegated to living in Tarlabası. Besides, the divisive and cohesive factors of ethnicity, class and property ownership are constantly reproduced in the everyday struggle to form a way of living together.

### 8.2.2 Residents' attachment to and satisfaction with their neighborhood and houses/shops before displacement

More than half of the residents interviewed (28 out of 48) felt attached to the neighborhood. They mentioned the presence of their relatives, townsmen and acquaintances, the long duration of their residence in the neighborhood and good relations with the neighbors as the reasons that they feel attached to the neighborhood. On the other hand, some residents felt no attachment. These people were living in Tarlabası because they had to. As Mrs. AY told me,

*If I need to be honest, we don't want to live here. If I had opportunities to move somewhere nicer, I would not live here.* (Mrs. AY, lower-class, Turkish, renter, early migrant)

They do not think it is a nice, safe neighborhood to live in, especially if one has kids. Some others felt attached but only for business purposes, as they do not see Tarlabası as a proper neighborhood to live as a family.

More than half of the respondents were satisfied with the municipal services such as cleaning and garbage collection. The rest complained about the poor standards of the municipal services. Among the things they disliked were the accumulation of garbage in the streets and the poor maintenance of the sewage system and the streets, the poor cleaning service and poor responsiveness to their complaints.

As for the public facilities, almost all respondents were very much satisfied with the public facilities in and around the neighborhood. The hospitals and schools were said to provide good service. Considering that either the respondents themselves or someone in their households had been suffering from a chronic illness, it is very important that there are many hospitals close to the neighborhood that these people could go to. Yet, a few respondents were unhappy about the facilities. They mentioned the poor quality of the schools in Tarlabası, as well as the lack of playgrounds for the children.

The respondents were satisfied with the location of the neighborhood and transportation facilities. Especially very central location of the neighborhood makes it easier for many to find employment, though insecure and low-paid, in the entertainment and service sectors.

As for the residents' satisfaction with their houses/shops, almost half of the respondents (21) are dissatisfied with their houses/shops for reasons such as the small size, old construction, bad maintenance, dampness and the lack of facilities. Some of these residents feel stuck with their houses; they cannot afford anything better elsewhere, as Mrs. N said:

*You have seen the stairs; everything is broken in this house. We repaired the toilet, it also was not working. There are holes in the window frames; it becomes very cold in the winter. It is not a house to live in but we have to. I do not have money, otherwise...* (Mrs. N, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

On the other hand, more than half of the residents (27) stated that they were satisfied with their houses/shops. Some property owners made an extra effort to keep their houses nice and well maintained, about which they are satisfied.

Some of the extended and large families are especially happy to have a relatively big living space. Spacious housing is not easy to get in Tarlabası, as Mrs. FT, who is living with 17 other family members in a dwelling of 110 square meters, was pointing out:

*Our house is one of the largest houses in Tarlabası. We are very crowded; I cannot say the house is big enough for us but compared to other houses in the neighborhood, this is the best we could get ever. We are happy in this sense.* (Mrs. FT, lower-class, Kurdish, property owner)

It is important to note here that the satisfaction of some residents results from the fact that they simply have a roof over their heads. Mrs. EL, a squatter who, along with her family, started to live in a very run-down abandoned house, explained this frankly:

*Thank God, we are not in the streets. The house is small, there is no running water. But we have a roof over our heads. I am fine with this. What would I do with my baby in the streets?* (Mrs. EL, lower-class, Roma, squatter)

Mr. ES is another renter who says that he is satisfied with his house even though there is no separate bathroom or kitchen.

*I have lived in this house for 20 years. There is no bathroom and it is hard to get a shower. I also do not have a separate kitchen but I got used to it. Thank God, I am not homeless.* (Mr. ES, lower class, Kurdish, renter)

These people are relegated to living in inadequate housing in a deprived neighborhood and most are not happy about this. Yet, considering worse cases, such being homeless, they declare satisfaction about their houses.

### 8.2.3 Relations in the neighborhood before displacement

Tarlabaşı may be a 'dangerous', no-go area for some, while others are relegated to living in this deprived neighborhood. Yet, it is the place where all residents establish and embed their relations with their neighbors and acquaintances. When asked about their relations with their neighbors, almost all respondents said these were 'good'. Yet, 'good' had different meanings. What some meant by 'good' relations was that they visited each other or sat on the doorsteps quite often (almost everyday or at least twice a week) to chat or have tea; they exchanged goods or help when needed; looked after the children or the elderly when needed, etc.

*Our relatives, friends, acquaintances, they are all here... If there is something urgent, we go help each other, we are close to each other. You cannot find this in another neighborhood.* (Mrs. MP, lower-class, Kurdish, owner-occupier)

These interactions are crucial to the women in the neighborhood, and they are the ones who usually establish these relations.

*Here my relations with my neighbors are really 'good'. Some of them are also my relatives. If I need something I ask for it from them and the next time they ask it from me. We exchange things, of course if we have them. If the weather is nice, we, all the women sit at the doorsteps and have our tea outside. It is like our living room.* (Mrs. MH, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

On the other hand, what some other respondents meant by good relations was that they occasionally greeted their neighbors and did not have problems with them but did not necessarily have any relations of the sort mentioned above. Mr. MS's remarks about his 'good' relations with his neighbors exemplify this:

*We are good with our neighbors. Our neighbors may be bad or weird but we are good with our neighbors. My sister [addressing me], we do not see certain things, we don't hear certain things. I mean we are good with our neighbors: we have not had any quarrel.* (Mr. MS, lower-class, Turkish, owner-occupier)

Mr. MS, for example, ignores his neighbors who are involved in sex work. If there is a fight etc. in the street, he pretends not to see it. In this way, he and his family have no encounters and thereby no problems with their neighbors, which he calls having 'good relations'.

Furthermore, there is also an unspoken tension between some Kurdish and Turkish neighbors. They usually greet each other but there is no real relationship. Turkish women living in the neighborhood mostly gossip about and stigmatize their Kurdish neighbors as being 'backward', 'illiterate' and 'parasites of the state'. Likewise, some Turkish shopkeepers

say that they keep a distance from their Kurdish neighbors and try not to be too close as they do not trust them. Yet, they have to sustain their relations to some extent as they have businesses in the neighborhood and need their Kurdish customers. Mr. I, who sells meatballs in Tarlabası, was mentioning that he would be ‘careful’ about his conversations with his Kurdish neighbors and keeps his distance from them:

*I greet them but that is it. The rest I keep it to myself.* (Mr. I, lower-class, Turkish, squatter, shopkeeper)

Keeping distance works as a strategy that enables the continuation of exchange (in this case, selling meatballs) and prevents tension.

As for the relations with relatives and townsmen, almost half of the respondents had relatives in the neighborhood, though most of the shopkeepers and some renters did not. However, some shopkeepers were working with close family members in their own shops.

Compared to the relations with neighbors, some respondents stated that their relations with relatives are stronger. They visit more often and ask for/give support to each other. Borrowing and lending money would usually take place between relatives. Provided that the family is within reach in the neighborhood, the family appears to be the first address for the very poor to turn for support, as Mrs. F mentions:

*If we have food for one day, we don't for 10 days. That is how it goes. I am lucky that my family is here. I go to them as they are my family. No matter what happens, I am their daughter. Even though I am married, they would look after my kid and me as long as they are alive. My family is such a good family, very good people. When I have food to eat I stay at my own house, if I do not have anything to eat then I go to them. Thank God.* (Mrs. F, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

Likewise, whenever Mrs. EL, a lower-class Roma squatter, needs something crucial like money, gas or food, she asks for these things from her family but not from the neighbors. Both Mrs. EL and Mrs. F rarely ask for anything from their neighbors, preferring to maintain their dignity and decency even though they may have no food at home. While this is the case for the very poor residents whose families reside in Tarlabası, for the poor residents who do not have relatives in the neighborhood, the relations with and support of their neighbors become very important. There were some respondents who were in such a situation and the support of their neighbors, for instance in the exchange of food, played an important role in their survival. Mr. ES said that:

*Thanks to the neighbors, they bring some food and meat on religious holidays and give some money (zekat) to me, which helps a lot for some months.* (Mr. ES, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

#### 8.2.4 Problems in the neighborhood before the displacement: See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil

Tarlabaşı is a neighborhood where serious problems mark everyday life. Almost every respondent mentioned that there was drug-dealing, pickpocketing and prostitution. Yet, they also mentioned that the groups involved in these activities do not bother the locals. For this reason, more than half of the respondents declared that they have not experienced any problems in the neighborhood. There is an informal agreement among the locals and the groups involved in 'problem' activities that they do not bother each other. That is why the residents of Tarlabaşı adhere to the golden rule: 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil', while the groups involved in extra-legal activities would not trouble the locals. Mr. K.'s remarks illuminate this point:

*You do not know who the thieves are in the neighborhood but we know... Yet, they would not work here, they would not do any harm here. Why? It is for their safety. If there would be an operation in this street, then they would themselves get into trouble. (Mr. K, lower-middle-class, Turkish, owner-occupier, shopkeeper)*

The unspoken rules of living together in the same neighborhood are constantly negotiated and contested and make Tarlabaşı both a 'problem' neighborhood and a neighborhood with no problems.

On the other hand, some respondents asserted that they were uneasy about the thieves or drug-dealers hanging around. Even though they themselves did not experience any problems with these groups, they felt very concerned about their children, saying that they would not want to these thieves drug-dealers to serve as role models. Some families did not even let their children play outside without the company of a family member. Likewise, the presence of these groups in the streets was problematic for the women of the neighborhood. The women could not go out to sit in the streets, as these guys dominate the social space of the neighborhood.

Besides, some of the shopkeepers' customers felt uncomfortable. They were afraid to come to the neighborhood due to the presence of people involved in drug-dealing, pickpocketing, prostitution etc. As one shopkeeper, a wig-maker, said:

*Tarlabaşı is a stigmatized place. There used to be a lot of pickpocketing in this area. Our women customers feel uncomfortable especially after it gets dark. (Mr. G, lower-class, Turkish, renter, shopkeeper)*

The owner of a workshop mentioned that he needs to escort his customers from the main road; otherwise, they would not feel at ease coming into the neighborhood. If the customers are with him, then:

*No one would say or do anything bad as they know they are my customers.* (Mr. K, lower-middle-class, owner-occupier, shopkeeper)

In the same vein, Mr. AA, a renter, told me that his customers feel awkward about coming to the workshop. Next door is one of the centers for sex work in the neighborhood, where transvestites are living and working. He says his customers are worried that someone would see them going in or coming out of this street, as there is the house of transvestites there. But not all shopkeepers think this way; some said their customers got used to coming to the neighborhood and that there is no problem caused by the groups in the neighborhood.

Another problem mentioned by some respondents is that the locals cannot trust the police. On the one hand, the police hold frequent raids in the neighborhood to look for criminals or terrorists. Especially the Kurdish households are tired of these search operations, which take place in the middle of the night, scaring the children and women badly. On the other hand, whenever there is a fight or any conflict between the drug-dealers and other criminal groups, the locals abstain from making a complaint to the police. Mr. TN, a lower-middle-class owner of a workshop, mentioned that he called the police to complain about some guys fighting each other to death. Then the same guys came and threatened him as they had found out that he had complained about them. Mr. TN said that nothing happened afterwards but that he got very frustrated about the police and learned to turn a blind eye to what goes on in the neighborhood. He thinks that the authorities are ignorant and/or take advantage of whatever informal/illegal activity is taking place. He gives the example of transvestites working and living right next door to the police station; the police close their eyes to what is happening there. Likewise, Mr. K, a lower-middle-class property owner, also mentions that police know everything that is happening in the neighborhood

### 8.2.5 Importance of living in Tarlabası

Even though there may be many problems, quite a few of the respondents said it was important for them to stay put in Tarlabası. They gave a variety of reasons such as the following:

**Economic and logistic reasons:** To start with, many respondents buy on credit (*veresiye*) from the local shops and pay the balance whenever they have enough money. This is quite an important practice, enabling their daily survival, as many have irregular and/or very low-paid work. The second reason underlined by respondents is the low rent level. Some immediately mention the increasing rents in other parts of Tarlabası, where the demand for rental houses is rising. If evicted, there are not many alternative places where they could find affordable rents. Some of the property owners do not want to lose their income from rental flats/shops, as it is crucial for their survival. Another economic

factor is that many of the residents use their social networks to find jobs in the informal sector, without which survival would be very difficult.

Many residents work in or very close to Tarlabası. Thus, it is very important for them to live in the neighborhood so as to avoid spending time and money commuting. Some workshop owners suggest that they would not easily find places to relocate, as the manufacturing sector is no longer welcome in the city center. Its decentralization took place from the late 1980s on; the last remaining workshops are now being pushed out of the city center. Shoe-making, textiles and cooling can be counted as part of the manufacturing sector. Mr. AL, who is occupied in metalworking, foresees the end of an era:

*Now they [the municipality] tell the shopkeepers that there will be no manufacturing sector here. I guess 50 percent of workplaces are involved in manufacturing here. That means we are finished. It is time for us to fade away.* (Mr. AL, lower-middle-class, Turkish, owner-occupier, shopkeeper)

It is also important for these workshops to remain in/around Tarlabası as they have connections (with other workshops/businesses) and customers nearby.

Other reasons underlying the desire to stay put in Tarlabası were to be close to public facilities, children's schooling, convenient transportation facilities and the city center, where work opportunities are concentrated. Especially being close to hospitals is very important for some households, who have at least one member suffering from a chronic illness and/or need maternal and child health care.

**Social reasons:** Many respondents explained why it was important for them to live in Tarlabası for social reasons. To start with, having family, townsmen and friends in the neighborhood is very important for many, as that is what makes them feel at home. Mutual support for looking after children or the elderly, help with daily problems such as asking for social assistance, etc. are very common among respondents. As these relations are mostly place-based, it is important for the residents to stay put. Especially for the ones with a very low income, practices such as food sharing constitute important socio-economic reasons to stay in the neighborhood (provided that the neighbors/relatives also stay put).

Among the shopkeepers, there are also solidarity relations. They look after the shops for one another, send over customers and chat with and support each other whenever needed. They are aware that they would not find these relations so easily if they were to relocate, so it is important for them to stay in the neighborhood. A group for whom it is very important to remain in the neighborhood for social reasons is the transvestites, as it would be hard for them to live elsewhere. This does not mean it is easy for them to live in Tarlabası or that they are not exposed to discrimination or harassment there. Nevertheless, in Tarlabası they are 'accepted' as renters and as sex workers. They have a certain 'habitus'

that would be hard to transfer to another neighborhood. Another group for whom remaining in the neighborhood is crucial is the squatters. They want to stay because of the relative ease of finding vacant houses to occupy. This is important for them as they do not have the means to rent a place.

A different social reason was the concentration of Kurdish people in Tarlabası. This is especially important to Kurdish women with little knowledge of Turkish. They can speak Kurdish in Tarlabası with other Kurdish people and thus do not feel alienated in the neighborhood. The fear of losing this sociability looms large among the Kurdish women; without it, they would have to stay inside their houses.

For the social and economic survival of most Tarlabası residents, staying put in the neighborhood is very important. Even though their presence in Tarlabası reflects their relegation to living in this deprived neighborhood, Tarlabası is still the place where they feel most at home, regardless of the problems that abound in the neighborhood.

## Summary

Tarlabası is a deprived historical neighborhood at the very center of Beyoğlu. From the 1960s on, it has been home to the rural-to-urban migrants replacing the non-Muslim minorities who had to leave the country due to discriminatory events. From the 1990s on, forced migration, crime and stigmatization and persistent poverty have been the most marked socio-economic characteristics of the neighborhood. While the residents of Tarlabası have suffered from poverty, unemployment, physical deterioration etc., the adjacent areas have been gradually gentrifying, turning the neighborhood into an 'urban frontier'.

Tarlabası is a Kurdish neighborhood, a transvestite neighborhood, a non-Muslim minority neighborhood, a recyclers' neighborhood, etc; different groups of residents appropriate the neighborhood differently. That does not mean that all of these disadvantaged groups live in harmony; to the contrary, conflicts and problems are always arising. There is an everyday struggle, as the social boundaries between different groups are constantly redrawn along the lines of class, gender and ethnicity.

Even though problems haunt the neighborhood, many of its residents are attached to Tarlabası due to the presence of their social networks, the long duration of residence, etc. Many are dependent on their neighborhood-based social networks for their economic and social survival. Living in Tarlabası is crucial to most of the residents for economic, logistic and social reasons. The ties that bind them are being threatened by the impending urban renewal that will displace these people from the neighborhood.

## Chapter 9

# Displacement Experiences in Tarlabaşı/Istanbul

Tarlabaşı has been surrounded by gentrifying neighborhoods for almost two decades while it has deteriorated due to the neglect of the local municipality and the private owners. Since the neighborhood has been designated as an urban renewal area, the municipality has started a project with its private partner. The residents of Tarlabaşı have been displaced from their houses and neighborhoods due to this urban renewal project.

This chapter investigates the displacement experiences of Tarlabaşı residents. After introducing the urban renewal process in Tarlabaşı, it will discuss the residents' displacement experiences based on three sub-dimensions: 1. residents' experiences of the urban renewal policy and living under the threat of displacement; 2. impacts of displacement; and 3. household and collective strategies to tackle the process and its negative impacts.

### **9.1 Tarlabaşı renewal process: Tarlabaşı as the 'Champs-Élysées of Istanbul'**

In early 2005, the mayor of Beyoğlu announced the initial plans for the renewal of Tarlabaşı. He declared in an interview that Prime Minister Erdoğan strongly supported the transformation of Tarlabaşı; "May you solve the issue of Tarlabaşı" he said to the mayor<sup>93</sup>. The municipality took an active role in the preparation of a new urban renewal law to ease the bureaucratic barriers for the renewal and recapitalization of the area. With cooperation between the local and central governments, the law-making process was quick; a new renewal law for historical areas, known as the 'Tarlabaşı Law'<sup>94</sup>, was enacted the same year. Tarlabaşı was among the six renewal areas in Beyoğlu that were designated in 2006. The same year, it received the approval of the cabinet for the urgent expropriation decision<sup>95</sup>, and in 2007 a tender was made for the design and implementation of the renewal project. A big development firm – the GAP construction company, part of Çalık Holding<sup>96</sup> – won the bid to realize the renewal project covering 278 buildings in nine building blocks.

The owner of Çalık holding is a 'close associate' of Prime Minister Erdoğan, according to the *Economist*<sup>97</sup> and the CEO of Çalık Holding is the son-in-law of the prime minister. These connections underline the strong coalition between the political and economic elite and the decisiveness with which the Tarlabaşı renewal project was implemented.

The project aims at "preventing decay and the creation of a new safer, healthier, livable area that is integrated in the city"<sup>98</sup> with an emphasis on the historical and cultural heritage



**Photos 9.1.** Advertisement boards of Tarlabası Renewal Project (Photos by Yaşar Adanalı)

in Tarlabası. It is planned that hotels, luxurious residences and offices will be built in the renewal area, and these will be designed by nine renowned architects.

Property owners are presented with three options: 1) they can receive the current value of their property<sup>99</sup>; 2) they can receive 42 percent of the current floor space of their properties in the renewed area and an underground parking space; or 3) they can claim the right to buy a house at a MHA mass housing estate, which is in Kayabaşı, 35 kilometers away on the periphery of Istanbul. The renters are provided with fewer options. The formal renters (i.e., those with a formal contract) are offered the right to buy a house at the Kayabaşı mass housing estate. The informal occupants (approximately five percent of the households) and renters with no formal contract (almost 75 percent of the renters, amounting to around 55 percent of all households) are not taken into consideration at all.

#### *Differential treatment of resident groups and their responses*

The municipality and its private partner, the GAP, treated different groups of residents differently. Property owners were considered to be the sole 'rightful' party. Yet, not every property owner was treated the same way.

As the project manager of the development company stated in our interview in a very straightforward manner, there were three groups of property owners. The municipality and the GAP had different approaches towards these different groups of owners during the negotiations. First of all, non-Muslim minority foundations (vakıflar<sup>100</sup>) were given the highest priority as they were already formal entities who were considered to be the founders of the neighborhood; thus, their cultural heritage was to be protected in the area. Three minority foundations in the renewal area were consulted as soon as the project was announced. While two of them immediately wanted to be partners in the project for the renewal of their properties, the negotiations with the Syrian Church Vakıf went on longer. As a result, the GAP altered the plans for two building lots in the project area. Although this was a major alteration to the plans, the company wanted to keep the church in the area.



**Photo 9.2.** Fıçıcı Abdi Street before and after renewal (Photo by Yaşar Adanalı)

Secondly, the owners of the commercial property stock, namely formal small businesses and shopkeepers, were among the ‘desired’ category of property owners to keep in the project area. Even though this category had been neglected in the prior version of the project, which foresaw only residential and office space, their demands to have commercial space in the area were accommodated during the later stages of negotiations. Even though the importance of these small businesses was acknowledged by the municipality and the GAP, some restrictions were imposed on them. For instance, the project did not allow a bakery or a teahouse, but the owners could start a restaurant or a café. By aligning the interests of the commercial owners with the project priorities, the GAP was not only able to break the resistance of these residents but could also determine what is acceptable and what not in the commercial space of the future Tarlabası, thus determining who the new users of Tarlabası would be.

The third group of property owners was the ‘urban poor’, as the project manager of the GAP called them. This was deemed the least important category to keep in the project area. Some ‘improvements’ were made for this owner group, such as the ten square meter addition to their space in the project area or the offer of the right to buy a house at an MHA estate on the urban periphery. However, these improvements did not mean much to the lower-class property owners as they could not afford the extra money they would need to get the new houses or they did not want to move to the periphery.

All in all, the differential treatment of different groups of property owners and a selective accommodation of their claims and needs framed the possibilities and constraints for the different groups in the negotiation process, which left its mark on the process. Besides, the entire negotiation procedure involved a combination of participation in and contestation against the decision-making process. The minority foundations were the most powerful and most desirable of the ‘rightful’ property owners. For example, as Mr. Hs., the administrator in charge, declared, the Syrian Church was looking forward to the renewal. The church needed a garden for the community to come together and they negotiated to get it through the renewal. They did not resist but acted as an interest

group defending their own interests. Commercial owners and other property owners, the so-called 'urban poor', had to contest the negotiation agenda of the municipality as they were not at all content with the terms of the project. Mr. M, one of the founders of the Tarlaşaşı Organization, which resisted the project of the municipality, was complaining about the regressive distribution by the municipality:

If some value is generated here through urban renewal, then *they should first give my share, I am a tradesman here. Why are you making the rich guy richer? Make me rich; let me go up to a higher class* (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)

As for the renters, the formal renters were offered the right to buy a house in a mass housing estate on the periphery of the city. The municipality did not uniformly let all the formal renters know about this right. A renter whose landlord had already agreed with the municipality was then given the option to buy, but the rest of the renters were not offered this right. Some of the formal renters who signed the eviction papers when their landlords sold their properties did not have to pay rent from that date on. Thus not paying rent was offered as an allowance to formal renters. Some renters were provided with moving vans. The municipality used these compensations and provisions selectively to proceed with the implementation of the project. Some of the informal renters could get some compensation. For instance, the municipality arranged for moving vans and provided a lump sum amount to cover the moving expenses.

Mr. ES was a lower-class, informal renter who was unable to work. When he went to the municipality to ask for support, showing his disability papers, the municipality provided him with a moving van and a rent compensation of 1000 TL. Not every renter could count on such support, though. Mrs. AT, a lower-class, formal renter went to the office of the municipality many times to get the promised moving van but it never worked out. In the end she gave up and moved her belongings without the help of the municipality.

Differential treatment of the residents not only helped to keep the power imbalances intact but also had effects on how the residents experienced the process, which will be investigated in the following section.

## **9.2 Residents' experiences with the urban renewal policy and living under the threat of displacement**

To understand the residents' experiences with the urban renewal policy, I asked them for their opinions on several matters: the municipal discourse regarding the necessity/urgency of urban renewal in Tarlaşaşı; whether and why they supported or rejected the project; who they thought would benefit or lose; their experiences with the information provided by the municipality; and the participation possibilities during the process. I also asked about their experience of living under the threat of displacement, in other words, about the

pressures of displacement. The latter issue will be covered in the subsequent discussions: on 1) how residents experienced the changes in their neighborhood; on 2) appropriation strategies of the municipality and landlords; and on 3) worries regarding displacement.

### 9.2.1 Residents' opinions about municipal discourse regarding urban renewal in Tarlabası

*It is true, there are dilapidated buildings but who is responsible for that? The municipality does not allow people even to drive nails in the walls of the buildings. Besides, there are a lot of nasty things happening: prostitution, drugs, theft... But who allows those to happen? The police... Tarlabası shopkeepers or renters cannot do anything about it. (Mr. C, lower-middle-class, Turkish, renter)*

The municipality calls Tarlabası a 'çöküntü bölgesi' (blighted area). When asked to give their opinions regarding this municipal discourse, many (30) respondents agreed that Tarlabası can be called a blighted area. Yet most of these respondents also thought that the municipality and public authorities at large were responsible for the deterioration of Tarlabası for the following reasons: 1) there is heavy bureaucracy to contend with in order to undertake any maintenance in the area; 2) the state has improperly managed the abandonment of the buildings and informal occupations taking place in the neighborhood; and 3) the police overlook some criminal groups in the neighborhood. Residents of Tarlabası have suffered from many problems. People find it unjust that the conditions they have endured, such as bad maintenance and crime, are being used to stigmatize their neighborhood and its residents, who are put under the threat of displacement.

Other respondents (18) totally disagree that it is a blighted area. Mr. RT, who works at his own cooling (soğutma) workshop with his brother, asserts that Tarlabası is nothing but a neighborhood where people earn their daily bread and live their lives. Likewise, Mrs. S., a lower-class Kurdish renter, gets very emotional about this question of Tarlabası being called a blighted area. She says there may be some problems in the neighborhood, but they should not call it a 'bad place'; it is 'a nest for the poor' and people live and work here.

Many respondents think that it stigmatizes the neighborhood if the municipality calls it a blighted area. Some even get very angry about this, as Mr. M puts it:

*What have they [the municipality and the police] done here? They say it is blighted. They are responsible for that and they also formed the public opinion in the same line. 'Tarlabası? That is a very disgusting place' people think. We are treated as second rank citizens. Whenever a bus is passing on the Tarlabası Boulevard and people in the bus are looking here as if they are looking at a Bogeyman (öcü). I get ashamed and go inside my shop immediately. I do not deserve this at all. (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

Not everyone agrees with Mr. M, though. There are a few respondents who think that the municipality cannot really stigmatize the neighborhood even if it uses a discourse of urban blight. These residents are fed up with the neighborhood and the people living there. They have wanted to move out for a long time but cannot afford to do so. Mr. Y. is one of them; he is a recycling worker who dislikes living in Tarlaşa. His remarks make the point:

*The municipality is right, here is decay; people living here are microbes. They are living just for the hell of it. They have no jobs, no social security, no other opportunities. They are villagers who are illiterate and came and bought properties here. Everywhere is full of Kurds; of course it is a blighted area. A nest for jerks!* (Mr. Y, lower-class, Turkish, squatter)

### 9.2.2 Motivations behind dis/approval of the project

Most respondents were not opposed to a *renewal operation*; to the contrary, many of them declared that there was an urgent need for renewal in the neighborhood because of the bad state of the housing as well as the concentration of crime. Yet most are against *the way the municipality is conducting the renewal operation*. The property owners' motivations for disagreeing with the project are twofold. One set of motivations relates to the exchange value of their properties. More than half of the property owners demand more monetary compensation for their properties and would not mind if the project were implemented, provided they are given a satisfactory share. Mr. M argues his point well:

*If they generate some value here after renewal, then they have to share it with the people of Tarlaşa, they have to share it with us. I had to put up with this neighborhood for 40 years. That is my right, anyways.* (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)

These respondents are all early migrants, having migrated before the 1980s, and of the lower middle class except for one respondent of the lower class. Most have more than one property. As early migrants, they are very much grounded in the neighborhood but are nevertheless not dependent on their social networks and ties.

