

IMPACTS OF URBAN RENEWAL POLICIES:  
THE CASE OF TARLABASI-ISTANBUL

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **IMPACTS OF URBAN RENEWAL POLICIES: THE CASE OF TARLABAŞI/ISTANBUL**

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Istanbul of 2000s has experienced a shift in urban policy approach from leading and maneuvering uneven, excessive and speculative urban growth, towards managing ‘urban transformation’ that has been put implementation with urban (re)development / renewal / regeneration / revitalization initiatives. To examine the rise of these new policies for ‘urban transformation’ in Istanbul of the 2000s for the entire restructuring of the city is the first and comprehensive aim of this study. In this respect, the political economic, social, dynamics that lied beneath the policy shift toward urban transformation and the associated alterations in the institutional and legislative configurations are discussed. Besides, a categorization of the extant ‘urban transformation’ projects in Istanbul with different scopes and aims is provided and lastly the main elements and impacts of the urban transformation projects in the city are evaluated.

The second and main aim of the study is to investigate the underlying features and intents, impacts of the new urban policies designed to renew the historical neighborhoods of Istanbul with a specific focus on the role of the municipal government as the key actor in the process. Attached to this, it is specifically

targeted to examine the relationship between these new urban renewal policies, strategies and gentrification in inner city historical neighborhoods. To this end, the case of Tarlabası renewal process, a deprived neighborhood in the old commercial and cultural center of Beyoğlu-Istanbul, is analyzed giving detailed accounts on the renewal approach and the municipality's attitudes towards different stakeholders in the process, the initial impacts of the project in the neighborhood and lastly on the relation between renewal initiative and gentrification.

Embracing a qualitative methodology, the study makes use of variety of data collection techniques, namely semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analyses, media analyses, participant and direct observations. Based on the analysis, the study firstly evaluates that the rise of the new policies, programs for urban transformation/ renewal in Istanbul of the 2000s refers to a new phase in the unplanned and highly uneven urbanization experience of Istanbul, which has been shaped by the neoliberal policies for more than twenty years. It also suggests that this new urbanization phase has been shaping with an approach, which sidelines the social aspects of urban transformation on behalf of the rent-oriented project implementations, plans that would make the urban redevelopment sector attractive for inter/national investments and which paves the way to the rewriting of the uneven urban development that would potentially result in the accentuation of the polarizations between the winners and the losers in the redistribution of the urban rents created as the result of these projects.

Based on the analysis regarding the Tarlabası renewal process, it is suggested in the study that renewal process in the neighborhood initiated by the municipality with a cultural and tourism based renewal strategy has been shaping with rent- oriented approach which excludes the social aspects of urban renewal. Leading the process, municipality has embraced an entrepreneurial attitude towards the investors and a selectively inclusive, encouraging one towards the property owners. However, the tenants, the groups with no legal tenancy status and the marginal groups, all of which constitute the majority of the neighborhood population have been the social groups that the municipality has not taken as the addressees but rather excluded within the renewal process. The initial implications of the renewal proposal at the

neighborhood level have been speculative increases in the real estate prices, heightened interest of the big capital groups for renewal investments in Tarlabaşı and an emerging appeal and interest of the middle classes for a living in Tarlabaşı etc.

Once these impacts are evaluated in relation to gentrification, the study argues that the renewal process that has been experiencing in Tarlabaşı is preparing the infrastructure for gentrification in the neighborhood as the result of the municipal initiative. Urban renewal plans shaped by the municipality do not include any social mechanisms, measures and programs to prevent the displacement of the low-income and marginal groups living in Tarlabaşı in this process, rather encourage a radical change in the socio-cultural profiles of the residents to create a ‘new’ Tarlabaşı as a prestigious cultural center in the city. In this sense, the study argues that this deprived, sociospatially stigmatized neighborhood in the historical city center is being created as a gentrifiable one with the municipal intervention in this renewal process. While such a trajectory of neighborhood change pinpoints the potential reproduction of the uneven development process that has carried Tarlabaşı to the thresholds of renewal through this new renewal policy, it leaves the low-income disadvantaged groups living in Tarlabaşı to face the very tangible problem of displacement.

**Key Words:** Urban transformation and renewal policies, gentrification, local government, uneven redevelopment, Tarlabaşı – Istanbul.

## ÖZ

### KENTSEL YENİLEME POLİTİKALARININ ETKİLERİ: TARLABAŞI – İSTANBUL ÖRNEK OLAY İNCELEMESİ

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2000’li yılların İstanbul’unda, kent politikası yaklaşımında eşitsiz, aşırı ve spekülative kentsel büyümeyi yönlendiren, şekillendiren bir anlayıştan kentsel yeniden gelişme/ yenileme / yeniden üretim / canlandırma girişimleriyle uygulamaya konan ‘kentsel dönüşüm’ yönetimine doğru bir geçiş deneyimlenmiştir. 2000’li yılların İstanbul’unda kentin yeniden yapılandırılması adına uygulamaya konan yeni ‘kentsel dönüşüm’ politikalarının yükselişini incelemek, bu çalışmanın birinci ve kapsamlı hedefidir. Bu bağlamda, kentsel dönüşüme yönelik politika uygulamalarının zeminini oluşturan politik, sosyal ve ekonomik dinamikleri ve bu politika tercihinin beraberinde getirdiği kurumsal ve yasal dönüşümleri tartışmak hedeflenmiştir. Ayrıca, her biri “kentsel dönüşüm” başlığı altında uygulamaya konan ancak amaç ve kapsamı açısından farklılıklar gösteren proje uygulamalarının genel bir sınıflandırılmasının yapılması ve son olarak da ilk uygulamalar itibarıyla kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin genel nitelikleri ve kentte yarattığı etkilerin tartışılması çalışmanın sorunsalları arasındadır.

Araştırmanın ikinci ve ana hedefi ise, 2000’li yıllarda, İstanbul’da kent içi tarihi mahalleleri yenilemek için hazırlanan ve uygulamaya konan yeni kentsel yenileme politikalarının temel özellikleri, hedefleri ve etkilerini yenileme süreçlerini

şekillendiren başlıca aktör olan yerel yönetimlerin rolüne odaklanarak incelemektir. Bu çerçevede, yeni kentsel yenileme politikaları, stratejileriyle kent içi tarihi mahallelerde soylulaştırma ilişkisini incelemek hedeflenmektedir. Bu amaçla, İstanbul'un tarihi, kültürel ve ticari merkezlerinden Beyoğlu'nda yer alan sosyoekonomik açıdan yoksul ve yoksun bir semt olan Tarlabası'nda yerel yönetimce uygulamaya konan yenileme projesi, süreçte benimsenen yenileme yaklaşımı, bu süreci şekillendiren başat aktör olarak yerel yönetimin yenilemeye dahil olan farklı sosyal gruplara olan tutumu ve ilk uygulamalar çerçevesinde projenin semtte yarattığı etkiler ve son olarak da bu yenileme girişimi ile soylulaştırma bağı konusunda detaylı çözümlemelere yer verilerek incelenmiştir.

Niteliksel metodolojiye dayalı olarak yapılan araştırmada bitbirini tamamlayıcı çok çeşitli niteliksel veri toplama yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Bunlar arasında, yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar, döküman analizleri, medya analizi, katılımcı ve doğrudan gözlem yöntemleri yer almaktadır. Yapılan analizlere dayanarak, bu çalışmada, öncelikle, son dönemde kentsel dönüşüm ve yenileme amacıyla uygulamaya konan yeni kentsel politika ve programların yükselişi, İstanbul'un son yirmi yıldır neoliberal politikalarla şekillenen plansız ve eşitsiz kentleşme deneyiminde yeni bir döneme işaret etmekte olduğu çıkarsanmıştır. Araştırma ayrıca, bu yeni dönemin kentsel dönüşümün sosyal boyutlarının, kentsel yeniden gelişim sektörünü yerel, yabancı sermaye yatırımları için cazip kılacak rant odaklı uygulamalar lehine arka plana itildiği ve bu projeler sonucunda yaratılan kentsel rantın yeniden bölüşümünün kazanan ve kaybedenler arasındaki uçurumları derinleştirdiği ölçüde kentsel eşitsiz gelişimin tekrar yaratılması anlamında adımlar atıldığı bir yaklaşımla şekillendiğini çıkarsamıştır.

Tarlabası yenileme projesine yönelik yapılan analizlere dayanarak, turizm, kültür odaklı kentsel yenileme stratejisi güden belediyenin girişimi ile başlatılan Tarlabası yenileme süreci yenilemenin sosyal boyutlarının dışlandığı rant odaklı bir yaklaşımla ile şekillenmektedir. Bu süreçte farklı sosyal gruplara karşı farklı tutumlar takınan belediyenin yatırımcılara yönelik girişimci bir tavır, mülk sahiplerini seçici bir şekilde sirece dahil eden tutum takınmakta ancak mahallede çoğunluğu teşkil eden kiracılar, yasal olmayan statülerle barınmakta olan gruplar ile



marjinal kesimler belediyenin yenileme sürecinde muhattap almadığı sosyal kesimler olmuştur.

Yenileme girişimi sonucunda mahallede düzeyinde ortaya çıkan ilk etkiler - Tarlabasında gayrimenkul fiyatlarında spekülatif artışlar, yenilemeye yönelen büyük yatırımcı ilgisi, Tarlabasının bir kültür merkezi yapılması hedefiyle paralel olarak mahalleye yönelen orta sınıf ilgisi vs.- soylulaştırmaya ilişkin olarak değerlendirildiğinde, Tarlabası'nda yaşanan yenileme sürecinde soylulaştırmanın alt yapısını hazırladığı çıkarsanmıştır. Belediyenin öncülüğünde şekillenen kentsel yenileme planları, bu süreçte mahallede yaşayan düşük gelirli kesimlerin, marjinal grupların yerinden edilmemesine yönelik hiçbir sosyal mekanizma, kriter ve programı kapsamamakta ve Tarlabası'nı yeni ve prestijli bir kültür merkezi olarak yeniden yapılandırmak için mahallede radikal bir sosyokültürel profil değişimi desteklemektedir. Bu bağlamda, yenileme süreci içinde belediyenin müdahalesi ile birlikte, tarihi kent merkezinde yer alan sosyomekansal olarak etiketlenmiş ve yoksun bir mahalle olan Tarlabası'nın soylulaştırılabilir kentsel bir mekan olarak yeniden üretilmekte olduğu tartışılmıştır. Böylesi bir mekansal değişim süreci ise Tarlabası'nı yenilemenin eşiğine getiren eşitsiz kentsel gelişim sürecinin potansiyel olarak yeniden üretildiğine işaret ederken, Tarlabası'nda yaşayan kentsel yoksulların dezavantajlı grupların yerinden edilme sorunuyla karşı karşıya bırakıldığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Kentsel Dönüşüm ve Yenileme Politikaları, Soylulaştırma, Yerel Yönetim, Eşitsiz (Yeniden) Gelişim, Tarlabası- İstanbul.

To My Father

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I dedicate this work to my father.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **1. The context and the aims of the research.**

Like many cities in the world, in the neoliberal era of the post 1980s, Istanbul, as the economic growth pole of Turkey, has been subjected to a dramatic socio-spatial, economic restructuring, which was led and maneuvered by the local and central governments. In this period, urban development, hitherto supported by the industrialization targets, turned into a crucial public policy and investment area (Kurtuluş, 2003; Keleş, 1990; Geniş, 2004 among others). In line with the structural adjustment programs, state and state agencies took a facilitating approach, which encouraged and prepared the ground for the extended operations of the market forces in urban land and housing markets (Keyder, 1999, 2005). City's transformation took its shape through the policy implementations blended with the rhetoric of global positioning of the city and initiated for the competitive restructuring of its built environment to make Istanbul a magnet for inter/national capital investments (Öktem, 2005; Özdemir, 1999).

On the other hand, the very rapid development of the city was fueled by the vast flows of internal migration to Istanbul. Inner city –mostly- historical dilapidated neighborhoods have been home to some of the migrants, while the majority settled in the squatter housings ‘illegally’ built on state land as an ad hoc solution to housing problems they encountered. In the lack of appropriate social housing and employment policies to accommodate the newcomers, public authorities and politicians embraced a populist-clientelist attitude toward the urban migrants and poor through enacting subsequent building amnesties for squatter housings and through entitling extra development rights for them (Sönmez, 1996; Sen, 1996 among others). While this populist clientelist attitude, which blinked an eye on the new squatter neighborhood formations, triggered the further expansion of the city, it resulted in the commercialization of the informal market for squatter housings, which decreased the chances for the newcomers to accommodate themselves in the city. Moreover, as discussed by the scholars (Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2003; Keyder,

2005; Sönmez, 1996), mainly after 1990s this urban populism approached to its ends as meeting the market driven demands in urban land and housing markets posed by the capitalist sector became a priority for the state agencies to capitalize on public lands under the pressures of scarce urban lands and financial austerity conditions.

As urban growth sector has been promoted and subsidized through various mechanisms and Istanbul gradually turned into the city of speculative large capital (Tekeli, 1991; Sönmez, 1996), neoliberal remaking of the commercial and residential landscapes of the city has revolved around the clientelist politics of urban rent production, which brought about the transfers of urban income from public to private sector and from low-income to high income groups in the city (Kurtuluş, 2006).

The price of this speculative urbanization, though, has been very high with not only that city's economic, natural, cultural and historical assets have been destroyed but also that sharpening socioeconomic inequalities, heightened socio-spatial fragmentations have marked the city. On the one hand, this is evident in the contemporary social geography of Istanbul, which is configured with the extended geography of the gentrified neighborhoods, fashionable business districts and gated communities etc. built in most privileged sites of the city sometimes very much isolated from and sometimes side by side to inner city slums, squatter neighborhoods, which are marked by deep levels of urban poverty and deprivation, and derelict industrial sites in the city.

On the other hand, increasing social and environmental risks that the city endures pose threat to the urban population –e.g. the vulnerability of its built environment against the high level of earthquake risks, severe levels of urban poverty threatening large segments of urban population surrounded by deteriorated and deprived living conditions in inner city slums and squatter neighborhoods.

Istanbul of the 2000s has witnessed a shift in urban/public policy approach from leading and maneuvering this uneven, excessive and speculative urban growth to

managing ‘urban transformation’. Addressing the need to halt the deepened social and environmental problems in the city, state and state agencies have recently taken proactive roles to competitively restructure the city’s economy and built environment through undertaking urban (re)development / renewal / regeneration / revitalization projects. Even though these project initiatives have different scopes and targets, they have all been proposed and coined under the general term of ‘urban transformation’.

While this recently shaping agenda for ‘urban transformation’ has brought about some legislative and institutional realignments to form the basis of the project implementations, ‘urban transformation’ has been proposed by the public authorities as the cure to the accumulated socioeconomic and spatial problems of unplanned urban development and as the mediated objectives on the way to economic growth. Various projects in many sites of the city have been proposed while some put in implementation in the early 2000s. While the initial project proposals and implementations by the involvements of various state agencies have targeted to transform the squatter neighborhoods around the city, some of which have already brought about and/ or foreseen demolitions, evictions and some relocations in the peripheral city, big scale urban (re)development prestige projects have been inserted to transform and re-function the old industrial sites along culture and tourism industry. These have been accompanied with the insertion of the projects designed to renew the dilapidated historical urban neighborhoods with the blended aims to refashion the city’s economy. Especially the projects for prestigious redevelopment of the old industrial sites and urban renewals for historical inner city sites have been blended with the strengthening urban entrepreneurialism and city marketing efforts.

This heightened political and economic interest in the transformation of the city with the proliferation of these new ‘urban transformation’ projects, all of which are packaged to serve the entire restructuring of the city, has been met, on the one hand, with some neighborhood mobilizations and public protests, contestations posed against the projects implementations. On the other hand, criticisms have been posed by some academic circuits and professionals in the city regarding this emerging



policy agenda for ‘urban transformation’. The increasing academic interests for these new policies, strategies and their potential socio-spatial, political economic effects for the city and its population have been evident with the increased numbers of conferences, seminars, public debates and some studies on the issue. The critical accounts and studies on the initial project implementations, conceptual debates and political approaches, strategies, models regarding ‘urban transformation’ have been raised first with the ‘Urban Transformation’ conference held by the Chambers of City Planners- TMMOB (The Association for the Chambers of Architects and Engineers) in June- 2003<sup>1</sup>.

In the emerging urban literature on this new area of inquiry, some studies have focused on the conceptual and theoretical and political debates around ‘urban transformation’ (İncedayı, 2004; Kayasu et al, 2003; Tekeli, 2003) while some involved in investigations of the project based implementations and discussed the characteristics of transformation processes and their relations to various issues like urban poverty, urban entrepreneurialism, participation in decision making processes and socio-spatial fragmentations in the city etc. based mostly on case studies (Gürler, 2003; Özdemir, 2005; Öktem, 2005; Seçkin, 2004). These have been accompanied by an emerging academic interest on comparative studies giving accounts to city transformation processes experienced in some other cities in the world, their characteristics, strengths and failures (Keskin et al, 2003; Kocabas, 2006; Özdemir, 2003) and on theoretical discussions revolving around the relation between neoliberal urbanism and city restructuring processes and the rising agenda for transformation in the city (Kurtulus, 2005, Yapıcı, 2004). Very recently in 2006, another urban conference on ‘urban transformation’ held again by the Chambers of City Planners-TMMOB managed to draw the academic and political attentions on the legal, economic, ideological, political and social dimensions of these new policies and implementations for ‘urban transformation’ with the participation of critical urban scholars<sup>2</sup>. In this conference, the seeds for a more comprehensive framework that locates the transformation agenda within the context of new urban politics have been planted.

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<sup>1</sup> See Özden et al, (2003) for the collection of the papers presented in the conference.

<sup>2</sup> See Planlama (2)- 2006 for the papers presented in the conference.

This study situates in and tries to contribute to this developing literature on this new policy agenda for ‘urban transformation’, which needs further comprehensive accounts and in-depth investigations on ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘for whom’ and the impacts of urban transformation initiatives. Within this general framework, this research is dedicated to shed lights on the rise of new policies for ‘urban transformation’ and to investigate the political economic, socio-spatial dynamics that lied beneath the policy shift toward urban transformation. Besides, to secure an in-depth understanding regarding the issue, it targets to give accounts on the associated alterations in the institutional and legislative configurations and to provide the categorization of the extant projects in Istanbul with different scopes and aims though they have been put implementations under the general name of ‘urban transformation’. Embracing a sociological perspective to evaluate this policy shift, it incorporates the aim to uncover the main characteristics of the new policies that has put their imprints on the realized and potential socio-spatial, political economic impacts on the city and its population.

Beyond this general aim, which serves to develop a general framework to locate the new urban transformation agenda in Istanbul of the 2000s within the context of new urban politics, the main and more specific problematic of this study is to explore the underlying features and intents of the new urban renewal projects and to examine the specific relationship between the new policies designed specifically to renew the historical urban sites and gentrification through the case study of Tarlabaşı renewal process, which has been initiated by the district municipality in this highly dilapidated, deprived and stigmatized inner city historical neighborhood populated by the urban poor.

Though gentrification in Istanbul has been predominantly a sporadic neighborhood change process that marked mostly the historical inner city neighborhoods, as Sen (2005) and Islam (2005) argue of it, the engagements of the non-profit organizations and institutional interventions through the launch of specific renewal projects, relevant policy programs have been significant in the ‘constitutions of the local contextualities’ (Islam, 2005, p. 134), which all together form the geography

of gentrification in the contemporary Istanbul. Specifically after the launch of the rehabilitation program by Unesco for the two historical neighborhoods located along the Golden Horn, namely Fener-Balat, which paved the way to gentrification in these neighborhoods, the relation between urban policy/politics and gentrification and the role of the local authorities, institutional involvement in the expansion of the geography of gentrification have been the crucial areas that some gentrification researchers draw attention to.

For instance, in their recent study on the expansion of the geography of gentrification in Galata- Istanbul, Enlil and Islam (2006) give account on the emergent proactive role of the urban policies, which helped to spur a new wave of gentrification in the neighborhood. Likewise, Sen (2005) mentions of the increasing importance of the revitalization projects, which are initiated by the local authorities, in the extension of gentrification activities in gentrifying neighborhoods like Galata, Beyoğlu, Ortakoy etc. The author, in her recent article (2006), draw attention to the heightening role of cultural strategies incorporated into the renewal plans for the historical inner city neighborhoods and emphasizes their potential effects on the urban poor living in these neighborhoods. She underlines the potential extension of the gentrification in these same neighborhoods declared as renewal sites after the new urban renewal policies and strategies began to be implemented.

These studies provide a starting point for this research, which tries to fill the existing lack in the urban literature on the newly rising policies for urban renewal and their relation to gentrification. In this sense, it puts its lens on the Tarlabaşı renewal process to get an in-depth understanding regarding the shaping of the neighborhood change process initiated by the local municipality and to depict the role of the local government as well the characteristics and the initial impacts of the process on the neighborhood. To question of whether gentrification as an urban strategy gets incorporated into the new urban renewal policies implemented by the local authorities lies at the centre of the inquiry and this is to be done through the discussion of the impacts of the process in their relation to gentrification.

### 1.1. The initial interest and the aims of the research

Initially planning to undertake a research on gentrification in Istanbul, my interest in conducting a research on the new policies to renew historical neighborhoods in Istanbul and specifically their relation to gentrification was triggered by the increasing media coverage of the renewal plans for Tarlabası in July 2005. In these news in the published media<sup>3</sup>, the mayor of Beyoğlu announced the municipal intentions to ‘rescue Tarlabası from its decaying condition’, which would not only ‘reinsert the old dilapidated building stock into the economy’ via converting them into hotels, shopping centers, residence units but also ‘make Beyoğlu a world class brand mark’. Underlining that everyone’s properties and rights would be protected in the area, he also declared the full support of the central government for these plans and about his personal contribution in the preparation of the new urban renewal law, which was enacted in July 2005.

At that time, I knew little about Tarlabası. However, on the one hand, just my basic knowledge that this neglected, socially and physically deprived neighborhood in the historical city center -marked by severe poverty, (forced) migration and infamous with crime, prostitution, drug dealing was/is surrounded with gentrified neighborhoods and on the other hand, the municipal intentions to reevaluate it made me interested in getting to know more about the underlying features and aims of the municipal renewal plans and the residents’ viewpoints regarding them.

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<sup>3</sup> Among these news in published media, the list contains:

Sabah, “Tarlabası Yenilenecek” (Tarlabası is to be Renewed), 06.07.2006,  
Sezer, Mustafa, ‘Beyoğlu’nun değeri artıyor’ (Beyoğlu is Revaluating), Türkiye Newspaper, 7.07.2005  
Vatan Gazetesi, Tarlabası Yenileniyor, (Tarlabası to be renewed), 07.07.2005  
Bizim Gazete, “Tarlabası’na Yeni Çehre” (“A New Face to Tarlabası”), 8.07.2005  
Zaman, ‘Herkesin Gözü Tarlabası’nda’ (Eyes on Tarlabası), 15.07. 2005,  
Ekonomist, Tarlabası Değişiyor (Tarlabası is to Change), 17.07.2005

Besides, former media accounts on the renewal plans can be listed as such

Türkiye, 'Tarihe Karşı Sorumluyuz' (We are Responsible to the History), 19.02.2005  
Tercüman, “Tarlabası Kurtuluyor” (Tarlabası is Being Saved), 9.04.2005;  
Radikal, “Beyoğlu'nun değeri artacak”, (Beyoğlu to be Revaluated), 11.04.2005.

After an initial desktop search reviewing the recent studies on Tarlabası, the municipal website, which provided rich data on the municipality's activities, all projects, some reports etc., which I completed in Ankara, I decided to make an exploratory visit to Tarlabası, which took place in November 2005. During this short visit -2 days- visit, I engaged in participant observations, informal talks with some locals –at grocery shops, at tea houses- and with two real estate agents, which, all in all, helped me to get a very broad idea about the neighborhood setting, living conditions, the knowledge of the locals about the renewal plans and the very initial impacts of these plans in the neighborhood. Two things were remarkable for me regarding this first step to the neighborhood. The first is that the locals I had the chance to talk to did have little –from TV, newspapers- or no knowledge at all about the municipal plans. Second is that two real estate agents I talked to, told about the increasing demand for the old buildings in the neighborhood. Being surprised about this development, they also added that some architects, real estate agents, as some other individual investors were in search of buying the housings at two-three folds of the previous year's values<sup>4</sup>.

After this experience, I made my final decision to conduct a research study to explore the underlying features and intents of the new urban renewal projects and to examine the specific relationship between the new policies designed specifically to renew the historical urban sites and gentrification through the case study of Tarlabası renewal process, which has been initiated by the district municipality. The need to situate the case within the wider context of new policies for urban transformation in Istanbul extended the scope of the research with the incorporation of a further aim: to examine the characteristics of the new urban policies for transformation, which have been on the rise in Istanbul of the 2000s, through which the broader context of Tarlabası renewal would be set.

Hence, this study has *two main interconnected aims*:

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<sup>4</sup> One of them initially thought that I was also a real estate agent or an investor in search of a place to buy in the neighborhood. He tried to convince me about how beneficial an investment would be in Tarlabası telling me about the hearsay he knew from his customers.

1. To examine the rise of new policies for urban transformation, which underlies the proliferation of state-initiated renewal and redevelopment projects in Istanbul: To shed light on the ongoing process that “urban transformation” policies and projects are being shaped and to identify the social, political, economic dynamics behind the urban policy shift from maneuvering excessive growth to leading and managing urban transformation are the tasks of this study. These are intended to be realized through analyzing the changes in urban and housing policies together with the associated alterations in institutional and legislative configurations undertaken to form the basis of ‘urban transformation’ activities. In a context that is marked by the proliferation of the urban projects, nearly all of which are presented under the same category of ‘urban transformation’, the study attempts to present a categorization of the existing projects with respect to their different scopes, visions, aims, actors, legislations involved to secure a clearer understanding on urban transformation activities in the city. Furthermore, identification and description of the main underlying elements of the new urban transformation policies and strategies together with their initial impacts in the city are aimed to be discussed.

2. Focusing on the initial phase of Tarlabası renewal process, which has been initiated by the district municipality, it seeks to examine the underlying features and aims of the renewal proposal and as well as its initial implications ‘down to effect’ with its specific focus on the lived experience of these policies at the neighborhood level, in the city at large. Putting together these findings regarding the underlying features and aims of the proposal and their initial impacts, it then aims to discuss the process in relation to what qualifies gentrification as a specific form of neighborhood change –as clarified in the literature review- to shed lights on whether the renewal policy promotes/encourages gentrification or not. With the latter the aim is to discuss the relationship between the new policies designed specifically to renew the historical urban sites and gentrification through its case study of Tarlabası renewal process, which has been initiated by the district municipality.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Given the aims stated above, the questions of the research can be formulated into three general questions, all with their relevant sub-questions (see also Figure 1).

**Main Research Question 1:**

How can we explain the rise of new urban policies, strategies for urban transformation in Istanbul in 2000s?

**Sub-questions:**

1. What are the political, social, economic dynamics behind the shift in urban policy approach towards urban transformation in 2000s?
2. What are the alterations undertaken in the institutional and legislative configurations to form the basis of urban transformation activities?
3. How can we categorize various urban transformation projects, proposals in the city?
4. What are the main elements of the urban transformation agenda, which has been shaping in this period?

**Main Research Question 2:**

What are the underlying features and intents of the urban renewal proposal for Tarlabası?

**Sub-questions:**

1. What are the targets, visions and strategies adopted in the proposal?
2. What characterizes the renewal approach of the proposal?
3. What are the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the local authorities to the issues of crime prevention and livability, which are among the main targets of the renewal proposal?
4. What characterizes the attitudes taken by the municipal government towards different actors/stakeholders involved in renewal?

**Main Research Question 3:**

Can we discuss that municipality's renewal plans for Tarlabası encourage/ promote gentrification?

**Sub-questions:**

1. What are the initial impacts of the renewal plans in the neighborhood?
2. Considering these impacts together with the priorities, aims of the proposal, can we say that gentrification is promoted by the authorities?