On the other hand, slightly less than half of the property owners are opposed to the renewal project because of the assessed use value of their properties and their attachment to the neighborhood. They have strong social ties and networks in the neighborhood and are dependent on these. They have close family members, relatives and townsmen in the neighborhood and their presence plays an important role in their social and economic survival. For some it is very important to remain close to public facilities (especially to hospitals for households with chronically ill members). It is also very important for these respondents to keep in close proximity to their work, which they do in their current housing. As for the characteristics of the respondents in this group, all but two are lower-

class, Kurdish migrants living in and working in/close to the neighborhood. Besides, they all have only one property that they live in.

The motivations of the renters and squatters for rejecting the project also fall into one of two categories: economic/logistical and social. One set of motivations relates to the economic benefits associated with their current dwelling and location, such as affordable rent, no commuting expenses and less commuting time. For lower-class households, it is not at all possible to move to other neighborhoods, as they cannot afford the higher rent levels. Tarlabası is one of the last places in the city center where these deprived people can find houses to live in at relatively affordable rents or even for free. Mrs. F, a renter with a very low income, puts it bluntly:

*It will be a very busy place with everything in. Would people like me be able to stay in Tarlabası? They will not be, right? Will a Gypsy be able to stay in Tarlabası? No, s/he cannot... No way, there will be no Tarlabası then... That is why we don't want [the project]. I wish Tarlabası would stay like this.* (Mrs. F, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

Moreover, most households do have at least one person working in or very close to the neighborhood. Losing the proximity to the workplace would affect their economic survival; it would mean extra travel costs or the loss of their job or access to services like hospitals and schools. Some also cite the economic and social importance of their ties in the neighborhood as their motivation to oppose the project.

Yet, some respondents do show strong support for the project. They support it because they are fed up with the concentration of problems and/or certain people in Tarlabası. A few of them are ardent Turkish nationalists and do not want to live with Kurdish people anymore. They support the plans to build luxurious housing and hotels as they think that all the 'dirt' would then be cleansed from the neighborhood when the Kurdish would need to leave, even though that might mean their own displacement as well. The rest complain about the concentration of drug-dealing, drug use, theft and prostitution in the neighborhood. Mrs. AY, who is a lower class, Turkish renter, for example, thinks that all Kurds would be cleansed from Tarlabası as a result of the project and that she will move out of the neighborhood. That is why she strongly supports the project.

### 9.2.3 Residents' opinions about who will benefit from the project

*Of course, I would like to stay put in the neighborhood after the renewal, but I cannot...* (Mr. C, lower-middle-class, Turkish, renter)

Most respondents said they want to return to their neighborhood after the renewal<sup>101</sup>. Yet most of them were quite aware that this would not be possible, as it would not be a suitable place for their social and economic status. The majority thought that it would be a

forced move for them if they did move out of the neighborhood due to this project. Only a few thought it would be a chance for them to move to a better house and/or neighborhood. The respondents in the latter group had been planning to move out of the neighborhood for years but could not afford it, thus felt stuck there. They are renters and squatters with a low income, and they also support the renewal project.

Many respondents are quite dissatisfied with the municipality. Some of them describe the project as a tool for the municipality to seize private property in the renewal area. Expropriation works as a powerful tool in municipality's hands. It is what makes this seizure happen and allows the municipality, together with its private partner (GAP) to benefit from it. For these respondents, the municipality is simply involved in 'theft', 'robbery', 'pickpocketing' and working like 'an official land mafia'. Mr. YK speaks his mind on this issue:

*This is theft; it is not for the public good. They are doing this project to make benefits available for their own supporters. They are not giving people the value of their properties so that we go buy a new house or relocate in the neighborhood. This project is not fair.*  
(Mr. YK, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)

Almost all respondents agree that the project does not serve the public good but rather the private interests of the construction company. Mrs. H summarizes the political economy of the renewal operation:

*... they will make the rich 10 times richer while making the poor ten times poorer? That is unconceivable...* (Mrs. H, lower-class, Turkish, property owner)

Most of the respondents do not think that the project would benefit the people living and working in Tarlabası.

#### 9.2.4 Satisfaction with information, provisions and resident participation during the process

Most respondents thought that they had not been well informed about the process and they were not satisfied about that. The property owners were informed about the pending renewal during the residents' meetings. However, the information provided was too general and did not specify the how, when and what of the plans. While informal renters were not informed at all, the formal ones got information if their landlords had made agreements with the municipality.

Almost all respondents were dissatisfied with the provisions offered. There were only a few renters who were satisfied with the chance to buy a house on an MHA estate. These renters had already wanted to move out of the neighborhood but could not afford to do so before. They thought the project offered a chance for the renters (with official contracts)

to move to a better neighborhood and become homeowners paying long-term installments to MHA. There was only one property owner who was satisfied with the house he could get in an adjacent neighborhood with the monetary compensation he received. The other respondents were not satisfied with the provisions. Many were offered very small places in the renewed area; to get bigger places they had to pay an excessive amount to the firm, which most could not afford. For the large households who are owner-occupiers, the project did not offer enough monetary compensation to buy houses that are big enough for them.

For the shopkeepers, initially no commercial space was offered, but that changed thanks to the negotiations between the municipality and the Tarlabası Organization, acting as the legal representative of the property owners who resisted the project. Yet, the commercial places the municipality finally offered were rather small. Moreover, they did not allow just any commercial shop; only certain ones could be reopened. For instance, the government did not allow betting shops, workshops, internet cafes or bakeries to reopen in the renewed area, but it did allow clothing (boutique) shops, cafes, restaurants, etc. Some owner-occupiers were using the basements and ground floors of their buildings as shops and workshops, and they were not offered any commercial space in the renewed area.

Many respondents stated that the municipality imposes the renewal project upon the residents. They emphasized that there was no real participation in the renewal process as the decisions were already made in advance. All the meetings and individual talks were just 'window-dressing' as government officials allegedly did not take into consideration the needs and demands of the property owners and didn't alter the terms of the project accordingly. Mr. M, a property owner, talks about this imposition:

*They made the tender without asking us. They had told us that they would invite us for individual talks later on but they made a tender for our properties without even asking us. They sold our properties without letting us know and now they are blaming me for not compromising. The municipality is saying that whatever they say is the rule and they don't accept any other thing. (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

In line with this remark, many respondents thought that the property owners had no influence on the renewal project, although some thought they did. By influence, they meant that the property owners could negotiate for some improvement with respect to the conditions of the project (e.g., bigger places in the renewal area, exchange a parking space for more square meters, etc.). As for the influence of the renters, all respondents thought that the renters were not taken into consideration and had no influence on the renewal plans.

Property owners entered into collective negotiations with the municipality and the GAP. No consensus or agreement was reached, however, so from then on each owner had to deal with the municipality and the GAP individually. The property owners were not satisfied with their options for participation as there was no margin for negotiation.

While the owner-occupiers could at least sit at the negotiating table, the renters without official contracts and the squatters were not considered ‘rightful’ parties and thus not eligible for any provision. The official renters whose landlords had not agreed with the municipality and were involved in expropriation court cases were also excluded from the right to buy a house from the mass housing estate of the MHA. Indeed, for many, getting MHA housing was not really an option. They could not afford to make the installments due to their irregular and/or low income. Moreover, they would lose their jobs and social networks if they were to move to the periphery of Istanbul. Just like the MHA offer, the other provisions available to renters were not uniform; not all of the renters were offered relocation allowance, nor were they all offered moving vans. These renters had formal rental contracts, which was not a common arrangement in Tarlabaşı. Furthermore, they were all early migrants whose landlords had sold their properties rather quickly for the project.

Informal renters and squatters, who constitute together approximately 60 percent of the residents, were not offered any relocation housing. They only met with the public authorities when there was a hard-hitting notice of eviction or a warning that it would come soon.

### 9.2.5 Residents’ experiences of living under the threat of displacement

*They killed the neighborhood. There’s no one but thieves and drug dealers. How can a family live here? There are only two families left in the entire street: Brother Basri’s family, our upstairs neighbors, and us. I would not be able to leave my wife alone and go to work if the upstairs neighbors would still not be there. The building next door was always home to thieves but at least we knew them and they would not do anything to us. Now there are some men gathering at nights and making fires. I’m afraid that they’ll set the house on fire at some point. Above all, they are bad examples for our kids. We do not know what to do anymore. I want to find a nice, clean place and move out of here. It is not yet final but it seems we will get 30 lira more for the house thanks to the expropriation court. It is not enough to get a house around here: we have all our acquaintances and family here, the kids are going to school here and I make and sell mussels here. We have to stay put around here but we can’t afford that. (Mr. AZ, lower-class, Kurdish, owner-occupier, street-seller)*

Mr. AZ, a Kurdish mussel seller who has lived in Tarlabaşı for 20 years, was among the last residents to be displaced from the renewal area in Tarlabaşı. He had lived with his family under the threat of displacement for six years after the local municipality announced the Tarlabaşı renewal project. The story of Mr. AZ and many others who have lived under the threat of displacement highlights a gap in the literature. Little attention has been given to the process of change in restructuring neighborhoods and how residents

live under the threat of displacement, especially in contexts where informal and precarious living situations are the norm. I will present some of these experiences in this section.

Tarlabaşı had suffered from disinvestment and thus dilapidation for years, which helped to produce a huge rent gap in the area. As can be argued based on the rent gap theory of Smith (1996), this type of disinvestment is followed by reinvestment, which is brought in by the renewal project. The announcement of the renewal project led to skyrocketing prices for land and housing around the renewal area as the developers competed to invest in Tarlabaşı. Slowly but steadily, the rent gap started to close. Besides, the growing demand for rental houses and dwellings for sale by the to-be-displaced contributed to the rise in rents and housing prices in adjacent parts of Tarlabaşı, which made it difficult for many to move within Tarlabaşı. Their objective position in the housing market thus worsened considerably as they were locked into an area where prices were still low. They knew, however, that they would eventually be displaced. During the period leading up to that moment, they saw their neighborhood change as well.

*Residents' experiences regarding the changes in Tarlabaşı:* For all residents, the pressure of displacement became palpable as the pace of the renewal accelerated. As some people moved out, the ones who stayed behind felt less at home as they saw their neighbors moving out and felt the sense of community gradually eroding. In addition, as the number of vacant houses increased, they did not feel as safe in the streets. The vacant buildings got occupied by groups from outside the neighborhood, either by people involved in drug dealing/use or by homeless people.



**Photos 9.3.** First demolitions in Tarlabaşı (Photos by Nejla Osseiran)

Above all, uncertainty about what would happen caused anxiety among the residents and drastically changed the atmosphere in Tarlabası. Besides, awaiting renewal, the landlords did not invest in the maintenance of their buildings. As a result, Tarlabası deteriorated further and people felt less at home in their houses and neighborhoods.

The threat of displacement was heightened when the municipality started the demolitions. As the shadow of the bulldozers fell over their streets and houses, it became clear to the people who were still living in the neighborhood that they would have to move out soon. Witnessing the demolition in his street, Mr. E, a low-income renter on state benefits who lives with his mentally handicapped son, expressed the pressure he felt when the bulldozers arrived in his street:

*There are quite some property owners, whose court cases are going on. If not this year, all will be demolished next year. Everyone is scared, you get it? The ones living adjacent to the houses they demolished yesterday, they also received an eviction notice. They are also looking for a house. Sooner or later it will be my turn. In the end they will bulldoze everything.* (Mr. E, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

Besides triggering fear, the demolitions sparked conflicts between the demolition workers and the opposing residents, as discussed below in Box 9.1. Moreover, demolitions brought about nuisance, such as dirt, noise and trembling of adjacent buildings.

The local shopkeepers were affected by the evictions, which caused a gradual decrease in their volume of business. Especially the small shops such as grocers and bakeries suffered from the gradual decline in the neighborhood population. As these shops closed down, the remaining residents had to go elsewhere to get their supplies, which made daily life even harder.

***Appropriation strategies of the municipality and landlords:*** Residents were exposed to multiple harassments and threats before their actual displacement. In the following, I discuss how different tenure groups experienced the threats and harassment by the municipality and private landlords. Then I discuss how the municipality used its power over information and time to put pressure all of the residents, specifically by creating uncertainty and the conditions leading to anxious waiting.

*Pressured to move out-* The standard procedure for *formal renters* was that they would be expected to sign an eviction agreement as soon as their landlord made a deal with the municipality. Once they had signed the agreement, they would not have to pay rent anymore. This procedure provided flexibility to the municipality and its private partner. Indeed, the municipality wanted to keep the tenants in the dwellings, especially in the registered buildings. The plan was to evacuate the buildings in the renewal area in a single operation just before the renewal would start so that there would not be any further occupation after the tenants had actually been evicted.

**Box. 9.1. Demolition day**

August 26, 2009- Today there were bulldozers in Tarlabası. In the morning, the workers faced the contestation of some Tarlabası residents. Four, five residents were seriously arguing with the workers who came to demolish a building which was sold to the municipality for the project.

A: Do you have permission papers?

B: You cannot demolish the building without damaging that one.

Two others got really angry with the workers:

C: You are the puppets of the municipality; let the decision-makers come here and demolish the building themselves. We will not watch our neighborhood being demolished in front of our eyes.

D: Don't you see this old guy was almost going to have a heart attack just because of the first hit of the bulldozer in the building?

On the street, there was only one safety line that the workers had set up at the beginning of the street, but this did not stop curious kids and other neighborhood people from getting so close to the bulldozer, ignoring the safety line. On the balconies of the buildings next door there were kids standing and watching the event. Two elderly people, the residents of the building next door, were at their window looking down anxiously at the bulldozers. As the bulldozer hit the building to be demolished, their building also trembled.

The workers said they were just doing their job and the crowd got more and more angry. One Kurdish resident mediated and said something in Kurdish to the chief of the workers. Then he switched to Turkish and continued.

F: We have nothing to do with you. We are not angry with you. I am also a worker; we are on the same front. But maybe you can stop demolishing now. This is our neighborhood.

The chief worker agreed to stop and called the municipality to inform the authorities that they cannot do their work as the residents protest and want to see their permission.

Then the workers went back but the bulldozer stayed there. After some time, an engineer and a chief municipal police came to check on what was happening. The engineer checked if there was enough precaution. Despite a small amount of tension between the residents and the engineer, the engineer shouted to the workers to take more precautions before they started working, i.e., to clear the streets in advance. Then he added that it was enough for today. As the bulldozer went out of the street, the crowd cheered. Some journalists were already shooting videos of the children in the debris who were posing for the cameras. (From Field Notes- Tarlabası/Istanbul)

Applying pressure could take various forms. For instance, if the renters would not sign the eviction papers, the GAP, as the new landlord, would send them notices informing them of a double or triple increase in their rents. If the renters would not pay these amounts, they would face the threat of a court case to evict them. Even though there are legal procedures to object to this rent increase, and because it takes a long time to start the eviction procedures, the renters of Tarlabası, most of whom had a low level of education, did not know their rights and duties as renters and became victims of this extra-legal intimidation by the GAP. Thus, they had the choice between staying for free till the actual eviction or engaging in a presumably losing legal battle against the powerful landlord. Mrs. SD was one of the renters whose landlords had sold their properties for the project and who were asked by the GAP to pay three times as much rent unless they signed the eviction papers, as recounted in Box. 9.2. Likewise, Mr. G, a hairdresser in his rented shop, signed the eviction papers because he would not be able to pay the higher rent (to be raised from 300 TL to 1400 TL a month).

Furthermore, the renters who signed these eviction papers and could not get an extension after the eviction due date were threatened with having to pay the increased rents for the duration of the time they had stayed without paying any rent, which amounted to sums that these renters would never be able to pay.

One-third of the in/formal renters also were under pressure from their old landlords who had sold their properties to the GAP and yet continued asking rent from the renters. Once it had been discovered that they were unnecessarily paying rents to their landlords who were not the legal owners anymore, some renters had serious fights with their old landlords. As Mr. X, a lower-class Kurdish renter who works as a construction worker, complained:

*I did have a fight with my landlord. He had sold his house and still wrongly asked for rent from me. Instead of giving him that rent, I found a place and moved out but it did put me in an economically difficult position. (Mr. X, lower class, Kurdish, renter)*

Just like the renters, the property owners faced a range of threats and harassments. The municipality's right to expropriate properties of the owners who don't agree with the terms of the project was the greatest threat to the property owners. Besides exercising the legal rights, the municipality exercised some extra-legal measures to pressure the owners. For instance, the owners were offered the chance to sell their houses at market value, as set by an independent company. If the parties could not agree on this assessed value, then the civil court of general jurisdiction would be in charge of determining the expropriation value of the house after the municipality started the expropriation procedure. The property owners who did not agree to sell their houses to the municipality were threatened that the civil court would set the expropriation values much lower than the value that the

### **Box 9.2. Pressures on renters: Mrs. SD's case**

June 2, 2010 – Mrs. SD, Mrs. LY and Mrs. NR are neighbors in the same apartment building. These three women are low-income Kurdish (formal) renters of the same landlord. After their landlord sold the building they were invited to the municipality to sign eviction papers. Mrs. LY and Mrs. NR signed these papers the municipality put in front of them without actually reading what was on them, while Mrs. SD did not sign. The GAP first sent a letter to inform her about the new rent, which was set at 900 lira, three times the rent she was paying. Then an eviction court case was started by the new owner. While I was interviewing Mrs. NR, Mrs. LY and Mrs. SD came down to sit with us. As she entered the room, Mrs. SD, seething, asked me what would happen if they don't sign the paper, if it was better if they don't sign it. 'We are ready to leave whenever they demolish it but I will not sign anything...' she said. She was full of complaints and questions.

June 26, 2010 – When I went to visit her today, Mrs. SD was feeling bad. She told me that they went to the Turkish Bar Association to get juridical support for her case but they told her to move out as there was not much to do about it. And when she came back, the officers serving the eviction notice arrived, giving her some papers and telling her that next time they came, they would enforce the order by putting her stuff outside on her doorstep. She showed me the papers. These were the eviction orders, declaring that the company had started the legal procedures to evict her as she did not pay her rent. She was at the municipality to ask if there was something to do to stop this eviction but it did not help. I had the idea that she could maybe call the contemporary jurists' office to ask for juridical support. She got an appointment and she asked me to go with her the next day. I said yes. Tomorrow we will go together.

June 27, 2010 – Mrs. SD, Mrs. LY and I went together to the association of contemporary jurists. The voluntary advocate from the association looked at her papers and concluded that if she follows the procedures well the firm cannot evict her for some time (up to a year). I could see the relaxation in her eyes. He suggested her to pay the unpaid rent for last three months and promised to follow her case at the court. Mrs. SD was relieved and she said she would do what he suggested. We thanked the lawyer and left. On the way back to Tarlabası, we walked through İstiklal and side streets while they were talking about the brutality of the municipality.

August 3, 2010 – Today I went to visit Mrs. SD to ask about her court case. I saw that her flat was empty and her neighbor told me that she moved couple of days ago. She did not have enough money to pay the unpaid rent for three months. Then she went to the municipality to ask for some time to find a place and move before

they are evicted by the municipality. She in the end found a cheap place in the neighborhood and moved out. I went to the address the neighbor gave me but she was not at home. I will try again. (From research diary, Tarlabası/Istanbul)

municipality had offered for their houses. Thus, the owners would be in a worse situation if they did not agree to go along with the municipality.

Last, regardless of their tenure, some of the local shopkeepers were pressured by the municipal police and finance officers regarding their business licenses and the permits they need to have to operate their businesses. State officials intensified their checks on all sorts of regulations that had hitherto been widely ignored (and still are in other parts of Istanbul and Turkey at large). Effectively, the officials were squeezing those engaged in the informal activities that typify the neighborhood's economy and those dependent on it.

*How the municipality used its power over information and time: Uncertainty and anxious waiting as pressure:* To understand what kind of pressure the government exerted on people, it is essential to recognize the temporality of the process of displacement. To understand that process, I will describe how the state and its partners use their power over the residents' time. As Bourdieu remarks:

“Waiting is one of the privileged ways of experiencing the effect of power, and the link between time and power – and one would need to catalogue, and analyze, all the behaviors associated with the exercise of power over other people's time both on the side of the powerful (adjourning, deferring, delaying, raising false hopes or conversely rushing, taking by surprise) and on the side of the ‘patient’ as they say in the medical universe, one of the sites par excellence of anxious powerless waiting. Waiting implies submission...” (Bourdieu 2000, p.228)

It took five years after its announcement in 2005 for the project to actually get started. The initial plans envisioned its completion in 2010 but the date was postponed to 2012 and then finally to 2014. Besides, during the periods of general and local elections, the project was slowed down for political reasons. All these years, the residents of Tarlabası waited in uncertainty, which indicates the power imbalances in the process.

It was first in 2006 that hearsay about renewal reached the residents of Tarlabası. As nothing much was communicated to them, most learned of the renewal from the media. In the same year, the municipality called a meeting for property owners and informed them about a possible renewal. The municipality would either get funds from the World Bank or find some private capital to undertake the renewal. No one was to be displaced and the renters would be compensated. Nothing much was clear about the actual plans, but the property owners started waiting for an in-situ transformation with World Bank funds, which they welcomed and were enthusiastic about. Likewise, the renters also waited for the plans to materialize.

Meanwhile the municipality and private investors were actively planning how they would appropriate the neighborhood. A year-long wait on the part of the residents, with high hopes, was interrupted by the news that the municipality had held a tendering procedure and the construction company that won it was now to transform Tarlabası into the ‘Champs-Élysées of Istanbul’. Most felt deceived by the municipality after hearing that what was promised to them – staying put in the neighborhood after renewal – was no longer possible. That sense of deception turned into panic when the municipality and the GAP started rushing the property owners into accepting the offer of selling their properties. Mr. M, who operates his hardware shop in his father’s property, talked about how his elderly father was intimidated by the GAP project coordinator:

*When he [his father] went to talk, Ms. LP [project coordinator from the GAP] scared him a lot. She told him to decide in 5 minutes. He came back with a red face and he said ‘I am selling the building’. I asked him ‘How come? ... Ok, that is your property and your decision but...let me go and talk with them’. I then went to the municipality, she also threatened me. At the municipality they also put psychological pressure on people. For instance, they make you wait... We are the owners, yet we wait for them to make some time for us. It is my property, my title deed and I come to see you at your place. And then you will crab at me, what are you talking about? I also rebuked here, what are you talking about, Ms. LP?’ (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

The municipality increased the pressure by threatening to expropriate the properties. In other words, the property owners would lose their property for a lower price and would wait for (five) years to get the monetary compensation for the expropriation. Those who felt too much pressured by the expropriation threat and could not bear another period of anxious waiting during the legal procedures for expropriation sold their properties and moved out. Others decided to engage in the legal battle and started court cases to object to the expropriation of their properties and the assessed value. Thus, they were again waiting without knowing what would happen.

Mr. AZ, a Kurdish lower-class property owner, talks about his tiresome wait during the legal process, which lasted for more than two years:

*This long-lasting juridical process tired us a lot. We have been tackling the same problems for years already. It is not yet clear if I will get an increased price for my house... I am very exhausted and do not have any patience anymore. I wish the court case will be over soon and we can move out after getting our money. (Mr. AZ, lower-class, Kurdish, property owner)*

The property owners first experienced uncertainty about the renewal plans, which triggered waiting with raised hopes. Then they went into anxious waiting during the

legal process of expropriation. The fear of losing their houses, shops, jobs and neighbors characterized this anxious waiting.

As for the in/formal renters and squatters, they never received clarification about what would happen and when. Initially, their expectations were high, as the municipality had declared it would compensate both the formal and the informal renters. Furthermore, the Association for Solidarity with Tarlabası Property Owners and Renters (Tarlabası Organization hereafter), which was established by property owners to resist the renewal plans, requested a rent allowance for the renters. This was a ray of hope, especially for the ones who had no place to go and would become homeless the day they would be displaced. Mrs. AT, who is a lower-class renter of her house and her second-hand shop in Tarlabası, was among the very few renters to join the neighborhood organization. She expected the Tarlabası Organization to help the renters in the process, but she ended up empty-handed:

*The neighborhood organization told us in the beginning to become members and promised that if the buildings would be sold they would also ask for rent allowance for us. We became members and waited but they did not do anything concrete for us. Not even for the property owners. (Mrs. AT, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)*

As time progressed, it became clear that the renters would not be compensated, though they were not physically removed yet. They entered a twilight zone – being uncertain throughout the process and feeling powerless against the state signified their ‘wait and see’ approach. They have all been waiting for the expected but often delayed evictions. There were rumors that evictions would take place during the summer break of the schools or after the local and central elections, and so on. They were constantly waiting for the evictions, though most of the time these were delayed. The uncertainty turned out to be the only certain aspect of the expected evictions: waiting for the announcement of the renewal project, waiting for whether their landlord would sell his/her building, waiting for the result of the court case, waiting for the promised MHA houses to be delivered, for the eviction papers to come, and for the bulldozers to come. Many lived under this pressure for as long as six years, from 2005 till the end of 2011.

Feeling powerless against their landlords and the state and waiting for others to make decisions left an indelible mark on the renters’ experience of living under the threat of displacement.

### ***Residents’ worries regarding displacement***

Leaving their life behind and trying to establish something new is quite a problematic experience for many residents of Tarlabası. For most, it was very difficult to go through this process and they got very worried. The things that worried them most were the following: finding another place; losing their social contacts and leaving the neighborhood; uncertainty; paying higher rents; becoming homeless or renters; disturbance of everyday

life/order; getting far away from their workplace or losing their jobs. In the rest of this section, I will investigate these worries and concerns one by one.

*Finding another house:* To start with, finding another place was the biggest worry for almost all of the respondents. Due to the renewal project, rent levels around the renewal area rose along with the house prices, which made it extremely hard for residents facing displacement to find an alternative house/flat within or close to the neighborhood. Furthermore, some pay very little or no rent and cannot afford the going rents.

*Losing social contacts and leaving the neighborhood:* Many were concerned about losing their social contacts and leaving the neighborhood because it is important for these residents to live in Tarlabası, as elaborated in Chapter 8. This is especially true for the Kurdish forced migrants, who had already been displaced from their own towns due to the armed conflict in the east and south east of Anatolia. Now that Tarlabası feels like ‘their village’, it is hard for these residents to face the threat of displacement for the second time. They have their own ‘habitus’ and feel at home in the neighborhood. For some Kurdish women who know no word of Turkish it is very important to be able to speak in their mother tongue with other Kurdish people in the neighborhood; for others, solidarity relations with their townsmen are very important. Mrs. SL talks about these points at length:

*They say [that the buildings] here will be demolished but where will people go? We have no money, no home, no other property. Where will I go? Besides, if we disperse to different neighborhoods we cannot survive, we are so much used to living here. I mean we are used to being here and we come from the same village. It feels as if we are one family and we live in our village in Tarlabası. It feels that we are not in Istanbul. My mother-in-law and my sister-in-law are here and my mother stays in the apartment across from mine. If they demolish it here, then everyone disperses to different places. We are used to living here, we are compelled to live here and we like it here. We don't want the demolition. (Mrs. SL, lower class, Kurdish, owner-occupier)*

The very disadvantaged are totally dependent on their place-based social networks for their social and economic survival. Being very much dependent on the support she gets from her neighbors in order to survive, Mrs. N, a Kurdish woman with six children and an imprisoned husband, cries out her worries about losing her social contacts and becoming homeless:

*If I do not have bread at home I ask for it from my neighbors. My neighbor next door brings us every night some left-over food from the restaurant that he works at. May God protect him... We don't want demolition, we cannot go anywhere else, we are used to living here: to the people, to our neighbors... All the people here are the ones we know, there is no stranger. You know, if you go somewhere, you feel like a stranger but here we are with*

*all the people we know. We know them, they know us, I mean this is good.* (Mrs. N, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

The solidarity relations between neighbors, especially those from the same towns or regions and with relatives or acquaintances in the neighborhood, serve an important function in people's lives. While it is hard for the very needy to survive economically if these social networks disperse, some other residents declare that they would feel alienated in other neighborhoods, which makes them anxious about the prospect of leaving.

Solidarity also exists among the commercial residents. They keep an eye on each other's shops/workshops when needed, chat over tea, send customers to each other, borrow and lend equipment whenever necessary, etc.

Another group of residents, who worry about leaving the neighborhood and losing their social contacts are the ones who were born and raised in Tarlabaşı or who have lived there long. Mr. I was born and raised in Tarlabaşı, where he has been selling meatballs for years. He cannot imagine himself working in another neighborhood, leaving all his memories and friends behind:

*I have had my entire life here. How should I leave in a day?* (Mr. I, lower-class, Turkish, squatter)

Likewise, Mr. C, a 72-year-old hotel owner who has been working in the neighborhood for more than 30 years, tells that it will be very hard for him to leave the neighborhood as Tarlabaşı is the place he is used to. All his friends and acquaintances are in the neighborhood. It is very important to him to chat with his fellow shopkeepers and have tea

### **Box. 9.3 Place attachment: The elderly Tarlabaşı resident and his flowers**

August 12, 2010- While sitting in front of Mrs. AT's second-hand shop waiting for my interviewee, an old resident in his 80s passed by with garbage bags in his hands. After putting them in the bins on the main boulevard he came back and asked A. about how it went at the municipality. A. shrugged her shoulders and said "the same, I have to move within a week." Then he started to complain: I will not sell. That is my only belonging: my house. And my flowers... They are my only cheer after I lost my wife. Where would I go if I have to? I thought that I have a house and that would be enough for me to survive for the rest of my life but now they take it from me. Where would I go? I don't want to go, I am used to living here, I cannot live anywhere else. What will happen to my flowers? If I move what will happen to them? No, no, they cannot get me out of this house before I die. (From field notes, Tarlabaşı/Istanbul)

with them on his way to the mosque. This is “what makes life bearable after the age of 70”: having a word or two with the people he knows in the neighborhood. In the same vein, a strong place attachment can also be discerned in the story of an elderly Tarlabası resident given in Box 9.3.

It is not hard to imagine that the residents with a strong place attachment are the ones who will ‘grieve for their lost homes,’ as suggested in Marc Fried’s (1963) classic piece on the effects of relocation.

Furthermore, staying in the neighborhood and not losing one’s social contacts are important issues for transvestites, who describe their anxiety about these issues. Mrs. O has been living and working in Tarlabası for six years already. She is a renter and lives with other transvestites in the same building, where they also work. When asked if she worries about relocation, she replies:

*Of course, I worry. I have an established life here. We can get by, for good or ill. Ok, our neighborhood may not be a perfect place but we live here, we earn our living here, we pay our bills here. We are here day and night.* (Mrs. O, lower-class, Turkish, renter)

There is a certain negotiated tolerance of or familiarity with transvestites in the neighborhood which would be hard to establish someplace else, where they would not easily be accepted as residents and be exposed to harassment.

Considering the economic, social and logistical reasons that make living in Tarlabası very important for some residents, as discussed in the previous chapter, the residents of Tarlabası are worried that they will lose their social contacts if they leave the neighborhood.

*Paying extra for rent, deposit:* Many respondents were worried about the extra costs, such as higher rent, key money and a deposit, upon their relocation. For the businesses and workshops, a certain amount of key money is almost always asked for moving in any commercial space, regardless of whether one is renting or buying it. Likewise, a deposit, which would be the equivalent of one or two months’ rent, is asked when renting either residential or commercial space. For the renters and squatters, paying more rent is a source of worry. Many had been paying a very low rent or none at all, and they would not be able to afford the increasing rents in/around the neighborhood.

Mrs. EL, a 17-year-old Roma woman with a ten-month-old baby, is staying with her family in a building that is property of a minority foundation. They squat the flat they live in and have no running water. Mrs. EL is very worried because they cannot get the money together to rent a house<sup>102</sup> so they will have to split up the family and stay in the houses of different relatives.

*Mrs. EL- ... There is a house for 170 TL but we could not rent it as we don't have the money. We are now trying to save some money.*

*B. (researcher) – Where is that house?*

*Mrs. EL- It is just in this street down. It has running water and everything. You know we cannot wash the baby and we need a house with running water. We just save some money but we then run out of diapers for the baby or food, water or gas. We then need to spend the money for those needs. We have no other option: we will split the family or do something like that. (Mrs. EL, lower-class, Roma, squatter)*

Property owners with a low income were anxious, fearing that the expropriation money they would get would not be enough to buy a new house. As many do not have the means, they either become indebted to their acquaintances and family or become renters.

*Moving down the ladder: becoming homeless, or going from being an owner-occupier to becoming a renter:* Due to the heavy economic burden that displacement brings about, renters, squatters and property owners with a low income were very worried that they would go down the housing ladder by becoming homeless or renters.

To start with the very disadvantaged renters and squatters some faced the threat of becoming homeless, as they had a low income. Mrs. NR, a low-income forced migrant renter in Tarlaşaşı, is very anxious, worrying that the municipality would not provide them with any alternative place to move or some rent support, which would mean they would either be homeless or else try reverse migration to their hometown. The ones, who considered reverse migration, were the forced migrants to Istanbul. That means that they did not have houses and villages anymore, as these had been ruined or damaged by the armed conflict taking place in the area. Even though some of these forced migrants still had their houses/villages intact they still did not want to return because they had started a new life in Istanbul. Moreover, most of the push factors that had induced them to migrate (such as unemployment, limited education opportunities for children) were still prevalent.

Mrs. IP, a 70-year-old, low-income, ex-prostitute living alone, faces the threat of homelessness because she does not have enough money to move to another place. She has a son who could look after her but she cannot get along with her daughter-in-law; that is why it is not an option for her to move into her son's house. She worries a lot and cannot sleep nights. She says that the municipality should at least relocate her to a shelter for the poor, as she has nowhere to go and could become homeless in her old age.

In the same vein, some property owners face the threat of becoming renters as the municipality does not offer them enough compensation for their properties. Thus, they cannot buy a new place for themselves. Especially the owners of the commercial spaces are very worried that they would not be able to afford the high rents in the area.

Among the residents who face this threat are large families. Becoming renters is particularly hard for them for several reasons. First, landlords do not want to rent their

places to large families due to the noise they would make and the potential damage to the house. Secondly, houses that are big enough to accommodate these families are far more expensive than what they can afford. Mrs. FT, who is a single mother and head of the most crowded household (18 persons) in the renewal area, says she cannot sleep at night, thinking about what they will do after displacement. What the municipality offers is not enough to buy another flat that would be big enough for them. Renting is not an option either, as there are not many big houses to rent in Tarlabası. The only alternative she can think of is to split the family up. This idea makes her very nervous about their future.

For other lower-class property owners, their houses are a last resort, a guarantee that they will survive their poverty. Becoming a renter would mean an insecure future, which makes many anxious. Mrs. SL, a low-income Kurdish property owner with six children, is worried that she will have to become a renter, which they cannot afford. She says:

*For instance they [the municipality] do not know if I have enough money for bread. If I have some cheese in the fridge? They assume that we do. They don't understand our problems. At least this house is ours and we live in it. I may eat only bread and onions with my children but if we did not have the house it would have been very difficult. No one tells me to move out because that I did not pay rent or electricity bills as it is my house.... No one tells me that...it is different if you a renter: what if the landlord comes to the door when you don't have any bread to eat. He comes and asks for the rent. How will you find the rent? How will you give it to him? Would that not be difficult? That would, of course, be difficult. (Mrs. SL, lower-class, Kurdish, owner-occupier)*

Becoming a renter would mean having less disposable income. These residents suffer from the anxiety of becoming more insecure due to the displacement they face.

Mrs. EM, who is a lower-class owner-occupier, is worried that they would not be able to make ends meet if they become renters. She shares her worries in these words:

*We thought about it [where to go and how] a lot. What my husband earns is not enough. If I start working then we may get by. Otherwise it is not possible. He is earning something around 800-900 TL and if we rent a place for 400-450 then what will we eat and drink? How will we pay the bills for electricity and water? We need to think about all these. It is very difficult. (Mrs. EM, lower-class, Turkish, owner-occupier)*

*Losing job/getting far away from workplace:* Most of the respondents had at least one person in their household working either in Tarlabası or in Beyoğlu. There are others, namely the mussels-sellers, who prepare their wares in Tarlabası even though they sell them somewhere else. Given this employment profile, it is not surprising that most are very worried about getting housing far away from their workplaces or losing their jobs if their workplaces are closed due to the renewal.

Mr. MS is one of them. He sells food in the streets of Beyoğlu, and the two sons he lives with are working in the service sector in Beyoğlu. Tarlabası is a 10 to 15 minute walk from their work, which is very convenient. He is worried about ending up far away from the workplace once they have to move out of Tarlabası. He says that:

*My sons are working close by and I work here [in Beyoğlu]. I sometimes work till 11 at night and every morning, I start at 6 a.m. My sons are working here. I cannot move out of Tarlabası. I simply cannot. (Mr. MS, lower class, Turkish, property owner)*

Similarly, almost all shopkeepers are worried, as they face the threat of losing their work and incomes. In the event of relocation, they worry that they would lose their customers, since they have conducted their business there for years. Mr. IB owns a building in Tarlabası where he lives with his wife, son and mother on one floor while his younger brother lives on the second floor. They also have another floor, which they rent out, and the income from it goes to his older brother. There are two commercial spaces on the ground floor, one of which is a grocery and the other a teahouse. Mr. IB and his wife operate them but the income is shared by four families because his brothers and his mother also have a share in these stores. Mr. IB is very anxious that they will not only lose their houses and but also their income from these stores.

*I cannot find a job easily. What will I do? We are 30 people, who earn their living from these two stores: my family, my younger brother, my mother, my older brother. There are four households who get their income from these stores. What will we do if the building gets demolished? Will the municipality take care of us? Do they give us a guarantee for that? No, of course they do not. (Mr. IB, lower-middle class, Kurdish, property owner)*

Mrs. K operates a beauty center that is mostly visited by transvestites. She has worked there with her son for almost ten years. She loudly expresses her concerns about relocating her workplace:

*Will the municipality compensate me for my losses? I worked here for ten years and my social circle and my customers are all here. They kick us out of here and they even are not afraid of God. They are so cruel and they do not think about the consequences. I have five persons who are dependent on me, five persons. When you [the municipality] kick me out of here, I wish God would damn you. Because five persons are dependent on me. Then you force these people to become thieves, prostitutes. I cannot think of another alternative. Closing my business here, which has been here for ten years and carrying it somewhere else. Will I get customers there? Or not? I don't know how things will go. (Mrs. K, lower-class, Turkish, property owner)*

Another issue that makes small entrepreneurs in the neighborhood worried is the need for business licenses to relocate their businesses. For instance, Mr. D, a lower-middle-class Turkish baker in Tarlabası, complains that he needs to find a new place that meets the requirements for getting a new business license. Likewise, Mr. C, a lower-middle-class, Turkish hotel operator, is very worried that he would not be able to find a new rental place for his hotel that would not only fulfill the license requirements but also would be affordable. He also mentions that when he got his license for this hotel it was easier to meet the standards. The standards are now higher, which is why he cannot meet them currently, and this makes it extra hard for him to relocate.

Some other respondents are worried that they cannot do their work elsewhere. For instance, Mr. AZ, a lower class Kurdish property owner who prepares the mussels with his wife in their basement and sells them in the streets, says that the ingredients he uses are only distributed to Tarlabası because of the concentration of mussels-makers and vendors in the neighborhood. Thus, they not only face the threat of getting displaced from their house but also of losing his income from selling mussels.

Likewise, Tarlabası is home to cooling and shoemaking workshops. Mr. RT, who has worked in his cooling workshop for years, says that the market for the cooling business is in Tarlabası. He thinks that he is obliged to stay put in the neighborhood; if he moves, he may lose his customers, who may not come to another place.

Likewise Mr. AA, a shoemaker who works in his rental workshop in Tarlabası, mentions feeling anxious that he will not find a suitable place for his workshop. The reason is that

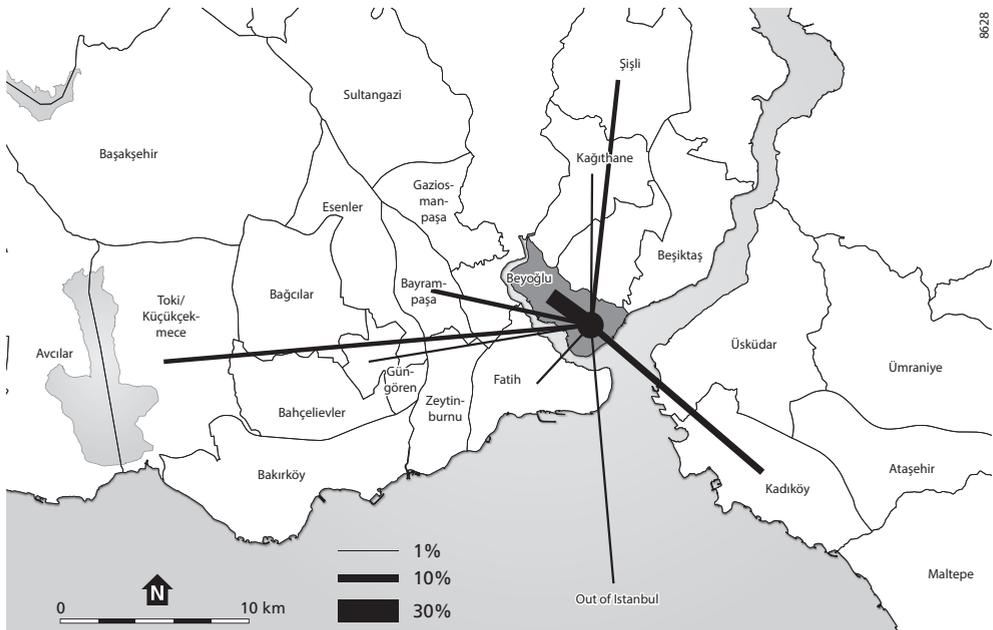


Figure 9.1. Relocation neighborhoods of Tarlabası residents

landlords would not rent their premises to such a noisy and dirty workshop, conditions that are normal in the shoemaking business. He says that he cannot relocate his business to Merter or İkitelli, to where the shoemaking sector had been decentralized a decade ago, as he is too small to compete with the producers and retailers in these centers.

Recycling workers would lose their livelihood after the eviction of their storage places as well as their houses. These workers collect the garbage suitable for recycling from the neighboring gentrifying centers such as Galata and Cihangir; obviously, they need to have their storage space somewhere close by. Mr. Y is not only worried that their storage has to be moved to somewhere else but also that he will be displaced from his house, where he is a squatter. He notes that it will be hard for him to work in the same area if he has to live somewhere else.

Losing their houses, jobs and social networks would mean losing their means to survive as well as the fragmentation of their routines and relations. Many respondents faced these worries as they experienced the process of displacement.

### 9.3 Impacts of displacement

Before examining the impacts of displacement, I will first consider where the respondents had gone. As of the end of the research in the autumn of 2011, there were 36 residents who had been displaced. The remaining 12 were still living in Tarlabaşı in their old houses under the pressure of displacement. I could not reach eight of the displaced for follow-up interviews but I did find out where five of them had gone. Thus, the discussion of where the displaced moved to will be based on the experiences of 33 residents. One-third (33.3 percent) of the respondents who actually were displaced moved within Tarlabaşı, while another quarter of them (24.2 percent) moved within the borders of Beyoğlu.

The residents had various reasons to stay in or close to their neighborhood: an affordable rent, the presence of social networks, and so on. Besides, many work in or close to Beyoğlu, and that is why they wanted to stay nearby.



*Photo 9.4.* Moving Process in Tarlabaşı (Photo by Bahar Sakızlıoğlu)

Compared to the residents who could stay put in the neighborhood, the households/shopkeepers who had to move away suffered most from the negative impacts of the displacement. On the other hand, the displacement also had some positive effects, which I will discuss one by one.

The discussion on the impacts of displacement refers to the experiences of 28 of the interviewees. In total, 48 residents were interviewed in the first round. However, during the follow-up, I could not reach eight of them, and 12 of them were still in Tarlabası in their old houses/shops.

*Impacts on economic situations:* Almost all of the residents of interest here (26 out of 28) declared that they were economically worse-off after displacement. The exceptions were the two renters who had not experienced any change in their economic condition due to displacement. The shopkeepers, regardless of their tenure, complained about a shrinking business volume as the neighborhood was gradually abandoned, and the property owners were not satisfied with the expropriation values. While some property owners had to become renters, some residents who used to live in the property of a close relative and did not pay rent also became renters, thereby incurring increasing rent expenditures.

Even though most declared that their economic situation was worse after the displacement, not everyone was affected to the same degree. For the ones at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy, namely some renters with a very low income, displacement meant becoming homeless; all of them therefore moved into the houses of close relatives. Many other renters had to bear heavy economic burdens, which further impoverished them. Some property owners with a low income had to become renters as they did not get enough compensation to buy flats. Not paying rent was a factor that helped them survive on a very low income, so these residents ran into economic difficulties. Even though some property owners could buy relocation houses/shops with the expropriation money they received, their expenses increased due to extra costs such as commuting. Other property owners were satisfied with the expropriation values. Yet they either saw their business volume decline or they had high moving costs, which was an extra economic burden. Thus, although not everyone was affected to the same degree, almost all were economically worse-off after the displacement.

*Changes in housing conditions:* The impact of displacement on housing conditions was mixed. On the one hand, the property owners with relatively higher incomes and/or stable jobs and/or with properties of a higher value had better conditions in their new houses/shops. On the other hand, owners with less income and/or properties with lesser value had to move to houses with worse conditions, as they could not afford any better houses. As for the renters, the ones with a low income had worse conditions after their displacement, because they could not afford to get a better house due to increasing rent levels in the area. While some of them complained that their new houses were rather small and not well maintained, the rest declared that their housing conditions got worse as they moved

in with family members. The very few renters who could get better houses or shops after the displacement were mostly the ones with a higher income and/or more stable jobs. Few renters with a low income could get houses in better condition. These were the renters who had lacked the most basic facilities in their old houses, such as running water and working sewage, which they did get in their new places.

*The impacts on children:* Very few households had to send their children to different schools due to displacement. As reported by their parents, these children did not have much difficulty adjusting to their new schools and friends. Besides, the quality of education was better at the new schools. Mrs. AY mentioned how much better it was for her children to change to a new neighborhood and new school:

*In Tarlabası, the school was full of Kurdish children. They did not speak Turkish and until the time they learned it, my children learned nothing. The quality of education was terrible. Besides, whenever I let my daughters play in the streets, they would learn every time a new curse. Here all has changed. The school is really better. There is a garden in the mass housing estate, where they can play safely. They are doing better here. (Mrs. AY, lower-class, Turkish, renter)*

Likewise Mr. D, a lower-middle-class property owner who moved out of Istanbul, declared his satisfaction with his child's new school:

*I put my kid in kindergarten here in Dikmen. I am really happy with that. Tarlabası was not a place to raise children. The schools here are better and the teachers do take care of the children better. (Mr. D, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

Some children of the households who stayed in Tarlabası were not happy because some of their friends had moved out of the neighborhood and/or they did not like the part of the neighborhood they moved to. Among them, some girls were quite dissatisfied that their families did not move out of the neighborhood as E, a 12-year-old girl, told me:

*E- I do not like Tarlabası. I am not from here. I was born in Konya but we are originally from Mardin.*

*B- Why don't you like it here?*

*E- It is full of thieves, drunken people. I was happy that maybe we would move out of here when they said they will demolish our house. I wish we had moved out of here. (E, 12-year-old, child of a renter)*

To sum up, the impacts of displacement on children were mixed: some were affected in a positive way while others were not.

*Satisfaction with the new neighborhood/neighbors:* Among the ones who moved out of the neighborhood (n=22), almost half were more satisfied with their new neighborhood

compared to the old one. They claimed that the new neighborhoods were safer, cleaner, quieter and had less problems. Yet many of them declared that they missed their old neighborhood as it was the place where they were so used to living, even though there were problems. The other half of the residents who moved out of the neighborhood were not satisfied with their new neighborhoods for various reasons. Almost all were unhappy, as they missed the social networks they had in the old neighborhood. Some also mentioned that their new neighborhood was too far away from their workplace and the facilities they needed such as hospitals.

When it comes to relations with new neighbors, some respondents complained that they missed their old neighbors and acquaintances. Only a few were more satisfied with their relations with the new neighbors compared to the old ones. These residents had wanted to move out of the neighborhood for a long time but could not do so as they could not afford it. For others, it was very problematic to lose their established relations, which had made their socio-economic survival possible. This is why some continued their relations in the neighborhood by coming back, for example to have tea with friends at a not-yet-vacated tea house, to find a job through friends or to buy groceries on credit at the grocery store.

*Access to workplace and impacts on employment:* Before the displacement, most of the respondents had at least one person in their household who was working in either Tarlabası or Beyoğlu. As more than half of the displaced stayed in or close to Tarlabası after displacement, their access to workplaces was not affected much. On the other hand, there were some whose access to work changed due to displacement. While a few of them moved closer to their workplaces, the rest complained that their houses were further away. The latter had a longer commute and higher commuting expenses.

Very few lost their jobs due to displacement. Only a few workers in the households of the respondents became unemployed when their workplaces were shut down due to the renewal. Some workshop owners and shop owners closed their businesses after displacement, as they could not afford to start up somewhere else. Thus, these self-employed people and their workers became unemployed. There was only one shopkeeper who switched to another sector after displacement. Mrs. O, who lived and worked as a sex worker in Tarlabası, started to work in the streets, which made life less safe and harder for her.

*Increasing distrust of the state/municipality:* Another impact of this process is the loss of trust in the (local as well as central) state among the ones whose properties were expropriated. At the beginning of the project, expectations were high. The residents were optimistic that their neglected neighborhood would finally get attention from the state, which would make it a nicer place to live. They were all looking forward to this intervention, as they did not want to live in a deteriorating neighborhood with many problems. In the words of Mrs. NR, most were expecting the state to take care of its citizens.

*It is the state doing the project. Probably they would show us some house to move to. They would not leave us in the streets, right?* (Mrs. NR, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)

Yet these great expectations turned into distrust when the municipality started to displace the residents. What most residents experienced in this process was simply coming face to face with the state apparatus, which was mobilized to safeguard the interests of private investors at the expense of the disadvantaged. In the experience of at least half of the respondents, the state had confiscated their properties by force. Residents used expressions like “the state is acting as the land mafia,” is “involved in robbery.” Mr. M put it thus:

*What really makes us feel offended is that our properties are seized... I see no difference between a pickpocket, who steals my money from my pocket, and the state, which confiscates my property. In the end, both acts are seizure. I don't know if I talk too bluntly but this is how I feel.* (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)

According to many, expropriation is a powerful tool in the municipality's hands. It works to make this seizure happen. The party that is to benefit from this seizure is private capital, involved as the partner of the municipality. Mrs. H was talking about the political economy of the project. Her assessment is in line with how Harvey (2003) talks about the regressive redistribution that accumulation by dispossession involves:

*I mean they want to make the rich richer, they let the poor go where the hell they go. Rich is already rich, they are playing with money. They do not have any worries. But what shall I do? Then make me rich as well, let me save my own life and the lives of my children. Make me also rich, is that not so? I mean they will make the rich ten times richer while making the poor ten times poorer? That is inconceivable.* (Mrs. H, lower-class, Turkish, property owner)

The frustration that there is a regressive redistribution from the poor to the rich is expressed by some residents, together with the ambition of climbing the socio-economic ladder through the urban renewal project. On the other hand, some are very frustrated that the state they are facing is not at all a benevolent state, one that would provide relocation policy and rent allowances especially, for the most disadvantaged.

Likewise some complain that the state uses its legal powers to enable regressive redistribution, referring to the new urban renewal law that was enacted to make the Tarlaşaşı renewal project possible. Mrs. O made this very clear:

*They are stealing gently. Yet, what they do is still legal: they are constantly enacting laws, all the time making new laws... Whenever a law does not serve their purpose anymore, they make a new one.* (Mrs. O, lower-class, Turkish, renter)

Whereas the local and central governments are using these laws to close the rent gap in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the residents complain that the power of the law does not work so well for ordinary citizens, who think their property rights are being seized by the local government when they face expropriation. This was very evident when the property owners took their expropriation cases to court. All property owners lost their lawsuits against the expropriation order. They could not convince the judges that the implementation contravened the law and even the constitution. Mr. YK complained about this:

*They do not even listen to what I say at the court, they make decisions rapidly.* (Mr. YK, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)

In short, the residents were quite frustrated that the courts did not protect their property rights. As a result, they lost their trust in the rule of law.

To sum up, state redistribution, which Harvey (2003) conceptualizes as one of the four elements of accumulation by dispossession, works regressively to the benefit of the investors and higher classes in this project. Accordingly, the residents lose their trust in the state as they meet, face and ignore its agents in the course of the project.

## **9.4 Household and collective strategies**

Residents developed strategies and tactics to tackle the negative effects of this process. Some of these were at household level while others were devised collectively.

### **9.4.1 Household strategies**

Considering the lack of uniform provisions, assistance and guidance from the municipality, residents had to seek support from organizations and/or their relatives, neighbors and acquaintances. Most respondents had help from their family members, townsmen and neighbors during the displacement process. Finding a place, financial support, physical help with moving out, and learning about their rights – these were the most common issues for which the respondents turned to people in their social network. Some had to resort to the informal housing market (squatting an empty building or settling in the storage space of an acquaintance, etc.) to find a solution to the relocation problem they faced.

Doubling-up with close relatives was the most common strategy of residents who could not afford to get a place for their households. Some of those who were already displaced

joined the household of close family members, such as their mother, mother-in-law and children. This provoked conflicts between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, who started to live in the same house after displacement. In addition, the displaced households did not generally feel at home in their new place.

Another household-level strategy was for displaced residents to retain their social ties in the neighborhood. Some of those who had moved out earlier visited the neighborhood frequently to socialize with their old neighbors, acquaintances and family members who were still living there. I met Mr. H. in a teahouse in Tarlabası, even though he was now living almost 50 km away from the neighborhood. He said he had been coming to Tarlabası around twice a week, as he could not get used to the new neighborhood and missed his friends. Likewise, Mr. ES started visiting the neighborhood/his neighbors on weekends after his displacement. He said:

*Tarlabası may not be a beautiful place to live but it is the place we got used to living. I like it here and have lived here for more than 30 years. It is not easy for me to be away from here. This is why I come whenever I have money for taking the bus to here.* (Mr. ES, lower-class, Kurdish, displaced renter)

Some maintained their economic ties in the neighborhood, shopping in the local grocery shops and looking for jobs through their social contacts. They could buy their groceries on credit from their old grocers, which gave them the financial means to make ends meet. They had to use their old social networks to find jobs, which was not possible in the new neighborhoods.