**Figure 1. Research Questions of the Study**

<b>Aim Served</b>	<b>Main Research Questions</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>
<i>Exploring/ Setting the context of the case study</i>	How can we explain the rise of new policies, strategies for urban transformation in Istanbul after 2000?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the political, social, economic dynamics behind the shift in urban policy approach towards urban transformation in 2000s?</li> <li>2. What are the alterations undertaken in the institutional and legislative configurations to form the basis of urban transformation activities?</li> <li>3. How can we categorize various urban transformation projects, proposals in the city?</li> <li>4. What are the main elements of the urban transformation agenda, which has been shaping in this period?</li> </ol>
<i>Shedding lights on the case of Tarlabaşı renewal process</i>	What are the underlying features and intents of the urban renewal proposal for Tarlabaşı?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the targets, visions and strategies adopted in the proposal?</li> <li>2. What characterizes the renewal approach of the proposal?</li> <li>3. What are the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the local authorities to the issues of crime prevention and livability, which are among the main targets of the renewal proposal?</li> <li>4. What characterizes the attitudes taken by the municipal government towards different actors/stakeholders involved in renewal?</li> </ol>
	Can we discuss that municipality's renewal plans for Tarlabaşı encourage/promote gentrification?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the initial impacts of the renewal plans in the neighborhood?</li> <li>2. Considering these impacts with the priorities, aims of the proposal, is there any evidence that gentrification is promoted by the authorities?</li> </ol>



## 1.2. Outline of the Study

The study is consisted of six chapters, an introductory and a concluding part. Looking back, this *introductory part* introduces the context and aims of the study. The research problematic and the general outline of the study are presented as well.

*Chapter 1* and *Chapter 2* are devoted to present the conceptual and empirical framework of the study based on a critical literature review. *Chapter 1* locates new urban (re)development/renewal policies adopted by the city governments around the world within the context of new urban politics in the post-1980 era, which was signified by the neoliberal socioeconomic, political restructuring. Secondly, it discusses the relation between these new policies and gentrification with reference to existing studies in the urban literature. For the latter, to secure a conceptual clarification, the chapter also presents a critical review of the gentrification literature, which is organized around key debates in the literature on how to define, explain and evaluate the outcomes of gentrification. By doing so, the definitional choice and theoretical stance embraced in the study regarding gentrification are clarified and on which the methodology of the research is based later in the methodology section. The rest of the chapter deals with two specific types of urban (re)development/ revitalization schemes mostly discussed in the literature in relation to the processes of gentrification, which are tourism- led redevelopment schemes and renewal programs designed for the low- income neighborhoods.

*Chapter 2* focuses specifically on the neoliberal socioeconomic, political and spatial restructuring processes in Istanbul after 1980s, but specifically project-led transformation processes, as the integral parts of the city's restructuring, are discussed. Evaluations on the neoliberal policy initiatives and urban project of post-1980s are presented next based on the review of the studies carried out about these urban policy initiatives and projects.

After these two chapters, there follows the *Chapter 3*, the task of which is to present the research methodology and design. Explanations regarding the selection of the

case study, the conduct of the field work study and the data collection methods are provided in the chapter.

**Chapter 4** is devoted to the analyses regarding the rise of new policies for ‘urban transformation’ in Istanbul of 21st century. It explores this policy shift from leading and maneuvering excessive growth to managing ‘urban transformation’, the rationale behind it, the institutional and legal realignments undertaken, the actors involved and the gradual shaping of urban transformation policies. Besides, the chapter provides a categorization of the ongoing and inserted projects mapping them with a focus on the main elements, contents and initial impacts of the shaping agenda during the early 2000s. The chapter ends with the final analysis on the main elements of the still shaping ‘urban transformation’ agenda in the city.

Following Chapter 4, which sets the context of the case study in the research, **Chapter 5 and Chapter 6** are dedicated to present a case study of an urban renewal process in the historical inner city of Istanbul, based on the fieldwork in Tarlabası. Chapter 5 introduces the neighborhood setting with the analyses not only on the characteristics of built environment but also on the socioeconomic conditions that inscribe Tarlabası today. Secondly, the chapter, in retrospect, aims to provide a synopsis of uneven development in Beyoğlu and Tarlabası through time to understand the ‘today’ of Tarlabası. The socio-spatial transformations in Beyoğlu and Tarlabası are discussed in relation to each other, but the analyses are specifically focused on the public and private interventions in the course of the years 1980-early 2000.

After this introductory chapter on the setting and historical development of the neighborhood, **Chapter 6** aims to shed lights on the initial phase of Tarlabası renewal process with its specific focus on the role take by the local government as the central actor in the process. Firstly, the political dynamics behind the emergence of renewal proposal are discussed. The content and main characteristics of the renewal plans for Tarlabası are discussed next. This is followed by an account on the scope, vision and the targets of the Tarlabası renewal proposal.

Then, the renewal approach of the proposal and local government's attitude towards different stakeholders involved in the process are discussed. While covering the approach to renewal, the chapter provides the mapping of the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the local authorities to the issues of crime prevention and livability, which are among the main targets of the renewal proposal. Following these accounts, the initial impacts of the proposal at the neighborhood level are discussed, though the implementation of the project has not been started during the course of the research. The final part of the chapter provides a systematic summary of the key discussions regarding the targets, strategies, priorities of the renewal initiative led by the municipal government, in relation to the qualifiers of gentrification process to question whether gentrification, as strategy for renewal, has become incorporated into the renewal agenda or not.

Lastly, the concluding part presents the summary and the evaluations regarding the key findings of the research evaluations as well as the recommendations for further research in future.

## **CHAPTER 1. CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The very general aim of the chapter is to discuss the new urban redevelopment project-based initiatives, mobilized by city governments partnering with private agents to rewrite the cityscapes widespread after 1980s in the context of new urban politics and present their key characteristics, social, spatial and political consequences for the city, society at large based on a critical literature review. The discussion is footed upon a prior discussion on the relationship between economic restructuring and urban restructuring to identify first the context of new urban politics.

The chapter proceeds with the specific focus on the relation between urban (re)development projects and gentrification. This relation is discussed based on the empirical evidence from case studies available in the literature. Before the latter discussion, though, to secure a conceptual clarification, the chapter presents a review of gentrification literature around the key debates in the literature on how to define, theorize and evaluate the outcomes of gentrification. This critical literature review targets to clarify the definitional choice and theoretical, political stance embraced, which provides the framework of this study. Moreover, the theoretical conceptualizations, themes and issues, raised in this chapter illuminate the way for the further stages of the study.

### **1.2. Neoliberal Socioeconomic Restructuring and the Primacy of ‘The Urban’: Changing Context of Urban Policy-Making in post 1980s**

The recession of capitalism beginning from the early 1970s had hit hard the countries all over the world. As the response to the crisis condition in capitalism associated with falling rates of industrial profits, massive rescaling and restructuring not only of the production processes but also of the spatial organizations were experienced (Brenner, 1999, Smith, 2002, Jessop, 1998). This was mobilized with

the gradual adoption of neoliberal political economic agendas by the central governments throughout the world.

These policies were based on privatization, deregulation of state power, flexibility, capital mobility, rectification of welfare policies (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2000; Keil, 2002; McLeod, 2002) and worked to penetrate the free market discipline into the organization of social life. Thus, from the early 1980s on, neoliberalization process has put its hallmarks on the socioeconomic, political, cultural changes experienced globally with the shaping of “actually existing neoliberalism”<sup>5</sup> by the mutual interaction of “inherited regulatory landscapes and emergent neoliberal, market-oriented restructuring projects at a broad range of geographical scales” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p.351).

While the shift to service economy, flexible accumulation regime, intensified globalization of economic processes, growing importance of the high tech industries (Jessop, 2001; Swyngedouw, 1986, Scott, 1988, Harvey, 1989) were gradually signifying the changes in urban economies, an accompanying social restructuring in the labor force became significant with the emergence of new managerial, technical and professional employees working in proliferating business, governmental, corporate services. On other hand, though there increased the number of low skill requiring low paid personal and domestic service employees and this was accompanied with relatively decreasing numbers of labor- intensive manufacturing workers.

What lied behind and triggered these changes was that the state centric organization of world capitalism left its place to the rescaling of the production processes more towards the local, regional but especially towards the urban scale<sup>6</sup> (Harvey; 1987;

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<sup>5</sup> As Brenner and Theodore put it, though, these neoliberal restructuring projects mobilized in different countries were/are basically based on the ideology of neoliberalism, which foresees that market rules would work wherever they are operated the same way and bring about the best and optimal outcomes to achieve social and economic development, they have been produced in a contextually embedded and path dependent way (2002, p. 351). Thus, there is no pure form of neoliberalism but contextually embedded processes of neoliberalization (Peck and Tickel, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> The rescaling of the urban did never mean the decreased importance of state and state policies, but rather was a part of the restructuring of the relations between the central and local governments

1989; Lovering, 1995; Smith, 2002). In such a context, the primacy of urban and urban politics was denounced for resolving the contradictions of capitalism (Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 1987, 1989). Reconfiguration of nation state went hand in hand not only with a gradual reconstruction of the urban scale as the centre of the new economic organization, but also with a redirection in urban politics towards an entrepreneurial stance that could help to reproduce the local social economic relations in line with the demands of a deregulated economic system (Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Swynegedouw et al, 2002).

That is to say, urban space and politics emerged as arenas for the economic development in this new configuration of the world economy. On the one hand, cities have not only remained as the key sites of production and consumption but also the (re)production of urban space and services as commodities emerged as invaluable means of capital accumulation. In other words, cities were the bearers and key actors of capital accumulation (Lefebvre, 1991). On the other hand, as Brenner and Theodore (2002) call it the ‘urbanization of neoliberalism’, cities have been key arenas, where neoliberal initiatives were deployed and neoliberal modes of regulation get grounded (Keil, 2002).

All in all, the reworking of urban landscapes and institutions have played a critical role in the (re)production of actually existing neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore; 2002; Harvey, 1985; Keil, 2002; Lefebvre, 1991; Smith, 2002). The reappraisal of the urban and urban politics was announced with the heightened appeal to ‘New Localism’ among the politicians, policymakers as the regional and urban governments tried to position their economies in this ‘new global economy’. As Lovering (1995) gives a critical account on, what was/is striking, though inherent in this new localism, the strategies adopted locally to increase competitive advantage over other localities have been *unlocal* in their nature as they have been blended with the priorities of neoliberal economic policy as Peck and Tickell (1994) emphasize.

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(Smith, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). On the contrary, the states’ role in promoting the economic production increased, which was accompanied with -to a lesser or greater extent- its withdrawal from its welfare role (Jessop, 1993).

Likewise, Smith (2002) discusses the emergence of new urbanism as a parallel process of 'refashioned globalism' for the rescaling of social processes and relations that brings about the primacy of the urban scale. According to Smith, while witnessing the globalization of economic processes, being a crucial actor in this process, "...the scale of the urban is recast" (ibid, p.427) and the urban forms, representations, functions, the way it is governed etc. are being redefined in this process. Lying at the heart of this change, neoliberal urbanism, according to Smith, "...expresses the impulses of capitalist production rather than social reproduction" (ibid, p.427).

Among others, Cox and Mair (1988), Harvey (1989), Cox (1993) had pinpointed the changing nature and importance of the urban policy making in the cities of advanced capitalism, which Cox (1993) referred to as the rise of "New Urban Politics", the characteristics of which will be discussed in the next section..

### **1.3 New Urban Politics/Policy**

The effects of deindustrialization on the cities in the advanced capitalist world were devastating: factory closures, fiscal problems, severing levels of unemployment, deteriorating sociospatial problems especially in the inner cities. (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; McLeod and Ward, 2002). Added upon this was -to a lesser or greater extent- the decline in government financial support for the cities under fiscal austerity conditions. Besides, 'hallowing out of the state' (Jessop, 1993), to a certain extent with the demise of the redistributive and welfare functions put another burden on the city governments (McLeod and Ward, 2002).

These restructuring dynamics all put the local governments at the forefront not only of dealing with the accumulated problems but also of meeting the challenges of local economic restructuring, which meant taking a crucial role in the reshaping of the capital-labor, state-capital and state- society relations (Harvey, 1987; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). The changes in the global and national economy had not only underpinned the policy redirections in the local

government agendas, in which the priority was given to economic growth oriented policies to secure a competitive edge among other cities. The same changes also widened the sphere of local politics as now the growth coalitions and partnerships became main ingredients of urban policy making (c.f. see among others Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 1987; Mayer, 1995).

The reorientation in urban politics was long ago described by Harvey (1989) as the shift from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism. As many scholars argue (among others cf. Harvey, 1989; Jessop, 1996; Fainstein; 1991; Mollenkopf, 1983, Saunders, 1986), two main features that characterize this new socioeconomic regulation in the cities are:

1. The transformation in the political priorities of the urban governments towards economic policy: Rather than managing the redistributive functions and provision of public services etc. as in Keynesian times, the city governments became more actively involved in providing the conditions for economic growth adopting market oriented policies to attract investments to compete with other cities in the globalized division of labor (Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Mayer, 1995).
2. Secondly, this transformation of the political priorities of the urban governments from social to economic policy domains was accompanied with the expansion of local politics with the involvement of private and semi- private actors (Leitner, 1990; Mayer, 1995) in urban policy making, which is captured by the term urban governance (Harvey, 1989; Jessop, 1997).

In Harvey's renowned formulation, urban entrepreneurialism "rests ... on a public-private partnership focusing on investment and economic development with the speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory as its immediate (though by no means exclusive) political and economic goal" (1989, p.8) Thus, engaging in heightened cooperation with private



agents, urban authorities take a businesslike approach to managing the urban and urbanization and this is realized rather in a piecemeal fashion (Harvey, 1989; Gottdiener, 1987).

Here two further points should be made to be precise about the rise of entrepreneurial cities and new urban politics before proceeding with certain strategies embraced by urban authorities. Based on their review of Harvey's work (1987, 1989, 1993), Hall and Hubbard (1998) emphasize Harvey's critical contribution in explaining the key role of the entrepreneurial politics in the reworking of uneven development all aligning the local dynamics and social relations in accordance with the requirements of flexible accumulation. The authors underline and confirm Harvey's point once again, in this sense the rise of the entrepreneurial city, new urban politics 'should not be seen as a reaction to global forces, but rather as a trigger to new forms of competitive capitalism' (Hall and Hubbard, 1998, p. 16).

Second -and related to the first- point is that emphasis should be made on the constructed nature of the new urban political agenda. Urban authorities, political and economic elites embrace the entrepreneurial stance, going for competitiveness to solve the urban problems, but as McNeill and While (2001) discuss it in relation to the discourses of new economies, these political responses cannot be seen as inevitable but rather as formants of a constructed agenda by power elites – policymakers, academics, politicians as the authors refer to- who have some stakes in the pursuit of this agenda. That is to say, the new urban politics works, as Painter (1996, p.261) puts it, through 'a complex process of negotiation, coalition formation, indirect influence, multi-institution working and public private partnership'. And given this, among the available strategies and development paths that the local governments could take, some, but not the others, are selected, legitimized and implemented based on overlapping interests and stakes of the actors involved in policy making.

To position their cities in the global economy, entailing a visionary urbanism, which incorporates the priorities of neoliberal economic policy into the strategies, policies,

forms of the urban governments, the economic and political elites have made coalitions and alliances to restructure the cityscapes through the very constructed ‘global city’<sup>7</sup> projects for their cities (Hall and Hubbard, 1998). The embracement of entrepreneurialism by the city governments around world, which entailed different strategies and locally contingent characteristics, has been marked by the circulation and production of the rhetoric and the projects of global city making by the city’s power elites and by the forces that crossroad several actors operating at different scales ( Smith, 1999). All in all, the rhetoric of global city making hallmarked the reshaping of the many cities around the world. On the other hand, the global city projects were constructed by the socio-economic and political interests of and alliances, conflicts between different strategic groups; hence, the power relations and ideology were the very immanent features of these projects (Brenner, 1998a, Smith, 1999). The entrepreneurial strategies were undertaken to pursue strategies to compete for a secure niche in four competition areas as Harvey (1989) identifies them:

- In the international division of labor pursuing cost cutting strategies like cuts in wages or heavier working conditions or provision of tax subsidies etc. as well as improvements in infrastructural conditions.
- In the international division of consumption pursuing strategies to attract tourists, affluent residents into the city e.g. offering qualified entertainment and leisure places as well as living conditions.

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<sup>7</sup> Based on her criticisms upon ‘world city’ theory, Sassen’s theoretical conceptualization of ‘global city’ (1991) is based on her analyses to depict some convergent characteristics, roles and socio-economic dynamics that mark the certain cities around the world, which make them central in the global economy. Her special emphasis on the role of these cities, which she calls “global cities”, in the shaping of global economy through the command and control functions they embody in their economic geography. Though it is beyond the scope of this study to enter into the associated debates within and against the huge literature of ‘global city’, it is suffice to state here that though it helps to shed lights on the dynamics of global economy, at its very basics, ‘global city’ theory views the globalization as a given, irresistible, top-down process ignoring the political and ideological aspects of the process (Brenner, 1998a, Smith, 2002) and falls short of explaining the role of the agents, power relations keeping in the trap of the discourses on economic globalization (Smith, 1999; 2001). Besides, the effects of the ‘global city’ theory on the urban politics and the neoliberal restructuring of the cities has been significant as the city governments adopted the global city models, roles to shape the trajectories of urban change in their cities. Thus, the theory itself became an ideological tool itself to legitimize the entrepreneurial and uneven development of the cities.

- In the division of labor for control and command functions creating the necessary technological infrastructure, providing corporate tax subsidies, creating enterprise zones etc.
- In division of labor for governmental functions pursuing strategies to attract governmental functions like military and defense etc. (Harvey, 1989).

Regardless of the choice for any of these strategies, rewriting the urban landscapes undertaking urban renewal/development projects became the way out in the search for growth. The main priority became to improve and aestheticise the outlook of the cities mobilizing public resources, embracing place marketing and image creation strategies, e.g. mobilizing culture and ‘heritage industry’ etc. (Fainstein, and Judd, 1999; Fainstein, 1994; Harvey, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 1987; Zukin, 1995, 1997), though at a high cost for the ones who cannot afford it (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Harvey, 1989; Mitchell, 1997; Smith, 1996).

### **1.3.1. The New Urban Policies For (Re)Development & Renewal: (Re) Building the City with Project-Led Initiatives**

As Swyngedouw et al.<sup>8</sup> (2002) put it, for the local authorities in the cities, urban (re)development emerged as ‘mediated objective, a necessary precondition for economic regeneration’ and perceived as ‘an opportunity to change economic hierarchies and functions within urban region, creating jobs, strengthening city’s position in the urban division of labor’ (ibid., p.548). The authors pinpoint this very concrete relation between new economic and urban policies and urban development projects as the figure below depicts it (Figure 1.1).

Especially for the old industrial cities, rebuilding became the main concern considering the abundance of derelict industrial areas and inner city suffering from capital and affluent residents’ flight, which had decreased the tax income for the

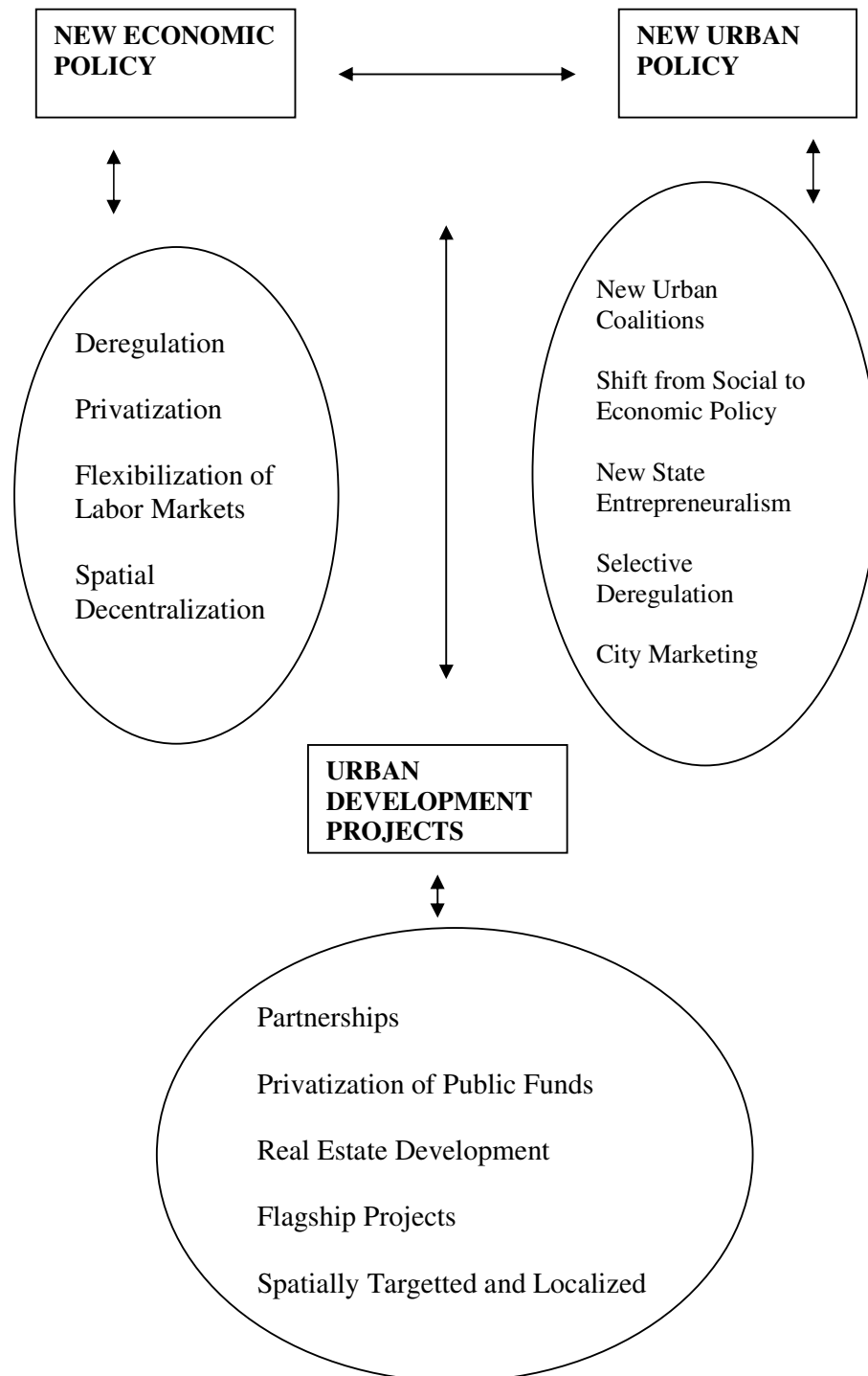
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<sup>8</sup> As the authors discuss based on case studies from many cities in Europe, large scale urban development schemes -mostly of mixed use types- become integrated part of growth strategies of the city governments to restructure their cities in line with the demands of investors, tourists, affluent residents, Euro bureaucrats.

local governments, who found it hard to attract new promising economic functions and activities. Altering the image associated with old industrial cities on the part of city entrepreneurs meant the recruitment of certain -but not the others- representations of space (Lefebvre, 1991), for the city 'to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative and safe place to live or to visit, to play and consume in' (Harvey, 1989, p.9).

To attract the people of a 'right' type and investment into the inner city closing the rent gaps, city governments involved in competitive forms of urban (re)development/ renewal project-based initiatives. Large scale emblematic projects undertaken characterized not only the urban schemes to revitalize the urban economic and physical landscapes but also the urban political activity. Some cities urged to rework their downtowns with property-led commercial development projects enabling prestigious business plazas and skyscrapers to be built-such as Dublin's Dockland Project, Berlin's Adlershof Project (Sywngedouw et. al., 2002), and mostly mixed use business, residential and leisure sites proliferated -such as Bilbao's Abandoibarra Project (Rodriguez et al, 2001, 2002; Swyngedouw et al, 2002), Glasgow's Buchanan Street (McLeod, 2002), among many others.

**Figure 1.1. Relation Between New Economic Policy, New Urban Policy and Urban Development Projects**



**Source: Swyngedouw et al (2002, p.548)**

On the other hand, what signified many of the (re)development/ renewal initiatives were the mobilization of the ‘cultures of the cities’, urban lifestyles for the imagined ‘urban’ future along entrepreneurial lines (Hubbard, 1998, p.199; Zukin, 1995, 1998), which helped to turn cities from ‘landscapes of production’ into ‘landscapes of consumption’ (Zukin, 1998, p.825). The latter was most evidently inscribed in tourism, culture-led initiatives undertaken for the revitalization of many cities around the world from Bilbao to Glasgow, from Vienna to Sydney.

The effects of the implementation of these large scale projects have been researched and discussed by some scholars. Here reviewing the studies carried out, I will present a mapping of their key characteristics and their social, spatial and political consequences for the city, society at large.

1. Though they are implemented for the purposes to modernize the cities, revitalize the economy, most of them engage in financial losses, which are in some cases financed by the public resources but for the most infrastructural cost burdens are carried by the public sector (Harvey, 1989; Swyngedouw et al, 2002; McLeod, 2002; Kurtuluş, 2003). On the one hand, the realizations of the trickle down effects of the projects (job creation, tourism income etc.) have been highly questionable, as many authors discuss (see Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Rodriguez, et al., 2001; Zukin, 1995 among others). On the other hand, these investments are highly focused on downtown locations meeting the locational and sectoral demands of the investors, which contribute to the reproduction of uneven development in the cities (McLeod, 2002). Besides, mostly with a one-sided physical focus on built environment, they downgrade social problems to a spatial level, indeed, drain public resources away from social policy programs, which are of great importance but do not yield immediate economic returns (Keating, 1998; Mayer, 1995).

2. Their initiation and implementation mostly involve partnership agencies, bodies which carry public duties of planning and policy making though with their semi-private or private characters. This not only redistributes the planning and policy making powers away from the central and local public bodies, but also shadows the pursuit of public good and accountability in the projects (Rodriguez, et al., 2001, 2002; Sywngedouw et al, 2002). All in all, these bring about the privatization of the planning and public policy making, as the interests of private agents filter down through these partnerships as Jessop (1998) and Harvey (1989) discuss it.
  
3. It is agreed by the scholars that these entrepreneurial prestigious project undertakings do contribute to the worsening of socio-economic gap within society since that they prompt the weakening of social equity concerns as they work to transfer public income and urban rents on behalf of the privileged groups and that they open up space for the consumption of middle and upper classes. Likewise, since they are based on rent appropriations and speculations, they work to threat the access to housing on the part of low income groups. The increases in rents and sale values of property in and around the projects' areas halt the chances for less privileged in the highly competitive real estate markets if not displace them (see Fainstein, 1994; Keating, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Mcleod, 2002; van Kempen and Marcuse 2002; Sywngedouw, 2002, Zukin, 1995; among others).
  
4. Among the most important outcomes, as Swyngedouw et al. (2002) emphasize, is that the project implementations do inscribe an 'elite driven democracy' in the cities. This stems from the fact that the initiatives are taken accordingly to elite's demands and that some exceptional measures are undertaken, which work to halt the formal procedures of planning and decision making on behalf of private

interests. Furthermore, the participation of the urban citizens into decision making is only welcomed in a 'formalistic' way in many projects (ibid, p.542). These pose the critical questions of 'for whom' the city gets revitalized and 'who decides' and 'why only some mechanisms and representations are selected and put in action'.

5. They generally put a question mark on the publicness of public space and culture. These projects mostly inscribe culture industries and consumption spaces, where the ones, who can afford to consume, are welcomed and the 'unwanted' elements are refused and displaced with strict surveillance tactics and private security. Equating the consumption to participation in public life, the private culture of consumption –of certain classes- to the public culture, they not only put a serious question mark on the issue of urban citizenship and bring about "consumerist citizenship", as Bauman argues it (Bauman, 2000). At the same time with a lip service to diversity though, homogenization of public culture –'Disneyfication'- is evident as Zukin discusses (1995, 1997, and 1998). The altered rules of 'publicness' in spatial practices destroy the social practice as once Lefebvre put it (1991).
6. Related to the last point, one further point can be asserted based on Zukin's invaluable analysis on the workings of 'symbolic economy'<sup>9</sup> (1995, 1998). As cities 'use culture as an economic base' (Zukin, 1995, p.11) and image making becomes integral part of urban politics as well as cultural strategies get incorporated into urban redevelopment schemes to attract tourists, affluent residents or new corporate investments: These do not only promote the cultural appropriations/consumptions of middle classes of city centers, which

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<sup>9</sup> Zukin (1998) argues of symbolic economy as it is based on the production and consumption of information, culture (music, food, fashion, art and tourism) and financial instrument and understands symbolic economy as the interrelated processes of production of cultural symbols and the space, where these cultural symbols are produced and offered for consumption. The proliferation of museums, restaurants, offices, historically preserved touristic quarters etc. indicate the powerful role of symbolic economy in the remaking of the contemporary city.



enhance the cultural hegemony of middle and upper classes regarding the social life in the cities (Zukin, 1995). But also the 'critical infrastructure' is created for gentrification in concrete terms with the proliferation of symbolic economy in the city center. These redevelopment schemes put their immediate area of focus and surrounding neighborhoods on the map of gentrification for the real estate developers, corporate investors, middle class gentrifiers as experienced in Bilbao, New Castle, New York, among other cities (Rodriguez, et. al., 2002; Cameron and McCaffae, 2005; Smith, 1996). This existing relation between new policies for urban renewal /redevelopment and gentrification will be of our concern, but, *en passé*, I would want to emphasize that this relation works to increase the spatial segregation and social polarization in the city as the geography of gentrification expands as the result of these projects.

This list can be lengthened but most significantly, as the widely used forms of intervention into urban space, the urban (re)development/renewal projects are working to shape once again the state-society-market relations helping to reproduce 'actually existing neoliberalism', redistributing the resources away from low income groups to middle and upper classes as well as away from public interests towards private interests (Swygnedouw et al., 2002; Rodriguez et al. 2001; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2000).

Having mentioned about the key formants of the new urban politics and key aspects of these redevelopment project-led initiatives, in retrospect, the rest of the chapter will elaborate on the relation between urban policies for (re)development and gentrification.

#### **1.4. The Relation between Urban Policies for (Re) development/Renewal and Gentrification**

Gentrification, as an aspect of urban restructuring, which blatantly denounces the social spatial differentiation in contemporary urban life has been a very inspiring,

productive as well as controversial phenomenon for urban scholars to contemplate on the urban reality through time. It is the common ground in gentrification literature that gentrification is not an isolated process of neighborhood change, involving in rehabilitation of inner city residential areas, but an integrated part of wider processes of urban spatial, political, economic restructuring (Smith and Williams, 1986; Smith, 1996).

Much as that the phenomenon became widespread in the cities all over the world with many different dynamics involved, the themes addressed and explored related to gentrification got richer in the literature. Some of the themes and issues researched by the scholars in relation to gentrification can be listed as such: the impacts of globalization, entrepreneurial city politics, incorporation of gentrification into urban policy, various discourses regarding gentrification such as ‘livability’, repressive state policies involved in the process etc. (c.f Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; Smith, 2002; Lees, 2000, 2003; Marcuse and van Kempen, 2000, 2002; van Weesep, 1994; Hammel and Wyly, 1999, 2005 among others).

The aim of this section is to discuss the relation between urban politics/policy and gentrification based on a review of relevant literature. But firstly, to secure a conceptual clarification, I will present a general literature review regarding gentrification. It will be organized around the key debates in the literature on how to define, explain and evaluate the outcomes of gentrification. By doing so, the definitional choice and theoretical stance embraced in this study will be clarified, and on which the methodology of the research will be based later in the methodology section.

#### **1.4.1. Definition(s) of Gentrification**

Defining gentrification has been a much contested exercise for gentrification researchers; however, after a brief review of the literature, one can simply assert that the ‘classed nature of the neighborhood change’ constitutes the common ground that the researchers agree on. This is actually based on the first conceptualization of the gentrification phenomenon by Ruth Glass:

"One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle-classes - upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages - two rooms up and two down - have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences... Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed." (Glass, 1964: xviii, cited from Smith, 2002).

In other words, the change in the neighborhood population through the displacements of the lower classes by the influx of middle and upper class residents is the constituent of this specific type of neighborhood change. Two other qualifiers of the gentrification, which are agreed upon in the literature are: the reinvestment in the building stocks and the resultant change in - or better to say 'upgrading' of the neighborhood- culture (Newman, 2004; Slater, 2005).

Encompassing these three qualifiers, as widely accepted in the literature<sup>10</sup>, Neil Smith defines gentrification as "a process...by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner city are refurbished by an influx of private capital and middle-class homebuyers and renters" (Smith, 1996).

As gentrification instances extended to various cities, so did their analysis by scholars, the definitional discussions on the criteria to qualify the process

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<sup>10</sup> Hellström and Lind (2003) provide the entire list of the indicators of gentrification in their 'overview of the literature'. Though, the authors emphasize that a combination of these indicators shall be used to identify gentrification in specific cases, it is worth here to present the entire list the authors provide us: 1) A disproportionate increase in income or education level relative to the city as a whole. 2) Changes in a neighborhood's race/ethnicity. 3) An increase in eviction rates, particularly due to owner move-ins. An increase in the number of harassment charges brought against landlords (as they attempt to force out existing tenants). 4) An increase greater than the average in median sales prices of homes or commercial spaces. 5) A decrease in the number of properties in tax arrears, as owners pay off back taxes and return their properties to the market. 6) An increase in private investment in a neighborhood over time. 7) A high ratio of building permits in an area, relative to the amount of total building square footage in the area. 8) An increase in conversion of rental units to owner-occupied units. 9) A decrease in family household size, with fewer children, and an increase in single person and unmarried households. 10) An increase in residential and commercial rents. Shops with low-income customers have closed and been replaced by shops catering to higher income and more discerning customers (ibid, p.7).

proliferated in the literature. These discussions are addressed by Lees (2003) and Smith (1996) as follows:

- *Questions regarding where it occurs*: whether suburban and rural gentrification should be embraced rather than limiting the definition of gentrification to an inner city occurrence only.
- *On the type of upgrading activity involved*- whether it should include the newly built apartments, conversions of warehouses to extend its initial coverage of the rehabilitation of derelict building stocks.
- *On the land use characteristics regarding the gentrification site* – whether it only takes place in residential places or whether commercial and industrial sites should be included as well.
- *The issue of displacement*: related to the third point indeed, if no direct displacement is inherent in the process -e.g. in the case of conversions of warehouses or waterfronts into upper class residential or commercial buildings- whether the “spatial spill over effects” (Lees, 2003, 572) of these transformations in the nearby sites or in the overall city, causing the indirect displacements of working classes should be taken into account and thus to extent regarding the definition of the term.

What underlies all, is the question of whether the definition of gentrification should be limited to its earlier version -as the rehabilitation of existing residential building stock in inner cities- or not, while other types are mushrooming in the cities. Smith (1996), providing a broader lens with an emphasis on the contextuality of earlier definitions, questioned the old distinction between rehabilitation and redevelopment, which qualified gentrification, with the crucial question

“How, in the larger context of changing social geographies, are we to distinguish adequately between the rehabilitation of nineteenth century housing, the construction of new condominium towers, the opening of festival market to attract local and not so local tourists, the proliferation of wine bars- and boutiques for

everything- and the construction of modern and postmodern office buildings employing thousands of professionals, all looking for a place to live in?” (Smith, 1996, p.39).

And he suggested that gentrification, which was a marginal instance in the housing markets in the past, “has become the leading residential edge of a much larger endeavor: the class remake of the central urban landscape” (ibid., p.39) with an emphasis on the changing relation between gentrification and global political economic restructuring, which put gentrification at the core of this remaking of the city.

Likewise, with an emphasis on the importance of contextuality and scale issues, Lees (2000) underlines the changing nature of gentrification and calls for a need to focus on the “geographies of gentrification” considering emergent different forms due to locally specific and temporal conditions. The author (2000) conceptualizes a new form of gentrification, she identifies in ‘global cities like New York and London, as ‘financification’, which is characterized by the highly paid finance employees regentrifying the neighborhoods.

Slater et al. (2004) taking into consideration the extended scope, scale and different contextualities, suggest the definitional stuck should be overcome for the sake of political challenges to be met regarding gentrification and the authors provide the broadest definition ever in the literature referring to gentrification as “production of space for and consumption by [a] more affluent and very different incoming population”.

Likewise, developing an “inclusive perspective”, Clark (2005) provides “an elastic yet targeted” definition of 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).

Under the light of these definitional discussions in the literature, I will embrace the definition of Clark to form my operationalized research questions, however, I will broaden it and put a further emphasis on the issue of direct or indirect displacement as an important qualifier of the process. To clarify what is meant with direct displacement, it is the forced outflow of the existing residents as the result of evictions and harassments as Atkinson provides the definition (Atkinson, 1998). As for the indirect form of displacement, it occurs when the residents move out from the neighborhoods as the result of the increase in the rents and/ property taxes stemming from gentrification (ibid). Atkinson at another study, points out another reason behind the indirect displacement that it occurs when people move out due to the loss of neighborhood attachment and a feeling of social isolation as their neighbors, friends move in time (2002).

As an attempt for a reformulation of Clark's definition, gentrification is understood in this study as a neighborhood change involving in/direct displacement of the previous users by 'higher socio-economic status users', 'together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital' (Clark, 2005, p.258).

#### **1.4.2. Theories of gentrification**

Bearing the imprints of the hardcore academic debates in social theory, on the hand, to relate agency to structure, production to consumption and culture to capital, and on the other, to explain the rise of "post-industrial" city as well as "new middle classes" (Smith and Williams, 1986; Hamnett, 1984), gentrification literature served as a 'theoretical battleground' for researchers (Ward and MacLeod, 2002) and was stuck with the 'theoretical logjam' (Lees, 2000) of two lines of analysis headed by two main academic figures: Smith's production-side approach based on Marxist political economy tradition and Ley's consumption-side approach footing on Liberal Humanism. Though these two different approaches to the same phenomenon clashed hard in the literature through years, they both -as a common point- grounded their explanations on the fact that gentrification has been an

integral part of broader processes of political economic restructuring in society (Ley, 1980; Smith, 1979; 1986; Smith and Williams, 1986).

On the one hand, production-side explanations cornerstoned by Smith's rent gap theory underlined the movement of capital into the inner city in search for profit as the main driving force of gentrification (Smith, 1979, 1986, 1996). Rent gap -based on the investment cycles of capital- is explained as the difference between "the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use" (Smith, 1987, p.462). Smith explains 'the role of disinvestment' -the rent gap- in the inner city areas, thanks to the suburbanization process, for the profitable reinvestment paving the way to gentrification, which he sees as a crucial part of uneven development (Smith, 1996, p.41).

On the other hand, the perspective of gentrification as a "back-to-the-city-movement by capital, not people" (Smith, 1979) was mainly criticized by Ley (1987) and others (c.f. Rose, 1984; Munt, 1987; Bondi, 1991, etc.) around the consumption side explanations and these studies put the emphasis on culture, agency, demands, preferences, and the pioneering role of the "new middle classes" in gentrification processes.

According to Ley (1978, 1980), the production of gentrifiers, middle class culture and ideology in the emerging post-industrial context, which was signified by the transformation of the labor force, the rise of individualism and interest groups shaping the political realm, was the key to understand the instances of gentrification since without gentrifiers' demands for the gentrifiable building stocks in the inner city, the process would not take place. The researchers focused on occupational, demographic, cultural changes in contemporary societies and tried to explain the demand for inner city neighborhoods. Some studies focused not only on the characteristics of the professional and managerial rank occupation groups (Munt, 1987) but also on gender aspects of the labor force transformation, empowering women as gentrifiers (Rose, 1984; Bondi, 1991, Warde, 1991).

As Lees (1994) and Smith (1986, 1996) discuss, Zukin's (1982) crucial investigations on the gentrification in SoHo, Manhattan, underlining how culture and capital were the very integral parts of the gentrification process, provided the basis for a synthesis for the contested accounts to explain gentrification phenomenon. Zukin did not prioritize either the cultural or economic dimensions of the neighborhood change in SoHo, rather provided an integrative understanding with an emphasis on the importance of cultural capital of artists serving the revalorization of Lower Manhattan.

In the same line, Lees (1994) and Clark (1991) underlined the complementarity of culture and economy-based explanations as well as the multidimensionality of gentrification. Besides, to move forward from this now synthesizing theoretical and political debates, Hammel and Wyly (1999), Lees (2000), Ley (1996), Slater (2002) called for the urge in shedding light on the different 'geographies of gentrification' focusing on the 'how' of gentrification rather than on its 'why's (Hammel and Wyly, 1999), and thus the urge for abolishing the existing "theoretical logjam" among scholars (Lees, 2000). This call has began to be met by researches embracing an articulated understanding on the process and its actors trying to grasp various dimensions like temporal, place specific aspects (Bernt and Holm, 2004) the complex relations between class constitution and gender, race, sexuality aspects, the new dynamics of economic, political restructuring in relation to gentrification, to reveal the dynamic nature and different 'geographies of gentrification'.

To give a full account of emergent perspectives on gentrification in recent studies, I will first focus on two discourses on gentrification in the literature diverging from each other with respect to whether gentrification is represented as emancipatory or else as repressive, forceful process and/or whether gentrifying/gentrified neighborhoods are liberating, livable, welcoming to diversity or else homogenized, secured for privileged, unlivable for the poor.



### **1.4.3. Meeting the ‘political challenge’<sup>11</sup>: ‘Emancipatory City’ for whom? & ‘Revanchist City’ against whom?**

Though different explanatory perspectives seem to converge to a reconciled ground after the early 1990s, two opposing perspectives can be identified around the old problem of how to relate economic and cultural shifts to each other to study gentrification as a spatial manifestation of their interaction. In other words, how to evaluate the outcomes of gentrification and what kind of standpoint to develop regarding the losers and winners of the process constitute another source for debate in the literature, it is a deeply political one in the sense that it reflects vividly the politics of problem formulation in academic research.

Lees (2000), in her thematic review of gentrification literature, discusses in detail these two different lines of representations of gentrification in the literature as on the one hand ‘emancipatory city thesis’ as she calls it and on the other hand, ‘revanchist city thesis’.

‘Emancipatory city’ thesis, portrays gentrification as an ‘emancipatory practice’ (Caulfield, 1989), thanks to the political activism of middle classes, who resist against the dominant structures of modern society, choosing to live in and turning the deteriorated inner city into a lively “oppositional space” (Ley, 1996). As Caulfield and Ley emphasize the agency and ‘counter culture’ (Ley, 1996) of middle classes and see gentrification as a tolerant, liberating process for the city. Thus, as Lees (2000) argues of the Ley’s and Caulfield’s viewpoints on the nature of gentrification, they see the inner city gentrified neighborhoods as inclusive and livable for different groups (Lees, 2000).

This representation of the process as emancipatory was criticized by Lees (2000), who argued that it did downplay the very tangible outcomes of the process - e.g. displacement, socio-spatial polarization, discrimination against certain groups etc.-

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<sup>11</sup> Our reference goes to Slater’s call to meet the political challenge regarding the representations of gentrification (Slater et al., 2004) and Clark’s (2005) call for the same issue.

and underscoring social diversity disguised the inequalities in exchange relations for different groups at stake. As Lees puts it very critically:

“If in debates over gentrification and neighborhood change the particular desires of gentrifiers win out over others, it is because they are willing and able to pay more for the privilege (one’s capital in such circumstances includes economic, cultural and social resources). By abstractly celebrating formal equality under the law, the rhetoric of the emancipatory city tends to conceal the brutal inequalities of fortune and economic circumstance that are produced through the process of gentrification” (Lees, 2000, p.394).

In contrast to the representations of gentrification as of emancipatory nature, the ‘revanchist city thesis’ (Lees, 2000) asks the question of *for whom the city gets emancipatory after gentrification*, if it does so. Smith (1996, 2002), as the foremost advocate of this critical question, developed a perspective whereby gentrification is seen as the spatial expression of revenge<sup>12</sup> against “minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed, women, gays and lesbians, immigrants” (ibid., p. 211), which is lying at the center of the contemporary neoliberal urbanism. He comprehends the middle class hegemony over the inner city as a repressive and revengeful exercise as it reminds a contemporary version of the frontier ideology back in American history (cf. see, Smith, 1996).

He defines the revanchist city as “... the dual and divided city of wealth and poverty. But it is more. It is a divided city where the victors are increasingly defensive of their privilege, such as it is, and increasingly vicious defending it. The benign neglect of the “other half” so dominant in the liberal rhetoric in the 1950s, 1960s, has been superseded by a more active viciousness that attempts to criminalize a whole range of behavior, individually defined and to blame the failure

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<sup>12</sup> The word ‘revenge’ originally is ‘revanche’ in French. Smith’s term revanchism adverts to the 19th century violent political movement of nationalists against the socialism of Paris Commune, claiming to take revenge from the workers who had taken the city from them (Smith, 1996). Revanchism is in this sense understood as a political movement to reclaim the territorial losses. Smith discusses the movement of upper and middle classes, into the city centers displacing the poor and “retaking the city” as the contemporary form of 19th century French revanchism.

of the post-68 urban policy on the populations it was supposed to assist” (Smith, 1996, p.227).

For sure, Smith’s understanding of revanchist city embraces more than the piecemeal instances of gentrification taking place here and there in urban areas. He mentions of repressive tactics and policies that assault the urban poor like zero tolerance, anti-welfare ideology etc. But to him, gentrification is the very concrete spatial manifestation of revanchism, whereby the class struggle -often entails upon cultural/ethnic lines as well- crystallizes on the ground over the claims on the inner-city living, often involved in mostly symbolic and sometimes brutal violence.

Smith discusses how with the privileged culture and demands of the middle and upper classes and/or interests of capital forces often promoted by the city officials, gentrification "embodies a revengeful and reactionary viciousness against various populations accused of 'stealing' the city” and blends with “an effort to retake the city” (Smith, 1996, p.xviii). In his understanding, gentrification works to oppress and dispose the claims, rights of the less privileged and disguises the (brutal or symbolic) violence inherent in shifting the gentrification frontier, which makes the inner city no longer livable for the marginalized.

Underlining the unequal nature of the process, Smith provides us the means to comprehend different but related dynamics behind gentrification such as political economic restructuring, dismantling of welfare and housing rights, contemporary culture and education, annihilation of space by law and order, the role of media in promoting the fear of disorder and crime in the urban centers that trigger revanchist attitude, which then gets easily adopted by the city authorities etc. (McLeod, 2002, Lees, 2000, Slater, 2005).

To sum up this account on two opposing comprehensions of the same phenomenon, I want to underline the need to think twice about asking ‘for whom’ of gentrification in any evaluation of the process, since as the next chapter will discuss, based on academic studies, the recruitment and incorporation of gentrification into urban public policy are fed and sometimes legitimized based on

academic accounts welcoming gentrification, and which deepen inequalities inscribed into urban space.

Having completed our review of gentrification literature around how to define, explain, and evaluate the effects of gentrification, now I turn to the key discussion on gentrification in relation to new urban policies for redevelopment/renewal.

#### **2.4.4. The New Urban Policies for (Re) development and Gentrification**

The relationship between gentrification and urban policy is not a new issue in the gentrification literature. Like various other themes related to the gentrification phenomenon, the role of the urban policy on the why, how, extent and socio-spatial effects of gentrification have been discussed in various studies not only to explain its relation to wider political economic and social restructuring processes, but also to identify the peculiarities of gentrification processes in different contexts<sup>13</sup>. Questioning the effects of the state's policies on reinvestment and disinvestment cycles in the neighborhoods, in earlier studies, the initiatives through which gentrification processes were promoted by public authorities had been identified by some scholars –such as the supply of public funds, subsidies and property tax cuts as well as the alterations in zoning laws for some instances of gentrification (see for instance: Hamnett, 1973; Smith, 1979, 1986; Smith and Williams, 1986 etc.).

With an emphasis on the increasing geographical extent and diversity - in turn, the significance- of gentrification, some urban scholars draw our attention on the recently increased and more active role of local governments, state agencies and urban public policy in gentrification processes in different cities around the world (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Lees 2000; Slater, 2004; Smith, 2002; Hammel and Wyly, 1999 among others). Situated in the context of New Urban Politics, initiating certain policy schemes, policymakers do actively adopt gentrification as an integral part of their revitalization strategies. Resulting

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<sup>13</sup> Differences in government policy in various cities have been an important factor to explain how gentrification differs in many urban settings. Those studies, mostly put a focus peculiarities of the process regarding European cities, for a detailed analysis on how differently public policy can affect the nature of the process, see Levine (2004), Bernt and Holm (2005) etc.

from the incorporation of neoliberal economic policy into the strategies and priorities of urban governments, gentrification became to be evaluated as an appreciated neighborhood change.

While, in an earlier study, Wyly and Hammel (1999), drawing their evidence from HOPE IV plans of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the US, argue that the role of the redirection in housing policy and finance in the resurgence of gentrification in eight US cities is significant. In a recent account, the authors suggest the extent of the state's involvement in and promotion of gentrification as such:

‘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).

Likewise, Lees (2000) emphasizes the emergence of the ‘ideology of livability and environmental sustainability’ in urban policy/ politics and with her analysis on UK Urban Task Force report ‘Towards an urban renaissance’ (DETR, 1999) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s report called ‘The State of the Cities’ (HUD, 1999). She discusses the “discursive construction of urban renaissance”, the language of environmental sustainability, livability and the decline in a sense of community, all of which “interweave urban regeneration policy with gentrification” (Lees, 2000, p. 391).

As well Smith (2002), referring to the explicit strategy of UK Urban Task Force (DETR, 1999) to “bring people back to our city” to maintain “social balance”, discusses that “the appeal to bring people back into the city is always a self interested appeal the white middle and upper middle classes retake the control of the political and cultural economies as well as the geography of the largest cities” (p.445). He evaluates this as “...the larger class conquest not only of national power but also of urban policy...” (p.441) and argues of the emergence of “generalization

of gentrification in the urban landscapes under the language of urban regeneration and underscores the emergence of gentrification as a global urban competitive strategy” (Smith, 2002, pp.438-9).

The rest of this chapter will deal with two specific types of urban (re)development/revitalization schemes mostly discussed in the literature in relation to the processes of gentrification. First, the focus will be on the property-led revitalization schemes based on tourism (business, history, religion themed), entertainment, into which cultural strategies have been inserted at an unprecedented level and which have become adopted widespread by the city governments to secure a new place in the globalized economy. Secondly, a brief account on the (re)development/regeneration programs and associated policy frameworks -adopted by city governments- to revitalize the deprived neighborhoods and their relation to gentrification will be provided, based on a review of relevant studies.

### ***1. Competing for ‘Tourist Dollars’: Tourism & Culture-Based Revitalization Strategies for Remaking the Inner city***

As Zukin (1995, 1998) discusses in detail and McNeill and While give an account on, the part of urban authorities, playing the competitiveness cards for rising urban leisure economies undertaking culture, arts, entertainment based revitalization strategies emerged as a very relevant option especially for old industrial cities. Creating the ‘critical infrastructure’ (Zukin, 1998) for urban consumption through the promotion of ‘symbolic economy’ seemed to offer lucrative chances for city governments -e.g. in Bilbao (Vicario and Monje, 2003), Barcelona (McNeill, 2000), Baltimore (Harvey, 2000), Newcastle (Cameron and McCaffea, 2005), Glasgow (McLeod, 2002), New York (Smith, 1996) among others- to refashion their economies undertaking emblematic and flagship projects pursuing place marketing strategies.

Indeed, as Zukin (1987, 1991, 1995, and 1998) gives a detailed account, remaking of the contemporary cities has been realized through the integrated workings of culture and capital boosted by urban policies for redevelopment to aestheticise the

cities. Zukin (1998) discusses ‘heritage industry’, creation of new museums, touristic zones among the forms that city governments undertake as cultural redevelopment strategies. In many cities, old and derelict industrial sites, waterfronts, warehouses have been turned into sites and symbols of postmodern urban forms, lifestyles as best exemplified with the proliferation of ‘festival marketplaces’, themed parks, galleries, museums, fashionable ‘nouvelle cuisine restaurants’, bars and cafés’ streets. Among the well known examples of these symbols one can count New York’s Battery Park, London’s Canary Wharf, Covent Garden, Bilbao’s Guggenheim Museum, and New Castle’s Millenium Bridge, Berlin’s Potsdamer Platz among many others.

Furthermore, this cultural regeneration is mobilized with the undertakings of mostly property-led emblematic development projects revolved around the competition to host internationally renowned cultural, political, sports events like Olympic Games, EXPO fairs, NATO summits, D-8 meetings, jazz and cinema festivals. Since these events are expected to increase the “city’s profile”, they are among the most viable image making and place marketing strategies for city governors. However, as Sywngedouw et al. (2002), discuss for the case of Lisbon EXPO 98, these big scale urban development projects put the extra burden for public agencies, which have to bear the infrastructural costs as well as the financial losses incurred from the project implementations though their skyrocketing rent and sales prices that put pressures on the city’s real estate markets.

Among these mega events, perhaps nothing but the competition for and extension of ‘European City of Culture’ status exemplifies best how cultural strategies get incorporated into urban revitalization schemes, promoted and funded not only by the national and urban governments but also at the supranational level by European culture policy. European cities, since 1984<sup>14</sup>, have competed hard to get the European stamp on their cultural and innovative outlook with their claims on a *shared* European heritage.

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<sup>14</sup> The proposal was presented by the Greek culture minister in 1984, and the scheme offered the cities in Europe the status of excellence in representing the European cultural and historical heritage (Evans, 2003).

Cities undertook arts-led flagships, promoted the proliferation of culture industries<sup>15</sup>, undertook historical preservation projects to become winners in this fuelled competition. Though, culture mobilized at an unprecedented scale could not help many cities, there proliferated unsuccessful accounts inscribing sunk-cost public investments for upgrading of cultural and physical infrastructure put aside the arts and culture complexes, abundant but not functioning as public places (c.f Evans, 2003). Besides, this competition fuelled by European culture policy among cities, is triggering the civic boosterism even at the bidding process, as Hall and Hubbard discuss it for mega events in general (1998, p.8). This is evident in that, in the year 2000, the number of culture capital of Europe increased to nine with the 'increased pressures from cities seeking culture city status' to landmark or 're-package their cultural itineraries' (Evans, 2003, p.426). Thus, 'cultures of cities' are marketed through European heritage industry in search for job creation possibilities and gaining the confidence of the investors though at varying costs for different groups and the societies at large.

As much as the culture becomes integrated into city marketing strategies and used as an engine for attracting further business and cultural, economic elites into the city, the implications for urban space, social life and certain groups get severer. Among the most important impacts, commercialization and homogenization of public culture and space becomes evident with corporate visions, dominant in the cities e.g 'Disneyfication' of cities (Zukin, 1991). On the other hand, these redevelopment projects, programs often serve the self interests of real estate developers, policymakers, and cultural and economic elites. Yet the use of culture and public arts works to hide the functioning of real estate markets, which decreases the life chances of the unprivileged in the inner city. Likewise, while the aestheticised urban spaces –mostly guarded by private security- appeals the middle and upper middle classes most, those, who can afford it, based on their high economic and/or cultural capital, these aestheticisation processes are mostly associated with the clearance of paddlers, homeless etc. from sight (Mitchell, 1997, Smith, 1998). That is to say, as the city officials embark more to capitalize on

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<sup>15</sup> C.f Evans (2003). The author provides a detailed account on the projects undertaken in many cities, presenting their effects on the cityscapes and their (un)successful stories as well.



cultural resources, they reaffirm and strengthen the cultural hegemony of middle classes, which gets manifested in the cities with gentrification. For Zukin:

“Gentrification received its greatest boost not from a specific subsidy, but from the state’s substantive and symbolic legitimation of the cultural claim to urban space. This recognition marked cultural producers as a symbol of an urban growth” (Zukin, 1991, p. 194).

The reaffirmation of gentrification by city officials actually prompted gentrification waves in and around project areas. Referring to two case studies from Bilbao and New Castle among others would help to illustrate this point further.

Vicario and Monje (2003) discuss ‘Another Guggenheim Effect’ in Bilbao La Vieja (BLV), a highly deprived and stigmatized neighborhood as the ‘Ground Zero’ in Bilbao. City Council designating the site as ‘new opportunity area’ targeted to revitalize BLV around urban leisure economies to create it as a vital arts quarter that would match and strengthen the city image. The initial impact of this culture-led revitalization project, as the authors argue, was the influx of cultural elites, thanks to the active role of the local government to generate a gentrifiable neighborhood. The authors underline the highly possible displacement of the drug addicts, prostitutes, low-income residents from the neighborhood, displacing the social problems elsewhere in the city.

As Cameron and McCaffae (2005) argue, the re-imagined cultural quarter Gateshead Quays, Newcastle represents how powerful arts and culture-led regeneration strategy pursued by the local state works to change the fortune of a quarter making it ‘culture Mecca’ though with gentrification effects in surrounding neighborhoods. Branded with renowned public arts like Millennium Bridge and Angel of the North as the symbols of revitalization, the authors underline that the public arts, cultural facilities and ‘positive gentrification’ used as a means to regeneration, worked to recreate the area as a highly commodified and yuppified quarter. This development resulted in gentrification in the neighboring East Gateshead neighborhood, pressing on the local people in the neighborhood.

To sum up, as cities more and more strive to market their cultural resources mostly wrapped with ambitions to become world class culture and tourism center, the reaffirmed hegemony of middle class values and culture gradually dominates the social life of the cities, the spatial manifestation of which becomes gentrification. Yet, the burden of the ‘revitalization’ is put on the disadvantaged groups for most of the cases.