Some respondents also asked for organizational support to deal with the process of displacement and its impacts. Some asked for advice from legal organizations to understand the juridical documents they received regarding evictions. Others had to get credit from commercial banks to cover their financial expenses during the displacement process. As stated above, for most property owners, the Tarlabası Organization provided support in many respects, though the number of renters who could get support from the organization was negligible. Indeed, a large proportion of the renters did not receive any organizational support during this process, while some had to turn to the muhktars, who are elected governors at the neighborhood level, the local governors, legal organizations and the lawyers of the municipality to ask about their rights, to understand the documents about evictions and to look for a relocation house.

The support received from individuals and organizations made the process less difficult. In the absence of guidance, assistance and satisfactory provisions from the local authorities, this strategy was common. The displaced mobilized their social networks and some organizations to decreasing the burden of displacement. Besides recruiting support from organizations and individuals, some respondents took another job. Mrs. N. had to send his son, who is 15 years old, to work at a car repair shop due to the higher expenses

after displacement. Even though it was difficult for others to make ends meet, they did not see the employment of women outside the house as a suitable strategy due to the patriarchal family structure.

Others tried to cut back by buying cheaper food and less clothing. Only one household turned to reverse migration as a strategy, though the municipality encouraged reverse migration by offering to pay the transportation costs.

The strategies used by the residents were not restricted to the household level. Some resisted the renewal project, which constituted the main collective strategy to tackle displacement and its negative impacts.

#### 9.4.2 Collective strategies: Resisting the urban renewal project

The Association for Solidarity with Tarlabası Property Owners and Renters was founded by a group of commercial property owners in early 2008. Mainly, the association struggled to ensure the rights of property owners. Its founders were owners of small businesses or shopkeepers who did not live in Tarlabası but worked there. The one exception was one of the founders, who was only an investor in the area. Almost all were early migrants (arriving between the 1950s and the 1970s) from the Black Sea and Central Anatolian regions. The one exception was a Kurdish real estate agent who migrated to Istanbul in the 1980s. All of their properties were located on Tarlabası Boulevard, the most privileged part of the project area, and all of the founders were among the economically better-off. In other words, just as the Tarlabası Boulevard itself operates as an urban frontier between the gentrified and dilapidated parts of Beyoğlu, these better-off, early migrant, commercial owners also constitute an in-between socio-economic group, somewhere between the white Turk<sup>103</sup> gentrifiers of Beyoğlu and the mostly Kurdish poor of Tarlabası.

The Tarlabası Organization was the brainchild of a businessman who neither lived nor worked in the neighborhood but merely invested in the area. Bringing in prior experience as an active member of various associations, he gave impetus to the idea of establishing a formal organization to mobilize against the renewal plans of the municipality. Another important figure in the organization, its former spokesperson, was a paid professional who acted as a community worker, mobilizing the residents and responding to their problems regarding the urban renewal project. In addition, he also acted as a public relations expert, serving as a link to the media, professional groups (lawyers, planners, academics) and other neighborhood organizations engaged in the struggle against urban renewal projects. His central role in the neighborhood mobilization came to an end<sup>104</sup> when he resigned from his position as a spokesperson<sup>105</sup>.

There were other important figures among the founders of the organization. One was a shopkeeper who was raised in Tarlabası and had worked there for a long time, so he had both strong and weak ties there. His daily presence in the neighborhood as a member of the organization helped rally support and build trust in it. On the other hand, his high profile also meant that he was overburdened, operating as the 'information desk' of the

organization, especially after the formal spokesperson resigned. Another important figure was the Kurdish real estate agent who had many relatives and acquaintances in the neighborhood, whose support he could mobilize. Being Kurdish, he also acted as a bridge to the Kurdish community. He could recruit some Kurdish property owners who were low-income owner-occupiers; they, in turn, acted as a bridge to the lower-class property owners and renters.

It was by working such networks that the organization gained most of its members. After initial one-to-one mobilizations, letters authorizing power of attorney were collected from each and every member who was property owner. By so doing, the organization could claim the right of collective bargaining with the municipality as the authorized representative of the property owners. Besides, individual properties could not be sold without the organization knowing it.

### *Strategies and action repertoire of the Tarlabası Organization*

The point of departure was that property owners were not content with the terms of the project, even though they were not opposed to idea of renewal in Tarlabası. The organization tried to recruit members among the renters as well, although renters' right to housing was not their primary aim. Actually, renters were only seen as strategic allies through whom the organization might gain more members and support for their struggle. These were the hallmarks of the strategies and action repertoire of the organization. Its leaders carefully maneuvered between participation in and contestation of the process.

The first of the tactical interventions was to negotiate with the municipality. That engagement then evolved into a juridical battle at the national level. Eventually it jumped scales<sup>106</sup> to an international juridical battle, even petitioning UNESCO to stop the project. Demonstrations, media campaigns and recruiting the support of other organizations were also in its action repertoire.

### *Negotiations with the municipality and the private developer*

The first and foremost strategy for the Tarlabası Organization was to start negotiations with the municipality and its private partner, the GAP, to contest the terms of the renewal project, in the capacity of the representative of property owners in the project area. In these negotiation meetings, the organization presented what could constitute a set of acceptable conditions under which the property owners would agree to go along with the project. They suggested using flat-for-land method<sup>107</sup> to compensate owners for the loss of their properties. They also requested some compensation for the renters to ease their relocation. The neighborhood organization demanded the following compensations during these negotiation rounds: 1) commercial space for existing business holders and shopkeepers; 2) a 10,000 TL rent allowance for residential renters; 3) a 50,000 TL rent allowance for renters who run their business in the neighborhood; and 4) an extra compensation for business losses incurred due to the urban renewal project.

The demand to use an alternative method to compensate the owners for the loss of their properties was rejected by the municipality. At that point, the neighborhood organization withdrew from the negotiations, seeing no scope to challenge the decisions that had already been made on the terms of the project. Regarding the compensations demanded by the neighborhood organization, the GAP decided to accommodate some commercial use of the space by the businesses in the area, so some alterations were made in this direction. However, the demand to provide an allowance for the renters was not accepted.

In short, the organization contested the existing framework and bargained to participate into the project. Even though the municipality and the GAP made some openings for negotiation and acquiesced to some of the demands, the attitude of the authorities was rather informal. They refrained from making any formal concessions during and after the negotiations.

After withdrawing from the talks, the organization continued its struggle. It held demonstrations against the project and simultaneously started a legal battle at the national scale.

*Demonstrations: 'We want to agree with you'*

After the negotiations ended, the municipality went on holding individual meetings with the property owners to make them consent to the project. The neighborhood organization was frustrated with this individualized tactic and called upon its members to reject the individual negotiations. Instead, it advised them to reply to the municipality's call for participation with an official letter stating that they would come to an agreement if and only if their condition, namely that the flat-for-land method with a 50-percent share for the owners, would be accepted. On this basis, the organization staged two demonstrations in front of the municipal offices to protest the project. Their aim was to convey the message that the project had no social vision but was instead displacing the people who were living or working in the neighborhood. The main thrust of these events was that the property owners wanted to agree with the municipality but the municipality did not want to make any concessions. Each time, around 20 people joined in the protest, mostly the very active members of the organization and a few renters<sup>108</sup>.

*Juridical Battle:*

When the project was announced, the Chambers of Architects and Engineers (TMMOB from here on) resorted to legal action to have the project annulled and its execution suspended. Its main argument was that the project would damage the cultural heritage. The lawyers of the TMMOB proposed that the Tarlabası neighborhood organization could join in the lawsuit when the juridical process started. Yet the neighborhood organization rejected this invitation, as they did not object to the project as completely as the TMMOB did; they objected to the terms of the project, which they started contesting in the negotiation process. Right after negotiations were suspended by the organization, the

organization decided to try legal ways to stop the project. Some property owners made a motion to be party in the TMMOB's lawsuit against the project. However, TMMOB's lawsuit failed and the appeals at higher courts were not successful either.

At the same time, individual juridical battles were launched as the municipality started the expropriation process. The lawyers were arranged by the organization though paid by the individual property owners. The organization had to switch lawyers after some time, as their performance in court was not satisfactory. Engaging a new lawyer shifted the balance in the struggle in three respects. First of all, some property owners did not entrust the new lawyer with letters assigning power of attorney to handle their court case, as it was costly to do so. They preferred to go on with their court cases with the old lawyers. Some found new lawyers themselves, as they lost their trust in the organization due to the poor performance of the previous lawyers. All in all, the loss of confidence meant that the Tarlabası Organization lost some members. Secondly, the new lawyer took a very active stand in the struggle, not only in running the juridical battle but also by starting a media campaign. Thirdly, he was an expert in the field of human rights, which was a golden opportunity for the organization. He could push forward the struggle by petitions to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which will be discussed in the next section.

*'Jumping scales' to seize state power: Petitions to ECHR and UNESCO*

Thanks to the expertise of the new lawyer in the field of international human rights, the organization took its juridical battle to the ECHR. Despite the fact that the ECHR accepted the application, the process was still going on at the time of writing. The application lodged with the ECHR brought fresh energy into the struggle by attracting media attention to the activities of the Tarlabası Organization. But it also provided a ray of hope for the property owners after their defeat in the negotiations and the TMMOB's juridical battle. Even for the renters, the complaint lodged with the ECHR brought them some hope: perhaps they could stay in the neighborhood longer or get some compensation as a result of the ECHR's ruling.

The lawyer of the neighborhood organization, Mr. Kaşka, also petitioned on behalf of the organization to stop the project. In response, UNESCO stated its own concerns that the new urban renewal legislation – Law no. 5366 – could possibly have negative impacts on the historical heritage. The request by Mr. Kaşka was forwarded to the national authorities of UNESCO in Turkey, namely the Permanent Delegation of UNESCO in Turkey, and also to ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites. Even though UNESCO cannot impose any direct sanctions on the local government and its private partner, this petition functioned as a threat to the local and central government, as they have to comply with the international norms on historical heritage. And it also brought the struggle once again to the attention of the media.

*Alliances and collaborations: The call of Amnesty International and the press release from S.O.S.*

The Tarlaabaşı Organization gained the support of Amnesty International. It published an appeal to Turkey to halt the forced evictions in Tarlaabaşı, which had already caused many to become homeless. In that appeal, Amnesty International called for an immediate suspension of the forced evictions in the neighborhood till the international human rights standards had been attended to<sup>109</sup>.

In September 2010, S.O.S. Istanbul, an urban activist group that campaigns for the protection of cultural heritage, circulated a press release against the urban renewal project in Tarlaabaşı. The platform protested against the demolitions and evictions. The press release communicated their concern that the project would not only damage the historical heritage of Istanbul but also displace the local residents, who are not provided with a relocation alternative. However, local residents' participation in this protest was very limited.

*Media campaigns and participation in conferences and meetings regarding urban renewal and resistance*

The former spokesperson of the neighborhood organization represented the neighborhood at several meetings, seminars and conferences held by universities, professional organizations, municipalities etc. He raised awareness among these institutions of the property owners' struggle against the project and also recruited some support. Furthermore, he represented the neighborhood in the meetings of the umbrella platform for neighborhood organizations in Istanbul to exchange ideas and support their fight against urban renewal in Istanbul at large.



**Photo 9.5.** S.O.S demonstration on Tarlaabaşı Boulevard (Photo by Yaşar Adanalı)

Besides these efforts, the chairman of the neighborhood organization appeared on many television programs to voice their demands and convey their experiences. The petitions to the European Court of Human Rights and UNESCO helped attract media attention to the neighborhood and to fight against the renewal project.

As examined above, the neighborhood organization used various tactics to stop and to change the terms of the project. Yet, the struggle lost momentum due to the dividing lines of class, ethnic background and property ownership.

***Contentious fields: connecting and dividing lines of class, ethnic background and property ownership<sup>10</sup>***

Romanticizing the neighborhood and its organizations as homogeneous entities with the single idea or purpose to resist the municipal renewal operations would not help us understand what is happening on the ground. Just like the neighborhood, the organization consisted of people with different backgrounds, demands and needs as well as different levels of attachment: from better-off business owners to low-income owner-occupiers, from transvestite renters to squatter recyclers, all could come together under the umbrella of the organization. Thus, urban renewal functioned as a temporary intermediary that enabled residents to act as a group against the threatening urban renewal project. Yet, this medium was quite fragile; contention, new coalitions and conflicts shaped the boundary-making process between different social groups throughout the renewal process. Considering the existence of such a wide spectrum of interests and claims, contention and conflict were unavoidable. Class, property ownership, and ethnicity were the contentious fields that divided the resident groups in the neighborhood.

*Class background both as a connecting and dividing line:*

There is a significant class difference between the founders of the organization and the rest of Tarlaşa. The founders are all early migrants to the city with established small-scale businesses in economically better-off positions. They have properties on Tarlaşa Boulevard (referred as ‘the frontline’ by the residents) and other properties outside Tarlaşa. They do not live in the neighborhood but do work there. They all wanted to expand their businesses and move somewhere else but “they were not ‘entrepreneur’ enough to take the risk of growing.” Their struggle revolved around exchange value of their properties as they wanted to maximize their benefit. This difference functioned as a connecting line for the founders of the organization to keep up the struggle.

Yet, it is also a dividing line. Initially these migrants did not have links to the lower class residents living ‘down the boulevard’. This divide was softened thanks to a group of lower-middle-class, owner-occupiers who were all Kurdish and lived ‘down the boulevard’. These people had relatively stable jobs (with a relatively longer duration of employment at the same workplace). They acted as the link between the ‘frontline’ and the rest of the neighborhood ‘down the boulevard’ as they were respected by both groups.

While class acted as a cohesive factor, sustaining the organization, the class divisions reflected the role of property ownership as another dividing line among residents.

*Divide of property ownership:*

Property owners who were active in the Tarlabası Organization, especially the founders, included the renters' right in their agenda during the negotiations. This was partially an instrumental move, as they wanted to involve as many people as possible in order to be taken seriously by the municipality. Yet, they felt superior, confident that their efforts to put renters' rights on the agenda of the municipality were worthwhile. They tried to 'help' the renters out as they are 'also human beings,' as Mr. M mentioned:

*When we first founded the organization, we also wanted to protect the rights of the renters as we wanted to increase in numbers. Indeed, rather than just increasing in numbers, the renters are also human beings; people living here are also human beings. Are they not? Where will they go to? Their incomes are low. What will they do? (Mr. M, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

Even though they acknowledged that renters would be badly affected by the renewal process, most property owners thought that it would be easier for the renters to move out as 'they were renters anyways.' Mr. AL's remarks reveal this point:

*Renters can take their stuff and move somewhere else but our, property owners' situation is very difficult. We will lose our houses ... it is easier for the renters. They take their stuff and leave. But the municipality is ruining us. We do not know what to do anymore. (Mr. AL, lower-middle-class, Turkish, property owner)*

In a later conversation Mr. AL expressed his understanding of how difficult renters' situations also are, but his expressions divulged his identification with the property owners as the worst impacted group.

Even though there were some property owners who were sincerely concerned about prospective displacement of the renters, they communicated that the renters' rights were not of primary importance to the organization. Consequently, their interests were easily dropped from the agenda, given that the municipality did not even take the property owners' demands seriously during the negotiations. Mrs. S put it straightforward:

*In the first negotiation talk, we [property owners] told them [the municipality] what we wanted as property owners and asked them what they would do for our renters. The municipality told us they would give the renters a priority to buy MHA housing. Well, they also mentioned about some relocation money to compensate for extra costs, for deposit money etc. ... Later on, even we as the property owners were not taken serious. Who would then listen to renters?... There was no more talk about the renters, let alone*

*them becoming of secondary importance. The renters were not talked about anymore as the municipality even did not take the property owners serious. You think one who does not take property owners serious would take the renters into account? (Mrs. S, lower-class, Kurdish, property owner)*

Furthermore, renters were exposed to pressures and threats by their landlords, as discussed above regarding the pressures of displacement. The landlords mostly did not inform their renters about the process. While some renters were forced by their landlords to sign eviction papers at the municipality, some property owners even asked for extra rent payments from their renters, even after they had sold their properties to the developer. Of course, not all landlords caused problems for their renters, yet the dividing line of property ownership played a role of crucial importance.

This divide between property owners and renters is also reproduced by the renters. Some renters did recall the neighborhood organization's call for renters to join the struggle but only a few renters became members of the organization or attended its meetings. Almost all renters think that the organization was of no use for the renters, while some even think that the organization took no notice of them. Mrs. AT is one of few renters who became a member of the organization. She mentioned that:

*The organization told us in the beginning to become a member as it would try to arrange relocation money for the renters. Then we became members but the organization was of no use for us. (Mrs. AT, lower-class, Kurdish, renter)*

In contrast to Mrs. AT, Mrs. AY was never a member of the organization, as she thought: *What use could the organization have for the renters? That is an organization for the property owners. Well, I have not participated or even heard of where they are located but I never thought it would be useful for the renters. (Mrs. AY, lower-class, Turkish, renter)*

Even though the organization's attitude towards renters was of a pragmatic nature, it should also be noted that the renters themselves neither tried to formulate a bottom-up reaction to the renewal nor tried to change the associations' stand on getting organized. Their stance was one of inactivity; they felt powerless against the state intervention in their neighborhood. They waited for their landlords to negotiate with the municipality; they waited for the results of the court cases that their landlords had started against the expropriations; for the municipal police to serve them an eviction notice; they even waited for the bulldozers to come. This state of anxious waiting and inactivity springs from their feeling of being powerless against the state and their collective disbelief in the capacity of collective action to change the state of affairs. This, however, casts their sense of being powerless during the process of urban renewal as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In short, the unequal status between the property owners and renters influenced how the renters were included in the organization's agenda. Property owners' distant understanding of the renters' difficult situations and their pragmatic approach to the inclusion of renters were mirrored in the collective disbelief of the renters in collective action as they thought they would not be able to challenge the state.

*Ethnicity as the dividing line: Turkish-Kurdish<sup>m</sup> divide:*

The early migrants, who are Turkish, have internalized and reproduced existing stigmas regarding Kurdish people throughout this process and, so doing, have remade their ethnic boundaries with the 'other' (Kurds). The latter have strengthened their identification with their own ethnic group throughout this process of renewal. This, of course, was reflected on and reproduced by and during the grassroots mobilization.

Throughout the mobilization, the Turkish-Kurdish divide was reproduced along two different lines: 1) non-ethnicized and 2) ethnicized and stigmatizing. Regarding the former, Kurdish people are seen by Turkish residents as 'backward', 'illiterate', and 'unmannered' and are mostly referred to as 'Easterners' who 'need to adjust' to city life. Yet, their being 'illiterate', 'backward' or 'uncivilized' is not ethnicized in this patronizing line of boundary re-making. In this sense, some members of the Tarlabası Organization blame the 'Easterners' for selling out their struggle, as Mr. RT mentioned:

*The Easterners, when the municipality gave them 50 thousand in return for their houses, they accepted as they had not seen that much money in their lifetime. This weakened our hands and that is why we face the expropriation threat right now. (Mr. RT, lower-class, Turkish, property owner)*

In Mr. RT's view, 'Easterners' sell the struggle as they are 'unmannered', poor people who do not know how to act as a collective to defend their rights, and as they 'sell out', people like him suffer facing the threat of losing their properties. While complaining about them, Mr. RT, like other people who engage in this sort of boundary re-making, does not ethnicize the problem but refers to 'Easterners', which makes reference to developmentalist discourse of the Turkish Republic. On the other hand, these 'Easterners' may be accepted as 'deserving' poor *if and only if* they get to learn the manners of and adjust to city life.

The second line, which is ethnicized and stigmatizing, is more aggressive. It excludes Kurdish people by portraying them as 'terrorist', 'violent', 'plunderer', 'parasites', etc. To illustrate how a dividing line of ethnicity is reproduced within the grassroots mobilization, I shall refer here to a conversation that took place during a meeting. A member of the organization, who is a Kurdish property owner, suggested blocking traffic on Tarlabası Boulevard as a form of direct action against the urban renewal project. While he thought this would attract media attention better than any other type of action, his idea was rejected out of hand by some other members of the Tarlabası Organization. The following

conversation between Mr. AH (early migrant, shopkeeper, Turkish) and Mr. B (forced migrant, owner-occupier, Kurdish) is revealing:

*Mr. AH- We do not want any confrontation with the police. We do not want to confirm the stigma. We are not 'terrorists'.*

*Mr. B- You do not become a terrorist blocking the street. But yes, you confront the police if you block the road. Indeed the police confront you. We have a right to demonstrate.*

*Mr. AH- No, never. I do not want to do anything against the police.*

The cautious attitude, especially among early migrant Turkish residents, toward getting involved in actions that confront the police and confirm the stigma of being a 'Tarlabaşı terrorist' marked the discussions about transgressive protests. This indeed was not only about refraining from confronting the police but also about 'other'ing and re/drawing their own (i.e., as Turks, early migrants) boundaries with the Tarlabaşı Kurds, who confront or are confronted by the police during the demonstrations and stigmatized as the 'terrorists' of Tarlabaşı. Surprisingly, this tension did not result in any dispute within the organization, as it was lowered by Mr. AH, one of the initial founders. He put forward the argument that the organization would not be able to mobilize enough people to engage in such action. This argument was enough to marginalize Mr. B's proposal. As revealed in a later interview, Mr. AH put this argument forward only because he wanted to eliminate this proposal in an acceptable manner. He himself was not enthusiastic about involving 'Kurdish' participants in the actions of the organization. According to him, they had nothing to do with the organization's struggle because they were mostly renters who did not even pay their rents. Mr. AH was not only stigmatizing Kurds as 'terrorists', 'violent', etc. but was also voicing the 'property nationalism' that the Tarlabaşı Organization was based on. He was trying to keep owner-occupier, 'well-mannered', 'deserving' Kurdish people in the mobilization to make the organization more powerful in its efforts to protect property ownership rights, while excluding the 'terrorist', 'uncivilized', 'violent', mostly renter Kurdish. This exclusionary incorporation of the Kurdish into the mobilization underlies the property nationalism of Tarlabaşı Organization. Later in the interview Mr. AH told me that the municipal authorities should consider themselves 'lucky' as the board members of the organization wanted to pursue 'decent' talks rather than 'sending the Kurds to throw two bombs at the municipal building on Tarlabaşı Boulevard'. Thus, he presents the exclusionary inclusion of Kurds in the mobilization as a potential threat to the municipality.

Property ownership and ethnicity operate together as connecting and dividing lines in this boundary-making process, where 'we' and 'they' were re-established by the (non) members of the organization and the moral superiority of one's group was reaffirmed. This not only helped to establish and/or maintain group norms and membership but also changed or maintained the balance of power between the groups.

## Conclusion

In Istanbul of the 2010s, the urban transformation agenda has worked as a tool to redistribute the urban space and resources among social classes. The local and central governments take an active role in this process of accumulation by dispossession. Tarlabası was one of the historical disadvantaged neighborhoods that have been targeted for renewal by the local authorities in partnership with the private developers. In this chapter, I examined how Tarlabası residents experienced the process of displacement.

To start with their experiences of the policy and the process of living under the threat of displacement, all residents support the renewal of their neighborhood but not the method of renewal the municipality is using. Almost all see it as a forced move while some, those who have felt stuck in the neighborhood but could not move for years, think it is a chance for them to move to other neighborhoods.

Residents of Tarlabası suffered from a spiral of decline after the announcement of the project. The social functioning of the neighborhood was hindered as the community feeling and social networks eroded slowly with the out-moving of the neighbors and safety decreased with the increasing vacancy. Increasing rent levels in adjacent areas put extra pressure on the residents. The municipality and its partner pressured the renters to sign the eviction papers or pay more rent, while they used expropriation as a tool to pressure the property owners. The use of time by the state as a strategy – in Bourdieu's words (2000, p. 278), "the exercise of power over people's time" – was a crucial tool for the state's appropriation of space for gentrification in Tarlabası. The residents were exposed to uncertainty and anxious waiting because the municipality didn't inform them well and postponed implementation of the plans during the process. Besides, anxious waiting for expropriations was a burden for the property owners.

There were no mechanisms to ensure the participation of the residents in the process, but the neighborhood organization could contest this and thereby opened some space for participation. This effort did not bring much gain, though, as most of the demands of the organization were rejected during the negotiations. None of the residents of Tarlabası, neither the property owners nor the renters, were satisfied with the provisions offered by the project.

It is the lower-class renters and property owners who became economically and socially dispossessed after this process. Lower-class property owners could not improve their housing conditions after displacement, while the ones with stable jobs and higher incomes could improve theirs. Lower-class renters had worse housing conditions, while few renters with stable jobs and relatively higher incomes could get houses in better condition.

Most moved within or close to the neighborhood. The ones who moved out of Tarlabası were happy to have done so, while some others were not satisfied with their new neighborhoods. The ones who moved away came back to Tarlabası for economic (finding a job, shopping etc.) and social reasons, hence the importance of their social networks.

The Turkish-Kurdish divide was reproduced through the process of renewal as the residents redrew their ethnic boundaries. Tenure status also acted as a dividing line as property owners did not perceive renters as rightful parties. Besides, renters were pressured by the property owners who asked them to pay rent for sold properties. Moreover, class worked as a binding element among the property owners who formed the neighborhood organization. These lower-middle- and middle-class owners had similar concerns. Class in combination with ethnicity played a divisive role in the process of renewal as the ‘frontline of Tarlabası’ distanced itself from the ‘Tarlabası down the hill’.

Households sought support from their social networks and from organizations to deal with the negative impacts of displacement. Staying put in Tarlabası to keep their social networks intact, doubling-up with family members, minimizing expenses and getting another job were some other household-level strategies. The property owners got organized around the neighborhood organization to contest the conditions of the project, though their efforts to stop the project were not successful.

There is little research on displacement experiences in Turkish cities. The findings regarding the impacts and the dynamics of grassroots mobilization presented here are in line with what the existing literature suggests (Erman 2009, Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, Kuyucu 2009, İslam 2009).

Drawing upon the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, the material presented here suggests that the formalization of informal housing arrangements and expropriations of private property before putting it into the service of private investors work to redistribute the urban space and resources between different classes in Istanbul. The local and central governments take an active role in this process of accumulation by dispossession.

Displacement in this context is discretionary and direct. It is discretionary as there is no uniform relocation policy and the existing laws and regulations do not formulate clearly the public responsibilities regarding citizen participation and redistribution of benefits during the process. As the result, authorities widely use their discretionary power to manage the process. Displacement is direct in the sense that the displaced are hit hard by the dispossession of their properties and rights. It is the lower class residents that suffer the most from these dispossessions. Residents contest the procedures in order to participate in the process through the neighborhood organizations. Yet, these grassroots mobilizations are often divided along property ownership, class and ethnicity lines and do not manage to stop the implementation of the plans.