## ***2. (Re) Solving Deprivation: Urban Redevelopment/ Regeneration Programs designed for Inner city Poor Neighborhoods and Associated Neoliberal Policy Initiatives***

Addressing the need to solve out worsening urban problems in deprived neighborhoods –mostly in inner cities, renowned with advanced levels of poverty, crime and suffering from disinvestment-, city authorities devised large scale urban redevelopment programs, projects in many cities to deconcentrate poverty, proposing ‘social mixing’, ‘social balance’ and community investment strategies. Elsewhere, creating social cohesion and order became the main concern of the state agencies to undertake restructuring initiatives in deprived neighborhoods.

Accompanying these, in some cities, several policy initiatives have been undertaken by the central and local governments to provide the funding to increase homeownership among low and middle income groups. However, as some studies give critical accounts, these initiatives, programs targeting to halt concentrated poverty, crime and physical dilapidation in deprived neighborhoods, to create so called ‘just’ cities, ‘decent’ and ‘livable’ neighborhoods, helped the insertion of middle classes, which either made gentrification a reality for these neighborhoods or left them under the threat of it. That is to say, policymakers actively spurred the waves of (potential) gentrification in poor neighborhoods and in some cases, prompted further conflicts among the residents, which also decreased the resistance chances against these undertakings.

To begin our review of relevant literature on the issue to illustrate these points, I will first refer to Slater (2004) and his case study on “municipally managed gentrification” in South Parkdale, Canada. He elaborates on how social mixing strategies devised in the Ward 2 Neighborhood Revitalization program -with a claim to create a socially diverse and healthy neighborhood, where the social cohesion would be maintained- paved the way to state-led gentrification, actually prompted further social unrest in the district. To make it ‘healthy’ and diverse meant the displacement of the occupants in bachelorettes and rooming houses. Questioning for whom this program would bring emancipation, Slater argues:

“It is a sobering thought that such municipally managed gentrification (helped along by provincial tenant legislation) may be paving the way for a different and more sinister kind of emancipatory practice, one which involves ‘liberating’ South Parkdale from the ball and chain of deinstitutionalization and housing conversions for low-income tenants” (Slater, 2004, p.322).

Likewise, Newman (2004) discusses a new type of neighborhood change, which connotes gentrification, in the city of Newark prompted by neoliberal urban policy. The author argues that city officials making use of federal block grants and entitlements demolished almost eighty percent of the public housings, based on a combination of policy frameworks – HOPE IV funds for demolitions in public housing sites, federal policy removing the obligation for one to one replacement of the public housings demolished and increased funding for low and middle income homeownership- to sweep the poverty from sight to alter the city’s image. This process, for Newman, spurred a neighborhood change, which resembles gentrification, characterized by socio-cultural transformations in the neighborhood, low income residents, under the threat of potential displacement and the influx of higher income residents resulting from actions of local political actors and community development organizations being active in the neighborhood.

To rebuild the deprived neighborhoods to revitalize the city, the New Castle City Council adopted a different strategy from earlier experiences of slum clearance and housing redevelopment in the city: ‘positive gentrification’. Cameron (2003)

discusses at length this new strategy with respect to Dutch redifferentiation policy and other UK neighborhood policies. The author suggests that gentrification is promoted as 'positive public policy'. The council adopting "Going for Growth policy" strived to rebalance the low-demanded low income neighborhoods through the insertion of high income residents. That is to say, the policies "combine the two essential elements of displacement of an existing lower income population and their replacement with more affluent households" (ibid, p.2372), which can be understood as gentrification as the author suggests. Though the process has not yielded any results during the time of the author's study, displacement of the low income residents is clearly targeted by the proposal. However, the author underlines some factors that would release the disadvantages of this displacement. Firstly, the program includes a relocation plan and there is available supply of housings in the city to relocate the residents in the neighborhoods to be redeveloped. However, the low income residents are not necessarily to be relocated in the same neighborhoods after the redevelopment takes place. Besides, these relocation plans do not cover the 'problem tenants' with anti-social behavior record in the same way as the other residents, who are as well to be displaced from their neighborhoods.

Not economic motives but the maintenance of social control in disadvantaged neighborhoods promoting the influx of owner-occupied middle income households constituted the impetus behind the state-led gentrification in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam as Uitermark et al (2007) discuss the process. The authors argue that the mobilized discourse of livability worked not to increase social cohesion as it targeted, but brought about forced locations. For the institutional actors seeking to maintain social order to pursue their operational activities smoothly, displacing urban problems from the targeted area through promoting gentrification appeared as a welcomed option, which was later supported by some residents as well. The collective identifications in the neighborhood were curtailed as the result of the state-led gentrification process, which blocked the resistance against the process at large as the authors inform us.

As these studies indicate, the aims to combat concentrated poverty, 'blight' accompanied with a policy discourse of creating 'livable', 'healthy' neighborhoods

work to bring about gentrification in poor neighborhoods as city officials approach to 'solve out' advanced social and economic problems of these neighborhoods through spatial solutions. Gentrification gets embraced as an acceptable strategy though at the cost of affordable housing for the poor, displacement of the social problems from sight, weakening resistance against these programs, loss of community with forced locations to other neighborhoods - which possibly bring about social cohesion problems further- etc.

## CHAPTER 2. NEOLIBERALIZATION OF ISTANBUL: 1980-1999

### 2.1 Introduction

Istanbul, renowned as the economic capital of the country, expanded enormously in its geography and population with the vast flows of rural to urban migration from 50s on. Until 1980s, city served as the industrial growth pole of the country hosting major state-subsidized industries. In this inward oriented developmentalist era of pre-1980s, which was marked by the state's crucial role as the regulator and the protector of the internal market against external competition through the imposition of custom fares and subsidies for import-subsidizing industries (Kepenek and Yentürk, 2001), industrialization rather than urbanization and urban development was the crucial area into which public resources were channeled (Sönmez, 1996). Under the lack of formal mechanisms for social housing and employment, the incoming population occupied the abandoned building stock in historical inner city neighborhoods of Istanbul. But mostly, public land occupation and formation of squatter neighborhoods by the incoming population, per se, offered a cheap and ad hoc solution to housing problems of the immigrants<sup>16</sup>.

Hence, it released the burden on part of the state but put the burden on the incoming migrants. Resulting from the state populism, these "illegal" settlements became legalized and some even were municipalized mostly before the election times in exchange of squatters' votes. This populist way of income redistribution based on blinking at appropriation of the public land by the migrants, constituted the non-formal face of welfare regime in Turkey (Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, Keyder, 2005). The earlier migration was a chain process, with the single men and young couples arriving first and later the families were taken to the city as the early ones solve the housing and employment problem first<sup>17</sup> (Senyapılı, 1998, Sen, 1996). Crucially,

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed review on the transformation of squatter housings in time or that is to say the 'voyage' of these housings and their inhabitant see Senyapılı, 2004; Sen, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> For the earlier studies on squatter neighborhoods and urban migration, integration issues, see, Şenyapılı, 1978; Kıray, 1970; Karpas, 1976 among others

created networks of solidarity, traditional links among the migrants – based on kinship, family, townsmanship- paved the way for the newcomers to access informal housing and employment. In short, public land appropriation and formation of squatter neighborhoods accompanied with informal employment and social solidarity networks<sup>18</sup> created among the migrants, 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 the cheap labor army for the growing state-subsidized industries in the city, hence, eased the further capital accumulation.

These dynamics and balances lied beneath the excessive growth of the city in years. As much that available land for occupation could be appropriated by the incoming population, the urbanization process of Istanbul in pre-1980s era, kept ‘smooth’ and ‘integrating’ as Isık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) call it. That is to say, the urbanization of Istanbul in this developmentalist era footed upon a sort of ‘societal consensus’ between different actors all with different political, economic, social interests nested in the city, though this ‘consensus’ was hegemonic, unequal in its nature, so was the urbanization of Istanbul uneven.

However, these all have been altered with Turkey’s entrance to the neoliberal era after 1980s. In 1980, Turkey adopted a neoliberal economic model, replacing its national developmentalist strategy based on import substituting industrialization. After the military coup in 1980, liberal conservative government (ANAP-Mother Land Party) -under the strong entrepreneurial leadership of the prime minister Turgut Özal- began implementing the structural adjustment reforms relied on the

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<sup>18</sup> As scholars discuss it, land occupation and formation of these informal housings, were realized collectively and based on the mobilization of solidarity networks formed around family, hometown, kinship (Erder, 1996; 1997). Migration in chains constituted the basis of the creation of these networks in the city and the early arrivers- mostly the single men and young couples- as the pioneers did play a crucial role for the newcomers from the same hometown, family etc. to access housing and employment, established relations in the city (Erder, 1999, 1996; Sen, 1996; Erman 1998). The early arrivers always were in privileged positions based on their central role in the integration of the late arrivers. While relations with the early migrants in the city helped for the integration of the late arrivers, migrants sustained bonds with the hometowns served as a buffer mechanism to survive in the city- e.g. food intakes attained from the village, income from the properties in hometown, villages (e.g. harvest income). Hence, the importance of the solidarity networks and relations underlied the phenomenon. (See for further discussions regarding these points, Isık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001); Erder (1995, 1996, and 1997); Özdemir (2005); Keyder (2005), Rittersberger-Tılıç, (1997); Senyapılı (2004); Sen (1996).

liberalization of trade and financial markets, enhanced capital mobility and commodification to integrate national economy with global markets (Boratav, 1991, Senses, 1994; Yeldan, 1994). In this transition to open economy, state's support and subsidies were reoriented from industrial sector towards tourism, export-import, finance, real estate sectors, while infrastructure investments in telecommunications, energy and transportation were prioritized to form the basis of the new services economy (Kepenek and Yentürk, 2001; Sönmez, 1996).

This neoliberalization process, which resulted in steady globalization of Turkish economy and capital increasingly after 1990s, meant socioeconomic impoverishment for the large segments of the society with unprecedented income polarization, decreased weight of public sector, dramatic contraction of real wages, freezing of agricultural subsidies, cuts in social expenditures and suspension of union activity (see Senses, 1994, 2001; Boratav, 1993; Kepenek and Yentürk, 2001; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001 among others).

In this neoliberal political economic context, while national socioeconomic development priorities were left aside, Istanbul emerged as the foremost center for the articulation of national economy with global markets as the result of its privileged location on the continental transportation routes and strong economic base hosting largest capital groups in Turkey. These historical and local contingencies have triggered the formation of coalitions among economic, political and cultural elites to globally position the city in the world economy, who produced and circulated the rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city as a significant way for national economic development (Genis, 2004; Oktem, 2005). The global city discourse and rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city were as well widely discussed by some academicians, who inserted this project as a 'new development strategy' and discussed different political economic strategies and ways to make the city a global one around renown question of "How to sell Istanbul?" posed by Keyder (1993) (see Keyder, 1992; 1993; Keyder and Öncü, 1993; and for a critical perspective see Ercan, 1996; Oktem, 2005, 2006).



With the neoliberal policies put in effect, the city underwent a dramatic economic, sociospatial restructuring in the post-1980s. At the same time, Istanbul kept growing as it stayed as an attraction center for new migration flows and its population increased from 4, 7 million in 1980 to more than 9 million in 2000. What made this migration process in the post 1980s from the previous chain migration process to the city, however, was the massive flow of migrants from eastern and southeastern parts of the country, who were forced to migrate as the result of the political conflicts in these regions-the armed conflict between PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and Turkish army. With its different causes and severe effects, this ‘traumatic’ forced migration of 1990s put its hallmarks on the transformation of Istanbul in this period (Erder, 1998).

To shed light on the socioeconomic spatial transformation of Istanbul in post-1980s, these two processes of neoliberal urban restructuring and forced migration should be discussed in detail, which is the task of next part.

## **2.2. Neoliberal Restructuring of Istanbul in the post- 1980s**

With the neoliberal economic policies mobilized, city’s economic base gradually shifted towards services sectors. Public investments and subsidies declined in industrial sector in this period. The private sector reoriented its investments<sup>19</sup> towards tourism, real estate, banking and finance, import and export activities (Sönmez, 1996). Changing profile of the city’s economy was also signified with the increasing international capital investments<sup>20</sup> -especially in banking and finance sectors through joint ventures with Istanbul based capitalists- and increased international trade (Özdemir, 2000).

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<sup>19</sup>Besides, the falling share of industrial investment was due to high interest rates, and shrinking domestic market resulting strict income policy. Rather investments shifted towards non-productive sectors since that the high interest and rent yielding investments such as real estate, trade, tourism, finance became attractive in post 1980s (Sönmez, 1996). As Sönmez gives a full account on it, the share of manufacturing investments in total investment declined from 35% in 1980 to 15% in 1990 (ibid, p. 56).

<sup>20</sup> In her study on international investment flows in Turkey, Özdemir (2000) provides us the information that after 1980s, Istanbul itself attracted 60 percent of the international service sector investments in Turkey and the concentration of international investments in finance and banking sectors in Istanbul was significant with the city taking 95% of the total international investments to Turkey in these sectors.

City's steady emergence as the primary business and finance center of Turkey became evident with that the largest share of corporate headquarters, FIRE, media, advertisement and real estate companies with orientation to global markets located in the city. In tandem with these developments, the share of services employment in city's labor force steadily increased<sup>21</sup> and there emerged a new group of highly paid professionals, managers, technicians, who were employed in rising FIRE, media and advertisement sectors (Aksoy, 1996). This differentiation in middle class began putting its imprints on the cultural life as well as urban form as this high profile group incorporated new consumption patterns, lifestyles and political affiliations as their counterparts in the world (c.f. Aksoy and Robbins, 1996; Keyder, 1999 among others). On the other hand, at the lowest ranks of the services employment in the city, personal and domestic services employment grew relatively with casual, lowly-paid, short term, informal jobs (Keyder, 1999, 2005; Sönmez, 1996).

Though the share of industrial employment in the city slowly declined in time with the large scale industrial investments shifting away from the city, small scale manufacturing, especially in textiles and clothing sectors, kept as the major source of income for the large segments of the population with low skilled, mostly informal labor in squatter and low income neighborhoods (Sönmez, 1996; Aksoy, 1996). These changes in economic base of the city were accompanied with developments such as decreasing public sector employment, increasing extent of informal sector with the contraction of formal sectors, decreased self employment in small retail and crafts, increasing extent of street vending, domestic work etc., internationalization of informal employment in major informal sectors like textiles, construction, domestic work, as Istanbul emerged as a destination for migrants from ex- Soviet Bloc, Balkanic, Caucasus, Middle Eastern and African countries especially after 1990s (Sönmez, 1996; Yüksek, 2003; Duymaz, 1995).

In this period, city's population kept growing -from 4.7 million in 1980, 7.3 in 1990 to 9 million in 2000- the growth rate of population decreased in years (Osman, 1999). Though migration has always played a significant role in the socio-spatial

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<sup>21</sup> The share of services employment increased in the city from 51,2 percent in 1980 to 53,2 in 2000, while the share of industrial labor decreased gradually from 34.4 percent in 1980 32.2 percent in 2000 (Sayılarla İstanbul, 2001).

making of Istanbul, the reasons and impacts of the migration process -both at social and individual levels- changed drastically after mid-1980s and especially in the 1990s (Erder, 1997; Sen, 1996).

While the driving force of chain type migration process -*voluntary migration*<sup>22</sup>- during the pre-1980s was economic reasons, after 1980s, the major reason of the *forced migration*<sup>23</sup> after 1990s was political<sup>24</sup> though in combination with worsening economic conditions in these regions. The armed conflict between PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and Turkish army, which began in 1984, resulted in a mass migration flow from south eastern and eastern regions to big cities, including Istanbul. this process, as discussed by Erder (1995; 1996; 1997); Şen (1996, 2002), Işık et al. (2001), has been characterized by the entire family migration; 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, the lack in the use of solidarity networks, kinship, family ties to find housings and employment etc. (Erder, 1995, 1997).

Unlike the early migrants, who could integrate themselves into the city mobilizing their solidarity networks to access employment and housing, forcibly migrants had heaviest conditions to incorporate themselves into the city: severe impoverishment

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<sup>22</sup> To provide a conceptual clarification, what is meant with “voluntary” here is to have a plan and intention to migrate, most of the times using the solidarity networks.

<sup>23</sup> 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 leave their hometown -such as armed conflict in this case, but other reasons can be counted as wars, violence, natural disasters etc. Instead of “forced”, the term “involuntary”, “zorlama” are preferred by some authors like Sen, (2002); Yılmaz (2006). Likewise, UN’s definitions of internal displacement, internally displaced persons are used interchangeably and/or referred to explain the forced migration process (c.f Kurban et al (2006) for a comprehensive edited work on the problem of “forced migration” and “internal displacement” in Turkey). UN’s definition of internally displaced persons (ILPs) does refer to the ones, “who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border” (2005). The concept is also widely discussed in the report published by Tesev (2006). In this study, I will use the term *forced* not only to emphasize the extraordinary forces behind the process -though not disregarding the social and economic conditions- but also to stick to this new and relatively more accepted concept by the wider public alongside the academic world.

<sup>24</sup> Political conflicts in these regions brought about severe socioeconomic impoverishments since the economic activity -agricultural and industrial production as well animal rearing- was hit hard significantly.

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 into the city with the lowest economic and social status through getting employed at the lowest ranks in informal labor markets and ending up as tenants in squatter neighborhoods or in dilapidated inner city neighborhoods such as Tarlabası, the neighborhood selected for the case study in this research (see Erder; 1998; Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Sen 1996, 2002; Yılmaz (forthcoming), among others). These all signified forcibly migrants to emerge as the “prominent ‘absolute poverty group’ in the city” (Senyapılı, 2004).

Accompanied with severe conditions of forced migration and continued demographic pressures in the city, the reconfiguration of city’s economy and labor force with new economic policies sharpened the socioeconomic and spatial inequalities in the city. The emergent unprecedented income polarization<sup>25</sup> got intensified with successive crisis, which brought about the worsening of the unemployment rate and real income levels. The gaps between different income groups increased, which was evident with that the share in total urban income of the wealthiest 20 percent increased from 57,6 percent in 1986 up to 64,13 percent in 2000 (Sönmez, 2001).

These changes in the economic base and sharpening inequalities found their repercussions on the spatial transformations in the city especially after 1990s. As the corporate investments in rising services sectors concentrated in urban cores, a new central urban landscape began to shape with the proliferation of new business, commercial, cultural centers in the city<sup>26</sup> mostly characterized by high rise office blocks and condominiums around them, new shopping and entertainment, cultural facilities, fancy hotels etc. In this period, large scale industries moved towards the

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<sup>25</sup> Worsening inequality in income distribution was evident with the increasing gini coefficient, which indicates the degree of income distribution inequality, from 0.38 in 1978 to 0.59 in 1994 (Güvenç and Işık, 2000, p.210).

<sup>26</sup> Among these centers, Levent- Maslak and Altunizade- Kozyatağı financial and business districts, Nişantaşı commercial center, Taksim- Beyoğlu business and cultural center etc. can be listed.

outer city, whereas small scale manufacturing kept their concentration in inner city parts such as Historical Peninsula and along the city's major highway -TEM highway-, where they could pool their labor from the surrounding squatter or low income neighborhoods.

Alongside these commercial developments, residential landscape of the city was also recast with a further expansion towards periphery and with new residential forms emerging in the city. Proliferation of gated communities, hitherto unknown in the city, and luxurious residential estates for the middle and upper middle classes in the privileged sites alongside Bosphorus, forest and water basins in the peripheral areas as well as inner city locations met the emergent demands for higher quality housing (see Aksoy and Robins, 1994; Öncü, 1997; Daniş, 2001; Kurtuluş, 2003 among others). On the other hand, old squatter neighborhoods in inner city and some in the periphery, pressed by the rent gaps and new demands of the households, began to transform into middle and upper middle residential areas (c.f. Kurtuluş et al, 2005). While some of the squatter neighborhoods with relatively less privileged locations were converted into apartment buildings by the owners themselves, some kept untransformed and underwent further socio-spatial deterioration in time. Accompanying the transformation of existing squatter neighborhoods, new ones continued to expand towards periphery sometimes formed site by site with gated communities.

Besides this residential expansion towards periphery, a new movement towards inner city neighborhoods at historical and/or coastal parts of the city with high environmental and cultural amenities was witnessed. The concentration of services jobs and of cultural and leisure facilities in revitalizing city centers contributed to this trend towards city centers, which was led by the high profile wage earner group of professionals, managers, technicians as well as cultural elite, who were appealed to inner city living at distinctive, historically qualified neighborhoods close to their working places -at new central business districts- and cultural and entertainment activities. This inflow towards the center resulted in gentrification processes in some central neighborhoods in the city.

These tendencies in the reshaping commercial and residential landscape of Istanbul reflected the heightened socio-spatial differentiations and fragmentation in the city, the conditions of which were provided with changing economic, demographic, employment and income structures\_in the city under the neoliberal political economic climate of post 1980s era. The emergent sharpening inequalities were translated and mediated into the spatial form with the crucial role played by new public/urban policies, non/interventions mobilized by public authorities, who entered into new coalitions, relations with different urban groups with their claims and demands regarding this transformation, which will be the focus of analysis in the next part.

### **2.3. Restructuring the city with Neoliberal Urban Policies and ‘Actually Existing’ Entrepreneurialism in Istanbul**

From early 1980s on, in the agenda of the central and local governments, Istanbul was attributed a significant importance to integrate Turkey’s economy and capital with global economy. In coalescence with city’s economic and cultural elites, public authorities mobilized and implemented economic and urban policies for Istanbul’s transformation from an industrial center into an international business, service and tourism center.

In this period, state’s approach to urbanization and urban development underwent a significant change as competitive socio-spatial and economic restructuring became a primary policy target, which lied beneath the growing political economic importance of Istanbul specifically. 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). To encourage and pave the way for extended operation of market forces in urban land and housing markets in line with structural adjustment programs and to make the city a magnet for inter/national investments, state and state agencies took a facilitating approach in the creative destruction of the city’s built environment (Keskinok, 1997, Öktem, 2005).

On the one hand, economic policies were mobilized, which leveraged corporate capital, foreign investments and rising economic sectors and functions. 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; Tasan Kok, 2004 among others). In neoliberal political economic climate of post-1980s, which was signified with the gradual retreat from industrialization targets and a rapid rate of urbanization, generating urban rents turned into a major mechanism for capital accumulation so did urban development into a significant growth sector (Brenner et al, 2002; Kurtuluş and Turkun, 2005, Swynedegouw et al, 2002).

As the large capital groups shifted and/or branched their economic activities into construction, real estate, tourism, banking, finance, retail and wholesale trade, export-imports (Sönmez, 1996), there emerged new market driven demands posed by capitalist sector for urban lands for the construction of business and trade centers, shopping malls, hotels, residential complexes etc. or for speculative investment purposes (Keyder, 1999; 2005; Sönmez, 1996). Given the enabling attitude for economic enterprise at the central and local levels, capitalist sector became more assertive in posing their claims for certain places with privileged strategic locations and high environmental qualities to be secured for their 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 releases in development regulations, halting of city plans etc.

Besides, in this period, state left aside its ‘non-interventionist’ approach in housing markets with the introduction of Mass Housing Fund in 1984 (see Baharoğlu, 1996; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Keleş, 1990; Keyder and Öncü, 1993; Tekeli, 1991 among others). While the fund aimed to finance large scale housing projects for lower and lower-middle classes directly or through the subsidized credits given to municipalities and housing cooperatives, it also offered long term subsidized credits

to homebuyers. The policy worked to gain the political support from the lower segments of the middle class, who were now offered the chances for upper social mobility through homeownership (Keyder and Öncü, 1993). While this new involving approach in the housing market paved the way for big capital groups enter into housing production sector, it not only brought about further commodification of urban land and housing in line with structural adjustment and stabilization programs. On the other hand, it increased the speculative land developments in the city transferring urban resources to certain groups such as speculators, mafia like groups and large scale investors (Kurtuluş, 2003). Thus, state's increased responsiveness to the demands and claims posed by newly emerging actors in urban land and housing markets characterized its new facilitating approach towards market driven urban development (Keyder, 2005).

On the other hand, restructuring of urban government was undertaken to regulate urban development in line with desired neoliberal transformation. First, a new two layered municipal system –consisting of metropolitan and district layers- was introduced and the authority for urban development was decentralized from central to metropolitan government henceforth given to the control of the metropolitan mayor (Keleş, 1990). Further decentralization of the duties for basic municipal services provision down to district layer allowed the metropolitan mayor to be exempt from populist demands and pressures at the neighborhood level (Genis, 2004; Keyder and Öncü, 1993).

This political autonomy at the metropolitan level paved the way for the entrepreneurialization of the city government (Tasan Kok, 2004), as the local authorities articulated investors into state power with increasing engagements in development coalitions (Özdemir, 1999). Crucially important though, as Tasan Kok (2004) discusses it in detail, this urban entrepreneurialism was born into and became embedded to inherited political structure in the country characterized by heavy bureaucracy and populist- clientalism<sup>27</sup>. Hence, it was blended with great

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<sup>27</sup> Here, two important factors characterizing urban political arena that have put their imprints on the urbanization history of Istanbul should be mentioned. First is that informalities, clientelism and illegal undertakings as well as the successor governments' subversion of the works and projects started by their predecessors has played a significant role in the transformation of Istanbul. Secondly,



deals of informalities<sup>28</sup>, political corruption, illegal activities etc. (c.f. Ekinici, 1994; 2004; Tasan Kok, 2004). On the other hand, different party affiliations, political conflicts, miscommunication among different governmental layers affected the shaping of entrepreneurial government (Tasan Kok, 2004). These power struggles have strongly affected the initiations and/or success of the projects<sup>29</sup> (c.f. Ekinici, 1994; Öktem 2005; Genis, 2004; Tasan Kok 2004). In this respect, if the governing authorities at the central and local levels have been from the same political party, this has reduced the likelihood of the potential conflicts and paved the way for more assertive and entrepreneurial initiatives and projects to be undertaken at the local level<sup>30</sup>.

Secondly, central government not only endowed local authorities with greater reach to inter/national financial resources<sup>31</sup> but also increased the central budget share allocated to the city -its highest level in Republican history. Underlying this extended financial resources provided by the central government was the aim to

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and related, political conflicts and tricks, power struggles between central and local governments as well as between different municipal layers have mostly -but not necessarily though- resulted from the disparity in the political party origins of the governing authorities at these relevant levels.

<sup>28</sup> High level of municipal bureaucracy and the slow rate of reforms resulted in the proliferation of informal ways.

<sup>29</sup> these two factors are partly the results of (or are enabled by) the uneven distribution of powers and authority to intervene the urban space among different central and local government agencies, still powers and role of the central government in urban development issues and the financial dependency of the local to central though weakened recently with the new laws. And they are as well results of the strongly established clientalism in country's political system.

<sup>30</sup> e.g. Motherland Party reign at central government (Ozal) and metropolitan government (Dalan) in 1980s did help Dalan to initiate many entrepreneurial projects with the support of the central government though some illegal and mostly clientalist in nature. Likewise, as will be discussed in the Chapter 5, with a mention on political context in 2000s and also with the subsequent Chapter 6 on Tarlabası renewal project, after 2000 during AKP' (Justice and Development Party) term of office both at metropolitan and central levels, paved the way for stronger entrepreneurial stance and radical moves regarding urban policies, project implemented e.g. urban transformation policies, which will be discussed in Chapter 5 on Istanbul after 2000 and as well in the chapter 6 on Tarlabası renewal project.

<sup>31</sup> These extended financial resources for Istanbul by the central state were the result of a policy choice rather in contrast to downsizing of the state and it was different from many other cities in advanced capitalist world, which suffered from cuts in the budgets allocated by the central governments under fiscal austerity. New legislations in 1980s entitled local governments to collect real estate taxes (Act on Property Tax. No.1319) increased the local governments share in central budget gradually from 1 percent to 5 percent (Municipalities Law, No.3030). Besides, municipalities could now borrow international credits for their operations. Significant use of international credits marked the large scale infrastructure investments undertaken in this period (Keleş, 1990).

strengthen city's infrastructural base in telecommunications, transportation etc. for it to play its new role as a business, services and tourism center. These restructurings in the relations between central- local governmental layers led active involvement of local government in city's economic restructuring with extended financial and political powers to intervene the urban space.

This market driven approach of the state towards urbanization and urban development was legitimized with the rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city, which was (re)produced and circulated by the successive city governments together with important elite groups in the city (Öktem, 2005; Geniş, 2004). As Öktem (2005) argues it in detail, these projects were reshaped in time in relation to the changing balance of power between central and local governments, political and contextual contingencies, party programs of different city and central governments. Likewise, with her emphasis on the constructed and contested nature of the global city making processes in Istanbul, Genis (2004) identifies and discusses two different global city making projects for Istanbul, constructed by two opposing strategic camps in the city after 1990: while the first is the secular- western global city project, posed by the secular political economic elites, the second is the Islamic global city project shaped and circulated by the Islamic economic circles and the Islamic city government during the rule of the Islamist Refah (Welfare) Party after 1994. The author gives full account on their shaping processes and the political economic and social conflicts, interests, which embrace their convergences in time due to historical and local contingencies.

#### **2.4. The New Urban Policies For (Re) Development & Renewal: *(Re) Building the City with Project-Led Initiatives***

After the 1984 municipal elections, the first metropolitan mayor of Istanbul (Dalan from liberal conservative party ANAP (Mother Land Party) engaged in entrepreneurial interventions to reposition the city's economy, as they are called 'Dalan's<sup>32</sup> operations' (Ekinici, 1994). Thereafter, "How to sell Istanbul?"<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Bedrettin Dalan was the first metropolitan mayor of Istanbul after the two tiered municipal system was launched. Elected in 1984 and armed with extended financial and political powers, he was

(Keyder, 1993) became the main concern for central and local authorities, development coalitions, urban actors with different stakes in the realization of 'global city' making project of Istanbul. On the one hand, several large scale business, tourism and services projects were launched throughout 1980s and 1990s with the direct or indirect central and local government intervention to open up fresh spaces for capital accumulation in *commercial urban development* (see Tasan Kok, 2004; Sönmez, 1996, Ekinçi, 1994 among others). Secondly, *tourism-led revitalization projects* and interventions into the historic urban cores aimed at image creation and upgrading to secure Istanbul as an historic and tourism city (Gürler, 1999).

On the other hand, changes in housing policy and squatter housing redevelopment plans triggered the *transformation of squatter neighborhoods* into apartmentalized ones (see Erder, 1997; Senyapılı, 2004 among others) or into middle and upper middle class neighborhoods, though some squatter neighborhoods with less privileged locations stayed untransformed and subjected to further decay (Kurtuluş, 2006). Besides these three types of project-led (re)development initiatives, which were marked by active involvement of the state, the transformation of residential landscape of the city was also signified with *large scale middle and upper middle class housing projects*, which were promoted by housing policy and squatter redevelopment plans. This was accompanied with the simultaneous processes of *gentrification in the inner city neighborhoods*, into which active involvement of the state was absent in the beginning but began with the insertion of rehabilitation projects for historical sites by the state only in the late 1990s. A brief analysis on these five types of project led developments<sup>34</sup> in the

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influential and entrepreneurial in formulating and actualizing the new vision for Istanbul as post industrial global city. coming from the same liberal conservative party ANAP in rule at the central level under the prime minister Özal, the entrepreneurial mayor had the full support from the central government and involved in radical policy initiatives pioneering the neoliberalization of Istanbul.

<sup>33</sup> The global city discourse and rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city were widely discussed by academic studies. Most of them evaluate this project as a new development strategy and the discussions around different political economic strategies and ways to make the city a global one. Among them, see Keyder, 1992; Keyder and Öncü, 1994 and for critical perspective on these academic standpoints, see Ercan, 1996.

<sup>34</sup> I count here process of gentrification as a project-led initiative but this account is valid for the latest processes. Initially gentrification was experienced as a sporadic event in many neighborhoods

commercial and residential landscape of the city, which underwrote Istanbul as the arena for market oriented economic growth will be provided below.

To begin with, the extended financial resources at the local were channeled to *mega urban infrastructural projects* as a postulate to strengthen the competitive advantage of the city. Among the major ones, one can count the construction of Second Bosphorus Bridge, a new metro system, new peripheral highways, sea transportation system, and opening of Tarlabaşı Boulevard to revitalize old cultural center Beyoğlu and to redirect the traffic flow in the city for new CBD projects. These infrastructural undertakings did not only stimulate the growth of residential and commercial areas along peripheral highways to the north of the city but also helped to link new centers, new project sites to each other.

#### ***2.4.1. Flagship Commercial Development Projects: Creating Central Business Districts***

From 1980s onwards, several *flagships commercial projects* were undertaken for the creation and extension of central business districts through the active/inactive partnerships between central, local government, sub-national institutions, private sector agents. On the one hand, to encourage tourism and business developments in the city, several centrally located sites were declared as “tourism centers” by the Ministry of Tourism in 1980s which enabled the investors with high density construction rights, less bureaucracy, technical support and extra subsidies at the same time (Özdemir, 1999). Beyond this facilitator role, central and local government engaged in the pioneering projects to stimulate the extension of new CBD along Levent Maslak axis (Öktem, 2005) to create the ‘little Manhattan in Istanbul’ and to develop new shopping centers, hotel complexes<sup>35</sup> etc. in the city. Public involvement in these projects, which aimed and helped to stimulate further

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in Istanbul but as will be discussed, with the insertion of Fener Balat rehabilitation project in 1999, marked by institutional involvement, the state of gentrification has transformed from being sporadic, this is why I call this more recent experience of gentrification as project-led initiative.

<sup>35</sup> Among these site specific commercial projects, mega shopping malls such as Ataköy Galleria, Grundig Cevahir, prestigious hotel complexes such as Çırağan, Conrad, Swissotel, Ramada, plazas and business centers mainly located in Maslak and highly debated projects like Gökkafe, Parkotel can be counted (c.f. Sönmez, (1996), Ekinci (1995).

private sector investments, varied from active partnership in development coalitions to participation as a landowner in return for rent and to provision of building permissions (c.f. Özdemir, 1999; Tasan Kok, 2004).

#### ***2.4.2. Tourism and Culture-led Renewal Project in Historical Urban Cores***

With the aims to revitalize an image of touristic and cultural city and recapitalize on the historical cores of the city, several big and small scale ***urban renewal projects*** were launched at the historical sites of the city after mid- 1980s. ***Historical preservation programs and tourism led revitalization*** initiatives widely implemented either through active public interventions in these areas or else through private sector led undertakings promoted by the state through subsidies, legislative frameworks aiming at the cultural and touristic revitalizations, historical preservation etc (Gürler, 2003).

Among the pioneering big scale urban renewal projects that aimed to underwrite the historical centers, I will discuss two projects namely, Golden Horn rehabilitation and Beyoğlu revitalization projects, which were pursued with Dalan's (the first metropolitan mayor) entrepreneurial role, as they are known as 'Dalan's operations' (Ekinci, 1994). First, within the framework of 'Haliç and its Environs Development Plan', Golden Horn Project was inserted to decentralize the industrial uses. Legitimized with environmentalist discourse to eliminate the congestion in this historically preserved area in Historical Peninsula, as Keskinok argues that the intervention helped to 'reoperationalize the urban land market' eliminating the obstacles to reproduction of space such as devalorization effects, bad image etc. (Keskinok, 1997). Metropolitan government formed public- private partnerships to relocate the industrial uses from the industrial site to newly formed trade and industrial centers<sup>36</sup> in the city (c.f. Tasan Kok, 2004). While for the area, touristic and cultural flagships would be implemented in time such as the construction of a new theme park called Miniaturk<sup>37</sup>, Rahmi Koç Technology Museum, Haliç Culture

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<sup>36</sup> These newly formed sites are Perpa Trade Center in Şişli and İkitelli Organized Industrial Sites.

<sup>37</sup> Located along Golden Horn coast, Miniaturk is a mini theme park designed with the maquettes of historical, architectural and cultural works all around Turkey.

Valley etc., decentralization of industry caused further economic and social worsening –job loses etc.- for the adjacent neighborhoods like Fener Balat, which became subjected to gentrification in late 1990s, when the cleaning up of Golden Horn was completed and a rehabilitation project for the neighborhoods was launched by the local municipality in collaboration with Unesco, which shall be analyzed next with gentrification processes in Istanbul.

Likewise, based on Beyoğlu Restoration Plan –for the historical culture center of Istanbul- initiated by the mayor (Dalan), massive amount of demolitions were realized on Tarlabası Street, destroying the historic fabric of the neighborhood (Ekinci, 1994). This plan foresaw the cultural, commercial and touristic revitalization of Beyoğlu through closing the main axis, Istiklal Road, to the traffic flow and creating a new transportation axis through Tarlabası (Bartu, 2000). Besides, the operation targeted to upgrade the transportation infrastructure of the city for the establishment of the new CBD –in Levent/ Maslak districts and to link the traffic route from Tarlabası to the new business center. As in time cultural and leisure facilities concentrated in old center, which regained its importance after this intervention throughout 1990s, it helped the fueling of gentrification processes in three Beyoğlu neighborhoods, namely Galata, Asmalımescit, Cihangir. At the other side of the coin, the new Boulevard separated Tarlabası from Beyoğlu both socioeconomically and physically, which resulted in the sprawling decay in the neighborhood, which will be discussed in detail in the section on Tarlabası renewal project.

Furthermore, many small scale rehabilitation and rearrangement projects for several sites in the city were implemented by the metropolitan and/ or district municipalities –e.g. Ortaköy Square rehabilitation project, Galata Tower and its environs rehabilitation project etc.

#### ***2.4.3. From Gecekondu to Apartment Housings: Building Amnesties and Development and Improvement Plans for Squatter Neighborhoods***

In this period, gecekondu neighborhoods, heretofore low-rise, poorly built settlements scattered around the city, became subjected to drastic transformation into apartmentalized neighborhoods. A series of building amnesties were enacted after mid 1980s, which legalized the unauthorized buildings and allowed the conversion of gecekondu settlements into multi-story buildings, which paved the way to emergence of *apartmentalized gecekondu* neighborhoods, in Erder's terms "apartmankondu" (Erder, 1997, see also Senyapılı, 2004; Sen, 1996, Keleş, 1990 among others). This redevelopment process was mainly realized by the small constructors, who were contracted by the squatter themselves.

On the other hand, within the scope of the amnesty laws, '*development and improvement plans*'<sup>38</sup> for gecekondu areas were inserted by the municipal authorities to legalize and redevelop gecekondu settlements for lower income groups, and to prevent gecekondu formation in their surrounding areas (Ekinci, 1994, 1995, Keleş, 1990, Sönmez, 1996). Some small and large scale developers became interested in redevelopment of these neighborhoods –mostly the ones with relatively privileged locations- into middle class housings and upper middle class residences, through the use of 'redevelopment and upgrading plans'.

All in all, apartmentalization process announced the commercialization of gecekondu, as it enabled tenancy in gecekondu areas, especially for the new migrants to the city, and put the initial gecekondu land owner in a privileged position to benefit from additional rent incomes.

'Fuelling the rent economy' in these neighborhoods (Keyder and Öncü, 1993, p. 40), central government enabled some gecekondu dwellers to 'participate in the sweepstakes for urban rent' (Keyder, 2005, p.126). Through the mobilization of this populist clientalist way of income redistribution, central government targeted to gain the popular support from and to suppress the potential socioeconomic upheaval of the lower classes, who suffered from declining real wages, unemployment,

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<sup>38</sup> These plans were introduced in the scope of building amnesty enacted in 1987 and targeted to legalize, redevelop gecekondu settlements with additional development rights entitled for the area. Besides, to prevent further gecekondu formation, their surrounding areas were also covered and provided with development rights, no matter these areas are built up areas or not.

worsening income distribution under neoliberal programs, with the offer of rent gains in housing market through homeownership (Boratav,1991; Sönmez, 1996). While, this urban populism encouraged the mushrooming of gecekondu formation in the city, it further caused the differentiation of the squatter population, which enabled the emergence of the mechanism of ‘poverty in turns’, through which the poverty of the early arrived migrants, who holds privileged positions in informal housing and labor market were handed over the new arrivers (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001).

Besides, once combined with the increasing demographic pressures and growing scarcity of land in the city due to excessive expansion, these amnesties triggered gecekondu construction to become a sector for some groups- gecekondu mafia, speculators-, who were organized to construct and sell gecekondu or apartmantkondus or merely the land to the newcomers (Kurtuluş, 2003). Thus, gecekondu lost its owner built and/or owner occupied character<sup>39</sup> and low-rise structure with the diversification of gecekondu settlements and their population – owners with multiple gecekondu, owners, tenants, ones with title deeds etc.<sup>40</sup>.

As, gecekondu turned into a valuable commercialized property in urban housing market, conflicting interests over gecekondu land increased as further projects were posed to redevelop these neighborhoods through partnerships between municipalities and private investors, which resulted in confrontations between city officials and squatters, who opposed to be displaced from their neighborhoods. As Genis (2004) discusses in detail in her study on changing representations of squatter people in time, representations of squatters by media – as well by business organizations, public authorities, intellectuals- drastically changed especially after 1990s with them being called such as ‘people after quick money’, ‘urban criminals’ etc., which reflected the changing perceptions of the urban poor with a

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<sup>39</sup> According to the survey carried out by State Planning Institute (Devlet Planlama Enstitüsü) in 1992, only 17 percent of the gecekondu owners had occupied and acquired their gecekondu lands themselves, others bought the land from the third parties- gecekondu mafia, real estate agents, family members etc. (Sönmez, 1996, p. 141).

<sup>40</sup> For the differentiation of the squatter population, and the transformation of the squatter neighborhoods see, Erder (1996, 1997), Erman (1998), Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001, Sen (1996), Senyapılı (2004), Rittersberger- Tılıç (1997).



criminalizing attitude (Genis, 2004, 98-129). Thus, these amnesties, altering the socioeconomic, political interests over the city, triggered the change in the overall image of the squatters and these neighborhoods (Sen, 1996), which then ideologically served as a legitimization basis for further demolition projects undertaken by the private sector

The emergence of squatter housing as commodity, moreover, made land occupation and gecekondu construction for the new migrants more than impossible in a context of heightened competition for gecekondu land but they could only become tenants in these now diversified settlements or resided in inner city dilapidated and low income neighborhoods such as Tarlabası (our case neighborhood), Kurtuluş, Feriköy, where they could find affordable housings (Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Sen, 2006).

#### ***2.4.4. Creating the Gated Communities and Middle Class Suburban Residential Estates through : Big Scale Residential Projects***

Istanbul of post-1980s was also rewritten by large scale residential projects undertaken in the city mostly by large capital groups, which were mobilized to meet the middle and upper middle income groups' changing residential preferences and demands for suburban living (Kurtuluş, 2003, Enlil, 2003). Several projects were launched to produce middle class residential estates and gated communities on the peripheral and central lands –around the forest areas, alongside the Bosphorus coasts, previously unoccupied public land (Danıs, 2001, Ekinci, 1995, 2004; Kurtuluş, 2000, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, Sönmez, 1996). The appropriations of these lands were realized by investors, developers, land mafia through engaging in clientalist relations with local authorities for the relaxations in development regulations, opening forest and agricultural land to development, privatizations of public land<sup>41</sup> etc. On the other hand, the proliferation of middle and upper middle class residential estates in and around the city was subsidized by the government

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<sup>41</sup> Among the luxurious residential projects realized through these regulation relaxations in forest, coastal, water basin areas, one can count villa projects in Sarıyer-Kilyos (villa project by Koç Holding), Büyük Çekmece (Alkent-2000 project by Alarko holding), Sarıyer, Beşiktaş, Beykoz (various villa projects realized by large scale holdings and construction firms like Acarlar, Soyak, Koray, Polat, Alarko holdings among others). For further information see Sönmez, (1996).

housing policy. Mass housing Administration provided cheap credits for the homebuyers which triggered further demand and at the same time supported housing cooperatives in their projects.

Furthermore, the emergence of these gated communities in the periphery put pressures on the gecekondu land and some of the gecekondu areas were transformed into middle and upper middle class residential estates in time (Keyder, 1999; Kurtuluş et al., 2006; Sönmez, 1996). This was enabled by the use of ‘development and improvement plans’<sup>42</sup> for gecekondu areas inserted by the municipal authorities to legalize and redevelop gecekondu settlements for lower income groups, and to prevent gecekondu formation in their surrounding areas. The development and improvement plans were made use of by the large developers, who entered into clientalist relations with municipal authorities, to transform first the gecekondu settlements with favorable locations in the inner city areas. This was followed by the unoccupied, agricultural, forest lands and the areas around water basins, which gradually turned into luxurious housing estates for the city’s elite<sup>43</sup> (Sönmez, 1996, pp.77-9). Lucrative speculative profits in this municipal market were highly appreciated by the holding companies, big construction firms, which competed to engage in some special arrangements with the municipal authorities to undertake middle and upper middle class housing projects. This not only meant the transfer of public resources to capital groups but also from lower income groups to privileged ones at the expense of destroying cultural, natural assets of the city at the same time.

While state and state agencies took facilitating role in above mentioned *four types of project-led based changes*, it indirectly contributed to another neighborhood change process: gentrification, which began sporadically and which the state would actively involve only from the late 1990s onwards. I will present a detailed mention

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<sup>42</sup> These plans were introduced in the scope of building amnesty enacted in 1987 and targetted to legalize, redevelop gecekondu settlements with additional development rights entitled for the area. Besides, to prevent further gecekondu formation, their surrounding areas were also covered and provided with development rights, no matter these areas are built up areas or not.

<sup>43</sup> For detailed account for these speculative activities and projects resulting from these plans see, Sönmez, 1996.

of this active involvement in more recent cases but it is crucial to discuss the question of how some structural developments -led or promoted by the state- created the conditions for gentrification to take place beginning from early 1980 onwards.

While simultaneous development projects resulted in an expansion towards periphery, this was accompanied with a strong centralization tendency as the corporate investment began to concentrate in certain metropolitan cores and as the tourism and culture based historical renewal projects increased the importance and attractiveness of the inner city historical sites. While promoting the recapitalizations on urban centers, indeed, state and state agencies helped for the concentration of leisure and cultural facilities and emergence of widened rent gaps in some inner city historical sites. Likewise, upgrading the infrastructures of these neighborhoods was realized by the local governments, which helped to speed the processes.

#### ***2.4.5. Gentrification in Inner City Neighborhoods***

As discussed earlier in this chapter, neoliberal restructuring process constituted the ground for the emergence of highly paid professionals, managers, technicians, who were employed in rising services sectors and acquired new distinctive cultural and consumption patterns alike their counterparts in the world, hence, a potential gentrifier pool in the city emerged (c.f. Islam, 2005). Some members of these groups together with cultural elites became attracted to live in historical neighborhoods in inner city or along the Bosphorus coastline with high environmental amenities and easier access to central business districts and took active roles in the gentrification of neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were namely Kuzguncuk, Arnavutköy, Ortaköy –neighborhoods on Bosphorus coast-, Cihangir, Asmalımescit, Galata – in historical culture and commerce centers of Beyoğlu-Galata- and Fener-Balat neighborhoods in Golden Horn. As a common characteristic to all was that they had experienced deterioration and devalorization with the inflow of immigrants following the outflow of non-Muslim minorities<sup>44</sup> in

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<sup>44</sup> This flight was the direct or indirect outcome of the political events in Turkish history -such as the Wealth Tax, 1942; September 5-6 events, 1955; Cyprus Operation, 1974 etc. This issue will be

time (for case studies of these processes, see Behar and Islam, 2006; Ergun, 2003; Ince 2003, 2006; Islam, 2003, 2005; Keyder, 2000; Sen, 2005; Uzun, 2001). Below, the table maps below the general characteristics of the gentrification instances in these neighborhoods (Table 2.1).

Gentrification processes started spontaneously by the initiations of the 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 1980s till the late 1990 (c.f. Islam, 2005). National regulations to protect natural and historical assets, municipality's tourism and culture-led revitalization interventions in the historical cores, initiatives to revitalize the inner city centers, provision of infrastructural investments played a crucial role in the formation of the setting for gentrification, hence, the speed and extent of gentrification processes in these neighborhoods. To exemplify the role of the state in these gentrification instances, the pedestrianization of the main axis Istiklal Road –Beyoğlu, as discussed above, fueled the gentrification processes in adjacent neighborhoods –Cihangir, Asmalımescit, Galata (Ince, 2003; Islam, 2003; Uzun, 2001). Likewise, the tourism-led rehabilitation project for Ortaköy Square initiated by the municipality, as discussed above, brought in a new momentum to the gentrification process in Ortaköy as commercial gentrification increased after the project (Ergun, 2003, Islam, 2005).

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touched upon again in our case study chapter with the discussion on the socio-spatial transformation of Tarlabası and Beyoğlu (Chapter 5).

**Table 2.1 Gentrification in Istanbul Through Time<sup>45</sup>**

Where	Arnavutköy	Kuzguncuk	Ortaköy	Cihangir	Galata	Asmalimescit	Fener Balat
When	Early 80s	Early 80s	Early 90s	Mid-90s	Mid-90s	Late 90s-2000s	2003 on...
What type	Residential	Residential	First residential / commercial	Residential/ Partly commercial	Residential/ commercial	Residential/ commercial	Residential/???
Who	Information sector employees	Well-known architect&his followers	1. Middle class 2. Entrepreneurs: commercial interest	1. Famous artist as the pioneer Intellectuals, artists, academicians 2. Entrepreneurs, urban developers	1. Famous architect pioneer and cultural elite as his followers 2. Entrepreneurs urban developers	1. Cultural elite 2. Culture Industry Entrepreneurs urban developers	1. European Union and Fatih Municipality, UNESCO, Greater Municipality, ICOMOS 2. supported by a Technical Assistance Team (commissioned in accordance with a service agreement signed with a consortium led by Foment Ciutat Vella SA, a development company 50% owned by the City of Barcelona. 3. Other members of consortium are IMC Consulting (United Kingdom), GRET (France)
NGO Involvement	Non	Kuzguncuk Neighborhood Association	Non	Cihangir Beautification Association	Galata Neighborhood Association	Non	1. Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW) (Turkey). 2. The French Institute of Anatolian Studies, Fener & Balat Neighborhood Associations
Municipal /State Involvement	Indirectly- Infrastructural upgrading	Indirectly- Infrastructural upgrading	1. 1989 renewal project for Ortaköy Square- 2. Infrastructural upgrading	1. Revitalization & Pedestrianisation of Istiklal Street 2. Infrastructural Upgrading	1. Revitalization & Pedestrianisation of Istiklal Street 2. Beautiful Beyoğlu Project 3. Galata Tower Regeneration Project 4. Upgrading of infrastructure and urban design- Street furnitures	1. Revitalization & Pedestrianisation of Istiklal Street 2. Beautiful Beyoğlu Project 3. Upgrading of infrastructure and urban design- Street furnitures	1. Transfer of industrial uses and cleaning projects for Golden Horn 2. Supply of buildings to be restored to serve as the Social Centre 3. Improvement of the infrastructure like repair of the façades, the renewal of electricity and water systems, the cleaning of the roofs, the repair of the overhangs (by Fatih Municipality) 4. Improvement of the connection with the larger city: reinforcement of the Balat entrances, better use of the Golden Horn (by the Greater Municipality)
Why /Factors	1. Availability of terraced apartments 2. Bosphorus	1. Availability of terraced apartment buildings	1. Location on Bosphorus 2. Availability of historical&	1. Strategic location & easy access to CBD	1. Strategic location & easy access to CBD 2. Cultural, leisure	1. Strategic location & easy access to CBD 2. Cultural,	1. Location in Historical Peninsula/ Golden Horn 2. High value

<sup>45</sup> I constructed the table based on the review of gentrification literature. The relevant studies reviewed are referenced in the main text.

	scene 3.Easy access to CBD	2.Bosphorus scene 3. Easy access to CBD	architectural valuable houses 3. Easy access to CBD	2.Bosphorus scene 3.High qualified building stock	center 3.High value historical building stock	leisure center 3.High value historical building stock	historical buildings but deteriorated requiring huge investments 3.Easy access to CBD
<b>How</b>	Individuals buying and renovating buildings	Individuals buying and renovating buildings	1. Individuals buying and restoring the buildings 2. New cafes, restaurants, shops on the Square	1. Individuals buying and restoring the buildings 2. New art-studios, galleries,book- stores,cafes, restaurants, shops	1. Individuals buying and restoring the buildings 2. New&small art&music- studios,stores galleries, apart- hotels, cafes,restaurants, shops	1. Individuals buying and restoring the buildings 2. Proliferation of Culture& entertainment industry & office use 3. New art & design studios, galleries, book- stores,cafes, restaurants, shops	1. Initiation of The Rehabilitation of Fener and Balat Districts Programme 2. Selection of the buildings to be renovated 3. Establishment of Social Center for Community meetings and participation 4. Improvement of the buildings' physical condition (by the Programme)
<b>Legal Aspects</b>	1983 Bosphorus Development Law (no new construction on the Bosphorus coast, protective legislation)	1983 Bosphorus Development Law (no new construction on the Bosphorus coast, protective legislation)	1983 Bosphorus Development Law (no new construction on the Bosphorus coast, protective legislation)	1994 Protection Law of Cultural and Natural Assets (restrictions on renovations, subjection to permission from Protection Committees, high bureaucracy)	1994 Protection Law of Cultural and Natural Assets (restrictions on renovations, subjection to permission from Protection Committees, high bureaucracy)	1994 Protection Law of Cultural and Natural Assets (restrictions on renovations, subjection to permission from Protection Committees, high bureaucracy)	1994 Protection Law of Cultural and Natural Assets (restrictions on renovations, subjection to permission from Protection Committees, high bureaucracy)
<b>Financial Aspects</b>	Individual- basis	Individual- basis	Individual basis Market forces	Individual basis Market forces	Individual basis Market forces	Individual basis Market forces	1. EU funds (7million Euros) Funds from 2. the French government, 3. the World heritage Fund 4. Fatih Municipality.
<b>Diffusion effects</b>	Slow	Slow	1. Moderate 2. From Residential to commercial gentrification	1. Moderate 2. Market forces stimulating the process 3. Residential accompanied with commercial gentrification	1.Moderately Low (existence of small workshop, warehouses) 2.Market forces (tourism and music industry) stimulating the process 3.Cultural festivals increasing the attraction 4. Future effect of the enactment of new urban renewal no. 5366 for urban protection areas	1. Moderate 2. Culture industry stimulating the process 3. Future effect of the enactment of new urban renewal no. 5366 for urban protection areas	1. Widespread and quick rightafter the announcement of the project in 1 ate 90s 2. Real Estate Market effects in the neighborhood (prices up&property changing hands) 3.Future effects of the enactment of new urban renewal no. 5366 for urban protection areas
<b>Displaceme nts</b>	Low-Mild	Low- Mild	Firstly Low- then relatively higher Double effect 1.residents by gentrifiers 2.new comers	High	Moderate	Relatively high Double effect 1. residents by gentrifiers 2. new comers slowly leave with the arrival	1. High just after the announcement of the project in the districts 2. For the selected properties to be renovated: Low-Mild

			slowly leave with the arrival of commercial gentrifiers			of commercial gentrifiers	
<b>Conflict</b>	Displaced &New Comers	1.Displaced &New Comers  2. Old &New Residents	1.Displaced& New Comers  2.Residential& Commercial Gentrifiers	1.Displaced&New Comers  2.New & old residents  3. Residential& Commercial Gentrifiers	1.Displaced&New Comers  2.New & old residents  3.Residential& Commercial Gentrifiers	1.Displaced& New Comers  2. New & old residents  3. Residential& Commercial Gentrifiers	<u>A. In the districts:</u> 1. Displaced&New Comers 2. New & old residents <u>B. For the selected properties to be renovated:</u> Low (Due to the restriction criterias and Community meetings and Social Center)

State's promotion of and direct involvement in gentrification began in late 1990s, with the announcement of EU-funded urban rehabilitation project for Fener Balat districts in Golden Horn implemented by the partnership formed between district municipality- Fatih Municipality- and UNESCO as well as the private actors. Though aims at physical and social rehabilitation in the area, this ongoing project, as some researchers discuss it, served as the driving force of gentrification in the area, though slow but steady (Ergun, 2003, Islam, 2005). In Islam'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' (Islam, 2005, p.130).

As an integral part of neoliberal restructuring the gentrification in Istanbul- hitherto unknown- expressed visually the new social spatial differentiation and fragmentation patterns in the city. Whereas the site-specific physical interventions to revitalize historical centers played a crucial role in the earlier instances of gentrification, the more recent experience of gentrification in Fener Balat district started as the result of neighborhood rehabilitation project, which was launched for the districts announcing the harbinger role of the state agencies and supranational institutions in gentrification.

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<sup>46</sup> Likewise, in Ortaköy- an old center along Bosphorus- the launch of a renewal project was significant in the shaping of the gentrification

## ***2.5. Evaluations on Neoliberal Policy Initiatives and Urban Projects of post-1980s***

Through the above mentioned project-led transformation processes as the integral parts of neoliberal restructuring of Istanbul, the city experienced an uncontrolled, unplanned, piecemeal and highly speculative development from 1980s onwards. I will below present the effects of these developments basing my arguments on the review of studies carried out on these policy initiatives and projects.