# Chapter 10

## A Comparative Look at Displacement Experiences in Amsterdam and Istanbul

*I wish we also had the conditions they provide (in the Netherlands), they provide good opportunities there. It would not be like here. They would not treat anyone unjustly there.”*  
(Mrs. H, lower-class, Turkish, property owner, Tarlabası)

*“Here [The Netherlands] and there [Turkey] are very different. For Turkey to have such a system like the one here, oooo [meaning it would take long time]... We complain here but this is the way they can manage it here.”*  
(Mr. CK, lower-class, Turkish, regular renter, VDP)

This research contributes to the literature by using the theoretical lens of accumulation by dispossession to study the experiences of displacement in different contexts. In this concluding chapter, a comparative account of the main questions of this study is presented. I first provide a summary of the macro-level political-economic dynamics that cause displacement. Secondly, a comparative account of how accumulation by dispossession works in the contexts of urban renewal in Amsterdam and Istanbul is presented. Following in the footsteps of Harvey (2003), I investigate and compare how the four elements of accumulation by dispossession, namely state redistribution; privatization and commodification; financialization; and the management of crises, actually work in the different contexts of urban renewal in Amsterdam and Istanbul. In addition, I discuss two themes that emerged from the fieldwork, namely, the complementary use of formality and informality by the authorities and how residents see the state during the process of displacement. Thirdly, I present a comparison of the displacement experiences in these two cities.

### **10.1 The macro-level political-economic dynamics that cause displacement of individual renters in Amsterdam and Istanbul**

The fact that displacement has an expanding geography led us to inquire why increasing numbers of residents in cities around the world are exposed to the process of displacement. This research has addressed that issue under the first research question: What are the macro-level dynamics that cause displacement? Behind the demolitions and upgrading in many localities, we discern the macro-level process of accumulation by dispossession, as Harvey (2008) conceptualizes it based on Marxist theory. In other words, displacement is

seen here as a socio-spatial manifestation of accumulation by dispossession in the context of urban renewal.

Even though the actors, dynamics and policies of urban renewal that cause the displacement of residents in the cities of Amsterdam and Istanbul seem to be quite different at first glance, at a more abstract level, the rationale of urban renewal is similar in these two cities. Urban renewal works to re-differentiate housing-market positions of different tenure groups and thereby reallocate urban space among different classes in both cities. While the re-differentiation of the housing position of different classes works through the privatization of social housing and the promotion of homeownership in Amsterdam, in Istanbul it works through the formalization of informal housing arrangements and the expropriation of private property before putting it into the service of private investors. In both contexts, the socio-spatial make-up of the cities is altered through these projects and brings about dispossession for the lower class. But how this happens and to what effect varies in important ways between Amsterdam and Istanbul.

## **10.2 How it works locally: putting processes of urban renewal under the theoretical lens of accumulation by dispossession**

Accumulation by dispossession explains why residents are exposed to displacement in many cities. Yet it works differently in different contexts. Here I investigate and compare how four elements of accumulation by dispossession, namely 1) state redistributions; 2) privatization and commodification; 3) financialization; and 4) management of crises, work in the different contexts of urban renewal in Amsterdam and Istanbul.

### **10.2.1 State redistributions**

In both contexts, the local and central governments play a direct role in determining who will benefit from and who will get dispossessed as a result of urban renewal. To start with Istanbul, the district government had a very central role in closing the rent gap in Tarlabaşı while displacing the lower class residents. Beyoğlu Municipality supported and provided the infrastructure for the gentrification of the district through different projects such as the construction of the Talimhane tourism area. It also enabled the private developer to benefit from the huge rent gap together with tax concessions and decreased outlays, which all in all reduced the cost of developing the area by 35 percent (Erdem 2005). Besides, the local municipality made the private developer company a partner to its public power of expropriation, which gave the developer a solid guarantee that the project would go on even if the property owners would not agree with the terms and conditions. On the other hand, the municipality's generosity faded away when it came to lightening the burden on the displaced. Given the lack of a uniform relocation policy that guarantees rights for the residents, the local municipality, together with its private partner, used its discretionary power to decide who gets what in the way of provisions. While informal renters and

squatters were totally ignored, property owners and formal renters were offered some benefits.

As for Amsterdam, the district and city governments together with the housing corporations, have made direct investment in public spaces in Indische Buurt through emblematic projects like the upgrading of Javastraat and have invested in campaigns to boost the image of the neighborhood, which in turn have promoted gentrification there. Other emblematic projects, particularly those located at Timorplein and Javaplein, have altered the image of the neighborhood by bringing in new cultural, commercial and tourist facilities such as a cinema, library, cafes and a hostel. These facilities have attracted tourists and the middle class into the Indische Buurt, thereby contributing to its gentrification. Besides, the district government has issued permits for subdividing existing buildings into apartments, mostly on Javastraat, paving the way for the sale of individual units. Thereby, urban space in the neighborhood has been redistributed to the middle class people.

#### 10.2.2 Privatization and commodification

In Istanbul, privatization works differently than it does in Amsterdam. Unlike the situation in Amsterdam, Istanbul is not undergoing privatization in a classical sense as most of the property in the renewal area is already owned by private parties. Yet, the municipality of Beyoğlu holds the power over the disposition of properties in the designated renewal area. The district government pushes people to go along with the terms and conditions of the project, either by selling their property to the developer firm<sup>112</sup> or getting a share of the redeveloped area. Thus, the municipality mediates in the transfer of property ownership from individual owners to the developer. On the other hand, the municipality uses its power to expropriate the properties if the owners do not agree with the terms of the project. The municipality expropriates properties owned by private parties, after which they are transferred to the private developer. Thus, expropriation works as a powerful tool to transfer property rights from low-income owners to a private developer.

In Amsterdam, the privatization of social housing lies at the heart of the renewal operations. Through either sales of existing social housing or conversions to private rentals, the social housing stock is reduced during urban renewal. Hitherto uncommodified, social housing has been commodified rapidly from the 1990s on (Uitermark, 2010) and, with the renewal operations of the 2000s, the pace of commodification has been accelerating. In Amsterdam at large, the change in the composition of the housing stock has been remarkable in the last decades. The renewal projects in Amsterdam also involve the privatization of social housing. The number of social housing in the blocks was reduced drastically in order to provide private rental housing. In short, in both renewal blocks, the reduction of social housing was rather sharp.

### 10.2.3 Financialization

As the third element of accumulation by dispossession, financialization works through the promotion of homeownership in the process of urban renewal in both cities. In Amsterdam, on the one hand, the owner-occupied sector is enlarged through the sale of social housing. On the other hand, promotion of homeownership as one of the aims of urban policy is helped by the financial benefits/tax concessions in the Dutch system. Besides, there is extra discount for first-time homebuyers. Moreover, there is a national mortgage insurance guaranteeing that loans (up to €250,000) will be paid off if the borrower fails to pay back the loan (Aalbers, 2011); this tends to lower the cost of borrowing. In the renewal projects that are investigated in this study, there are no owner-occupied units. It is therefore not possible to talk about financialization for these specific projects. Yet, it should be noted that these two projects are part of a bigger operation that brings about financialization of the built environment at large through the increased homeownership in gentrifying neighborhoods.

As for Istanbul, homeownership among lower-class residents is widely promoted during the process of urban transformation through the provision of the right to buy a house in a mass housing estate built by the MHA, the public authority for mass housing in Turkey. Promotion of homeownership in this way works not only to formalize informal elements of the housing stock but also to make the lower class households indebted to the banks for their mortgages. On the one hand, the mortgage legislation, which was legitimized initially as a means to enable large segments of the population to become homeowners by offering long-term housing loans, was blended with other aims: to overcome the financial crisis and to restructure the public debt through reorganizing capital flows in the real estate market. On the other hand, the mortgage sector, in general, offers great potential for the banking sector to grow. In this scenario, the MHA has been attributed a special role in the establishment of secondary markets that the mortgage system in Turkey still lacks but which would provide liquidity for mortgage lenders in the primary markets. As a public institution, the MHA is not only supposed to back this market up, allowing it to ripen and deepen more easily, but it is also supposed to liquidate its receivables, by means of the securitization<sup>133</sup> of the built environment. All in all, the Tarlaşa renewal project formalized the informalities in the housing market and inserted luxurious housing units into the local stock. The renters and property owners who accepted the MHA houses became indebted to the banks and/or to the MHA. Furthermore, the property owners who wanted to return to the renewed area had to get indebted to the project developer and/or to the banks.

### 10.2.4 Management and manipulation of crises

In Harvey's understanding, the creation, management, and manipulation of crises are a key strategy for regressive redistribution of wealth on a world scale (Harvey 2005, p. 171). Such crisis politics manifests itself also in the processes of urban renewal in the cases studied

here. To manage the economic crisis of 2001, the central government in Turkey transferred economic resources<sup>114</sup> to the urban redevelopment sector through the investments of the MHA with the aim of “revitalizing the economy by motivating the housing production sector in Turkey” (the President of MHA, the First General Assembly Meeting on Housing, April 2006). On the one hand, urban transformation projects have been initiated in mainly gecekondu and historical inner city neighborhoods and on the other hand, MHA have produced housing estates on a massive scale to counter the crisis. Crisis talk was also apparent in the case of Tarlabaşı. Officials routinely portrayed the neighborhood as an area where acute problems had to be addressed. The dilapidation of the built environment and the social problems in the neighborhood were used to legitimize the project’s implementation.

In the Dutch case, the urban renewal of Indische Buurt is part of a more encompassing process of urban restructuring in response to two different kinds of crises. The first of these crises, is the chronic need to cut budgets to prevent deficits. Since the early 1990s, social housing has been considered a major financial burden. The urban renewal operations are one way to reduce the share of social housing as many units are brought into the private sector after demolition or renovation. Another crisis concerns the social situation in deprived neighborhoods. By designating forty neighborhoods as problematic areas, the central government diagnosed a social, economic and physical crisis in the neighborhoods that needed more policy attention.

In both cities, the residents of the renewal areas have long suffered from the neglect of maintenance and the lack of public investment. Years of disinvestment in the built environment by housing corporations in the Amsterdam case and by the municipality as well as the property owners in the Istanbul case brought about the physical and social deterioration of these disadvantaged neighborhoods. The uneven development was not only an expression of the conditions that residents had suffered for years but was also the impetus for the authorities in charge of renewal to label these neighborhoods as blighted or problem areas. In this sense, the production and management of dilapidation as a crisis is directly related to how these neighborhoods are put on the agenda for urban renewal and gentrification (Smith 1996).

### **10.3 Displacement experiences under a comparative lens**

In this section, I compare the displacement experiences on the basis of the three dimensions of displacement experiences<sup>115</sup>, which are, first, the experiences of the policy and living under the threat of displacement, secondly, the impacts of the displacement, and last, the collective and household strategies. The first dimension is discussed on the basis of four themes. The first is the interchangeable use of formality and informality. Secondly, I elaborate on how citizens face, meet, contest and ignore the state through the renewal process, which affects the state-citizen relations. The third theme concerns the pressures

of displacement, while the last one refers to the residents' experiences with participation, information and the provisions offered during the process.

### 10.3.1 Experiences of the policy and living under the threat of displacement

#### **In/formality: The role of calculated informality in the urban renewal processes in Amsterdam and Istanbul**

"...[i]nformality exists at the very heart of the state and is an integral part of the territorial practices of state power." (Roy 2009, p.84)

Housing corporations start renting out vacant flats to temporary renters and anti-squatters<sup>16</sup> instead of regular renters as early as five years before renovation and demolition. This implies the deregulation of rent protection, as temporary renters and anti-squatters do not have much in the way of housing rights and rent protection, but it also makes it relatively easy for the housing corporations to manage the process of displacement. First, through the insertion of temporary renters and anti-squatters in the buildings to be renewed or demolished, housing corporations set aside their formal obligations to compensate renters for their displacement. Secondly, temporary renters depend on anti-squatting agencies<sup>17</sup> and housing corporations to help them find alternative housing. Their precarious position is the main reason that they usually do not voice dissent against these agents, even if they do not receive proper treatment. Thirdly, the insertion of temporary renters also changes the social fabric of the housing blocks and streets, which decreases the feeling of belonging to the place among the residents who are still living there. This may affect the emergence of contestation against renewal projects; if people do not feel at home anymore in their neighborhood, they will want to move out as soon as possible.

In addition, the allocation of housing to temporary renters is loosely regulated, which creates more space for informality. For instance, there is no fixed waiting list or any other mechanism for the allocation of temporary housing. Every housing corporation and anti-squatting agency distributes the available housing stock in its own way, e.g., through waiting lists or personal connections. As this research has revealed, at Ceramplein there were a few anti-squatters who could get their relocation housing through personal connections at the housing corporation whereas others were not helped at all. Likewise, the rents that anti-squatters were paying for houses with more or less the same conditions were different. Deregulation brings about the discretionary power that housing corporations and anti-squatting agencies can exercise regarding the allocation of housing in the temporary housing market and the management of processes of urban renewal and of displacement.

All in all, this deregulation of renter protection through renting to temporary renters and anti-squatters "...indicates a calculated informality, one that involves purposive action and planning, and one where the seeming withdrawal of regulatory power creates a logic of resource allocation, accumulation, and authority. It is in this sense that informality,

while a system of deregulation, can be thought of as a mode of regulation” (Roy 2009, p.83). In other words, the insertion of temporary renters and anti-squatters paves the way for a gentrified future.

Because temporary renters do not enjoy formal rights that would safeguard their housing positions, they either tap into the institutional practices of calculated informality, such as the provision of housing through personal connections, or they use their own informal networks to find alternative housing. As discussed in previous chapters, anti-squatters try to be ‘good renters’ and ‘hope’ that they ‘deserve’ to be helped by the housing corporation to find alternative housing. Most of the time, this precariousness leaves them with no option but to use their own informal networks – friends, family, acquaintances – to get a roof over their heads. Some practice couch surfing at their friends’ places, while others move back to their parents’ houses. Most find their houses through their informal social networks.

As for Istanbul, the sharp neoliberal turn in urban policy is based on the formalization of the informal housing market as a way to control disadvantaged neighborhoods and to reregulate the housing market (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). This formalization, on the one hand, aims to incorporate the informal elements into the market mechanisms through the proactive agency of the state. Hitherto widely tolerated, the informal housing market together with other informalities embedded in disadvantaged neighborhoods are now seen as unwanted hindrances that need to be cleared away. On the other hand, this formalization still leaves room for the public authorities to exercise discretionary power regarding the management of the process. This stems from the ambiguity of the new urban renewal law in framing the obligations of the public authorities and the rights of the renters. For instance, there is no uniform relocation policy and the rights of the renters are not guaranteed by law, which leaves considerable space for discretionary power and informality, e.g., regarding the allocation of benefits to residents. Such ambiguities regarding the regulation of urban renewal are not due to a lack of oversight on the part of the policy-makers. Rather, they are “precisely the basis of state authority and serve as modes of sovereignty and discipline” (Roy 2009, p.83). Public authorities use their discretionary power to manage the process of urban renewal, and only some of the residents, namely those who benefit from that discretionary power, get satisfied.

The complementary use of formality and informality in different settings ensures that displacement works smoothly. Case studies in this research break with conventional thinking that attaches informality to the cities of Global South and rather shows that complementary use of informality and formality in different settings constitutes the basis of the power to manage the processes of displacement in different contexts.

### **‘Seeing like a state’ and seeing the state<sup>118</sup>**

In both contexts, renewal neighborhoods are designated as problem areas with high unemployment, crime, low levels of educational attainment and poor living conditions.

Renewal interventions entail the social engineering of these neighborhoods, transforming the housing stock, making them 'livable' and eliminating unwanted situations such as crime and poverty. While in Amsterdam the insertion of the middle class as a role model for disadvantaged groups is expected to improve these neighborhoods, in Istanbul the public authorities seek to transform disadvantaged neighborhoods by replacing the poor with middle and higher class residents. Although the official aim is to improve the conditions of neighborhoods and make them livable, this approach ignores the people living there, the existing communities and the social relations. Such 'state simplification' involves "a sweeping, rational engineering of all aspects of social life in order to improve the human condition" (Scott 1998, p.88). The public interventions in both contexts impose rationalized visions of society. In Amsterdam, the interventions have more of a 'civilizing' tone<sup>19</sup> and resident participation in the process functions as a tool to produce consent, as Huisman (2011) underlines. In Istanbul, it is more uprooting as it sweeps away the poor from these neighborhoods towards the urban peripheries. What hinders the process of displacement in Istanbul is the contestation of the residents around election time, when party politics plays an important role in tilting the power imbalances between the local governments and the citizens.

Once their neighborhoods get targeted by the state for renewal, residents face, negotiate with, get assistance from, resist and/or ignore the state institutions and agents that implement the renewal policy. Through these encounters – or the lack thereof – the ways the residents perceive the state and housing corporations may be reshaped during the process of urban renewal. Below I will discuss how residents perceive the state and how they respond to it.

To start with Istanbul, most residents view the state as a threatening entity and their encounters are rather confrontational. Most think that the state is out to confiscate their property and dispossess the people. Experiencing years of neglect, residents mostly blame the state for the deterioration of the neighborhood. Facing the uprooting intervention of the (local) authorities, most residents feel pressured by and powerless against the municipality. One-third of the residents, most of whom are lower-class renters, think they cannot do anything but accept the conditions as it is not possible to confront the state. This attitude becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, a presupposition that in/directly causes it to come true. They think they cannot do anything against the powerful local government and, as they do not challenge its power, they affirm and strengthen its power. This, in a nutshell, summarizes the power asymmetries of urban renewal in Istanbul.

The uprooting operation of the municipality triggers a search for justice from the judicial system, from international organizations such as the European Court of Human Rights, etc. The national judicial system was indeed a tool that the property owners used in their appeal for justice. When the national legal paths were exhausted, the ECHR was petitioned to ask for justice vis-à-vis the state. On the other hand, some Kurdish residents ignored the municipality and were reluctant to seek its support as they did not trust it.

In Amsterdam the encounters with the housing corporation and relevant public organizations were mostly uncontroversial except in the case of a few residents who experienced confrontations. Even though residents went through uncertainty for years, about which they were not happy, the professional support they received from the housing corporation to find relocation housing was satisfactory for most of them. While only one had to go to court to resolve a dispute with the housing corporation, two other families had to negotiate hard for the housing they wanted to get. Considering the very tight housing market in Amsterdam and the strong renters' rights, some regular renters strategized about their relocation to get the better house they desired. To that end, they waited for the renewal to occur and put a lot of effort into finding a house they wanted by using their priority status in the social housing market.

Whereas in Amsterdam, the process is more routine, as procedures are formalized and renters have strong rights, the brutal intervention by the district municipality in Istanbul brings about more confrontational encounters.

### **Living under the threat of displacement**

Residents in both contexts lived under the threat of displacement for some years and were exposed to the pressures of displacement, though in different forms and to different extents. In this study, the residents' experiences of living under the threat of displacement were examined. Here, I account for how they experienced the changes in their neighborhood (neighbors moving out, change in the profile of commercial shops, change in the public services, etc.). I then discuss the appropriation strategies of the authorities involved in renewal and those of the landlords.

#### *Experiences of residents regarding the changes in the neighborhood:*

In Tarlabaşı, the announcement of the renewal project increased the attractiveness of adjacent areas for investors; developers started to buy building lots in the extended renewal area and beyond. Increasing prices meant increasing pressure on Tarlabaşı residents, as the chances to move within Tarlabaşı were reduced. The announcement of the project also affected the social functioning of the neighborhood. When some of the neighbors moved out, the community feeling and support networks started to erode. As vacancy increased, safety went down. The remaining residents felt less and less at home in their neighborhood as community cohesion declined. Local shops closed down, increasing the impediments to everyday life. These developments set into motion a spiral of decline: Tarlabaşı was not the same neighborhood anymore, which pushed the remaining residents to move out of the area as soon as they could.

In contrast to Tarlabaşı, the renewal of the two blocks in Indische Buurt did not trigger investment demand in the adjacent areas, nor was there pressure on the property prices or rents. Yet the social functioning of the blocks was affected seriously. The housing corporation started early on to change the profile of the households by putting

in temporary renters whenever regular renters moved out. The neighbors moved out gradually and were replaced with temporary renters who were ‘strangers’, making it less and less attractive for the remaining residents to live in the housing block. However, for the middle-class regular renters, who had few ties with their neighbors, the change in the profile of the residents did not matter.

The last residents to move out of the housing blocks in Indische Buurt felt very unsafe. There was less social control, as many of their neighbors had left and it was not possible to get to know the newcomers, who were using the empty buildings. As the vacancy rate increased, a perceived safety decreased. The housing blocks were not physically safe either (holes in the ceiling, etc.) and the poor hygienic conditions (mice, etc.) made it too problematic to remain living there, as some renters complained.

In Tarlabası, the pressure of displacement increased when the municipality started the demolitions in the neighborhood. As the shadow of the bulldozers fell over their streets and houses, the threat of displacement became more tangible to the remaining residents, who realized that they would have to move out soon. Likewise, renovation had started in a piecemeal fashion in the Van der Pek block, thereby putting pressure on the remaining residents to move out as soon as possible.

#### *Appropriation strategies of the authorities*

The effects these changes had on the housing market and the areas’ social functioning were aggravated by the pressure exerted by the municipality in Tarlabası and by the housing corporation in the Indische Buurt. To start with Tarlabası, it was unclear when the demolitions would start; they were often delayed, but the municipality kept up the pressure. Renters were threatened by the municipality and its private partner to sign eviction agreements or else face higher rents or eviction court cases. As an extra-legal complement to the appropriation strategy of the local government, the harassment by municipal police and the threat of cutting access to electricity, water, etc. worked to put pressure on renters to move out. Likewise, the municipal police put local shop keepers under pressure by checking their business permits and licenses. Property owners were exposed to threats and harassment by the municipality, which used expropriation as a weapon. As for Indische Buurt, the housing corporation pressured some regular renters to speed up the relocation process. Especially the very last households, who were mostly large families, living in the block felt this pressure.

In both contexts, the processes were characterized by uncertainty and anxious waiting due to the way the authorities – the housing corporation in Indische Buurt and the municipality in Tarlabası – managed time and information during the process. In Tarlabası, the municipality did not inform the residents about the renewal decisions, yet the authorities delayed demolitions, raised false hopes and rushed people out of their houses. Property owners were also exposed to the anxious waiting of a long-lasting

expropriation process. The fear of losing their housing, shops, jobs, neighbors and investment for the future is what made the waiting so anxious.

In Indische Buurt, only some of the renters had been informed by the housing corporation years beforehand that there were plans for renewal. Yet nothing was made clear. It took a long time for the corporation to actually start the renewal, and all that time the renters had to wait in uncertainty in their deteriorating houses. Being kept 'on-hold' diminished the quality of their stay for some residents, as they no longer put any effort into making their houses nicer; for some others it did not matter, as they strategized about their stay in to-be-renovated blocks so that they could get better houses in the end. Furthermore, the corporation initially did not announce its concrete plans to the residents. Thus, the renters did not know if everyone would be able to return to the block. Uncertainty was also apparent regarding the completion of the renovation and the delivery of the renovated apartments. The temporary renters of Indische Buurt were not informed well about the plans or how long they could stay. Some did not mind as they were satisfied with the temporary nature of their tenure, partly because they paid so little rent.

The case studies showed how neighborhoods/blocks change after the authorities target them for renewal and how these changes are experienced by and affect the residents even before their actual displacement. Both the Amsterdam and Istanbul areas of renewal underwent a further spiral of decline after the announcement of the project. And in both cases, the authorities pressured the residents to move out as soon as possible, which made the process harder for some.

### **Residents' experiences with participation in the process, information, guidance and provisions**

#### *Negotiated/contested participation vs. invited/procedural participation*

In Amsterdam, the procedures for residents' participation in the renewal process are well defined by the regulations with which housing corporations are obliged to comply. The housing corporation invited the residents to join the residents' committee and to take part in decision-making on renewal. The most active residents joined the committee and kept busy making decisions about the interior design and some outdoor details of the to-be-renovated buildings. They neither represented nor had contact with the other residents. This procedural or invited participation not only gave the renewal operation legitimacy by empowering the residents to take part in making some – but only some – decisions, as Huisman (2011) emphasizes, but also held back the active residents, who wanted to participate in the process, from engaging in any resistance by narrowing their political space and imagination for alternative renewal schemes. On the other hand, temporary residents were not given any space for participation, nor did they claim any, as they needed the assistance of the housing corporation to find alternative housing and/or they did not consider themselves party to the renewal.

In Istanbul, there is no regulatory framework for resident participation in decision-making processes. As a result, the discretionary power of the public authorities shaped the process. Beyoğlu Municipality and its private partner encouraged the participation of the Non-Muslim minority foundations and even altered the projects according to their demands. On the other hand, other property owners and some formal renters had to claim their right to participate in the decision-making process. These residents formed the Association for Solidarity with Tarlabası Property Owners and Renters (Tarlabası Organization), which resisted the project, with the intention to alter decisions that had already been made and negotiate on their demands for the renewal. The contestation was successful in the sense that the municipality agreed to start negotiations with the organization.

Even though the participation models are different, neither the procedural/invited participation in the Amsterdam case nor the negotiated/contested participation in the Istanbul case resulted in any real gain on the part of the residents, as there were severe power imbalances involved. The respondents who participated in the residents' committee in Indische Buurt were satisfied with the decisions they could take part in, though they were acutely aware that they had very limited power to alter any decisions in the process. As for the property owners who were active in the Tarlabası Organization, they experienced the authorities' unwillingness to alter any significant decision regarding the project. They changed their strategy successively from *negotiate* to *participate* in the project to *resist* to *annul* the project.

#### *Satisfaction with information and guidance provided during the process*

In both contexts, the residents were exposed to uncertainty and were not well informed about the pending renovations for years. The uncertainty became much less for the residents with relatively stronger positions in both contexts as they were relatively better informed about the process compared to other resident groups. The regular renters in Amsterdam and property owners in Istanbul were informed about the renewal through the information meetings organized by the authorities. Later on, one-to-one meetings were arranged to talk about the individual cases in both contexts. Professional support was available in Amsterdam to help regular renters realize their rights to relocation. It was satisfactory in the sense that many residents received enough support to get the relocation housing they needed. On the other hand, this professional support was not enough for some regular renters of Moroccan background to get the housing they wanted. As for Istanbul, there was no equivalent support for the residents to find relocation housing.

#### *Satisfaction with provisions*

Regular renters in Amsterdam were provided with relatively generous provisions (relocation compensation and the right to relocation housing) and most were satisfied with them. Yet it was hard for some regular renters with a migration background to realize their

rights. Temporary renters were not offered any provisions; nonetheless, a few who had good relations with the housing corporation were offered relocation housing. In Istanbul, most property owners were not satisfied with any provisions. The informal renters were not provided any benefits and experienced great difficulty finding alternative housing. As for formal renters, a few, who had always wanted to move out of the neighborhood, could get relocation housing at the mass housing estate, with which they were satisfied.

### 10.3.2 Impacts of displacement

*Economic burdens:* In both contexts, the displaced suffered economic burdens due to displacement. In Amsterdam, all renters experienced an increase in their rent after relocation. While the rent subsidies still protect the residents with a low income against such increases, it was more problematic for renters whose incomes were slightly above the ceiling for rent subsidy, so they had to pay the increase out of their own pockets. Likewise, due to the higher expenses, around one-third of the respondents from Ceramplein and one-fourth of the VDP respondents had difficulty making ends meet due to their higher expenses after relocation. All temporary renters had rent increases after displacement. The ones with a very low income had trouble getting by after displacement.

As for Tarlaabaşı, the economic burden of displacement was heavier for the lower class households, especially for the renters and squatters, as they were not compensated for displacement. Some lower-class residents doubled up with family members because they could not afford to rent a new house. Most of the owner-occupiers also became economically worse off; either they did not have enough money after selling their houses or they incurred extra costs due to displacement. Others suffered from increasing expenses such as higher rent, commuting and utility bills. Some property owners had to become renters, as they could not afford to purchase a house for themselves with the compensation they had received.