Firstly, as Tekeli (1981) put it Istanbul after 1980s, turned to become the city of speculative large capital and it was through formation of growth coalitions, public private partnerships and/or enabling attitude of the state towards market enterprise in urban land and housing markets that large capital groups became the largest beneficiaries of this neoliberalization process (Sönmez, 1996, Özdemir, 1999, Kurtuluş, 2003).

As Keskinok (1997, p.128) gives a full account on the issue, large scale infrastructure investments in tandem with the expanded operations of urban development sector and operations of state sponsored housing cooperatives simultaneously increased the land speculations in the city and rent oriented (re)development became the major mechanism of capital accumulation, shaping the city's speculative and uncontrolled development.

The initiatives undertaken for infrastructural upgrading and large scale commercial flagship developments resulted in further expansion of the city. While the former eased the formation of new centers and further peripheral expansion along new highways, Istanbul has turned into a 'multinucleated city' as corporate investments concentrated in newly emerging business districts in the city –in Levent- Maslak, Altunizade-Kozyatağı etc.- (Özdemir, 1999). In her analysis on the impacts of post 1980s large scale commercial development projects, Özdemir (1999) underlines the emergence of speculative high price real estate markets for commercial and residential property around the new centers, which made it unaffordable for large segments of the population, who had to move towards periphery (Özdemir, 1999). Besides, the author emphasizes that attraction of international investments into



these commercial projects and their surroundings stayed weak in contrast to what was expected.

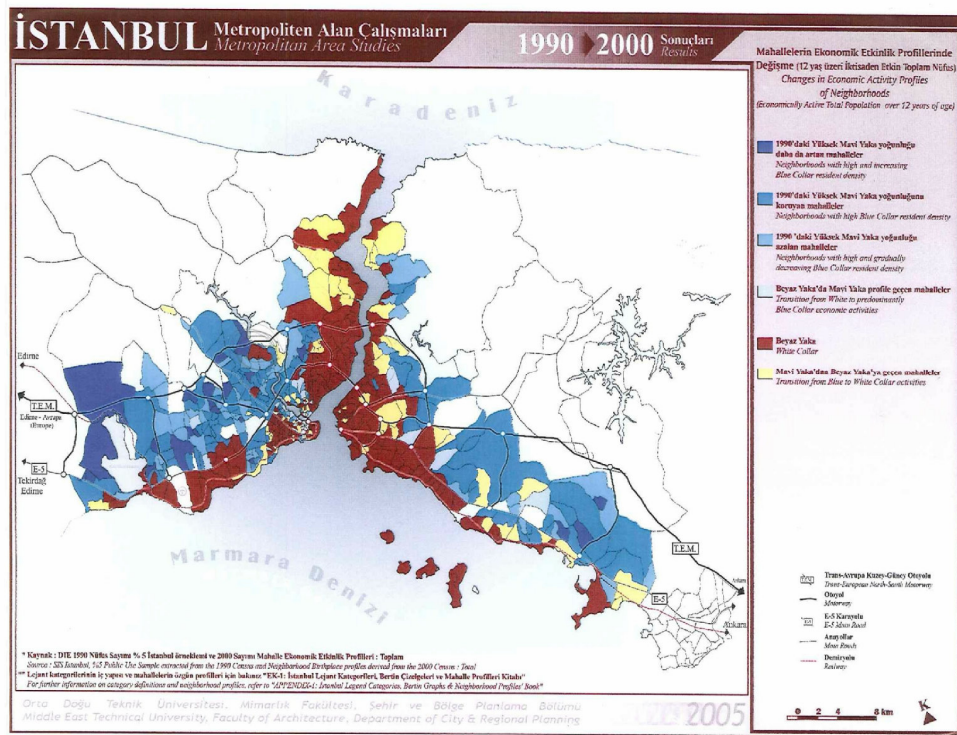
Öktem (2006), in the same line with Ozdemir (1999) argues about this centralization tendency that it contributed the class based residential segregation to increase in the city as new high rise condominiums, villa type residential estates proliferated around the new CBD, Levent Maslak, which helped to secure the center for middle and upper middle classes while at the same it put pressure on the gecekondu areas like Kuştepe, Fikirtepe in its surroundings, which became subjected to the subsequent ‘urban transformation’ projects, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 on the urban transformation projects undertaken in Istanbul in 2000s.

As for another crucial point, as Tasan Kok (2004) analyzes them in detail, in the (un)realization of the commercial development projects initiated through the public private partnerships, interpersonal relations, informalities, political corruption, ‘political battle’ between different municipal layers as well as central and local government authorities did play a crucial role (p.178). While sometimes projects were halted by the successor municipal government in rule, sometimes the coalitions between the district municipalities and central governments helped the projects to take place jumping over the authority of metropolitan layer in the decision making. While these power mechanisms were in charge, the city was landscaped with highly debated project undertakings such as Gökkafes, Park Otel, which sucked the public resources at the expense of cultural and natural assets of the city (Ekinci, 1994).

Kurtuluş (2003, 2006), in her research on suburban enclaves and gated communities in Istanbul, underlines on the one hand, the mechanisms that certain groups – speculators, land owners, developers, land mafia etc.- appropriate the land development rents before these projects take place engaging in clientalist relations with authorities. Besides this transfer of public income to certain groups, she emphasizes the erosion of the ‘public’ and public spaces as these forms of sociospatial segregation proliferate in the city (Kurtuluş, 2006, p.120).

Likewise, the mushrooming of the gated communities in the privileged peripheral sites, sometimes side by side with untransformed gecekondu areas heightened the class based segregation in the city, spatializing and strengthening the socioeconomic inequalities. As in time low income neighborhoods with privileged locations –mostly gecekondu areas- turned into middle and upper middle class neighborhoods resulting from the policies discussed above, it announced the colonization of the privileged sites in the city by the affluent.

**Figure 2.1. Changes in Economic Activity Profiles of Neighborhoods-Istanbul**



Source: Güvenç (2005).

Furthermore, ‘redevelopment and upgrading plans’, initially developed for to upgrade the living conditions in squatter neighborhoods, were mobilized by the public private partnerships to develop luxurious residential developments in – forests, water basins, coastal lines as well as former gecekondu areas-, however, legitimized with the discourse of ‘saving the city’ from uncontrolled and distorted urbanization.

This expansion of middle and upper middle class residential areas through the privileged sites of the city is vividly sketched in the map below, which depicts the changes in economic profiles of the neighborhoods from the year of 1990 to 2000. As Güvenç's study (2005) reveals it out with the shrinking geography of working class neighborhoods along the Bosphorus coast line, which turned to become white collar activity neighborhoods within ten years resulting from the policy initiatives, project undertakings as discussed above (see the Figure 2.1 above).

The populist framing of the interventions into urban land and housing markets through amnesties in the case of squatter neighborhoods and through subsidizing homeownerships for the lower middle classes had secured the widespread support for the policies to be implemented (Keyder, 1999, Keyder and Öncü, 1993). However, this populism -which in a way bribed the popular classes- has been discussed by the scholars to come to its ends, as meeting the market-driven demands posed by the capitalist sector in 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 2003; Keyder, 2005). Thus, commercialization of the urban land and housing, meant the steady dismantling of chances for the appropriation of public lands and/or access to gecekondu land and formation for the newcomers after 1990s, mostly for the forcibly migrants, who ended up as the tenants and lowest rank informal/marginal workers as they entered into the mechanism of poverty in turns at the lowest ranks (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2003, Keyder, 2005).

As a simultaneous movement towards the centre, the extended geography of gentrification announced the securing of the city center for the affluent at the expense of displacement of the urban poor, who used to concentrate in these neighborhoods. Though the scale and type of displacement was different for different geographies of gentrification in Istanbul, it is crucial to note that these occurrences put their surrounding neighborhoods under the pressure of rent gaps, which again potentially brings about the subjugation of the housing needs of the

lower classes (e.g. Tarlabası surrounded with three gentrified neighborhoods in Beyoğlu).

Putting all these points together, under the neoliberal policies, transformation of Istanbul was highly uneven, piecemeal, and speculative. As Turel et al. (2006) discuss it; this speculative urbanization was mostly shaped by market dynamics, ad hoc solutions of different actors with different stakes in the city, urban coalitions, informalities and political balances between different layers of central and urban governments rather than being dependent on strategic plans, programs. Given this, state and state agencies were crucial actors in this transformation still maneuvering the excessive growth of the city and orchestrating the unequal distribution of the urban rents among different social classes through various mechanisms.

As Kurtuluş puts it clearly, this neoliberal urbanization experience was marked by the transfer of resources from lower to upper classes and from public to private sector (Kurtuluş, 2006). While this line of development increased the urban and environment risks that the city and city dwellers are exposed to today, the expansion of the geography of gentrified neighborhoods, gated communities, prestigious business centers still put the pressure on the untransformed neighborhoods around them, which become subjected to transformation projects, which is the task of Chapter 4 to elaborate on.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, I will present the research methodology and design. Explanations regarding the selection of the case study, the conduct of the field work study and the data collection methods are provided.

### **3.1 Methodology of the Research**

This research has been conducted based on qualitative methodology, which provides the adequate tools for this study, which is an exploratory attempt to capture an in-depth understanding on the complex issues and processes related to urban transformation/ renewal, which cannot be comprehended using quantitative methodology: historical, local contingencies that enable the shift in urban policy focus toward urban transformation/renewal; the characteristics and the impacts of the initiatives; the meanings, perceptions, legitimizations that the public authorities attach to these initiatives, targets; and lastly the attitudes taken by local authorities towards different actors. In this respect, a wide range of qualitative data collection techniques were used to explore the related processes, issues, on the way to fulfill the aims of this study.

### **3.2. Selection of the Case**

Tarlabaşı is a socio-spatially deprived inner city neighborhood, located in the northern part of Beyoğlu, which is the prestigious historical cultural and commercial centre of Istanbul, located on the European side of the Istanbul just opposite to the Historical Peninsula. Among the forty five administrative neighborhoods in Beyoğlu, Tarlabaşı is not a single unit but rather consists of 8 quarters<sup>47</sup> in Beyoğlu all in the northern part of İstiklal Road.

Three of these eight quarters, namely Bülbül, Çukur, Şehit Muhtar, do constitute the research area in this study since the first stage pilot project area is in the borders of

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<sup>47</sup> These quarter are namely Sururi, Kamer Hatun, Kalyoncu Kulluğu, Hüseyin Ağa, Bostan, Çukur, Bülbül, Şehit Muhtar -from the west to its east end.

these three quarters mainly. I will discuss in detail the setting of the neighborhood in the Chapter 5. There are several reasons that Tarlabası was chosen as the case study for this research:

***1. Tarlabası as the Pioneer Case, where the new “Urban Renewal” law will be implemented for the first time in Istanbul:*** Though the new urban renewal law is a general one, which frames all renewal activities in the historical sites throughout the country, it became to be known as ‘Tarlabası law’ due to the active contribution of the Beyoğlu mayor into the law making process and to his decisive announcements of Tarlabası renewal proposal in the media, even before the law was enacted. Related, municipality took decisive steps to undertake the bureaucratic procedures timely necessary to start the process, which made Tarlabası project as the pioneering one in the city. Besides, the central government’s support for the project made it more to the front in the media accounts.

***2. Tarlabası as an “island of decay in the sea of renewal”:*** Tarlabası is a highly deprived neighborhood in the old prestigious cultural and commercial city center, - Beyoğlu- surrounded by gentrified neighborhoods. As it will be analyzed in detail in the section on the sociospatial transformation in Tarlabası and Beyoğlu, despite the revitalization of Beyoğlu after 1990s, accompanying gentrification processes in its nearby neighborhoods –Galata, Asmalımescit, Cihangir-, Tarlabası has kept physically and socio-economically isolated from the old cultural city center especially after the planned public intervention into the neighborhood to widen the Tarlabası Road. Thereafter, while Tarlabası Road functioned as an “urban frontier” between Beyoğlu and Tarlabası (Saybaşı, 2006; Smith, 1996), Tarlabası has turned into “an island of decay in the sea of renewal” (Hammel and Wyly, 1999) as the social deprivation and physical deterioration in the neighborhood perpetuated in time. On the other hand, the neighborhood has shared characteristics with the gentrified neighborhoods around it: historically invaluable building stock of 19th century; very central location just at the heart of the city center, a high rent gap with very low rents and sales prices; the Non-Muslim cultural background of the neighborhood, which would potentially be considered as distinctive and attractive features to attract gentrifiers into the area.

Despite these characteristics, once the bad reputation of the neighborhood, which is infamous with crime, prostitution, drug dealing, mafia presence combined with the fragmented property structure and very desolate condition of the housings, which require large sums of investment to renew, it has not become a target for gentrification unlike the nearby neighborhoods. These all put together, Tarlabası provides the invaluable ground for us to examine the impacts of the new initiatives regarding gentrification and whether the new policies for urban renewal promote and or encourage gentrification in deprived neighborhoods or not.

**3. *Tarlabası as a socially and spatially deprived neighborhood:*** As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter on the neighborhood setting, Tarlabası is among the neighborhoods in Istanbul marked with the severest problems like socioeconomic deprivation, poverty etc. hosting the most unprivileged groups in the city. The neighborhood presents the showcase of sharp uneven development in the city with its physical location right at the prestigious, cultural center of Beyoğlu, and with its very deprived conditions keeping the neighborhood at the very margins of the socioeconomic development in the district, in the city. Since this study is an initial attempt for an investigation of how the costs and benefits of urban renewal are to be distributed among the different urban actors involved in renewal, the case of Tarlabası renewal enables one to explore what these new renewal initiatives would bring in to reverse the conditions of uneven development.

### **3.3. The Field Research and the Data**

The actual research began with a critical literature review on theoretical conceptualizations and empirical evidence (both in the cities around the world and Istanbul)

- a. On the new urban (re)development policies and strategies adopted by city governments in a context shaped by neoliberal economic restructuring after 1980s.

- b. on gentrification
- c. on the changing relation between urban policy/politics and gentrification –new (re)development policies, strategies embraced by the central/ city governments and their relation to gentrification.

While the literature review enabled to clarify the concepts, to determine the theoretical stance embraced and to raise the themes, issues crucial in this study, as presented in the previous chapter, these themes, issues, concepts were critically utilized at the latter stages of data collection and analyses –e.g. as they informed the preparation of the interview questions and themes, the selection of the range of the interviewees, the inclusion of various qualitative data collection techniques and the analyses of the findings etc.

The field work began with the exploratory visit to the neighborhood in November-2005, which was followed with the interviews conducted mainly in the period late February- early April-2006. The research ended in the late March- 2007. To capture the ongoing dynamics of the very initial phase of the renewal process, I made several visits to Istanbul during more than a year-long research conduct, though the data analyses phase of the research was realized in Ankara mainly. I limited the duration of the research with the announcement of the result of the public bidding that the municipality opened for the private investors to prepare and implement the final renewal project based on the initial proposals of the municipality. As of the late March-2007, when this research ended, the details of the actual project was not yet announced publicly though the investor firm was decided upon with the bidding process. In this respect, the analyses provided in this research is based on the renewal plans, proposals of the municipality, as they are communicated by the authorities and constitute the input for the final renewal project design and implementation.

### **3.3.1. The Data Collection Techniques used for the Analyses regarding the Rise of the New Urban Policies for Transformation/Renewal in Istanbul during 2000s**



To investigate the changes in urban and housing policies in general and the rise of urban transformation policies in specific to set the broader context of Tarlabaşı renewal, I used three different qualitative data collection techniques in a complementary way to explore:

1. The *documentary analysis* was undertaken with the reviews of the *written and visual materials available*. Among these data sources, central government programs, plans, reports regarding urban and housing policy, the activity reports of the semi- public and public housing agencies (Mass Housing Administration, Kiptaş etc.) were analyzed to depict the policy changes at the national level.

Likewise, at the urban level, strategic planning documents (Çevre Düzeni Planı, Draft Istanbul İmar planı, Earthquake Master Plan, Istanbul Neighborhood Revitalization Plan), research documents (JICA report), the annual activity reports of the Metropolitan Municipality and of relevant directorates under municipality –e.g. Directorate of Urban Transformation and ISAT- and leaflets brochures delivered by IMP related to urban transformation/renewal issues, renewal/transformation plans and project proposals (Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects, Sulukule Rehabilitation Project among many others) municipal annual activity reports, documents, websites (both metropolitan and district municipalities as well Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Center (IMP)) constituted the major source of secondary data to depict the changes in urban policy.

Secondly, to trace the legal and organizational realignments undertaken to form the basis of urban transformation, I reviewed the general and specialized laws and legislative documents systematically. Besides, the websites of the organizations (IBB, TOKİ, Bimtaş, and Kiptaş) were browsed to get further information about the organizational changes undertaken.

2. **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted with the public authorities at different institutions, which have taken leading roles in the preparation of the urban transformation policies, laws, strategic plans etc. (IBB, IMP, and Governorship of Istanbul). I made interviews with the chief operating officers of the most relevant directorates at the IBB and IMP. While some of the interviewees were selected through a chain process starting with persons, who were interviewed formerly; a friend of mine, who works at IMP, guided me in the selection of the relevant interviewees at this institution. Besides, the interviews were conducted with the representatives of the Chambers of Architects and Engineers-Istanbul and the Chamber of City Planners-Istanbul to get a general understanding of how the professional organizations view the urban transformation policies, projects.

In total, I conducted 9 interviews with the respondents from Metropolitan Municipality (1), IMP (5), Governorship of Istanbul (1), the Chambers of Architects and Engineers-Istanbul (1), the Chamber of City Planners-Istanbul (1). These interviews were tailored accordingly to the respondents' areas of specialization and the range of activities of the institutions they take part in. The interviews were conducted in March –April 2006 and they took about an hour on average, some lasting more than two hours while some were half an hour long. The interviews were type-recorded based on the preference of the interviewees. While only four were recorded and transcribed later, during the remaining five, I took systematic notes and then typed them after the interview.

3. **Participant observations** were used as another technique to have an in-depth understanding and they served for many different purposes. Firstly, I had the chance to make participant observations at the presentations, conferences/meetings<sup>48</sup> held by IMP, during which I had some unstructured interviews and informal talks on the new urban transformation policies,

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<sup>48</sup> These presentations and meeting held by IMP that I could participate are listed as such : 1) 16 November 2006 : Kentsel Dönüşüm Dinamikleri (The Dynamic of Urban Transformation), 2)14 December 2006 : Kentin Yeniden Üretiminde Sivil Katılım (Civic Participation in Urban Restructring 3) Museum Town project Presentation by IMP for Unesco

projects with the urban designers, planners, sociologists and some other professionals, which served not only for a deeper understanding of the changes in urban policies but also for capturing different viewpoints, criticisms from the experts. Likewise, I had the chance to engage in participant observations attending two round- table expert meetings held by the initiatives of NGOs, academics on urban renewal and transformation projects, which took place at Human Settlements Association.

Secondly, during my fieldwork, a former interviewee invited me to the EU Progression Observation Committee Meeting on Neighborhood Change in November 2006, which was held with local residents on the impacts of the urban renewal and transformation project implementations at three neighborhoods in Istanbul (Kağıthane, Küçükbakkalköy, and Sulukule). My participant observation at this event served to understand the impacts of these new policies, listening them from the residents, as well as the shaping of oppositions using the ways open to jump the scales. Besides, the neighborhood visits right after the meeting provided a direct observation chance for me to understand the real impacts of the implementations at these neighborhoods. Likewise, I attended the neighborhood meeting in Sulukule -one of the historical neighborhoods of Istanbul-, where the residents organized to confront the renewal project for their neighborhood.

I took systematic notes during these observations and used them in writing about the descriptions of the main elements and impacts of the urban transformation policies, projects, when necessary.

**Table 3. 1. The Details about the Data Collection Techniques used for the Analyses regarding the Rise of the New Urban Policies for Transformation/Renewal in Istanbul during 2000s**

Types of data	Data Collection Technique Used		Purpose Served (both for the findings of the research and the shaping of the research itself during the its conduct)
Qualitative	<b>1. Indepth Interviews</b>		<p>1. To understand the roles of the different institutions involved in different dimensions of renewal and the relations between their operations together with their sometimes interconnected sometimes uncollaborative ways of functioning through the information disseminated by the informants</p> <p>2. To capture closely the stakes, aims, meanings attached to renewal by the informants, which shaped the institutional and legal changes undertaken.</p> <p>3. To discover about the initially unconceived aspects regarding the aims and management of as well as the power relations and balances involved in transformation and renewal process, which to a certain extent, rerouted our inquiry.</p> <p>1. To capture an understanding regarding the interactions of the agents in and the functioning of the institutions involved.</p> <p>2. To capture the shaping of the oppositions, contestations, initials impacts and the ways open to jump the scales to reorient the distribution of the costs and benefits, which already accrued during the initial project implementations.</p> <p>3. To capture the dynamics of decision making process regarding renewal and the powers relations involved. Besides, to understand how the authorities, politicians do mediate between the needs and demands of the residents as the voters and the requirements of the visions targetted to be realized during the lawmaking process about renewal activities.</p> <p>1. To capture and analyze the changes in housing and urban policy regarding the new priorities, aims, visions, strategies etc.</p> <p>2. To depict the visions targetted for Istanbul and the specific aims of the projects in line with these visions</p> <p>3. To capture the institutional and legislative changes undergone to form the basis of renewal/transformation</p> <p>4. To provide an account on the changes in legislative basis of the renewal and transformation, which the scope of the decisions and actions taken by the actors involved in the process.</p> <p>The specific purpose served with the detailed analysis of the new renewal law -for the historical neighborhoods- called <b>Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revütalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (2005, Law no. 5366)</b> is to provide a detailed account on</p> <p>1. Its scopes, targets and</p> <p>2. How it distributes the power and authority to intervene the urban historical space between different governmental scales as well as between public and private agencies.</p> <p>This analysis is used in our analysis on the case study undertaken in this research in Tarlabası</p>
	<b>Criteria and/ or method used for the selection of the interviewees:</b> 1. key public authorities at the relevant state agencies holding key positions with regard to decision making process regarding transformation and renewal activities. 2. the initial interviewees, who proposed new themes and issues to be searched further and led to the key informants with whom the interviews were then made.	<b>Types of interviews:</b> Semi-structured	
	<b>2. Participant Observation</b> <b>Place of observation</b> 1. IMP (Presentations, conferences, expert meetings held by IMP, during which we had the chance to have some unstructured interviews and informal talks with designers, planners, professionals involved in process) 2. EU Observation Committe meeting held with local residents on the impacts of the urban renewal and transformation project implementations at three neighborhoods in Istanbul (Kağthane, Küçükbakkalköy, Sulukule) and the neighborhood visits after the meeting 3. Participation into an ad hoc meeting with the key authorities that shaped the urban transformation draft law for Istanbul, which was not enacted		
	<b>3. Documentary Analyses : review of documents</b>		
	<b>Types of documents reviewed and analyzed:</b> 1. Central government programs, plans, reports regarding urban and housing policy 2. strategic planning documents ( <i>Çevre Düzeni Planı, Earthquake Master Plan, Istanbul Neighborhood Revitalization Plan</i> ) 3. Research documents ( <i>JICA report</i> ) 4. The Annual Activity Reports of the Metropolitan Municipality and of relevant directorates under municipality –e.g. Directorate of Yrban Transformation and ISAT- and leaflets brocherus delivered by IMP related to urban transformation/renewal issues. 5. renewal/transformation plans and project proposals ( <i>Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects,Sulukule Rehabilitation Project</i> , 6. (old and new) Laws and draft laws related to urban renewal and transformation ( <i>Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (2005, Law no. 5366),The Law of Metropolitan Municipalities (2004, no.5216) and The Law of Municipalities (2005, no.5393, The law regarding the amendments in squatter legislation (No. 3414) that empowers TOKI the conservation law for cultural and natural heritage -Law no. 2863 and the altered version of the law no. 5226- and Gecekondul Law no. 775, Draft Law for Urban Regeneration-2004, Draft Law of Development -2004, Draft Law for Planning and Development- 2005, Draft Law of Urban Regeneration and Development- 2005, Draft Law about Regeneration Areas-2006)</i> )		

The data collected through these three different qualitative techniques, the summary of which is presented with the **Table 3.1** above, form the background of the analyses presented on the rise of new policies for urban transformation in Istanbul as well the categorization of the urban transformation projects that I present in the subsequent section. For the categorization of the urban transformation projects in Istanbul, I used the information gathered through three different methods to categorize the ongoing or else proposed projects in the city with respect to the project area, the targets and visions related to the project category, the actors involved and the relevant laws, which frame their proposals, the initial impacts of the implementations.

### **3.3.2. The Data Collection Techniques used for the Case Study of Tarlabaşı Renewal Process**

Aiming to secure a deeper understanding on the initial phase of urban renewal process in the neighborhood, the case study was conducted using different qualitative techniques to collect data on the underlying features and intents of the renewal proposal, the parts played by different actors/agents involved in the process –though with a specific focus on municipality’s role- and the initial impacts of the renewal plans. These techniques were *in-depth interviews, participant observation and informal talks, together with document and media analyses*, which were used to collect multiple and complementary data from different sources and people to develop an in-depth understanding of the case. The explanations about the details of these techniques are provided below.

1. As the main technique of data collection, I conducted ***semi structured in-depth interviews*** with several actors involved in renewal. As Sayer (1984) discusses it, semi structured in-depth interviews serve as enabling data collection tools for a deeper comprehension of social phenomena studied through a meaningful communication with the actors involved, which ‘maximizes the information flow by making use of communicative and social skills, by being willing to adopt preconceived questions and ideas in the course of interviews’. Though I had pre-formulated questions to ask around the pre-selected themes, the reason behind the

choice regarding the semi-structured design of the interviews was to leave space to the interviewees to communicate their own comprehensions of the issues, themes, practices regarding renewal.

The specific focus is given to the role played by the district municipality, which is the leading state agency in the initiation and the shaping of Tarlabası renewal process -as it is authorized by the new renewal law. In this respect, among the interviewee groups, municipal authorities –as the representatives of the district municipality- constitute the key respondent group that I focus on in this study. However, to secure a deeper understanding of the renewal process, which is a multidimensional and multi-actor one, the interviews were conducted with mainly five different groups of actors/stakeholders involved in different aspects and stages of the process:

- **District Municipal Actors**: the authorities at the municipal units such as urban planning (1), urban design (1) , Beyaz Masa –White Table-(1), Beyoğlu Yerel Sivil Güçbirliği Merkezi -Beyoğlu Center of Local Civic Power Union- (1), legal affairs (***I***) and a chief operating officer, who has taken responsibility in the preparation and implementation of the project (1).
- **Other local public actors**: the representatives from Town Hall of Beyoğlu (2), the Foundation of Social Mutual Aid and Solidarity in Beyoğlu(1) and at the city level(2), mukhtars (3).
- **NGOs, researchers, professionals**: the representatives from Beyoğlu Beautification Association (1), Human Settlements Association (1), Galata Residents Association (1), Tarlabası Community Center (1), Istanbul Chambers of Architects and Engineers(1), and the former directors of the ITU research on Tarlabası(1).
- **Market Agents**: Real estate agents (2), the manager of a local developer firm (1), which took an important role in the gentrification of Galata.
- **Tarlabası locals**: Shopkeepers in Tarlabası (4 –and 1 incomplete interviews).

Before the interviews, I had some pre-formulated open ended questions to be asked to these different groups of respondents, which were based on the themes, issues raised in the literature review and shaped accordingly to the respondents' area of specialization and interests. However, during the interviews, as I recognized and discovered some more questions to be asked based on the interaction with the interviewees and on the new themes and issues they addressed to, I constantly formulated some new questions to ask further. Indeed, it was the semi structured nature of the interviews that enabled this type of inquiry into the unperceived aspects of the process. According to these new themes and issues raised and emphasized by the respondents, I rerouted to research adding new questions and improving the existing ones. Besides, this inquiry guided the selection of the interviewees to talk to at the later stages of the research. Thus, I let the research reroute itself through the new themes covered and new interviewees talked to. Crucially important to note though, I kept a constant eye on the reference to themes, issues, indicators discussed, raised during the literature review not to get lost in the field.

The interviews mostly took place in the period between late February and the early April 2006 but since I made frequent visits to Istanbul when I had the chances, some interviews scattered in time as the research went on. At the later stages of the research, some follow-up interviews were conducted at the municipality of Beyoğlu and with real estate agents to trace the new developments regarding both the preparations for the project and the impacts on the real estate market. However, most of the interviews (4 out of 5) with the shopkeepers took place in November-2006 purposely after the meetings with property owners held by the municipality to get their opinions on the municipal plans in details.