*Changes in housing conditions:* Despite the fact that the higher rents put an economic burden on the renters, all of the renters in Indische Buurt experienced some improvements in their housing conditions after relocation, e.g., better insulation, central heating.

The impact of displacement on housing conditions was mixed in Tarlaabaşı. On the one hand, property owners with relatively high incomes and/or stable jobs and/or with properties of higher value had better conditions in their new houses/shops. On the other hand, the owners with less income and/or properties with lesser value had to move to houses with worse conditions, as they could not afford any better ones. As for the renters, those with a low income had worse conditions after their displacement; they could not afford to get a better house due to increasing rent levels. Very few of the renters could get better houses or shops after the displacement, but those who did were the ones with a relatively high income and/or more stable jobs.

To sum up, while the housing conditions improved for all of the renters in the Amsterdam case, in Tarlaşa the conditions of the lower-class residents got worse after displacement.

*Satisfaction with the new neighborhood and the effects on social networks:* In Amsterdam, many renters could stay put in their original neighborhood, and they were satisfied about that. By staying, there was little rupture in their social networks and relations. Interestingly, the Moroccan and Turkish renters who moved within the neighborhood tended to relocate to blocks or parts of the neighborhood that are ethnically less mixed.

The middle-class Dutch households who could not move and had felt stuck in the neighborhood for years, even though they wanted to move out, were eventually able to move to neighborhoods they preferred. This was possible due to the priority status they obtained to relocate in the social rental system. As for the ones who stayed put in the blocks, the VDP residents appreciated the change in the renters' profile after renovation, whereas at Ceramplain there was a social divide among the newcomers and the old residents. The satisfaction among the former was related to the fact that VDP residents who stayed put in their block were mostly of a middle-class background. In the Ceramplain case, the renters were mostly of a working-class background.

Some of the residents who moved out of Tarlaşa were satisfied with their new neighborhoods while the rest were not, as they missed their old neighborhood, neighbors and the social environment back in Tarlaşa. Social networks were affected badly and the people who moved away came back to find jobs, buy groceries on credit, socialize, etc.

*Effects on access to workplace, health and education services:* As more than half of the displaced stayed in or close to Tarlaşa after displacement, access to their place of work was not affected very much. While a few moved closer to their work, some complained that they were now further away. The latter had a longer commute and higher travel expenses. Few among the displaced lost their jobs due to displacement. Some shop owners went out of business because they could not afford to open up a new place. Access to health services was not affected much for those who stayed in the neighborhood. For those who moved away, it became more difficult to get to the hospitals they needed. The impacts on children were mixed. Some got into better schools in the new neighborhoods even though they missed their friends in Tarlaşa. Others were not happy to stay put in Tarlaşa after displacement as they did not like to live there.

As for the residents of Ceramplain and the VDP block, access to health services and children's education was not affected much, as most remained in or close to the neighborhood. Among those who moved out of the neighborhood, there were some whose access to their workplace was affected in a negative way.

*Reshaping of boundaries between different social groups:* Throughout the processes of renewal in Amsterdam and Istanbul, social boundaries between different groups of residents were reshaped along the lines of ethnicity, tenure and class.

The parallels between the ethnic boundary-making processes in these two cities are striking regarding the divide between native Dutch and immigrants (especially Moroccan) in the Amsterdam case and the divide between Kurdish and Turkish in the Istanbul case were reproduced by residents. Established residents in both Istanbul and Amsterdam described as 'uncivilized', 'less decent' or 'unmannered' in a patronizing tone. In the stigmatizing and ethnicized version, these groups are described as 'the source of problems' in the Amsterdam context and as 'terrorist' in the Istanbul context. Even though the number of residents who re-drew their ethnic boundaries according to the ethnicized and stigmatizing version was relatively less, it is striking that urban renewal process reinforces the process of othering – of the Moroccan and the Kurdish residents among these residents.

Turning to tenure, in both contexts tenure formed a dividing line between property owners and in/formal renters in Istanbul and between regular and temporary renters in Amsterdam. In both cities, the authorities made use of classification along tenure lines as a strategy to divide and rule. This strategy worked better in the Netherlands, as rules and roles are more clearly defined there than in Turkey. Regular and temporary renters accommodated themselves to their roles during the process and did not try to change the status quo. Besides, as the number of temporary renters increased, so did social distance in the blocks; there was not much interaction between the temporary and the regular renters. Yet some temporary renters maintained good relations with regular renters, through whom they learned more about the renewal, and empathized with them.

As for Istanbul, at first the different tenure groups could, to an extent, come together around the Tarlabaşı Organization. The main reason is that the rules and roles were not defined well in the beginning and the classification strategy did not work as efficiently as it did in Amsterdam. Tenure status formed a dividing line between the property owners and the renters. Even though the property owners who were active in the organization put renters' rights on its agenda, pursuit of improvement in those rights never became a priority. In fact, most property owners thought that they were more 'rightful' than the renters and thought that they were the ones who were suffering most. Besides, renters were exposed to pressure from and exploitation by their landlords; the latter asked them to pay rent even though they had sold their properties for the sake of the project. Renters also reproduced this divide; they felt powerless and did not organize themselves to claim their rights, which resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Thirdly, class worked as a binding element in the resistance. Both the neighborhood organization in Istanbul and the residents' committee in Amsterdam consisted of relatively better-off residents, namely middle-class renters in Amsterdam and lower-middle-class owner-occupiers and renters in Istanbul. In Amsterdam, the residents' committee consisted of middle-class native-Dutch renters, except for one member who was a second-generation immigrant renter. In Istanbul, the founders of the organization were Turkish – with the exception of one Kurdish property owner – and were early migrants with a

lower-middle-class background. These people came together because of the similarity of the demands they had made regarding the renewal of their houses, while their similar class background together with their shared ethnicity played a binding role.

In Istanbul, class also played a divisive role, distinguishing these owners from the rest of the population of Tarlabaşı, who were lower-class residents. But class was not a dividing line among the residents in the Amsterdam case. The lack of class-based alignment there is due to the egalitarian rules for relocation, which ensure the compensation of regular renters. The absence of such rules and regulations in Istanbul makes dispossession a heavier burden for the lower class residents to bear.

In sum, the renewal processes in both cities meant not only change in the physical and social make-up of the renewal areas/blocks but also a redrawing of the boundaries between different social groups. The renewal in both cities served as a catalyst to strengthen and/or redefine the existing social boundaries between different groups as they went through the process.

### 10.3.3 Household and collective strategies

Residents in both contexts devised strategies to cope with displacement and its negative effects. These strategies constitute a crucial part of their displacement experience and are devised at the collective and household levels. To start with the latter, residents recruited support either from institutions or from their social networks (family, acquaintances and friends) to cope with the difficulties and problems involved in displacement.

In both cities, residents with relatively more rights, namely property owners in Istanbul and regular renters in Amsterdam, were provided with benefits, assistance and guidance by the project implementers, though to different extents. In Amsterdam, regular renters were surrounded by a web of institutions, namely the housing corporation, the OGA and the Renters' Support Unit, that were ready to support them to relocate. Despite this rich institutional environment, some had to rely on their social networks as a strategy to deal with the process. For instance, elderly households with a migration background needed help from family members to manage the process of displacement, as they did not have enough language proficiency and did not know the rules and regulations. Institutional support was weaker in Istanbul. Even though there were provisions for property owners, their rights were not clearly circumscribed as in Amsterdam, so they had to deal with the discretionary power of the public authorities regarding the allocation of any benefits. Rather than falling back on the institutions, they recruited the support of the organizations that were critical of the project, such as the Tarlabaşı Organization and the Contemporary Jurist Organization. To a large extent, they also had to rely on support from their social networks.

Temporary renters in Amsterdam and informal renters in Istanbul, on the other hand, could not ordinarily get institutional support. Instead, they had to individually mobilize their social networks to get help for various issues such as the physical chore of moving

out and the task of finding relocation housing. As the temporary/informal renters in both contexts had little or no rights, pulling in assistance from informal social networks played a significant role as a coping strategy. Among these renters, though, there were some who used their informal networks to get support from the institutions. In Amsterdam, some temporary renters, who had good contacts at the housing corporation, could get support for finding an alternative house (with a temporary contract) even though temporary renters do not have any right to a relocation house. Likewise, some informal renters in Istanbul, who had good contacts (through acquaintances, being a voter, etc.) at the municipality, could get some support from the municipality such as relocation compensation or transportation for moving.

Staying in the same neighborhood was another household strategy. The loss of social networks is detrimental, especially to those who are dependent on these networks for their economic and social survival. In Indische Buurt, this was mainly true for families of Turkish or Moroccan background that had strong networks. Especially the women in these families were very much grounded in the neighborhood, having a lot of friends and family members nearby and being able to speak their own language with people from their country of origin. This was also true for most of the disadvantaged families and Kurdish women in Istanbul, who tried to stay in the neighborhood so as not to lose their social networks and support mechanisms. Furthermore, the displaced who had to move out of Tarlabaşı tried to retain the socio-economic ties in the neighborhood for their survival. Some kept coming back to the old neighborhood to find job, to socialize and/or to do their grocery shopping.

Another household strategy was to save on household expenditure as a means to compensate for the increased cost of rent and other necessities after relocation, such as commuting expenses. In Amsterdam, while most were compensated for the rent increase or had no problem paying the higher rent, a few households did use this strategy. In Istanbul, though, it was a common strategy, as many residents suffered from the increasing expenses that were not covered by any public subsidy. Likewise, some households took a new job or put their children to work to help pay the bills. Doubling-up was another strategy, especially among lower-class residents. This is quite common in Istanbul, whereas in Amsterdam there was only one respondent who had joined households with family members.

As for collective strategies, in Istanbul residents got organized to collectively resist the renewal project, whereas in Amsterdam no such collective action was taken. In Istanbul the collective action revolved around the neighborhood organization that had been established by the property owners, who then recruited some renters to join in. Initially, the association tried to negotiate with the municipality to change the terms and conditions of the project. Then it started a legal battle, which was accompanied by demonstrations and media campaigns to raise public awareness. Appeals to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and UNESCO were made to counter the state power. Besides,

some collaborations and alliances were made with outside entities such as Amnesty International and S.O.S. Istanbul in an effort to make the organization's campaign more visible. As for Amsterdam, four reasons can be given for the absence of collective action. First, residents have strong rights regarding relocation, and they opt for actualizing those individual rights. Secondly, residents are surrounded by institutions that treat them individually. Even though the problem of displacement is common to all residents, this individualizing treatment pushes them away from collective action. Thirdly, the housing corporation initiated resident platforms and invited interested residents to take part in the process of renewal. The renters who were most active in the block participated in these platforms, where they could make decisions about the interior design of the houses. The platforms did not take or give any feedback from residents who did not participate. Nor did they have a say in fundamental decisions – i.e., regarding whether everyone would be able to move back to the renovated block. Through the initiation of the platforms, the housing corporation co-opted the residents who were most active and capable of organizing collective action against the conditions of the renewal. As the fourth factor, the relations between the neighbors were not strong; therefore, communication about renewal did not take place.

For these reasons, no collective strategies were applied at Ceramplain or in the Van der Pek blocks. Nor did the temporary renters use any collective strategy to deal with the process, though for different reasons. Temporary renters are in a very precarious position in the housing system. They do not have enough time to wait for a social rental dwelling, nor do they have a right to get a relocation house. In a tight housing market like that of Amsterdam, they tend to lower their expectations and hold on to whatever housing they can find. Most importantly, they are dependent on the housing corporations to find alternative housing, which makes it almost impossible for them to get involved in any collective action against the corporation.

Why was there contention in Istanbul but not in Amsterdam? According to Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark (2014), the level of contention can be explained by the extent to which rules and roles are defined in these two contexts. In the Dutch case the rules and roles are very clearly defined and the residents are differentiated into renter groups, who internalize their roles. In the Turkish case, though, at least at the beginning of the process, the rules and roles are not institutionalized or well defined. This not only creates discretionary power for the authorities but also some space for the residents to mobilize, as the residents do not simply accept the differentiations and rules imposed upon them.

## Conclusion

Cities are dynamic; they always change. Under the neoliberal policies, the desired urban change is rent-oriented, and urban restructuring becomes a tool to redistribute urban land and income in a regressive manner from the public to the private sector and from lower

to higher class people. As a result, many residents get displaced from their houses and neighborhoods and bear the burden of this change. Urban renewal thus functions as a tool to re-differentiate the market positions and reallocate urban space among different classes. This study has argued that, in the contemporary neoliberal policy context, urban renewal and displacement are social-spatial manifestations of accumulation by dispossession.

Both the Amsterdam and Istanbul cases represent examples of accumulation by dispossession. In Istanbul, this is very straightforward: property owners are dispossessed of their properties to make way for urban renewal projects, while renters are stripped of their rights and displaced. In Amsterdam, though, the situation is more ambivalent. The renters with standard social housing contracts do not lose their rights – they go to the top of the waiting list, receive compensation to cover relocation costs, and can call upon rent subsidies to cover the rent increases. As housing is transferred from the social to the private sector, it is the people who are not yet in the social housing system who are dispossessed: they face increasing costs or are priced out of the market altogether. Privatization makes the housing market more lucrative for private developers but will result in reduced access for the immigrant groups and lower class households currently living in Indische Buurt. Although the articulation of accumulation by dispossession is different, both the Amsterdam and the Istanbul cases do illustrate the privatization and commodification of housing and the negation of participatory modes of urban development, which pave the way for using the city as a space for capital accumulation.

While in both cases urban renewal projects are tools to effectuate accumulation by dispossession, the ways in which displacement is realized differs in important ways. In Amsterdam, the rules and roles of urban renewal are well defined and firmly institutionalized. Past housing struggles and a strong welfare state have provided residents – at least those with regular contracts – with a relatively strong and clear position. Exclusionary displacement happens but is hardly contested. Thus Amsterdam represents an example of *routinized exclusionary displacement*. The Istanbul case is more difficult to classify because the rules and roles are not fully crystallized there. New laws were made in the early 2000s but they did not formalize the entire urban renewal process; i.e., they did not spell out the responsibilities of public authorities with respect to resident participation and the rights of the renters. This created room for the public authorities to use their discretionary power to manage the process. Displacement has occurred more by discretionary action than through routine. The effects of displacement are also more direct, as not only prospective residents (as in the case of Amsterdam) but also the people being displaced directly suffer the consequences of the urban renewal operation. While displacement in Amsterdam thus can be characterized as *routinized exclusionary displacement*, displacement in Istanbul is *direct* and *discretionary*.

This study has examined three dimensions of displacement experiences. The first dimension has been most extensively discussed in the literature and involves the impact on the living conditions of displaced households, measured as the difference between

living conditions before and after displacement. In general such impacts have been milder in the Dutch context due to the well established rights of residents with regular social housing contracts. Residents with lower incomes are largely compensated, as they can call upon rent subsidies to cover their rent increases while still enjoying better housing after their move. Residents with middle or higher incomes do have to pay the rent increases from their own pockets but they often get better housing in return. As most who wanted to stay in the neighborhood could do so in Amsterdam, there was no rupture in the social relations or daily routines of these residents. As for the ones who moved out of the neighborhood, they were satisfied with the new neighborhoods and new contacts they had made. On the other hand, not everyone in Amsterdam could make use of their rights and generous compensations to the same extent. The ethnic minorities, especially the Moroccan and Turkish renters, endured hardship in realizing their rights.

Istanbul does not offer these forms of protection, and as a result the lower class households are disproportionately affected. A number of residents could cushion the impact as they found a new place in the neighborhood through their social networks and, in spite of the rising rent levels, it was still affordable. Most of the residents who had to move out of the neighborhood experienced a rupture in their social networks, relations, memories and routines which made them *'grieve for their lost home'* (Fried 1963). This was especially difficult for the Kurdish women who had strong neighborhood-based social networks and could not speak Turkish well. Residents in Istanbul with very little or no income had to join households of their family members so as not to become homeless, and the housing conditions worsened for these residents.

The renewal process in both cities also entailed a redrawing of the boundaries between different social groups. The processes of renewal operated as a catalyst to deepen or redefine the existing social boundaries. The parallels between the two cases are most striking with respect to the reshaping of ethnic boundaries between the native-Dutch and immigrant residents in the Amsterdam case and between Kurds and Turks in the Istanbul case. While the Kurds in Istanbul and the immigrants, especially the Moroccans, in Amsterdam are patronizingly viewed as *'uncivilized'*, *'less decent'*, *'unmannered'* others, they were also stigmatized as *'problem people'* in Amsterdam and regarded as *'terrorists'* in Istanbul.

This study has emphasized that the displacement process is lengthy. It starts with disinvestment and deterioration, often many years before actual displacement takes place. This means that measuring living conditions pre-move and post-move covers only part of the displacement experiences. For this reason, the research also documented the residents' experiences prior to and during displacement. While the impacts of displacement are heavier in the Istanbul case, the ways the residents lived under the threat of displacement, as the second dimension of displacement experiences, were quite similar in the two cities. Both cases of renewal experienced a further spiral of decline after the announcement of the projects. The way the authorities used their power over information and time in

both contexts resulted in uncertainty and waiting for the residents. While a few residents in Amsterdam accepted the prolonged period of waiting for the execution of the plans as a calculated cost in anticipation of an upward move, residents in both Amsterdam and Istanbul experienced both the social decomposition and physical deterioration of their neighborhoods after the renewal plans had been announced. The spiral of decline functioned as a factor to build consent for the renewal operations in both cases, as the residents witnessed the erosion of their social networks and lost all faith that alternative courses of action (involving incremental renovation and participatory governance) had a chance of success.

Even though uncertainty was prevalent in shaping the experiences of the residents in both cases, over time the more privileged residents became less anxious in both cases. The renters with a regular contract were mostly satisfied with the relocation compensations and guidance they received; property owners in Istanbul were largely dissatisfied with what was offered to them and with the guidance in the process. The renters in Istanbul did not generally receive any relocation compensation or guidance, about which they were not satisfied. Likewise, temporary renters in Amsterdam did not get any compensation or guidance as they do not have any rights regarding the process.

Although the displaced residents were obviously less powerful than the initiators of the renewal process, the residents did develop their own strategies to cope with and respond to the process, which constitutes the third dimension of the displacement experiences. Exactly how they did so influenced the renewal process and the way they experienced it. In Amsterdam, residents were largely passive in the sense that they accepted whatever avenues for participation were offered to them. Participation in Amsterdam was *invited*, as the housing corporation and the government could decide who participated, when they participated, and what topics they could discuss. Such avenues for participation were only open to the most active residents and were restricted to design details. In Istanbul, the residents tried to tilt the power imbalances through their *contested* participation. The Tarlabası Organization tried a diverse repertoire of action to challenge the municipality and its private partner. The difference in contention could be explained by the extent to which the rules and roles are defined in these two contexts. The Dutch case, with a clear differentiation of residents and definition of rules, represents a situation in which the residents incorporate their roles and consent is constructed through a citizen participation that co-opts the most active residents. To the contrary, the rules and roles were not well defined and institutionalized in the Turkish case, which created room for the mobilization of the residents against the renewal project. Household-level strategies were also applied to different extents in Amsterdam and Istanbul. In general, the formalized and stronger the rights of the residents, the less need there was to use household-level strategies to deal with the negative effects of displacement. In Istanbul the mobilization of social networks was the most important household-level strategy to find relocation housing, to bear the

economic costs of displacement and to decrease the pressures of displacement as the residents went through the process.

### *Suggestions for further research*

This study has examined different dimensions of the process of displacement as it followed the displaced residents and highlighted important differences and similarities in their experiences across two different cases. While the study addressed a number of gaps in the literature, important questions remain. Research on displacement could be advanced in three directions.

First, there is a need to extend and deepen the methods to fully understand displacement experiences. This means, for instance, studying the impacts of displacement over longer time periods through longitudinal research. The long-term effects of displacement are expected to be different from the short-term ones. For instance, most of the displaced, who relocate to MHA estates, are satisfied with their housing in the short term but, as they cannot keep up their installments, they get displaced in long term. In the same vein, to understand the extent and the effects of displacement, it is necessary to investigate all four types of displacement as Marcuse (1986) defines them, namely last-resident displacement, exclusionary displacement, displacement pressure and chain displacement. Excluding any of these types would produce an incomplete picture of the extent and impacts of displacement. The Tarlabası case showed, for instance, that some of the displaced moved within the designated renewal area, which would probably be renewed in the second or third round of renewal. To investigate these sorts of dynamics, it is necessary to trace displaced residents over longer time periods and longer residence chains.

A second research direction would be to examine the change in the social and economic fabric of the affected neighborhoods. These include the renewal and relocation neighborhoods after displacement as well the areas adjacent to the renewal projects. In the renewal neighborhoods, the socio-economic profile changes with the incoming middle- and higher-class population. This raises important questions about how different classes meet and the conflicts, problems or relations that might ensue. Studies on social mixing have addressed some of these questions, though the research has been restricted to cases in the Global North, where the process of gentrification is relatively moderate. These questions are also important for relocation neighborhoods. The displaced often move to adjacent areas, thereby changing the demographic and socio-economic structure of these neighborhoods. Rent levels and housing prices often increased in the Tarlabası case; in Amsterdam, the displaced residents competed with other (prospective) residents for a unit in the city's shrinking social housing stock. In other cases, the residents are far removed from the renewal areas, as in the case of the MHA estates in Turkey which were built partially to relocate the displaced from renewal areas. These modern estates are different from inner-city areas in important ways. It would thus be interesting to examine

how displaced residents reconstruct their lives and what advantages and problems they experience.

The third research direction would be to develop different analytical perspectives on displacement. This study prioritized a political-economic perspective by developing the Marxist concept of accumulation by dispossession. Such a perspective is obviously relevant to an understanding of the asymmetric power relations involved in displacement, but other lenses could be adopted too. For instance, the intersection of gender, migration and social networks requires more research attention. Both in Amsterdam and Istanbul, immigrant women – Turkish and Moroccan women in Amsterdam and Kurdish women who are forced migrants in Istanbul – often have strong neighborhood-based social networks. As I noted, these women are more affected by displacement, as the process ruins their networks. Examining the displacement experiences of these women would surely be an interesting line of research, as it would reveal not only the extent of dispossession but also place-making practices from a gendered perspective. In the same vein, the intersection of migration, social networks and generation/age differences would be another interesting line of research. Researching the displacement experiences of different generations of Moroccan and Turkish migrants in Amsterdam and those of Kurdish or Turkish migrants in Istanbul could help us understand not only the intergenerational differences regarding place-making practices that would be ruptured or continued by displacement but also the extent to which different generations are dependent on their social networks and how they use these social networks to tackle the process of displacement.

While these questions and many others await research and political attention, it is crucial to put the experiences of residents at the center of any analysis. That is because it is the people whose lives are changing as they get dispossessed of their houses, neighborhoods or rights to social housing or to the city at large while the politicians are trying to market their cities as the ‘global city’, ‘best city’, ‘livable city’, among others. Yet, as Shakespeare wrote centuries ago, “What is a city but the people?”<sup>120</sup>.



# Notes

- 1 According to work by the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) funded by the United Nations (UN), two million people were displaced between 1988 and 2008 to make way for the Olympic Games in different cities around the world. (<http://www.cohre.org/topics/mega-events> accessed last on Sept 6, 2013).
- 2 The Marxist concept of primitive accumulation means that the land is enclosure and the landless people are proletarianized and become wage-laborers for the capital accumulation to take place (for further information see Harvey, 2003, pp.142-147).
- 3 The theory of under-consumption advanced by Luxemburg (1968) explains the crisis tendency of the capitalist system by the lack of effective demand to absorb the output growth that is generated by the system. According to her, the reason for this lack of demand is that the workers are exploited and are not given enough to spend. To bridge the lack of demand or the oversupply, capitalists widen markets in non-capitalist territories. This theory of under-consumption was overridden by the theory of over-accumulation. That theory views the lack of investment opportunities for investment as the problem of capitalism rather than the lack of effective demand (For a discussion, see Harvey 2008, pp. 138-143).
- 4 According to Lefebvre, the right to the city is neither a reformist claim nor a tactical contestation. It is rather a claim that socio-economic and political relations are restructured in a radical way and that the urban inhabitants wrest control over the production of space from the hands of the state and the economic elite (Purcell 2002). As Lefebvre formulated it, altering the power relations that underlie the production of space enables urban inhabitants to produce urban space in line with their needs and desires. This at the same time means the transformation and production of urban life.
- 5 Purcell asserts that the right to the city consists of two main rights for urban inhabitants, one of which is the right to participation and the other the right to appropriation. The former right means that urban inhabitants are the main agents of decision-making regarding the production of space. Any agent that affects the production of urban space (be it a firm, state, supranational organization, etc.) should be accountable to the urban citizens, and the citizens should participate and take central roles in these decision-making processes. The latter right is about appropriation, which not only entails the right to occupy and use the existing urban space but also the right to produce the space in line with the needs and desires of the inhabitants. This right prioritizes the use of value of space regarding the decisions for the production of space (Purcell 2002, p.103).
- 6 In the Turkish context, 'urban transformation' (*kentsel dönüşüm*) is often used as an umbrella term for restructuring of cities after 2000. There are different types of urban transformation projects (see Chapter 7, for further discussion). Urban renewal projects are one type, which covers

- the socio-spatial upgrading operations in historical urban areas. This study will use these terms accordingly for Turkish context.
- 7 In the case of gecekondü dwellers, this is said because they could become the owners of the houses they had already built, mostly on state land. In the case of inner-city dwellers, the widespread occupation of empty houses is the reason to represent these people as unduly benefiting from urban growth.
  - 8 Rent gap can be defined as the difference between “the actual capitalized ground rent (land price) 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)
  - 9 To provide a broader view of urban change in Dutch cities, here I refer to the wider process of urban restructuring (*stedelijke herstructurering*), as an overarching process that covers the socio-economic and spatial change in the Dutch context. Process of urban renewal (*stedelijke vernieuwing*) is seen as socio-spatial upgrading at a rather small scale i.e. the scale of a housing block or a neighborhood.
  - 10 The literature on Dutch urban policy mostly refers to displacement as forced relocation. There is a well defined relocation policy that ensures any displaced resident the right to relocate in the same complex and/or neighborhood.
  - 11 For instance, this may be due to the restriction that the applicant could only get priority for comparable dwellings in the market, thereby intensifying the competition in the housing market among the holders of a priority status who are simultaneously searching for a relocation dwelling.
  - 12 Accordingly, some households had already been displaced by the time this research started. Many, though, lived under threat of displacement in the neighborhood till their actual displacement.
  - 13 In the Dutch housing system, there are two types of renters: regular and temporary. In contrast to regular renters, who have tenure security, temporary renters have contracts with a limited duration and the contract can be terminated by the landlord without any obligation to give a reason. Temporary contracts can also be of different types, such as anti-squatting, campus contracts, etc. These types will be covered in Chapter 4.
  - 14 The restructuring in Tarlabaşı started in 2007 after the announcement of the project by the municipality. Even though the actual demolitions started only in 2009, displacement pressure already was felt by the residents (Sakızlıoğlu 2007).
  - 15 Erik Olin Wright’s understanding of class is based on and amends the Marxist perspective on class with its emphasis on the multi-dimensionality of exploitation in a given society.
  - 16 Working and lower class are used interchangeably in this study.
  - 17 For Istanbul, Environmental Plan, Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects. For Amsterdam, the Housing Vision Amsterdam till 2020 (Municipality of Amsterdam 2008) and the Pillars of Spatial Development in Amsterdam (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2009).
  - 18 Tarlabaşı renewal project documents, project documents of renewal at Cerampléin and VDP block, Neighborhood Approach (Wijkaanpak) Indische Buurt.
  - 19 I actually held 23 interviews with temporary renters. After the data analysis phase, I decided to omit 11 of these interviews. As I recognized later on, I had already reached a saturation level with

- the first 12 interviews that I had conducted with temporary renters. In this sense, the additional interviews did not add value to the analysis.
- 20 I tried to include all different social groups living in Tarlaşaşı (based on ethnicity, gender, class etc.). In the end, the interviews with residents from Kurdish and Turkish communities constituted the majority of the interviews because these groups constitute the majority of the population in Tarlaşaşı.
  - 21 The details of the interviews conducted in Tarlaşaşı are as follows: 48 interviews with residents from the neighborhood (14 renter households, 10 of which have a member with a job either in Tarlaşaşı or in Beyođlu; 12 owner-occupier households; 2 squatters; 10 shopkeepers, who are property owners and 5 of whom reside in the neighborhood; 7 shopkeepers who are renters, 3 of whom reside in the neighborhood; 1 investor; 1 street seller who has worked in the neighborhood for more than 30 years) and 7 interviews with relevant parties (1 at the municipality; 1 with the Consultant-Reconciliation Manager; 2 with the local governors at the neighborhood level; 1 with a representative of the Syriac Church in the neighborhood; 1 with the representative of the Tarlaşaşı Association for Property Owners and Renters; and 1 with the representative of the Recycling Workers' Association).
  - 22 These events in Istanbul were 1) the first demolition day; 2) renters' meeting in the neighborhood; and 3) going to the municipality with a renter, which then was followed by the visit to CHD with two renters. As for the events in Amsterdam, these were 1) the meeting with the contact person from the housing corporation; and 2) the gathering with Turkish women living in the Van der Pek block.
  - 23 The severe housing shortage was not only due to the destruction of residential areas during the war but also to demographic shifts, notably the baby boom.
  - 24 The housing vision projects that in the period between 2007 and 2016; the housing corporations can sell 31,000 dwellings, which means almost 3000 per year.
  - 25 Even though the ministry initially referred to the selected neighborhoods as 'problem' neighborhoods, later on the name of the program was changed to 'high-potential districts' (krachtwijken) policy. Yet, in the discourse of the ministry and urban policy makers as well as the media, the target areas are often referred to as 'problem' neighborhoods.
  - 26 The extra budget allocated for the urban renewal activities in these 40 neighborhoods is declared to be 250 million Euros per year over a ten-year period.
  - 27 See <http://international.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=11054>
  - 28 An extra budget of 2.5 billion Euros would be allocated for the social and physical renewal operations in the 40 priority neighborhoods for the upcoming 10 years.
  - 29 The fund would be used to finance the social projects aiming to solve problems like poverty, insecurity and unemployment.
  - 30 Namely the resources of the Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science (OCW), Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Transport, Public Works and Water Management (VWS), Economic Affairs (EZ), Justice, the Interior (BZK) and the program Minister for Youth and Family will be used for specific social projects.