As for the reasons that I did include the shopkeepers but not the residents among the interviewee groups, firstly, my first attempts to make a pilot study with the residents, interviewing one tenant resident in March-2006 and one in November-2006 did end with me cutting the interviews short since the interviewees did know nothing about the plans, rather it was me disseminating some knowledge to them. This made them further anxious and unrest during the interviews, which made me

keep these pilot interviews short to avoid this situation. Furthermore, since most are tenants, even after the municipal meetings, hearsay was the only source of their knowledge, as I can suggest based on my field observations and informal talks. This made me decide not to undertake any further interviews with the residents on the renewal plans but rather I went on with informal talks during the fieldwork.

The in-depth interviews were about an hour long while some had to keep as short interviews due to the time limitations of the respondents or else their knowledge about the renewal plans.

The details regarding the purposes of the interviews with these different groups, around which the interview questions were shaped, the selection criteria of the interviewees and the further details about the interviews – as well as the other techniques- are presented in *the Table 3.2* below. To give a brief account, while the interviews with the public actors –municipal and other public actors- served for the reason of understanding the formulation process of the renewal plans and these actors' approach, attitude to renewal basically, the interviews with the NGOs, researchers, professional organizations aimed to understand their viewpoints, reactions on the plans since they are, at the most of the cases, appear as the important figures to spur or else halt the implementation of the renewal projects. To shed some lights on the initial implications of the policies 'down to effect', the interviews with market agents and with some shopkeepers were conducted.

A more detailed account on the conduct of the interviews with the municipal authorities, as the key respondent group in this study, is necessary here. The interviews were conducted to secure a deeper understanding not only on the underlying features, intents of the proposal but also the meanings, legitimizations attached to them. In other words, I tried to capture how the municipal authorities – as the representative of the municipality- approach to renewal (the strategies, aims, visions, priorities set during the process and the meanings, legitimizations attached to the decisions, actions regarding these strategies, aims, priorities) and the general attitudes taken towards different stakeholders in renewal.



**Table 3. 2. The Details about the Data Collection Techniques used for the Analyses regarding the Case Study of Tarlabası Renewal Project**

Types of data	Data Collection Technique Used	Purpose Served (both for the findings of the research and the shaping of the research itself during the its conduct)
Qualitative	<b>1. Indepth Interviews</b> <b>Criteria and/ or method used for the selection of the interviewees:</b> <u>1. District Municipal Actors:</u> the authorities at the municipal units such as urban planning (1), urban design (1) , Beyaz Masa –White Table-(1), Beyoğlu Yerel Sivil Güçbirliği Merkezi -Beyoğlu Center of Local Civic Power Union- (1), legal affairs (1) )and a chief operating officer, who has taken responsibility in the preparation and implementation of the project (1). <u>2. Other local public actors:</u> the representatives from Town Hall of Beyoğlu (2), the Foundation of Social Mutual Aid and Solidarity in Beyoğlu(1) and at the city level(2), mukhtars (3) <u>3. NGOs, researchers, professionals:</u> the representatives from Beyoğlu Beautification Association (1), Human Settlements Association (1), Galata Residents Association (1), Tarlabası Community Center (1), İstanbul Chambers of Architects and Engineers(1), and the former directors of the ITU research on Tarlabası(1). <u>4. Market Agents:</u> Real estate agents (2), the manager of a local developer firm (1), which took an important role in the gentrification of Galata. <u>5. Tarlabası locals:</u> Shopkeepers in Tarlabası (4 –and 1 incomplete interviews-). 6. the initial interviewees, who proposed new themes and issues to be searched further and led to the key informants with whom the interviews were then made.	1. To understand the roles of the different actors involved in the processinstitutions involved in different dimensions of renewal and the relations between their operations together with their sometimes interconnected sometimes uncollaborative ways of functioning through the information disseminated by the informants 2. To capture closely the stakes, aims, meanings attached to renewal by the informants, which shaped the institutional and legal changes undertaken. 3. To discover about the initially unconceived aspects regarding the aims and management of as well as the power relations and balances involved in renewal process, which to a certain extent, rerouted our inquiry.
	<b>2. Participant Observation</b> <b>Place of observation</b> 1. Participant / direct observations in the neighborhood 2. Participation in the weekly Beyoğlu Platform meeting organized 3. Participant observations at Tarlabası Community Center (attendances in the opening ceremony and volunteers’ meeting in Tarlabası Community Center as well as random visits -around 5 times)	
	<b>3. Documentary Analyses : review of documents</b> <b>Types of documents reviewed and analyzed:</b> 1. The relevant documents prepared by the municipal government related to renewal proposal (Beautiful Beyoğlu Project, Tarlabası renewal plan and proposal documents and maps etc. ). 2. The websites of the municipality	1. To capture an in-depth understanding regarding the setting of the neighborhood. 2. To capture the interactions and the activities of the relevant parties involved in the neighborhood renewal 3. To capture the relations between the public officials and the representatives of NGOs; the collaborations, the contestations between them 4. To capture the dynamics of decision making process regarding renewal and the powers relations involved. 5. To get to undertand the impacts of the renewal plans at the neighborhood level 6. To secure a comprehension regarding the viewpoints and needs of the Tarlabası locals regarding the renewal 1. To capture and analyze the underlying elements of the renewal proposal and activities 2. To depict the visions targetted for Ibeyoğlu and the specific aims of the projects in line with these visions 3. To secure a thorough understanding regarding all relevant activities of the municipality

	<p>3. The new urban renewal law (<i>Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (2005, Law no. 5366)</i>),</p> <p>4. The Annual Activity Reports of the Beyoğlu Municipality</p>	<p>3. To capture how the legislative changes undergone are put into implementation in the Tarlabası renewal process.</p>
	<p><b>4. Media Analyses</b></p> <p><b>The realization of the media review</b></p> <p>1. The systematic check and review of the internet websites of two renown electronic architectural platforms in Turkey – Mimdap and Arkitera-, which browse the city news for Istanbul daily that were released by the published and electronic media -both local and nationwide- and provide the updated collection of city news on daily basis.</p> <p>2. The review of municipality's website at least once a week systematically and made use the available collection of the TV news, newspaper articles, news about Tarlabası, Beyoğlu but specifically about the renewal project, which are available as a collection in this website.</p>	<p>1. To get an in-depth understanding regarding the media coverage of the renewal plans for Tarlabası</p> <p>2. To analyze and understand the media representations of Tarlabası</p> <p>3. To secure a comprehension regarding the role of the media in the process</p>

As for the selection of the informants interviewed, I first selected the relevant directorates/ bureaus such as urban planning, design, social and cultural affairs and the special units/services involved in social services provision such as Beyaz Masa<sup>49</sup> (White Table) and Beyoğlu Yerel Sivil Güçbirliği Merkezi<sup>50</sup> (Beyoğlu Center of Local Civic Power Union). The interviews at the municipality took place between late February and early April- 2006 and from the first interview at the planning department on, the interviewees directed me to other respondents but especially to some key authorities, whom they thought would reply to my questions on the renewal proposal in detail. This guided the selection of the interviewees in the research process, however, I could only have an access to one of the three key authorities, whom I was directed to by the interviewees and who took a crucial role in the preparations regarding renewal. This respondent provided generously the

<sup>49</sup> Beyaz Masa (White Table) is the department under the municipality dealing with public relations. The department is the center where the citizens go and inform the the unit about their complaints, problems, needs related to the duties of the municipality. The units collects all the information disseminated by the citizens and distributes them to the relevant units, departments under the municipality so that all the problems, complaints –e.g infrastructural problems in the neighborhoods, social aid requirements etc.- are dealt with the relevant units of the municipality. The unit operates from 1994.

<sup>50</sup> As it is addressed at the municipal website, “Beyoğlu Yerel Sivil GüçBirliği Merkezi is a local initiative undertaken on July-2004, with the purpose to secure the collaborative actions and works between local government and the non-governmental organizations, which actively operate in Beyoğlu. The starting point of the initiative is to enable non-governmental organization to make acquaintance with each other and to take joint action; and to ensure collaborative and supportive activities undertaken by the municipality and the non-governmental organizations”. (<http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/markalarimiz/default.aspx?ContentId=1378> , accessed on 21.05.2007).

information I asked for during our interview. I made two more face to face interviews and a telephone interviewing with him to follow up the further developments at the later stages of the research.

In total I made six interviews at the municipality with the informants involved in urban planning (1), urban design(1), social services provision (2), legal affairs(1) and a chief operating officer (1). I took systematic notes during the interviews since the respondents did not prefer to have type recording during the interviews, feeling uncomfortable about it. All the notes were typed as word files right after the interviews took place so that I ensure not to lose any details regarding the interviews. The notes, which captured the exact wordings of the interviewees, were then used for quoting in the analyses, if necessary.

Before the conduct of interviews I had a pool of pre-formulated questions around the themes, issues regarding the subject of inquiry and especially the qualifiers of gentrification process were incorporated into the formulation of these questions. Below the table shows this incorporation (*Table 3.3*). The relevant questions asked to the informants were selected within this pool of questions but were tailored according to respondents' areas of specialization. This theoretically informed way of interview design, though, was constantly reshaped as during the interviews, I recognized and discovered some more questions to be asked further based on the interaction with the interviewees and on the new themes and issues the respondents addressed to. Accordingly, I formulated new questions and improved the existing ones.

The respondents were welcoming about sharing information with me in general. I could not have an interview with the mayor though requested one but I compensated this crucial lack of an interview with a key actor in the process, through media analyses as another data collection techniques used in this study, which will be discussed later.

As for the issue of how I analyzed the interviews, I depicted the general information regarding the proposal among the data provided. I then sorted out the opinions and

comments of the respondents with respect to commonalities and divergences in their points of views on the issues covered during the interviews. I mostly made use of the interviews and presented them under the parts on the contents and main characteristics of the proposal, the renewal approach of the proposal, municipality's attitudes to different stakeholders in the process.

**Table 3.3 The Indepth Interviews with Municipal Authorities**

<b>Qualifiers of gentrification</b>	<b>Direct questions asked about the renewal project/ plans to municipal authorities</b>
<b>In/voluntary displacement of the previous users with 'higher socio-economic status' users</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether they have a plan to keep the tenants in the neighborhoods?</li> <li>Whether the needs and demands of the current users of the neighborhood are included in the renewal plans? If so, what are the mechanisms of inclusion?</li> <li>Whether they encourage the current property owners, tenants to undertake the renewal of their own places? Whether the funds, subsidies are used or channeled for this purpose?</li> <li>what are the mechanisms developed to secure the participation of the current users into decision making regarding planning and implementation phases of the renewal, if any?</li> <li>Whether the social aspects of urban renewal integrated in the plans? What are the social measures included? Do the physical renewal plans incorporate as well the social, educational, health programs to secure the social development? Or how the relation between social transformation and spatial transformation is conceived and put concretely in implementation through the renewal plans?</li> <li>Whether there exists resettlement plans for the tenants and property owners?</li> <li>Whether there exists an open communication between municipal authorities and the tenant/property owners?</li> <li>Whether any mechanisms and measures to prevent the speculative price and rent increases in the renewal area is operated?</li> <li>What are the new functions targetted to have after the renewal project?</li> <li>Whom they think the new users will be?</li> <li>What is meant with the target of creating a 'livable, beautiful Tarlabası, Beyoğlu? How would that place be like? Or What 'livability' and 'beautiful' mean?</li> <li>How would Tarlabası be like after the renewal implementations they think?</li> </ol>
<b>Change in built environment with an investment in fixed capital</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the financial aspects of the renewal project is dealt?</li> <li>how the relations between investors are shaped?</li> <li>how do they attract the investors to the area? And how do they share their powers and authorities to intervene in urban space with the investors, if any?</li> <li>what are at stake and among the concerns while deal making with the investors?</li> </ol>

Attached to the analysis regarding the renewal approach of the proposal, I included the different public authorities' perceptions, viewpoints, legitimizations attached to the two targets of the proposal –crime prevention and livability. Since this analysis is based on the individual viewpoints of the respondents, I do not have an aim to generalize them as the official viewpoints of the relevant public institution they work at but rather the attempt is to map the tendencies among the opinion of the individual respondents regarding these targets. These public authorities are the authorities interviewed at municipality and at other public institutions (Town Hall and the Foundation of Social Mutual Aid and Solidarity in Beyoğlu and its counterpart at the city level). Besides, though he is not a public official, the viewpoints of a professional, who took active role in the preparation of the renewal law, are included in this analysis as well. To provide a guide for the quotations from these respondents, I used the categories to refer to these respondents as follows:

*Municipal authority:* The respondents working at the municipality.

*Local Authority:* The public authorities working at relevant public agencies other than the municipality.

*Urban Professional:* The professional, who took active role in the preparation of the new renewal law, which known as Tarlabası law.

**2.2. Media and Document Analyses :** Informed by our theoretical stance to gentrification, which embraces a synthesis of economic and cultural analyses to explain not only the phenomenon itself but also the crucial question of whether the renewal plans of the municipality support or promote gentrification in the neighborhood, media emerged as the key source to collect data about the crucial question of whether gentrification is supported or promoted by the municipal renewal plans, which may embrace the long term plans/demands of the economic and cultural elite.

In this respect, I not only included the *analyses on the media coverage of the renewal plans and of the investors plans as well as the media representations of*

*the neighborhood vis a vis Beyoğlu* to question whether the media plays any role in the formation of the ‘critical infrastructure of gentrification’ and on the creation of the conditions of ‘symbolic gentrification’ of the neighborhood. Crucial to note here is that we put special care for the municipal authorities’ use of media to make the plans public and their impacts on the trajectory of change in the neighborhood or else in its image.

As for *how the media analyses were realized*, we made use of three electronic sources to collect the data from media (see Table 3.2 above). The internet websites of two renowned electronic architectural platforms in Turkey – Mimdap and Arkitera-, browse the city news for Istanbul daily that were released by the published and electronic media -both local and nationwide- and provide the updated collection of city news on daily basis. I systematically checked these websites at least once a week to gather the news about Tarlabası in their available news database through making the searches for the keywords of “Tarlabası, Beyoğlu, yenileme (renewal), kentsel dönüşüm (urban transformation), Ahmet Misbah Demircan (the name of the current Beyoğlu mayor), proje (project), 5366 (the number of the law) etc.” These internet sites provided an access to invaluable collection of the news related to our subject of study from wide range of media sources- national and local newspapers, magazines. I sorted these news and made use of them to discuss the role of the media in the renewal process.

Besides, I checked municipality’s website at least once a week systematically and made use the available collection of the TV news, newspaper articles, news about Tarlabası, Beyoğlu but specifically about the renewal project, which are available as a collection in this website. Besides, the website offers the collection of the TV programs, in which mostly the mayor of Beyoğlu participated to talk about the renewal plans, activities, future plans for Beyoğlu and Tarlabası, evaluations on the current renewal activities etc. I made use of this data source to watch all these programs not only to compensate the fact that I could not arrange an interview with the mayor though demanded one from his secretary but also to give space for the analysis of the representations of and discussions about the renewal plans in the media.

As for the *document analyses* used as another data collection technique in this study, firstly, the review of the legislative documents –but especially the new renewal law enacted to frame the urban renewal project implementations in the historical urban cores- was made. With this analysis, I aimed to put the lights on the legal framework that the renewal project was launched within and to reveal out

- how the law regulates the rights and power of the actors involved in renewal together with the relations between them and
- how it handles crucial issues like participation into decision making process, protection of the rights of the residents etc.

**Table 3.4 The analyses on the renewal law**

Qualifiers of gentrification	The relevant criteria used in the analyses regarding the coverage of the new renewal law (no.5366)
<b>In/voluntary displacement of the previous users with 'higher socio-economic status' users</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. whether it allocates the duties to the stage agencies in charge of pursuing renewal plans (metropolitan municipality, district municipalities, TOKI) for the protection of tenants and property owners' rights to housing</li> <li>2. whether it puts as a requirement the development of the measures to keep the current users in the neighborhood during the implementation process.</li> <li>3. whether it proposes any mechanisms regarding the participation of the current users of the neighborhood into decision making and implementation processes regarding renewal</li> <li>4. whether it proposes the incorporation of the social measures, programs into the renewal plans and the inclusion of the resettlement plans</li> </ol>
<b>Change in built environment with an investment in fixed capital</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the provision of the subsidies, tax cuts, lessening of bureaucracy to promote the investments in the renewal activities</li> <li>2. the ways it eases the partnerships between the state agencies (Metropolitan municipality, district municipalities and TOKI) and the private investors to undertake renewal projects.</li> </ol>

The analysis of the law was based on the implicit question of whether it provides an enabling framework for gentrification to happen or not. The related questions included in this law analysis can be categorized as presented in the Table 3.4 above.

Besides, the website of the municipality was reviewed systematically once every 2 weeks not only to make use of the rich data provided in this website about the activities and the projects of the municipality but also the recent news etc. More importantly, this website provides a rich data set on Tarlabası renewal plans-neighborhood meeting records, the legal documents, renewal site maps, declarations of the aims etc.. I used them in writing about the aims, scope etc. of the renewal plans.

As for the qualitative data used in this research to explain the neighborhood setting-both physical and social terms-, I made use of three available academic studies on Tarlabası. One of them was carried by the architecture faculty of Istanbul Technical University (ITU), (Unlu et al, 2000, Unlu et al, 2003 and Unlu, 2005). While this research provided a rich data set for the analyses on the built environment in the neighborhood mainly, two sociological research studies were used to discuss the socio-demographic conditions of the neighborhood, these studies are the ones carried out by Enlil and Dinçer (2003) on the poverty conditions in Tarlabası and by Yılmaz (2006, forthcoming) on the survival strategies of forcibly migrated Kurdish residents in Tarlabası. Due to time limitations to process the census data in this study, I made use of the census data Yılmaz (2006) provides for Tarlabası. Although aforementioned studies do have different samples and focus of analyses, I made use of their findings to draw a general picture regarding the physical and socioeconomic characteristics of the neighborhood. Enlil and Dinçer's study is realized with a sample of 130 persons from Tarlabası in its entirety (8 quarters included), ITU (Unlu et al, 2000, Unlu et al, 2003 and Unlu, 2005) research has the exact same research site (three quarters in Tarlabası) with this study. I am aware of the methodological problems in using these studies with different samples at the same time; nevertheless, I will do so to discuss the physical and social characteristics of Tarlabası.



a. The *participant/direct observations* served as the tools to develop a deeper understanding not only on the neighborhood setting but also the relations between different actors involved in renewal as well as the impacts of the renewal plans in the neighborhood. However, they were not done as systematically as an ethnographic inquiry would require it. I only made use of participant/direct observations as a complementary data collection technique to shed lights on the aspects about what the use of other methods did provide limited inquiry.

With the attendance in Beyoğlu Platform Meeting -though only once- I had the chance to capture the relations between the public officials and the representatives of NGOs; the collaborations, the contestations between them. On the other hand, the participant observations in Tarlabası Community Center (attendances in the opening ceremony and volunteers' meeting in Tarlabası Community Center as well as random visits -around 5 times) provided an invaluable chance to capture the real experiences of the residents in the center, the programs developed to address their problems and relations between the center, municipality and the residents. Besides, I engaged in several informal talks with the locals I met through the interviews with the shopkeepers and mukhtars and during the participant observations at Tarlabası Community Center, which gave me an insight about the lived experiences of the renewal policies but also about the living conditions in Tarlabası and the problems, expectations and needs of its residents at large.

## CHAPTER 4. ISTANBUL IN 2000s: THE RISE OF ‘URBAN TRANSFORMATION’ POLICIES

### 4.1. Introduction : Political, Economic Climate in 1999-2007

Turkey suffered from severe political and economic crisis during 2000s, which had enormous effects on society. The first development signified the era was the Marmara Earthquakes<sup>51</sup> in 1999, which caused life and property losses at an enormous scale affecting approximately sixteen million people in the region to different extents and leaving also the additional social and economic burden on economy<sup>52</sup>. The economic instability got worsened with the political conflicts among the coalition government parties<sup>53</sup>, which was followed by the severest economic crisis in 2001<sup>54</sup>, which hit hard the formal sector especially the financial sector resulting in dramatic job losses with the bankruptcies in the sector<sup>55</sup> and brought about further informalization of the economy as well as increasing precarious labor conditions in informal sector with the rising levels of

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<sup>51</sup> The two subsequent earthquakes in August and November in 1999, as the result of which according to the official figures more than seventeen thousand people (17480) lost their lives and 43953 people were severely injured (the unofficial figures were much higher like that around 50000 people died and 100000 people were severely injured) (Kocabaş,2006). This has not only showed the high risk level of the built environment to earthquakes but also how “natural” the disaster was has been a concern in the public debate. At the core of the discussions there lied the arguments that most of the life and property losses were due to the ad hoc, unplanned, provisory urbanization process.

<sup>52</sup> The impacts of the earthquake in economy reflected upon the foreign debts increasing up to 30 billions in the period.

<sup>53</sup> This coalition government was consisted of three parties: Democratic Left Party (nationalist leftist), Nationalist Movement Party (nationalist right) , and Motherland Party People (liberal conservative) and the political cleavages within the coalition government, crystallized with the parties’ different standpoints on EU integration policies right after the Helsinki Summit in 1999, which declared Turkey’s candidacy for EU membership. Political and economic instability contributed the emergence of severe economic crisis condition in 2001 and 2002.

<sup>54</sup> There experienced 40 percent devaluation in the Turkish currency, 9.5 percent decrease in gross national income in a year and rising levels of unemployment accompanied with plant closures and bankruptcies of financial institutions. Severe economic impoverishment was evident with 14.6 percent decrease in the real wages (per hour worked) compared to the same period previous year, 2000 (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001).

<sup>55</sup> As the result of the financial crisis, the decrease in the services sector jobs especially in banking sector was significant with 23000 wage earners losing their jobs in banking sector and %25 percent shrinkage in the total employment in media sector in Istanbul (Islam, 2005, p. 126).

unemployment, hence resultant severe socioeconomic impoverishment for the society<sup>56</sup> (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2003, Keyder, 2005; Keyder and Buğra, 2005; Sönmez, 2001; Yeldan, 2001).

Another break even point in the period was the 2002 general elections, in which Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- AKP (Justice and Development Party) became the single party government. AKP was established in 2001 as the reformist wing of Islamist movement in Turkey after the separation from its predecessor Islamist party- Fazilet (Virtue) Party<sup>57</sup>- and despite its Islamist roots, it voiced down the Islamist discourse with an strong emphasis on party's opposition to the use of religion for political purposes<sup>58</sup> (Çınar, 2005). With strong pre-election promises for economic revitalization and speeding up the EU integration process, the party defined its political stance as New Conservatism and leveraged free market economy, plural democracy and human rights (AKP, Party Program, 2002) and got the widespread support from business world (both secular and Islamist), civil society organizations, media with its political stance for democratization, EU accession, economic liberalization etc., which enabled it to implement neoliberal policies faster during the early years of its office with no strong popular confrontation.

To calm down the severe economic crisis conditions in the country, AKP<sup>59</sup> imposed and implemented rigid foreign capital oriented, export-based economic development policies with an overt entrepreneurial tone in line with the IMF

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<sup>56</sup> All in all, the devastating effects of this crisis condition had its hallmarks on the period especially between 1999 and 2003 and brought about the insertion of IMF's rescuer economic policy agenda to be implemented by the newly imported ministry of economy –Kemal Derviş- from World Bank.

<sup>57</sup> Virtue Party was the successor party established after the closure of Welfare Party by the state after 28<sup>th</sup> February process due to its radical Islamist discourse and activities.

<sup>58</sup> In AKP's discourse, Islam has been viewed as an identity, belief belonging to one's private sphere.

<sup>59</sup> The government's party program and the emergency Action Plans revolved around political priorities to accelerate privatizations, decentralize the state power, empower the local democracy, endure the development of good governance practices and embracement of new state-society relation though at the price of cuts on real wages and social expenditures, sharp decreases in social investments, decentralizations of the state functions

program. Massive amount of privatizations<sup>60</sup> of the state economic enterprises, downsizing of the public sector blended with efficiency concerns and cost cuts in the public sector and shrinking social security coverage, insufficiency in the supply of public services in education, health etc. –e.g. the share of public funds for education among the total public funds decreased to %10 in 2003 as compared to 18% in 1990 (DIE, 2005)– have marked the party’s rule. Increased unemployment, anti-labor policies such as increased income taxes charged from working classes, the increase in the minimum wage far less than the inflation rate, hardened retirement conditions among others (Koç, 2006), resulted in severing socioeconomic polarization, which was evident in the income distribution figures in 2003: the share in total income of the wealthiest 20 percent among the households was high up to 48.4 percent while the poorest 20 percent had 6 percent of total income (DIE, 2005, Gelir Yoksulluk Tüketim Göstergeleri).

Accelerated reform initiatives have been inserted by the government to restructure socioeconomic and political administrative system in accordance with EU standards<sup>61</sup> after Helsinki Summit in 2004 with the EU’s declaration to start accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005. Among them, the public administration reform package was inserted to the ‘modernize’ political-administrative system that called for the dramatic restructuring of the state based on the principles on subsidiarity, efficiency in public governance and the empowerment of local autonomy and economic effectiveness (Keskinok, 2006, Koç, 2006). A sequence of

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<sup>60</sup> The income generated through privatizations in the years of 2005 and 2006 were 1.737 times bigger than the total privatization income generated throughout 1990-2004 period (Privatization Administration, 2007). See, [http://www.oib.gov.tr/program/uygulamalar/1985-2004\\_years\\_table.htm](http://www.oib.gov.tr/program/uygulamalar/1985-2004_years_table.htm) Alongside the privatizations of public enterprises, the downsizing of the public sectors with the use of massive service intakes from private sector to supply public services was another kind of privatization. Public sector service suppliers massively engaged in subcontracting arrangements with private firms and clientalist relations determined from which company these service intakes would be taken. these subcontracting arrangements with the private sector did not only worked for transferring the public resources to market agents, which was determined by clientalist party relations for most of the times, but also encouraged the illegal and insecure work conditions for working class (Koç, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> In the period 1999-2003, the process was rather slow due to the political economic crisis situation in the country, which changed drastically after AKP’s reign in 2002 enjoying the benefits of its status as a single party government.

laws<sup>62</sup> was enacted, all of which redistributed the decision making, planning and financial powers among various public, private actors and denounced the dismantling of national on the behalf of urban and regional scales<sup>63</sup> and of public sector on behalf of private sector to increase local economic competitiveness<sup>64</sup>. Resultantly, the powers and authorities of the local governments in planning, decision making and financial issues were increased –e.g. with the new Municipalities Law (no.5393), the greater municipalities are entitled to establish real estate investment trusts widening their operation in real estate markets, as well as they are charged with the duty to make to prepare the strategic plans for the metropolitan areas etc. All in all, these policy realignments enabled the regional and local actors to engage in further image making, place marketing, entrepreneurial efforts so as to ensure economic growth incorporating capital sectors into regional and local state power.

#### **4.2.1. Government Housing and Urban Policy**

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<sup>62</sup> Among the relevant laws enacted, İl Özel İdareleri Kanunu (Special Provincial Administration Law) (no. 5302), Bölgesel Kalkınma Ajansları Kanunu (Regional Development Agencies Law), Büyükşehir belediyeleri yasası (Metropolitan Municipalities Law) (no.5216), Belediyeler Kanunu (Municipalities Law) (no.5393) and the new legislation about managing and controlling the public finance (Law no. 5018) can be listed.

<sup>63</sup> Among the relevant political and administrative alignments related to urban development and urbanization, one can count the formation of regional development units and agencies, resegmenting the country into 32 statistical regional administrative units called NUTS and the establishment of the regional development agencies to lead and ensure the even economic development of the cities within the nuts. Empowering the units to prepare the local development plans and programs and the regional agencies, to distribute the EU funds and incentives among the projects, this new legislation announced the rescaling of regional vis a vis the national regarding the planning and decision making powers and incorporates the private agents, corporate business in the planning system clouded with the discourse of local democracy and governance. Secondly, the new legislation about managing and controlling the public finance (Law no. 5018) and the new Metropolitan Municipalities law (5216) and Municipalities Law (5393) rescaled the urban vis a vis the national increasing the power of metropolitan/ district municipalities regarding strategic planning, decision making and financial issues. Entitling them with preparing a strategic plan and environmental plans for their districts, thus the increasing their influence on the remaking of the city, the legislations also give municipalities the power to vacate and demolish the buildings bearing high natural disaster risks and constituting a threat to life and property security within their jurisdiction, which enables them to initiate the projects for risky urban areas and the law also encourages the greater municipalities to establish firms themselves, to form partnerships with private and public sector agents, to involve in joint projects -seeking public good- with the domestic and/or foreign public, private bodies and non-governmental organizations.