- 31 This reference is to article 22 clause 2 of the Constitution.
- 32 <http://www.vdpekbuurt.nl/node?page=11> (accessed last on June 2, 2012)
- 33 [http://issuu.com/amsterdamweekly/docs/amsterdamweekly\\_issue16\\_17april](http://issuu.com/amsterdamweekly/docs/amsterdamweekly_issue16_17april) (accessed last on 2.4.2012)
- 34 Mostly organized around the city-wide organization called ‘Stop the Curtailing of Social Housing’ (for more info, see <http://www.sash.nl/> (accessed last on June 2, 2012)
- 35 Means neighborhood consultation.
- 36 Private rental housing in this context means housing with a rent above € 681 per month (based on the rent ceiling for social housing in 2013).
- 37 These houses vary in size between 92 and 125 square meters and monthly rents are set between € 995 and € 1,250 including service fees.
- 38 When the renovation plans for Ceramplein and the Van der Pek block were started, the neighborhood district of Zeeburg was responsible for the project. In May 2010, Zeeburg merged with Oost-Watergraafsmeer to form the municipal district East (stadsdeel Oost), which then assumed responsibility for the urban renewal policy.
- 39 Minimum income policy of the Municipality of Amsterdam defines it as up to 110 % of the Legal Social Minimum (Wettelijk Sociaal Minimum – WSM). 110% of the WSM in 2010 was a net annual income of €12,027 for a single-person household and a net annual income of €15,464 for a single parent with one or more children (Poverty Monitor 2011, p.8).
- 40 In 2007, the net minimum income for single-person households was € 1154 per month, while the level for multiple-person households was net €1633 per month.
- 41 Long-term unemployed is defined as having been registered for more than three years as unemployed yet searching for a job.
- 42 WWB benefit is provided based on Wet Werk en Bijstand to provide social security for the people with little means to get by.
- 43 The safety index was prepared in 2003 on the basis of some objective and subjective criteria that measure overall safety in the city. The objective index is based on the measurement of instances of break-in, theft, violence, vandalism, nuisance, traffic and drugs use/selling, whereas the subjective index is based on the experiences of safety and avoidance behavior, together with neighborhood problems. A score of 100 stands for the average safety in Amsterdam in 2003. The lower the score on the safety index, the safer a neighborhood is.
- 44 The percentages mean the share of the neighborhood’s residents who think that there is often nuisance in their neighborhood caused by the youth and drugs.
- 45 This category includes restaurants, bars, cafes, movie theaters, hotels, etc.
- 46 A definition of the creative sector is not provided by the source (O+S). However, the municipality of Amsterdam defines it as follows: “Creative industry is an umbrella concept for businesses and organizations that provide services with cultural and symbolic meaning” (Amsterdam Municipality 2008a, p. 5). Creative industry is divided into three sub-sections: the arts (podium arts, museums and galleries); media and entertainment (publishing, TV, radio); and creative commercial services (commercials, fashion and design) (Amsterdam Municipality 2008a).

- 47 A gentrified neighborhood in the south of Amsterdam.
- 48 I will refer to anti-squatters, temporary renters and the renters with campus contracts under the general title of temporary renters unless otherwise stated in the text.
- 49 By August 2009, when I started the fieldwork at Ceramplain, there were only 15 regular renters, 26 temporary renters and a squatter living in the block; five houses were empty.
- 50 Here I use temporary renters in a comprehensive manner that includes all residents with temporary contracts: temporary renters, anti-squatters and students/researchers with campus contracts. The reason for this categorization is to make the comparison to the regular renters clearer.
- 51 Campus contracts are agreements between the housing corporations and universities (in this case the University of Amsterdam) to accommodate graduate students in the housing stock of corporations. The building stock that is used for this purpose is most of the time old housing stock that is to be renovated or demolished.
- 52 Half of the renters who strategized and waited for the renovation, relocated within the neighborhood whereas the rest moved out of the neighborhood (to Amsterdam North, Center and Southeast).
- 53 That is a team under the independent renter support organization called the Neighborhood Housing Support (WSW). It examines the fairness of the rent in comparison to the quality of the house.
- 54 As scholars discuss it, land occupation and the formation of informal housing were realized collectively and based on the mobilization of solidarity networks around the family, hometown and kinship (Erder 1996, 1997).
- 55 To provide a conceptual clarification, what is meant by “voluntary” here is to have a plan and intention to migrate, most of the time using solidarity networks.
- 56 Forced migration emerged as a new concept in the late 1990s to explain this migration process in the urban literature. It embraces the existence of obligatory conditions that push people to leave their hometown – such as armed conflict, in this case, but there are other reasons too: war, violence, natural disaster, etc.
- 57 AKP became a single-party government at the central level in 2002 while in 2004 the party got 42 percent of the votes in the municipal elections. With its strong pre-election promises of economic revitalization and speeding up the EU integration process, the party defined its political stance as New Conservatism and leveraged a free -market economy, plural democracy and human rights. It received widespread support from the business world (both secular and Islamist), civil society organizations and the media. This enabled the party to implement neoliberal policies faster during the early years of its office.
- 58 The amount of investment planned for the period 2003-2006 was declared to be 9 billion YTL, 3.5 billion of which was actualized.
- 59 [http://www.legalisplatform.net/hukuk\\_metinleri/5998%20Say%C4%B1%C4%B1%20Yasa.pdf](http://www.legalisplatform.net/hukuk_metinleri/5998%20Say%C4%B1%C4%B1%20Yasa.pdf), accessed last on Jan 19, 2012.

- 60 With this law, the individual's property ownership rights are restricted severely as the law prevents individuals to oppose the implementation of the administrations through juridical channels. Likewise, development rights of the district municipalities are restricted to enlarge the development powers of the metropolitan municipalities.
- 61 The public funds that are collected through an additional 1% levy on real-estate in the country and offered by the Ministry of Culture for the maintenance and rehabilitation of cultural and historical assets can be used by the local administrations to finance expropriations and other expenses related to renewal projects.
- 62 The laws exempt all the construction taxes and outlays for the selected and approved plans, which means approximately a 35 percent reduction in the construction costs for renewal activities.
- 63 The central government and Istanbul metropolitan municipality also presented some combination of these projects to be implemented under some umbrella programs. For instance, the renovation of some historical sites was covered by the program of the Istanbul Cultural Capital of Europe 2010. The renewal of Tarlabaşı, the case study of this research, was also supported by this program.
- 64 See one of the declarations that the Chamber of Architects made on the subject: [http://www.tmmob.org.tr/genel/bizden\\_detay.php?kod=8816&tipi=3](http://www.tmmob.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=8816&tipi=3) (accessed on July 2013).
- 65 Construction groups like Torun, Kiler and Taşyapı, and big holdings like Çalık, Ülker and İhlas Holding have extended their operations in the sector. Many of these firms are known for their close ties to the governing party AKP (Gürek 2008).
- 66 Gecekondu refers here to people living in gecekondu areas.
- 67 In Turkey, the official hierarchy is as follows: neighborhoods comprise quarters and a collection of quarters comprise districts. Accordingly, Tarlabaşı is officially not a neighborhood but a quarter consisting of eight neighborhoods. However, in this study, it is called neighborhood because the residents living in Tarlabaşı call it a neighborhood.
- 68 My reference is to the work of Wyly and Hammel (1999).
- 69 This was a one-time tax imposed on people with considerable wealth or extraordinary earnings. The purpose of the tax was to overcome the budget deficits during the wartime.
- 70 The figures related to the application of the tax are worth mentioning at this point. The amount of the accrued tax was almost one-third of the total budget of the country. 87% of the declared taxpayers were non-Muslim minorities and 70% of the tax was collected only from Istanbul. Those who could not pay their accrued tax, around 1229 people, were sent to work in Askale (75 Years of The Republic Encyclopedia, Volume. I, p. 242-243).
- 71 In total, 386 buildings were demolished, including 168 of high historical value, which were registered as cultural and historical assets.
- 72 The Chamber of Architects organised the opposition. The protests were based on the illegality of the demolitions and the consequential land speculation (see Bartu 2000, for further details). The demolitions occurring as a result of the mayor's 'bulldozer approach' were against the conservation and development laws and destroyed the historical urban fabric in the district. The mayor defended the operation by citing its role in upgrading the transportation infrastructure of the city for the establishment of the new CBD.

- 73 A mukhtar, or neighborhood governor, is an elected administrator at the neighborhood level.
- 74 This section is based on the survey conducted in the Tarlabası renewal area by a consultancy firm hired by the municipality, namely Kentsel Strateji A. S. (2008). The general statistics are used whenever relevant and available. Since the renewal area doesn't correspond to administrative units but is located in three neighborhoods, the official statistics from the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) are not used for this section. The survey that Kentsel A.S. conducted in the renewal area was completed with the participation of 442 (out of 514) households and 139 (out of 209) businesses in the renewal area. According to the survey, the total population of 442 households surveyed is 1847, which represents 85 percent of the total population of the renewal area. Thus, the study estimated the total population to be around 2200 people.
- 75 With the unregistered residents, the number goes up to approximately 3000-3500 people.
- 76 As the survey lacks data about when 20 percent of the migrant households actually came to Istanbul, the figures about the timing of migration are not complete yet can give some idea of the process.
- 77 The survey results do not give the complete picture of duration of residence in the households' current house and in Tarlabası, as the non-response rate is 12 percent for both.
- 78 It should be noted that it is not correct to say that everyone who migrated from the East and South East of Turkey is Kurdish. That figure merely gives an approximation of the real percentage.
- 79 As mentioned in the previous section, this flight was the direct or indirect outcome of political events in Turkish history – such as the Wealth Tax of 1942; the September 5-6 events in 1955; the Cyprus Operation of 1974, etc. This will be mentioned again in the next part when discussing the socio-spatial transformation of the neighborhood.
- 80 In this study, poverty is discussed both in absolute and relative terms. While absolute poverty is used to describe the conditions of forced migrants, relative poverty is used to differentiate the conditions of the early migrants to inner-city neighborhoods and their counterparts in squatter neighborhoods. Furthermore, relative poverty is also used to describe the different conditions of poverty between early migrants and forced migrants.
- 81 'Poverty in turn' explains the unequal nature of power relations among the poor. It is a mechanism whereby the early migrants transfer their poverty to the newcomers. The privileged position of the early migrants in informal housing and labor markets lies beneath the mechanism. The newcomers use social networks to find accommodation and employment in the city and take over the poverty from the early migrants (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001).
- 82 The data presented covers only the renewal area, unless otherwise stated in the text.
- 83 Turkstat (Turkish Statistical Institute) calculates the poverty line as 50 percent of equivalent disposable median income. According to the statistics for 2011, 16.3 percent of the population in Turkey have income below the poverty line (Turkstat 2011). However, the poverty and hunger lines are calculated differently by the labor unions. The hunger line as defined by the labor unions more or less equals the poverty line as set by Turkstat. Accordingly, almost 90 percent of the population has an income below the poverty line.

- 84 According to Turk-is (2009), in December 2008, a family of four persons must have had 739.67 TL for their food expenditures. which is defined as the hunger line. As for the poverty line for a four-person family, it is 2,409.35 which includes rent and other household expenses such as clothing, transportation, entertainment etc. <http://www.turkis.org.tr/source.cms.docs/turkis.org.tr.ce/docs/file/aclikocak09.pdf> (accessed last on May 10 2011)
- 85 Green Card is a social provision that entitles its users free health care in state health institutions. The requirements to obtain this card are having an income under the minimum wage (less than one-third of the minimum income), not being covered by any social security system and having no ownership of real estate property.
- 86 The weakening effects of the neoliberal policies on the protective capacity of social solidarity bonds and especially of family bonds in Turkey, which are important dimensions of non- formal welfare in Turkey, had already been discussed by several scholars. Among them, see Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç (2002), Keyder and Öncü (2003), Keyder (2005), Şen (2002).
- 87 Dünden Bugüne Tercüman Gazetesi, *Tarlabaşı is saved*, 9.4.2005, online: [http://www.Beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/basin/liste/Basinda-Buyuk-Donusum/25/0/0?LPN=10#prettyPhoto\[galeri\]/2/](http://www.Beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/basin/liste/Basinda-Buyuk-Donusum/25/0/0?LPN=10#prettyPhoto[galeri]/2/)(accessed last on December 22, 2012). Sezer 2005, Beyoğlu'nun Değeri artıyor [The value of Beyoğlu increasing], *Türkiye Gazetesi*, 7.7.2005
- 88 Zaman Gazetesi, Tinercilerin İşgal Ettiği Çöküntü Alanları Yenilenecek [Blighted areas squatted by glue-sniffers will be renewed], 26.07.2006
- 89 Star Gazetesi, *Tarlabaşı is a poisoned princess which we cure now*. 17.8.2013 online: [http://www.Beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/basin/liste/Basinda-Buyuk-Donusum/25/0/0?LPN=4#prettyPhoto\[galeri\]/0/](http://www.Beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/basin/liste/Basinda-Buyuk-Donusum/25/0/0?LPN=4#prettyPhoto[galeri]/0/)(accessed last on October 12, 2011).
- 90 Cooling (soğutma) is a sector that involves the repair and sale of cooling systems such as refrigerators and air conditioners.
- 91 It is not only transvestites but also gays, bisexuals, sex workers, etc. who had to move to Tarlabaşı. I focus on the transvestite community here, firstly, because in the public discourse it is more known as a transvestite neighborhood and, secondly, because transvestites are more often the ones claiming more physical and social space in the neighborhood in a rather open way.
- 92 In 1996, some transvestites who were residents of Ülker sokak in Beyoğlu were attacked by local people who did not want these transvestites in their neighborhood. Many were wounded and the event resulted in the transvestites moving out of the neighborhood (Selek 2001).
- 93 See Erdem, Selim Efe, "The History is Revitalizing", 20.04.2006, *Radikal*
- 94 The original title of the law is Renovating, Conserving, Actively Using Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Immovable Assets (Law no. 5366).
- 95 That meant that in the designated renewal area, the municipality would be able to expropriate the properties of the unknown owners as well as of the property owners who don't agree with the terms of the project.
- 96 The result of the tender was evaluated by the residents as an act of favoritism, because the son-in-law of Prime Minister Erdogan was/is the general director of Çalık Holding, which won the tender for the Tarlabaşı project.

- 97 <http://www.economist.com/node/11332305> (accessed last on June 1, 2013)
- 98 [http://www.Tarlabaşiyenileniyor.com/5osoruda\\_Tarlabaşı\\_yenileme\\_projesi.pdf](http://www.Tarlabaşiyenileniyor.com/5osoruda_Tarlabaşı_yenileme_projesi.pdf), (accessed last on June 16, 2011)
- 99 Property values were estimated by a real estate assessment firm connected to Capital Markets Bond/Turkey (Sermaye Piyasaları Kurulu) upon the demand of the municipality.
- 100 Vakıf is a non-profit organization, established by legal persons or organizations who donate for certain services to be fulfilled. According to the Constitution, foundations are established around a clearly stated purpose for which they organize activities. They are supervised by the General Directorate of Foundations.
- 101 The rest prefer to move out due to not being satisfied with the neighborhood, concerns for their children, the concentration of crime and sex work in the neighborhood.
- 102 In the Turkish context, people generally refer to a flat when they say house.
- 103 'White Turk' refers to the urban, well educated Republican elite in Turkey, term coined by the sociologist Nilufer Göle. Members of this group tend to distance themselves from the low-educated, rural and mostly Islamic Turks, who constitute the 'Black Turks'.
- 104 This indeed was a turning point, as the organization lost its daily relation to the residents, especially to the renters. Thereafter some shopkeepers who were very active in the neighborhood organization functioned as representatives of the organization.
- 105 The reason for his resignation was, according to the founder of the organization, that they did not have enough finances to pay his salary anymore. While he did not want to make any comment about his resignation, according to some neighborhood activists, he had resigned because he became a defender of renters' rights.
- 106 'Jumping scales' is a broad concept coined by Neil Smith (1993) but in this study, it refers to acting on one scale to circumvent the established power at another scale.
- 107 This method has been commonly used in the construction sector in Turkey, at least till the very beginning of the 2000s. It involves an agreement between a builder and landowner(s) where the latter would cede ownership in return for some of the flats that would be built on the land. This percentage of the flats that the landowner would get is dependent on the market rates as well as the negotiation powers of the parties, which are related to the type and quality of the project to be realized.
- 108 The organizers of the demonstrations blamed the Tarlabaşı people for being too ignorant or illiterate, when I asked them why there were so few participants from the neighborhood, rather than bothering to think about what went wrong with their organization.
- 109 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/turkey-urged-halt-heavy-handed-evictions-istanbul-2011-07-18>, (accessed last on August 8, 2011)
- 110 This theme was examined under the impacts of displacement for the Amsterdam case, in the Chapter 6. Even though the remaking of social boundaries between different groups is still an impact of displacement process, I examine it in relation to the contestation of the Tarlabaşı Organization for the Istanbul case. The reason for this is that reshaping boundaries affected the contestation process in Istanbul and therefore should be examined in relation to this process.

- 111 I should here note that there were also other ethnic divides, namely around the Roma people and the migrants from Africa, but I focus on the Kurdish-Turkish divide here as it is the most outstanding one.
- 112 The developer firm is the construction company that undertakes, as the contractor, the job of making a renewal plan and developing the area in the Turkish context of urban renewal. The developer firms are most of the time the investors/owners.
- 113 Securitization means transformation of an asset that is not liquid, such as a house, into a security. This financial engineering enables liquidity in the financial system.
- 114 The amount of investment planned for the period 2003-2006 was announced to be 9 billion YTL, 3.5 billion of which was actualized.
- 115 As discussed in the introduction and the theory chapter of this dissertation; see Introduction and Chapter II on Theory.
- 116 As stated in Chapter 4, anti-squatters do not have 'renter' contracts but 'use' contracts. This means they are legally not renters and thus have no renter rights. They have to vacate the property on short notice, as stated in the use contract. Temporary renters are renters with rental contracts but they do not have rent protection and have to leave the property after being given timely notice by the property owner.
- 117 Anti-squatting agencies manage vacancy in the housing market in the Netherlands. Anti-squatting was invented to prevent squatting in the 1990s, as discussed in Chapter 4. The main idea is that whenever a property is not used and stays vacant, these companies put it back to use as soon as possible by renting the property to anti-squatters for residential or commercial use, depending on the available building permits.
- 118 Seeing the state refers to the experiences of residents as they face, meet, challenge or ignore the state through the process of displacement; seeing like a state, in contrast, denotes the state's approach to the renewal of disadvantaged neighborhoods and refers to the work of James Scott (1998).
- 119 My reference is to Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008), who describe the Dutch approach to the management of urban marginality as having a civilizing tone, an approach that tries to integrate through assimilating/civilizing rather than excluding the poor, who are, most of the time, the immigrants. Likewise, the renewal operations in the disadvantaged neighborhoods try to civilize these areas through the insertion of Dutch middle-class residents and by manicuring the incivilities (Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008).
- 120 <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/coriolanus/coriolanus.3.1.html> (accessed last on February 12, 2014).

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# Summary

In many cities, public authorities engage in redevelopment or renewal of disadvantaged neighborhoods. While the aim is social, physical and economic upgrading of these neighborhoods, the result is often displacement of local residents. Despite the growing literature on displacement, we know little about how residents experience the process of displacement. This research studies residents' displacement experiences through the analytical lens of accumulation by dispossession. It has three main aims: 1) to explain the macro dynamics of displacement; 2) to explain and compare how accumulation by dispossession works in different contexts of urban renewal; 3) to add a comparative dimension to the study of displacement through an intra- and inter-city comparison of residents' displacement experiences on the basis of evidence from the two radically different cases of Amsterdam and Istanbul. The data is collected using qualitative methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

This study finds that the rationale of urban renewal is similar in Amsterdam and Istanbul: to re-differentiate the housing stock and reallocate urban space in such a way that gentrification is promoted. While the re-differentiation works through the privatization of social housing and the promotion of homeownership in Amsterdam, in Istanbul it works through the formalization of informal housing arrangements and expropriation of private property. The ways displacement is realized in these cities differs in important ways. Displacement in Amsterdam can be characterized as routinized exclusionary displacement, whereas displacement in Istanbul is direct and discretionary.

Residents' displacement experiences are compared based on three dimensions: 1) experiences of the policy and living under the threat of displacement; 2) impacts of the displacement; 3) collective and household strategies. As for the conclusions regarding these dimensions, firstly, the ways residents lived under the threat of displacement were quite similar in both cities: a spiral of decline, uncertainty, anxious waiting, pressures of authorities and landlords signified the processes. While regular renters in Amsterdam were mostly satisfied with compensations, guidance they received, the property owners and renters in Istanbul were largely dissatisfied about these issues. Experiences of participation differed drastically. While in Amsterdam, the residents were invited to participate in the process, residents in Tarlabaşı contested the authorities to participate in the decision making.

Secondly, the impacts of displacement are, in general, lighter in Dutch context due to the well established rights of residents with regular social housing rent contracts. In contrast to this, lower-class residents in Istanbul had to bear high economic and

social costs (e.g. higher rents, rupture in social networks). In both cities, existing social boundaries were redefined during the displacement processes based on ethnicity, tenure and class property ownership. Thirdly, the most precarious resident groups, namely the temporary renters in Amsterdam and renters and squatters in Istanbul, used strategies at the household level to cope with displacement. While in Amsterdam residents didn't use any collective strategy, property owners initiated the resistance in Tarlabası, which could not prevent displacement yet could get some compensation for some.

# Nederlandse Samenvatting

In veel steden herontwikkelen of vernieuwen overheden achtergestelde buurten. Het doel is om sociale, fysieke en economische vooruitgang te realiseren maar het resultaat is vaak dat bewoners worden gedwongen te verhuizen. Ondanks dat er een groeiende literatuur is over gedwongen verhuizingen (*displacement*) weten we weinig over de manier waarop bewoners dit ervaren. Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de ervaringen van bewoners met gedwongen verhuizingen en maakt daarbij gebruik van David Harvey's concept *accumulation by dispossession* (accumulatie door onteigening). Het onderzoek heeft drie doelstellingen: (1) het verklaren van de macrodynamiek van gedwongen verhuizingen, (2) het verklaren en vergelijken van de manier waarop *accumulation by dispossession* uitwerkt in verschillende contexten van stedelijke vernieuwing, (3) een intra- en inter-stedelijke vergelijking van bewonerservaringen met gedwongen verhuizingen in de radicaal verschillende cases van Amsterdam en Istanbul. De data van het onderzoek zijn verzameld via kwalitatieve methoden: diepte-interviews, participerende observatie en tekstanalyse.

Het onderzoek laat zien dat de rationale van stedelijke vernieuwing vergelijkbaar is in Amsterdam en Istanbul: het herdifferentiëren van de woningvoorraad en het herbestemmen van stedelijk grondgebied op een zodanige wijze dat *gentrification* wordt bevorderd. In Amsterdam vindt herdifferentiatie plaats via het privatiseren van sociale woningbouw en het bevorderen van eigen-woningbezit, in Istanbul via formalisering en het onteigenen van privaat bezit. De manier waarop gedwongen verhuizingen plaatsvinden verschilt aanzienlijk. Gedwongen verhuizingen vinden in Amsterdam plaats als een beleidsroutine en er is vooral sprake van *exclusionary displacement*: door vernieuwing worden voorheen betaalbare gebieden ontoegankelijk voor lagere inkomens. In Istanbul gebruiken bestuurders discretionaire macht om mensen te dwingen te verhuizen.

De ervaringen van bewoners zijn vergeleken op drie dimensies: (1) hun ervaringen met het beleid en de dreiging van gedwongen verhuizingen, (2) de impact van de feitelijke gedwongen verhuizing, (3) de individuele en collectieve strategieën van bewoners in reactie op (de dreiging van) gedwongen verhuizingen. De ervaringen van bewoners met beleid zijn vergelijkbaar: in beide steden is er een spiraal van verval, een periode van onzekerheid en druk vanuit bestuurders en ontwikkelaars om te vertrekken. Bewoners met een regulier huurcontract in Amsterdam waren voor het merendeel tevreden met de compensatie die zij kregen voor de gedwongen verhuizing, terwijl huurders en eigenaren in Istanbul ontevreden waren. Met name de ervaringen met beleidsparticipatie liepen scherp uiteen. In Amsterdam werden reguliere huurders uitgenodigd deel te nemen

aan het proces van uitplaatsing terwijl bewoners in Istanbul vochten om het beleid te beïnvloeden.

De impact van gedwongen verhuizingen is over het algemeen milder in de Nederlandse casus als gevolg van de sterk verankerde rechten van bewoners met een regulier huurcontract. In vergelijking daarmee moesten lagere inkomensgroepen in Istanbul hoge sociale en economische kosten dragen, onder meer in de vorm van een hogere huur en verstoring van hun sociale netwerken. In beide steden werden sociale grenzen (gebaseerd op etniciteit, eigendomssituatie en sociale klasse) aangescherpt en geherdefinieerd. De meest precaire groepen in beide steden – de tijdelijke bewoners in Amsterdam (tijdelijke huurders en anti-krakers) en de huurders en illegale bewoners in Istanbul – gebruikten vooral strategieën op het niveau van het huishouden om de impact van de gedwongen verhuizing op te vangen. In Amsterdam gebruikten bewoners überhaupt geen collective strategieën, terwijl in Istanbul huiseigenaren zich wel collectief verzetten en enige compensatie afdwongen (maar gedwongen verhuizingen niet voorkwamen).

# Appendix

## **A. General and Residential Data of Displaced Residents**

**Table A.1.** Residential Data of Displaced Residents- Regular Renters- Ceramplein

Name	Rent former rent (euros)	Rent subsidy former house (euros)	Rent new house (euros)	Rent subsidy new house (euros)	Residence duration Indische Buurt (years)	Residence duration new house (months)	Residence duration Amsterdam (years)	Residence duration Ceramplein (years)
Mrs. T	163	n.a.*	511	184	15	3	19	15
Mr. N	259	n.a.	670	n.a.	20	7	24	20
Mr. R	312	n.a.	589	220	25	12	25	23
Mrs. K	285	n.a.	n.t.k.**	na	20	n.t.k	24	15
Mr. I	240	n.a.	533	n.t.k	13	10	20	13
Mr. NN	227	70	386	124	24	3	34	24
Mrs. Z	250	n.a.	670	n.t.k	12	10	35	12
Mrs. MT	280	120	n.t.k	n.t.k	7	n.t.k	7	7
Mr. HM	240	n.a.	240	n.a.	20	3	20	13
Mr. Y	240	20	460	200	12	12	23	12
Mrs. C	210	n.a.	400	240	31	10	34	31
Mrs. KZ	240	n.a.	n.t.k	n.t.k	30	n.t.k	30	30
Mrs. BD	250	n.a.	601	n.a.	15	7	15	10

\* not applicable \*\* not known

**Table A.2** General Data of Displaced Residents of Ceramplain- Regular Renters

Name	Age	House- hold size	Country of origin	Education	Education partner	Employment self (hours per week)	Employment partner	Occupation	Income sources	Monthly income in euros	Welfare aid
Mrs. T	54	1	Netherlands	HBO	n.a.	Employed (40)	n.a.	Social worker	Salary	1800	n.a.
Mr. N	43	5	Netherlands	WO	Bachelor	Unemployed	Unemployed	Social entrepreneur	Unemployment benefit	2000-2500	Unemployment benefit
Mr. R	55	1	Ireland	HBO	n.a.	Employed (>20)	n.a.	Construction business	Salary + disability benefit	1600	Disability benefits
Mrs. K	48	1	Netherlands	WO	n.a.	Employed (>20)	n.a.	Care	Salary	2000-2500	n.a.
Mr. I	51	4	Morocco	Primary school	Primary school	Disabled	Housewife	Unemployed	Disability benefits	1100	Disability benefits
Mr. NN	77	2	Turkey	None	None	Retired	Housewife	Worker	Pension+ disability benefits	1363	Disability benefits
Mrs. Z	25	2	Netherlands	Bachelor	Bachelor	Employed (40)	Employed (>20)	Audiovisual designer	Salary	2000	n.a.
Mrs. MT	26	4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary school	Housewife	Employed (>40)	Housewife	Salary	1200	n.a.
Mr. HM	38	4	Morocco	MBO	Primary school	Employed (40)	Housewife	Logistics worker	Salary	2200	n.a.
Mr. Y	44	1	Netherlands	VWO	n.a.	Employed (24)	n.a.	Bicycle courier	Salary	1050	n.a.
Mrs. C	75	1	Turkey	None	None	Retired	n.a.	Retired (cleaner)	Disability benefits	769	Retirement benefits
Mrs. KZ	59	4	Morocco	None	None	Housewife	Retired	Housewife	Disability benefits, pension	1700	Disability benefits
Mrs. BD	33	6	Morocco	LBO	Primary school	Employed (13)	Employed (>40)	Cleaner	Two salaries	1700	n.a.

**Table A.3.** Residential Data of Displaced Residents – Regular Renters- Van der Pek Block

Name	Rent former rent (euros)	Rent subsidy (euros)	Rent new house (euros)	Rent subsidy new house (euros)	Residence duration Buurt (years)	Residence duration Indische (years)	Residence duration Amsterdam (years)	Residence duration new house (years)	Residence duration Van der Pek (years)
Mr. GN	177		551	177	16		18	5	5-5
Mr. IJ	180		420	n.a.	13		17	3	9
Mr. IT	110		500	226	20		24	4	11
Mr. G	150		500	n.a.	10		12	4	6
Mr. YU	180		400	n.a.	13		18	1	11
Mr. BE	200		515	220	12		19	2	10
Mr. E	150		400	160	29		48	4	25
Mr. CK	163		569	250	10		23	1	8
Mr. PR	160		285	n.a.	35		48	0.5	25
Mr. ES	300		600	n.a.	15		20	4	11
Mr. A	180		430	n.a.	10		49	4	5
Mr. M	250		420	n.a.	66		66	4	7
Mr. ID	160		580	230	7		7	4	3
Mrs. YE	150		630	280	25		25	3	22
Mrs. SG	200		535	225	13		17	3	13
Mrs. PE	156		268	40	22		56	1	20
Mrs. H	145		437	n.a.	17		17	1	15
Mrs. J	200		550	n.a.	4		21	1.2	4
Mrs. MO	180		580	n.a.	15		15	4	12

Name	Rent former rent (euros)	Rent subsidy (euros)	Rent new house (euros)	Rent subsidy new house (euros)	Rent new house (euros)	Rent subsidy new house (euros)	Residence duration Indische Buurt (years)	Residence duration Amsterdam (years)	Residence duration new house (years)	Residence duration Van der Pek (years)
Mrs. KO	200		n.t.k.	n.a.			16	53	0.7	14
Mr. W	200		330	n.a.			9	9	1	7
Mrs. CK	139		650	n.a.			25	40	1.5	22
Mr. B	186		303	n.a.			42	42	0.5	12
Mrs. L	173		560	n.a.			10	12	2	7
Mrs. U	288		550	n.a.			13	13	3	10
Mrs. AD	165		280	n.a.			34	34	1.5	24

**Table A.4.** General Data of Displaced Residents – Regular Renters - Van der Pek Block

Name	Age	Household size	Country of origin	Education	Education partner	Employment status (hours per week)	Employment partner	Occupation	Income sources	Monthly income in euros
Mr. GN	43	4	India	High school	high school	Employed (>20)	n.a.	Meat packer	Salary	1440
Mr. JJ	36	3	Serbia	Bachelor	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Employed (>20)	Sound manager	Two salaries	2700
Mr. IT	45	6	Morocco	Elementary school	Elementary school	On benefits	n.a.	Cleaner	Benefits (wao)	1100
Mr. G	38	1	Netherlands	PhD	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Employed (>20)	Informatics	Salary	1500-2000
Mr. YU	37	3	Netherlands	MBO	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Employed (>20)	Graphic designer	Two salaries	2000-2500
Mr. BE	48	4	Morocco	LTS	MAVO	Unemployed	n.a.	Machine operator	Benefits (bijstand)	1100-1500
Mr. E	64	1	Dutch	HBO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Artist	Benefits (disability)	700-1100
Mr. CK	54	1	Surinam	LTS	n.a.	Disability benefits	n.a.	N.t.k	Disability benefits	1100
Mr. PR	58	4	Indonesia	HBO	High school	Employed (40)	Employed (>20)	Accountant	Salary	3000-4000
Mr. ES	50	3	Surinam	HBO	MBO	Employed (>20)	Employed (20)	Nurse	Two salaries	2500-3000
Mr. A	49	1	Netherlands	HBO	n.a.	Employed (>20)	n.a.	Social trainer	Salary	3000-4000
Mr. M	70	1	Netherlands	LTS	MAVO	Retired	Retired	Train conductor	Disability benefits + pension	1500-2000
Mr. ID	40	3	Iraq	HBO	MBO	Unemployed	Employed (20)	Assistant engineer	Salary + benefits (bijstand)	2000-2500
Mrs. YE	47	7	Morocco	Elementary school	Non	Housewife	Unemployed	Housewife	Disability benefits	1100

Name	Age	House- hold size	Country of origin	Education	Education partner	Employment status (hours per week)	Employment partner	Occupation	Income sources	Monthly income in euros
Mrs. SG	41	1	Netherlands	HBO	n.a.	Self-employed	n.a.	Shoemaker/ photographer	Self-employed	1100-1500
Mrs. PE	56	1	Netherlands	MAVO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Volunteer	Disability benefits	750
Mrs. H	49	1	Netherlands	HBO	n.a.	Employed (>20)	n.a.	Nurse	Salary	2000
Mrs. J	39	3	Netherlands	Bachelor	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Employed (> 20)	Guitar teacher	Two salaries	2000-2500
Mrs. MO	35	4	Netherlands	HBO	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Employed (>20)	Pedagogic family worker	Two salaries	3300
Mrs. KO	53	1	Netherlands	HBO	n.a.	Employed (>20)	n.a.	Social worker	Salary	1500-2000
Mr. W	37	4	South Africa	Bachelor	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Employed (>20)	Film maker	Two salaries	2500-3000
Mrs. CK	72	6	Turkey	Elementary school	primary school	Retired	n.a.	Worker	Two salaries	1200-2000
Mr. B	71	2	Turkey	Elementary school	None	Disability benefits	Retired	Worker	Disability benefits + pension	1400-1500
Mrs. L	39	4	Netherlands	Bachelor	High school	Unemployed	Employed (>20)	Anthropologist	Benefits (bijstand) + salary	2000-2500
Mrs. U	39	4	Turkey	Elementary school	Elementary school	Housewife	Employed (20)	Housewife	Salary	1500
Mrs. AD	47	1	Turkey	Elementary school	n.a.	Employed (40)	n.a.	Catering/ dishwasher	Salary	1200

**Table A.5.** Residential Data of Displaced Residents- Temporary Renters- Ceramplein

Name	Monthly Rent	New Rent	Residence Amsterdam (in years)	Residence Indische Buurt (in years)	Residence Block (in years)	Duration Temporary renter through (in years)	House found through	Type of Contract
Mr. DR	660	790	4	3	3	4	UvA	Temporary – UvA
Ms. RN	20	350	18	0,2	0,2	0,2	Housing corporation	Temporary
Ms. TC	289	500	5	0,75	0,75	5	Housing corporation	Temporary
Ms. VD	250	400	5,5	2,5	1,5	5,5	Housing corporation	Temporary
Ms. BP	20	n.t.k	3	0,2	0,2	2,1	Housing corporation	Temporary
Mr. OA	245	n.a.	15	0,7	0,7	0,7	Housing corporation	Temporary
Ms. XI	27,5	150	10	3	2	0,8	Housing corporation	Temporary
Ms. SR	200	320	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	UvA	Temporary – UvA
Ms. LP	200	380	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	UvA	Temporary – UvA
Mr. ZZ	500	n.t.k	3	3	1	5	UvA	Temporary – UvA
Mr. DD	340	n.t.k	2	1	1	2	UvA	Temporary – UvA
Mr. P	350	n.t.k	2	3	3	6	UvA	Temporary – UvA

**Table A.6.** General Data of Displaced Residents- Temporary Renters- Cerampléin

Name	Age	Household size	Education	Employment (hours per week)	Occupation	Income Source	Income
Mr. DR	33	2	Master	Employed (>20)	Phd student	Salary	1 500-2000
Ms. RN	18	2	Higher school (HAVO)	Employed (>20)	Student + receptionist	Salary	700
Ms. TC	34	1	Bachelor	Employed (>20)	Artist/student	Salary	1 500-2000
Ms. VD	24	1	Master	Employed (<20)	Student	Scholarship + Salary	500-750
Ms. BP	24	2	High School	Housewife	Housewife	Unemployment Benefit	1 100-1 500
Mr. OA	43	1	Lower vocational education (LBO)	Unemployed	Production worker	Unemployment Benefit	750-1 100
Ms. XI	32	1	Bachelor	Employed(>20)	Masseur + student	Own business	1 100-1 500
Ms. SR	23	2	Bachelor	Student	Student	Family	500-750
Ms. LP	21	2	Bachelor	Student	Student	Family	500-750
Mr. ZZ	27	1	Master	Student	Phd student	Salary	1 500
Mr. DD	28	2	Bachelor	Student	Student	Study funding	1 000
Mr. P	37	2	Master	Student	Phd student	Salary	2 000-2 500

**Table A.7.** Residential Data of Tarlaabaşı Residents

	Before displacement				After displacement		
	Tenure type	Residence house (years)	Residence Tarlaabaşı (years)	Residence İstanbul (years)	Old Rent (TL)	New rent (TL)	
Mr. AZ	Owner-occupied	12	15-20	15-20	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. AT	Renter	3	14	14	300	300	
Mr. AA	Renter	8	27	27	300	700	
Mrs. AY	Renter	13	14	14	350	400	
Mr. Z	Renter	15	15	15	300	n.t.k.	
Mr. B	Owner-occupied	11	12	13	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. IB	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	22	26	26	n.a.	600	
Mr. C	Renter	14	15-20	15-20	3250	n.a.	
Mr. ZK	Renter	19	41	50	300	No rent/father's property	
Mrs. EL	Occupier	4	10	10	n.a.	No rent joined households	
Mrs. EM	Owner-occupied	3	12	22	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. ES	Renter	15	> 30	>30	150	300	
Mrs. FT	Owner-occupied	15	17	17	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. F	Renter	4	7	7	350	n.a.	
Mr. F	Renter	1,5	2,5	2,5	50	n.t.k.	
Mr. D	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	27	27	33	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. HG	Owner occupied	12	13	13	n.a.	320 (MHA installment)	
Mrs. H	brother's house/no rent	11	34	37	n.a.	500	

	Before displacement				After displacement		
	Tenure type	Residence house (years)	Residence Tarlabaşı (years)	Residence Istanbul (years)	Old Rent (TL)	New rent (TL)	
Mr. AL	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	7	51	65	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. K	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	26	45-50	45-50	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. IP	Renter	20	5	40	150	No rent/joined households	
Mr. Y	Occupier	3	7	17	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. K	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	10	10	38	n.a.	2000	
Mr. TN	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	38	38	38	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. D	Owner-occupied	30	30	30	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. A	Renter	38	47	47	1000	1500	
Mr.T	Renter	50	75	78	300	500	
Mr. MD	Owner-occupied	10	19	19	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. MY	Owner-occupied- shopkeeper	37	40	40	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. MP	Owner-occupied	8	30	30	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. MM	owner-occupier	n.t.k.	n.t.k.	n.t.k.	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. MH	Renter	4	8	8	400	n.a.	
Mr. MT	Renter with his mother	6	6	42	100	450	
Mr. M	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	10	35	35	n.a.	n.a.	

**Table A.7.** Residential Data of Tarlabası Residents (Continued)

	Tenure type	Before displacement			After displacement		
		Residence house (years)	Residence Tarlabası (years)	Residence Istanbul (years)	Old Rent (TL)	New rent (TL)	
Mrs. N	Renter	5	15	9	300	400	
Mrs. NR	Renter	4	10	10	200	No rent/joined households	
Mrs. O	Renter	11	11	16	300-500	1350	
Mr. G	Renter	20	30	32	1000	3000	
Mr. RT	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	15	23	23	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. ST	Owner-occupied	20	20	20	n.a.	350	
Mrs. SD	Renter	13	18	19	150	n.t.k	
Mr. SH	Owner-occupied/ shopkeeper	36	36	59	n.a.	n.a.	
Mrs. S	Renter	4	8	8	300	400	
Mr. X	Renter	6	6	6	300	430	
Mrs. 5L	Owner-occupied	5	17	17	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. I	Occupier	25	50	50	no rent	n.t.k.	
Mr. MS	Owner-occupied	30	30	42	n.a.	n.a.	
Mr. YK	Owner not living/ working in Tarlabası	n.a.	18	55	n.a.	n.a.	

**Table A.8.** General Data of Tarlabaş ı Residents

Age	Household Size	Place of birth/ Ethnicity	Education	Education partner	Employment	Employment partner	Income Sources
Mr. Az	6	Mardin/Kurdish	Primary school	Primary school	Daily/Street work	Housewife	Daily income
Mrs. AT	6	Mardin/Arab	Primary school	Primary school	Self-Employed	Self employed	Daily income
Mr. AA	3	Kayseri/Turkish	Primary school	High School	Self-Employed	Paid-work/full time	Income from self employment + salary
Mrs. AY	4	Konya/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Paid-work/full time	Paid-work/full time	Regular salary
Mr. Z	7	Mardin/Kurdish	Elementary School	none	Retired	Housewife	Retirement Salary + son's income
Mr. B	6	Mardin/Kurdish	Primary school	Primary school	Paid-work/full time	Housewife	2 Regular salaries
Mr. IB	3	Agri-Kurdish	Primary school	Bachelor-moldovali	Self-Employed	Unpaid Family Worker	Income from self employment
Mr. C	n.a	Rize/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Retired+Self employed	Housewife	Retirement Salary+income from self-employment
Mr. ZK	n.a	Istanbul/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Paid-work/full time	Housewife	Retirement Salary+income from self-employment
Mrs. EL	5	Eskisehir/Roma	none	n.a.	Daily/Street work	n.a	Daily income
Mrs. EM	2	Siirt/Kurdish	Primary school	Primary school	Housewife	Paid-work/full time	Regular salary
Mr. ES	2	Saniurfa/Kurdish	Primary school	n.a	Disabled	n.a	Disability Income
Mrs. FT	18	Mardin/Kurdish	none	n.a	Housewife	n.a	Regular salary

Table A.8. General Data of Tarlabaş ı Residents (Continued)

Age	Household Size	Place of birth/ Ethnicity	Education	Education partner	Employment	Employment partner	Income Sources
Mrs. F	3	Siirt/Kurdish	Primary school-	Primary School,	Housewife	Daily/Street work	Daily income
Mr. F	5	Anembra/Nigerian	Elementary School	n.a	Daily/Street work	n.a	Daily income
Mr. D	4	Istanbul/Turkish	High School	Elementary School	Self-Employed	Paid-work/fulltime	Income from self employment, salary, rent income
Mr. HG	3	Mardin/Kurdish	Primary school	none	Retired	Housewife	Retirement Salary, rent from the house, 2 daily incomes from the sons.
Mrs. H	5	Antep/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Housewife	Paid-work/fulltime	Regular salary+rent income
Mr. AL	n.a	Istanbul/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Self-Employed	Housewife	2 retirement salary+rent+income from the shop
Mr. K	35	Istanbul/Turkish	Bachelor	n.a	Self-Employed	n.a	Income from self employment+rent from property, retirement income
Mrs. IP	70	Gumushane/Turkish	none	n.a	Housewife	n.a	Salary for elderly persons
Mr. Y	42	Samsun/Turkish	none	n.a	Daily/Street work	n.a	Daily income
Mrs. K	5	Erzincan/Turkish	Elementary School	Primary school	Self-Employed	Unemployed/not searching	Income from self employment+rent from property
Mr. TN	38	Istanbul/Turkish	High School	Elementary School	Self-Employed	Housewife	Income from self employment+rent from property

Age	Household Size	Place of birth/ Ethnicity	Education	Education partner	Employment	Employment partner	Income Sources
Mr. D	6	Tokat/Turkish	none	none	Daily/Street work	Housewife	Daily income+salary of the sons
Mr. A	n.a	Tokat/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Self-Employed	Housewife	Income from self employment+trent from property, retirement salary
Mr.T	n.a	Istanbul/Armenian	Elementary School	Elementary School	Self-Employed	Housewife	Retirement Salary+income from self-employment
Mr. MD	5	Mardin/Kurdish	none	none	Housewife	Retired	Retirement Salary+income self-employment+fulltime paid work
Mr. MY	n.a	Rize/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Retired+Self employed	Housewife	Retirement Salary
Mrs. MP	7	Siirt/Kurdish	none	none	Housewife	Daily/Street work	Daily income
Mr. MM	n.a	Kayseri/Turkish	Primary School	none	Self-Employed	Housewife	n.t.k
Mrs. MH	7	Mardin/Kurdish	none	Primary school	Housewife	Daily/Street work	Daily income
Mr. MT	2	Istanbul/Turkish	Primary school	n.a	Paid-work/full time	n.a	Salary and unemployment benefit
Mr. M	n.a	Kayseri/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Self-Employed	Housewife	Income from self employment+trent from property
Mrs. N	7	Siirt/Kurdish	none	Primary school	Housewife	Unemployed/In jail	Daily income from textile work
Mrs. NR	7	Siirt/Kurdish	none	none	Housewife	Unemployed-Searching	Social aid
Mrs. O	36 n.a	Izmir/Turkish	Primary school	n.a	Daily/Street work	n.a	Daily income

**Table A.8.** General Data of Tarlabası Residents (Continued)

Age	Household Size	Place of birth/ Ethnicity	Education	Education partner	Employment	Employment partner	Income Sources
Mr. G	32	Istanbul/Turkish	High School	Primary school	Self-Employed	Housewife	Income from self employment
Mr. RT	35	Konya/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Self-Employed	Housewife	Income from self employment
Mrs. ST	38	Diyarbakir/Kurdish	none	Primary school	Housewife	Paid-work/full time	Regular salary
Mrs. SD	42	Siirt/Kurdish	none	Primary school	Housewife	Daily/Street work	Daily income
Mr. SH	69	Yozgat/Armenian	none	Primary school	Self-Employed +retired	Housewife+retired	2 retirement salaries, rent from ikitelli, sons' income
Mrs. S	48	Batman/Kurdish	none	Primary school	Housewife	Daily/Street work	Income from teahouse+ salary
Mr. X	40	Mardin/Kurdish	Primary school	none	Daily/Street work	Housewife	Daily income, 2 salary textile sector
Mrs. SL	36	Siirt/Kurdish	none	none	Housewife	Paid-work/full time	Regular salary
Mr. I	50	Istanbul/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Daily/Street work	Housewife	Daily income
Mr. MS	67	Tokat/Turkish	none	none	Daily/Street work	Housewife	Daily income, 2 sons' salary
Mr. YK	60	Erzincan/Turkish	Primary school	Primary school	Self-Employed	Housewife	Income from self employment+rent from property, retirement salary

**Table A.9.** General Data of Tarlabası Residents

	Occupation	Monthly Income (TL)	Social Security	Social Security Partner	Social Security Children	Social Aid
Mr. AZ	mussels seller	500	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mrs. AT	second hand goods shop	1250	Bag-kur	none	Free health insurance for kids below 18	coal, food, education support
Mr. AA	shoemaker	1000	Bag-kur	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. AY	textile worker	1500	none	SSK	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mr. Z	retired (cannot work)	700	SSK	SSK	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mr. B	cleaner	1500	SSK	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mr. IB	grocer	1000	Bag-kur	Bagkur	Bag-kur	n.a.
Mr. C	hotel owner	1100	n.a.	Bagkur	SSK	n.a.
Mr. ZK	electrician	1300	SSK	Bagkur	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. EL	street seller	200	Green Card	na	Green card	Food, coal, money (100 TL quarterly)
Mrs. EM	salesperson	900	SSK	SSK	n.a.	n.a.
Mr. ES	cook	773	none	n.a.	none	na
Mrs. FT	housewife	2200	SSK	n.a.	Free health insurance for kids below 18, SSK	na
Mrs. F	mussels seller	500	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18	na
Mr. F	porter	600	none	n.a.	na	Food from church
Mr. D	baker	>4000	Bag-kur	SSK	Bag-kur	n.a.

**Table A.9.** General Data of Tarlabası Residents (Continued)

	Occupation	Monthly Income (TL)	Social Security	Social Security Partner	Social Security Children	Social Aid
Mr. HG	retired	1700	SSK	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. H	salesperson	1050	none	none	Free health insurance for kids	n.a.
Mr. AL	metal worker	2000	Bag-kur/retired	SSK/retired	SSK	n.a.
Mr. K	shoemaker	3500	SSK	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Mrs. IP	cook, cleaner, prostitution	150	Green Card	n.a.	none	Food stamps
Mr. Y	recycling worker	450	none	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Mrs. K	epilation worker	>4000	none	none	none	n.a.
Mr. TN	metal plating	5500	Bag-kur	Bag-kur	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mr. D	street seller	2100	SSK	SSK	Free health insurance for kids below 18,SSK	n.a.
Mr. A	barber	1650	Bag-kur -retired	Bag-kur	SSK	n.a.
Mr.T	button maker	750	Bag-kur -retired	Bag-kur	SSK	n.a.
Mr. MD	retired	1350	SSK	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mr. MY	water distributor	2500	SSK	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. MP	street seller	700	SSK	SSK	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mr. MM	second hand shopkeeper	n.t.k.	n.t.k.	none	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. MH	street seller	550	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18	coal, food, education support

Occupation	Monthly Income (TL)	Social Security	Social Security Partner	Social Security Children	Social Aid
Mr. MT worker	960	SSK	n.a.	Free health insurance for kids below 18	unemployment benefit
Mr. M hardware storekeeper	2500	Bag-kur	Bag-kur	Bag-kur	n.a.
Mrs. N housewife	700	Green Card	none	Free health insurance for kids below 18	food stamps
Mrs. NR housewife	100	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18,SSK	coal, food, education support
Mrs. O sex worker	1500	none	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Mr. G wigmaker	4000.	none	none	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mr. RT cooling worker	2000	SSK	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. ST textile worker	650	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18	food
Mrs. SD housewife	500	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18	food stamps
Mr. SH metalworker	2900	SSK	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mrs. S teahouse keeper	600	Green Card	Green Card	Green card	food stamps, money
Mr. X construction worker	3250	Green Card	Green Card	Free health insurance for kids below 18, green card	education
Mrs. SL worker at a restaurant	1000	none	none	Free health insurance for kids below 18	n.a.
Mr. I street seller	1285	SSK/Retired	SSK	SSK	n.a.
Mr. MS street seller	2750	SSK (from son)	SSK (from son)	SSK	n.a.
Mr. YK beltmaker	2000	Bag-kur	none	n.a.	n.a.

# Curriculum Vitae

Nur Bahar Sakızlıođlu was born on April 30, 1980 in Izmir, Turkey. She did her bachelor study in Business Administration and received her minor degree in Economic Policy at Middle East Technical University (METU). During her Masters study in Sociology, she served as a research assistant at the Department of Sociology at METU from 2004 to 2007. In 2008, Bahar started as a guest researcher at Urban and Regional Research Center at the University of Utrecht. After receiving the Nuffic Huygens Scholarship in 2008, she started her PhD study at the same center. Among her main research interests are urban and political sociology, uneven urban development, displacement, gentrification and accumulation of dispossession and social movements. She has written papers on politics of gentrification and displacement experiences of disadvantaged groups in restructuring neighborhoods.