<sup>64</sup> Among these reforms, there can be listed as the significant ones such as the formation of regional development agencies to manage the economic development in the newly formed statistical-administrative system, on the other hand, the new legislations such as Municipalities Law, Metropolitan Municipalities Law should be counted.

In this period, besides the restructuring of the local government, some radical changes in housing and urban policies have been inserted during AKP's term of office. In this section, I will focus on these housing and urban policies but a few remarks for the period of 1999- 2002 are necessary.

In the period 2000-2002, public policy had addressed only the housing problems of the aggrieved parties from the earthquakes (Kocabaş, 2006) and under the conditions of political and economic crisis accompanied with the efforts to cure the socioeconomic problems marked by the earthquakes, urban policy at the central government level attracted little care (Öktem, 2006). Although, at the municipal level, Istanbul Mayor- Gurtuna from Fazilet (Virtue) Party had launched a program set of visionary urban transformation projects and undertook institutional realignments for 'urban transformation' activities, which will be discussed later in this chapter, in the lack of coalition government's support for these projects, the efforts to implement this visionary program stayed limited at the municipal level.

These all changed after 2002 with the radical shifts in housing and urban policies inserted by AKP government. In a context inscribed by the devastating effects of economic crisis and the accumulated socio-spatial economic and environmental problems of ad hoc and distorted urbanization, the intensity of which had become apparent after the miserable experience of Marmara earthquakes, the government combined the need for addressing housing problems and urban risks with economic growth targets to create 'livable' cities with competitive advantages. Housing production and urban (re)development emerged as the main growth sectors for the government to encourage so as to ease the crisis situation, to overcome budget deficits, attract inter/national capital flows through real estate sector while creating employment and ensuring the competitive restructuring of the city spaces and economies. That is to say, competitive urban (re)development has become the main ingredient of the government's urban and housing policies while, in time, real estate developers, large scale investors would become partners of this policy choice.

Within this framework, the central government aimed at and launched programs or undertook actions for

1. ***The transformation of squatter settlements into modern, livable, healthy neighborhoods:*** Mainly two interconnected programs have been launched for this target, namely, *Squatter Transformation Program and Social Housing Program*. Housing Development Administration (TOKI), working under Prime Ministry, has been mobilized to produce social housings for lower income groups in general. The administration has been entitled to engage in projects making partnerships with the local municipalities to redevelop squatter neighborhoods and provide social housings for squatters. Addressing housing need with economic revitalization, TOKI transferred large economic resources<sup>65</sup> into urban development sector during the period 2003-2006 with the aim of ‘revitalizing the economy by motivating the housing production sector in Turkey’ (President of TOKI, 1<sup>st</sup> General Assembly Meeting on Housing, April-2006).

Administration has a great power over the public lands to use in its operations and in the early 2007, the powers and authority of the administration have been extended, for it has been declared as the sole authority for squatter prevention and transformation taking over the powers of Ministry of Public Works and Settlements regarding the issue with a new legislation<sup>66</sup>. This amendment also entitled TOKI with the right to make partnerships with established firms as well, which widened its real estate market operations, though put dark shadows over its ‘public’ duties. To finance its operations, TOKI engages in construction of luxurious residential complexes using its public land stocks with privileged locations through partnerships with large scale developers, which not only increases the socio-spatial segregation tendencies in the city but also works for the erosion of the idea of “public space” (see Appendix I for these luxurious housing projects and other mass housing projects of TOKI).

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<sup>65</sup> The amount of investment planned for the period 2003-2006 was declared 9 billion YTL, 3,5 billion of which was actualized.

<sup>66</sup> This authority was handed over to TOKI with the amendment in Squatter Law (no.775) that has been passed with the law no.3414.

This sharp market driven tendency and strong agency of TOKI in the real estate markets announces that state has severed its retreat from its populist political attitude in urban land markets through the allocation of its more ‘valuable’ land stocks to the service of market driven demands of large developers in urban land and housing markets, though this tendency had already began during 1980s as analyzed in Chapter 2. On the one hand, the social housings for lower classes are constructed in less privileged locations, mostly in the fringes of the city. On the other hand, it has been declared by the administration that subsidized payment arrangements for the sales of the luxurious middle and upper middle class residential units would be provided under the conditions of shrinking demand in the housing market for these housing units<sup>67</sup>. On the other hand, TOKI has engaged in partnerships signing protocols with several municipalities in Istanbul for squatter transformation projects within the programs mentioned above<sup>68</sup>.

**2. The creation of tourism cities** to increase tourism income and generate employment has been among the prior urban policies. The government inserted the National Tourism Vision-2010 in 2004 with the target to make Turkey a “brand mark” in tourism industry and “new tourism cities” were designated and provided with the supply of infrastructure and land development concessions to make them attractive for new private sector tourism investments. Among these cities Istanbul ranked the top as it was represented as the ‘vision city’ of Turkey<sup>69</sup> and a visionary urban project called ‘**3 Istanbul**’ was initiated by the central government for global repositioning of Istanbul as a culture, tourism and business city. Massive amount of

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<sup>67</sup> Among these luxurious projects realized in Istanbul, there can be listed Kent Plus Istanbul, Myworld, UpHill Court among other. See Appendix I for further details of these projects.

<sup>68</sup> These protocols can be listed as with Istanbul Metropolitan and Küçükçekmece Municipality: Halkalı Urban Renewal Project (2640 housings);\* with Istanbul Metropolitan and Tuzla Municipality (4600 housings);\* with Istanbul Metropolitan and Kadıkoy Municipality (500 housings);\* with Istanbul Metropolitan and Şişli Municipality: Kuştepe Neighborhood (150 housings);\* with Istanbul Metropolitan and Kartal Municipality (500 housings);\* with Istanbul Metropolitan and Fatih Municipality (400 housings);\* with İstanbul-Avcılar Municipality (1000 konut);\* with İstanbul-Maltepe Municipality (2000 housings); Bekir Yeniay, ‘İşte kentsel dönüşüm’ (Here it is Urban Transformation), Türkiye - 16.09.2006, [http://www.mimarist.org/mhaber/haber\\_oku.asp?haber=95](http://www.mimarist.org/mhaber/haber_oku.asp?haber=95) (accessed on 05.05.2007). For the mass housing implementations of TOKI in Istanbul, see Appendix I.

<sup>69</sup> Sabah Gazetesi, 07.12.2003, ‘Erdoğan: “İstanbul’a aşığım”’ (Erdoğan: I am in love with Istanbul), <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2003/12/07/siy102.html> ,(accessed on 04.05.2007).



public resources<sup>70</sup> was declared to be channeled to Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the implementation of the project. With its strong emphasis on heritage and tourism industry, it foresaw the creation of Historical Peninsula as an open city museum, for which the urban design project called ‘Museum City’ was formulated later on at Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Center. ‘3 Istanbul’ project embraced the revitalization of Beyoğlu/ Galata as a crucial culture, tourism and business center of the reimagined Istanbul, likewise Kilyos- Kumburgaz -as the third Istanbul- was to be turned into a ‘tourism heaven’ with the creation of marinas, sports facilities, hotel complexes etc. Likewise, the government gave full support and allocated funding<sup>71</sup> to historic preservation projects and activities the candidacy of Istanbul for the Culture Capital of Europe-2010, which the tourism vision was catered to.

***3. Recapitalization on urban built environment, public lands, and natural resources*** has been aimed through the undertakings of privatizations via the insertion of emblematic urban projects, loosening the land use or property ownership regulations to encourage the real estate sector and attract inter/national investment mostly blended with strong entrepreneurial though informal, clientalist arrangements with the inter/national investors<sup>72</sup>. Likewise, new laws such as the mortgage law, which brought about the liquidation of the real estate properties and their insertion into international financial markets, and the law that allows foreigners to buy properties have been enacted to revitalize the urban land and housing markets and to extend the operation of international market forces in these sectors.

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<sup>70</sup> It was declared publicly via a press release that 300 million dollars would be transferred for ‘3 Istanbul’s’ project (Cetin, U., ‘Hayalindeki Istanbul’a 100 trilyonluk start’ (100 billion worth start for the Istanbul in his dream), Hurriyet Gazetesi, 4.1.2004).

<sup>71</sup> With the new legislations for historic and cultural preservation, the authority for municipalities to preserve and revitalize cultural and historical assets was entitled as well an additional fund, which was consisted of the 10 percent of the local real estate taxes, was directed to the use of the municipalities for cultural historical revitalization.

<sup>72</sup> The prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s had legitimized his informal meeting with the potential investor -Sami Ofer- before the bidding for the flagship urban project Galataport –renewal project for old port area in Istanbul- in his words as “I have to market my country” referring place marketing among his main public duties (Milliyet, 16.10.2005).

Especially the mortgage law, which was legitimized initially with that it would enable large segments to access homeownership through long term housing loans, indeed was blended with the aims to overcome the financial crisis and to restructure the public debts through reorganizing capital flows in the real estate market. Likewise, place marketing efforts have been evident with the insertion of Haydarpaşa and Galataport, Dubai Towers emblematic projects (which foresaw the privatization of the public properties- historical railway station and an old port area and old public bus garage respectively- through the flagship developments to create new landmarks in the city), massive privatization of urban public lands, a number of realignments in the regulations on the sales of forest areas, new allowances for (re)developments in coastal areas.

**4. *The preparations for the new legislations and regulations*** to create the legal and organizational basis ***for the urban transformation initiatives*** were undertaken. This signified the shift in urban policy approach from leading and maneuvering the excessive and uncontrolled urbanization, through which the created urban rents were distributed among various urban actors but mostly transferred on behalf of capital as we discussed in the previous chapter. The new approach was signified with managing urban redevelopment and renewal. Through these new legislations, the government aimed to empower the local municipalities for the initiations of urban transformation projects- either with partnerships with private sector or Mass Housing Administration- and release the bureaucratic obstacles to urban transformation. Below, further analysis on the shaping of the legal framework for urban transformation and renewal will be provided but it is necessary here to discuss the reasons behind this policy shift for the case of Istanbul.

These policies have been mobilized to make urban (re)development sector attractive for inter/national investment to recapitalize on urban space as a crisis displacement and economic growth mechanism. Within this policy framework, urban transformation emerged as an objective on the way to economic growth, which underlies the rise of new policies for ‘urban transformation’ in the 2000s. And Istanbul has been attributed great importance in this policy redirection, which shall

be analyzed in the next part but after a brief introductory part on the political, economic, spatial conditions in Istanbul of 2000s.

#### **4.2.2. Istanbul in 2000s: From Excessive Growth to Urban Transformation:**

Istanbul of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century has been marked by the devastating socioeconomic effects of the Marmara Earthquakes in 1999, successive economic crises in the country, increasing impacts of global forces on the city's economic and social geography and entrepreneurial city politics in the enabling context of a strategic fit between the city and central governments under AKP's rule in both governmental scales after 2002<sup>73</sup>. After the unplanned and speculative neoliberal urbanization experience during 1980s and 1990s, the accumulated problems of this uncontrolled growth with high urban and natural risks in the city has become crystallized and widely accepted with the miserable experience of Marmara Earthquakes in 1999, which as Keyder discusses it in detail (2005, p. 125), resulted in 'widespread pessimism' and shrinking possibilities for 'easy growth and accommodation'.

Moreover, successive crises in 2001 and 2002 have brought about a contraction – though short term- in urban economy<sup>74</sup>, substantial amount of job losses in financial and banking sector, further informalization of urban economy with the internal market oriented sectors hit hard, worsened conditions for both formal and

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<sup>73</sup> Indeed, when AKP won the central elections in 2002, at the local level, Ali Müfit Gurtuna was the mayor, who used to be a party member of Virtue Party before the party was closed in 2001. Gurtuna kept his term of office as an independent mayor with no party membership till 2004, when, in the local elections in this year, he handed over his office to Kadir Topbaş, the current mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality from AKP. Given this, what I call above as the strategic political fit between two governmental layers could be started with the year of 2004, when actually AKP was in reign at both levels. However, the political roots of AKP are based on Fazilet (Virtue) Party and formerly Refah (Welfare) Party as mentioned above in the text. Though Gurtuna did not join AKP's reformist movement actively, being from the same political base, central and local governments beginning from 2002 did act in harmony till 2004 during the local rule of 'independent' mayor Gurtuna in Istanbul. The mayor actually reflected the altered political stance of AKP with respect to the issues of EU, Islam, reimaginings of the city as a culture, tourism and business city serving as 'the meeting point for civilizations', entrepreneurial city politics etc., which was reflected first in the language of Vision 2023 projects, which is to be analyzed later in the next. From the 2004 local elections on, AKP, literally enjoyed its reign at both levels, which enabled the party operate and implement its urban policies smoothly with more like no conflicts between different governmental layers. This eased the way out to take radical actions and further rescaling of the state on behalf of the local.

<sup>74</sup> As Sönmez (2004) discusses it the city's economy had shrunked by 10, 5 percent in the year of 2001 compared to the economic activity in 2000.

informal labor with more precarious arrangements in employment (street work, domestic labor -putting out system-, no more reliable -though informal- contracts), increasing rates of women and child labor in informal sector, increasing unemployment at large were among the effects of 2001 crisis condition in Istanbul (see Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Sönmez, 2004, Keyder and Buğra, 2005 among others). The implications of these have been discussed by the scholars (Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2002, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2003, Keyder, 2005, Keyder and Öncü, 2005) that they catered the conditions for advanced levels of poverty for large segments of the society with now the increasing pressure on the protective role of community and family solidarity networks and shrinking capacity in and worsening conditions of informal employment. The latter two have long been discussed to constitute the ground for poverty alleviation mechanisms in Turkey as the non formal mechanisms of welfare in a context defined by the absence of a strong welfare system in the country.

In this period, further decentralization of capital intensive industry, contraction in construction sector -though only till 2003-, persistent concentration of small scale labor intensive manufacturing sector around TEM highway and inner city neighborhoods, which pooled its cheap and low skilled labor from surrounding un/transformed squatter neighborhoods and low income neighborhoods in inner city historical sites -such as the neighborhoods in the Historical Peninsula- defined the characteristics and spatial dimension of urban economy. On the other hand, services sector- though hit hard by the financial crisis- kept its importance in city's economy, while especially the restructuring and internationalization of construction and urban development alongside the real estate sector, as a remarkable and steadily growing tendency with the foreign direct investments concentrating in this sector, has put its imprints both on urban space and economy after 2003. The latter development has been significant in the shaping and evolution of urban transformation policies and implementations in recent experiences as real estate trust companies emerged as the strongest interest group in the process. This point will be elaborated further in the concluding discussion of this section as well as in the discussion regarding our case study of Tarlaabaşı renewal process.

To give a very brief account on the residential landscape of Istanbul in 2000s, spatial segregation and social fragmentation patterns as we discussed of their already high levels in the previous section, have deepened as the middle and upper middle class residential areas continued to extend (Kurtuluş, 2006), as the real estate sector spurred investments in luxurious housing construction. This trend has been accompanied by the increasing pace of gentrification in inner city historical neighborhoods -due to a new momentum stemming from new legislations –such as the law enabling foreigners to buy properties in these prestigious historical centers- and the announcements of renewal plans, which increased the expectations regarding the high benefits from investing into these cheap real estate properties etc. (Enlil and İslam, 2006). I will refer to these points in the next part further.

On the other hand, lower income groups continued to reside in the dilapidated inner city historical neighborhoods, one of which is Tarlabası, as well as poorly conditioned untransformed squatter neighborhoods, low standard apartments in transformed squatter neighborhoods scattered in the city. Lower middle classes continued to live partly in apartment stocks in inner city neighborhoods and partly in transformed squatter neighborhoods.

While socioeconomic and cultural distances, barriers between different classes increased in the city in 2000s, city politics was no less significant in the shaping and spatialization of these polarizations with now increasing reach of entrepreneurial city politics at inter/national, regional and local scales. In this period, especially after 2004, the strategic fit between municipal and central governmental layers has been secured in the local elections in 2004. Thereafter, armed with the increasing financial, economic and political powers and authority in the metropolitan level and the strong support from the central government, metropolitan municipality engaged in heightened city marketing efforts. For global repositioning of Istanbul, the city officials engaged in strategic research partnership with OECD and State Planning Institute (DPT) to draft a “global roadmap” for Istanbul to finalize a trajectory for the city on the way to become a ‘global city’ as a business, culture and tourism center. On the one hand, the insertion and implementation of flagships commercial projects on public lands through increasing partnerships with foreign capital, which

involved in heightened privatizations of municipal lands though at the expense of severe losses-such as Dubai Towers and Cevahir Shopping center etc.- and flagship events such as Formula 1, the NATO Summit in 2004 and the Culture Capital of Europe 2010, for which the city has been rewritten steadily.

More importantly, what has put its imprints on the urban politics in Istanbul of the 21st century has been the rise of new policies for ‘urban transformation’. Though, in practice, increasingly after 1980s, big scale urban projects for commercial development, historical renewal and for the redevelopment of squatter neighborhoods were undertaken as analyzed in the previous chapter, it was in 1999 that so called Urban Transformation Projects (UTP) were introduced into the urban political realm as a bulk agenda, by Gürtuna -the mayor of Istanbul from Fazilet (Virtue) Party<sup>75</sup>.

In the course of the years, this visionary urban program called ***Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects***, through which the term ‘urban transformation’ entered into political discourse for the first time, has been followed by a series of institutional and legal realignments to form the legal, administrative and strategic basis of urban transformation. Especially after 2002, during AKP’s rule, attempts to prepare the legal basis of urban transformation have gained pace while the strategic planning and research activities have accompanied this process. The issues of ‘urban transformation’ have begun widely discussed by the media, academic circles, politicians, and real estate market agents as well among urban citizens.

In every occasion, blended with a strategic component and inserted as the integral part of the new urban policies, urban regeneration has been represented by the politicians and urban authorities not only as the cure for the ills, all the accumulated problems of the disorganized, rapid and unhealthy urbanization process from the early 50s on, but also as an objective itself for the required competitive socio-spatial restructuring to reposition the city in global economy to generate future economic

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<sup>75</sup> Fazilet (Virtue) Party was the subsequent party established after Refah (Welfare) Party was closed after 28th February.

growth and social development. While strategic planning and research activities have accompanied the preparatory process, based on the laws enacted, city officials have begun devising and implementing new projects in several parts of the city.

This section will explore this policy shift from leading and maneuvering excessive growth to ‘urban transformation’, but before starting a detailed discussion on the rise of these new policies for urban transformation, it is necessary here to provide a brief account on what social, political, economic factors made this policy shift possible.

- As stated above, *accumulated problems of excessive and uncontrolled* growth and the enormous levels of urban and natural risks that it was posing became more vivid and widely accepted with *the miserable experience of Marmara Earthquakes* in 1999, as mentioned earlier. In this respect, the earthquakes constituted a turning point in the popular acceptance that the risks in the built environment had to be halted, so did precautions to be taken. In tandem with awakened popular concerns against uncontrolled urbanization and widespread pessimism among masses, civil society organizations, academic circles became more assertive about posing contestations against this excessive and uncontrolled line of urbanization and speculative endeavors. Shortly, *widespread acceptance that the city needed an urgent transformation* marked the popular and academic accounts on the issue.
- Istanbul has grown enormously not only in its population reaching up to more than 12 million according to estimations, but also in its geography. This excessive expansion especially towards the north up to Black Sea were at the expense of the forest, agricultural areas, water basins, lakeside areas with the mushrooming of luxurious enclaves sometimes side by side with squatter neighborhoods as development rents appealed many. Not only that this *growth reached to its limits geographically* but also popularly as the contestations against it increased. It was no more the speculative expansion

but the transformation of the existing built environment that the demands and claims concentrated on (Isik and Pınarcıoğlu, 2003).

- In the rise of urban transformation policies, *AKP's role* was significant. As the single party government and with its reign at metropolitan and many district municipalities as well, the party put decisive efforts for urban transformation initiatives. As analyzed above the government aimed to make urban redevelopment attractive for inter/national investments involving in entrepreneurial strategies as a way of crisis displacement. These efforts actually found their repercussions in real estate market. The scarcity of urban land to be opened for new developments, real estate sector became appealed to this shift towards urban transformation, which constituted a major dynamic behind the policy shift.

As another political dynamic behind the rise of the new policies was the need to align city's urbanization, quality of urban life and services with EU standards with the adjustment programs. In this, Istanbul has been attributed a pioneering role in the adjustment process.

After this brief account on the social, political and economic factors underlying the policy shift towards urban transformation, now the turn is of a discussion to trace the process of the still ongoing shaping of this policy agenda, the rationale behind it, the institutional and legal realignments undertaken to manage the process, the major actors involved and the gradual shaping of urban transformation policies under the light of strategic planning activities. Besides, I will provide a categorization of the ongoing and inserted projects mapping them with a focus on the main elements, contents of these policy initiatives during the early 2000s. These analyses will set the stage for our further analysis in the next chapter on the relation between these urban transformation policies and gentrification through the case study of Tarlabaşı renewal project, as it is among the four project categories that will be presented in this section.



The chapter will proceed with the subsequent discussions on

1. The Pioneering Urban Transformation Program: Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects
2. The Research and Strategic Planning Activities For Urban Transformation
3. Changes in Institutional Configuration
4. The Legal Aspects of Urban Regeneration and detailed analysis on the new urban renewal law.
5. Evaluation of the Urban Transformation Agenda
6. Categorization of the emergent projects
7. Evaluations of the main elements of the urban transformation

#### **4.2. The Shaping of ‘Urban Transformation’ Agenda**

##### ***4.2.1.1. Pioneering “Urban Transformation” Program: Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects***

Formulated *en masse*’ and put on the urban political agenda in 1999, this pioneering visionary urban program called Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects, tailored a ‘post-industrial’ global city vision for Istanbul and proposed to transform the city embracing competitive strategies. Upgrading the transportation and technology infrastructure of the city to function as the “European Corridor” and the construction of international prestigious culture and convention, sports, tourism, trade fair and high technology centers etc. were among the strategies to position the city in international competition for division of labor and consumption.

To give a full account about its scope and strategies adopted, a mention of the formulation of the projects within the program would be helpful: “The European Corridor as the Reality of World vision”, “The Central business Areas and Urban Staging as the results of Regional Vision”, “The New roles of Urban Backbones as the Requirement of the Integrative and Competitive Vision of a Giant Metropolis with the World”, “The Visional Project of A Civilization (civilizing/Civility) initiative (Impulse), Mega Urban Transformation”, “The Prestige Centers and Information Valleys as the Vision of Transformation to Informational Society”,

“The Green Corridors From North to South as The Vision of the Green’s Longing to Blue”, “Great Environment Projects and Ecological Transformation as the Vision of Self- Reproducibility of the Nature” (IBB-1999).

The actions to realize this ambitious visionary development trajectory for Istanbul could not be taken immediately due to firstly, the devastating effects of 1999 earthquakes on the socio-spatial and economic base of the city and secondly, the lack of political, economic will and power to actualize them<sup>76</sup>. However, it served as a reference agenda<sup>77</sup> for the subsequent AKP local government<sup>78</sup> and was updated in years accordingly to the national strategic development programs, EU integration policy programs, the targets and requirements of ‘becoming the ‘European Cultural Capital’ and the requirements of ‘World City status’.

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<sup>76</sup> This fact actually stems from two main reasons related to different governmental levels. Firstly, since Fazilet (Virtue) Party was abolished by the state in 2001 and the mayor served as an independent political actor. In such a context of the political chaos within the Islamist camp, the required political and economic will and support for these mega projects was lacking as far as the local and party politics are concerned. Secondly, and as an integral, historically proven feature of the functioning of the local politics and the balance of power between the local and central governments, the party mismatch between the local and central governments before 2002 - the time Justice and Development won the central government elections- obstructed the required funds and political support of central government flow into these mega projects. The latter point is significantly important to understand the contextual fit that AKP enjoyed after 2003 as the governing party at both levels which I will elaborate on later. Thirdly, in a political economic context on which the factors such as the devastating effects of the earthquakes on the economy and following severe economic crisis in 2001 keeping the coalition government –consisted of DSP, MHP, ANAP- busy with the consequences of economic recession and the political cleavages within the coalition government itself on key issues such as EU integration had their hallmark on, the initiation of these mega projects was no of realistic.

<sup>77</sup> With its emphasis on multicultural heritage of the city actually signaled the convergence of formerly contested global city projects of two opposing camps in the country: secular- western global city project and the Islamist global city project.

<sup>78</sup> Its call for strengthened local democracy and autonomy for Istanbul and emphasis on the urgent political and institutional reforms that would empower the local governments with required powers and financial resources to initiate the urban regeneration projects. In its rhetoric, this would be needed to improve the economic, spatial and symbolic infrastructure of the city to reposition Istanbul as a competitive global city. Blended with the languages of ‘new localism’, ‘need to compete’ etc. reflecting the discourses of the new economies (McNeill, 2003), all in all this regeneration agenda not only reflected and carried the seeds of ongoing negotiations over decision making, planning, financial powers between different governmental scales- local, regional, national and supranational – concerning the regeneration issues but also actually paved the way for the subsequent local government to make attempts for those reforms

Indeed, this policy program, with its emphasis on multicultural heritage of the city<sup>79</sup>, signaled the convergence of formerly contested global city projects of two opposing camps in the country : secular- western global city project and the Islamist global city project (Gündüz, 2004), as mentioned in the previous section. It can be evaluated as the pioneering document that signals AKP's pro-EU party politics, urbanization and urban policy approach and the reimagination of Istanbul by the party leaders as “a bridge for/between civilizations”<sup>80</sup>.

A brief mention of the research and strategic planning activities especially for earthquake mitigation would help to elaborate on the updating process of these reference mega urban projects and provide the basis for our further evaluation later on the basic tenets of all regeneration activities, strategies undertaken up to date.

#### ***4.2.1.2. The Research and Strategic Planning Activities for Urban Transformation***

The acceleration in the research and strategic planning activities pursued to incorporate a strategic perspective into the future transformation of the city embraced the studies as follows:

- **JICA research:** Carried out in 2001 by Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, this research drafted the earth quake risk map of the city<sup>81</sup>.
- In 2003, **Earthquake Master Plan** was prepared based on the findings of JICA research, jointly by four universities-ITU, ODTU,YTU and BU<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> This was also strengthened with the emphasis put on plural democracy, city vision and trajectory set for 2023 -the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey- together with formerly radical Islamist discourse voiced down.

<sup>80</sup> The former imagination of Istanbul as a site for “competition between civilizations” was altered with the reimagination of Istanbul as “a bridge for/between civilizations” (Ekinci, 2005).

<sup>81</sup> Analyzing the associated risk levels of each neighborhood through geological investigations and depicting the most risky areas in the city, this research constituted the base for upgrading and strengthening activities together with the precautions to be taken.

<sup>82</sup> This comprehensive strategic plan for earthquake mitigation not only defined the mitigation measures and identified the risk factors -such as the risks in the building stocks, the risks due to the insufficient amount of open-air places etc. On the other hand, providing the guideline to take the necessary actions and precautions on the ground, which should urgently be done to mitigate the existing earthquake risks, for the local and central authorities, relevant state agencies, civil society

Identifying the risk factors, providing the guidelines for risk mitigation, this plan provides the guidelines for action plans at local level.

- The third research activity called **Istanbul Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy and Action Plan**<sup>83</sup> investigated the neighborhood revitalization programs in European cities and provided the guidelines for possible methods and tools for revitalization at neighborhood level in Istanbul<sup>84</sup>.

After this brief account on the research activities undertaken, now the focus will be on the exploration into the realignments in the legal and institutional configurations to form the legal and organizational basis for the planning and implementations of urban regeneration projects.

#### ***4.2.1.3. Changes in Institutional Configuration***

To begin with, internal restructuring at Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality reflected the shift in the urban policy approach from leading urban growth towards managing urban redevelopment/ renewal. On the one hand, the establishment of Urban Design **Directorate**<sup>85</sup> in 2000 as the ‘forerunner of the “Urban Renaissance” movement in Istanbul’<sup>86</sup>, on the other hand, the restructuring of the Directorate for New Settlement into Directorate of Urban Transformation<sup>87</sup> in 2002, were among the first

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organizations, ordinary citizens etc., it served as the key document to determine the division of labor between these agents and agencies to act collaboratively to mitigate the severe risks and also to make the local action plans at neighborhood level.

<sup>83</sup> It was pursued by the collaboration of Mimar Sinan University and London South Bank University.

<sup>84</sup> The plan, analyzing different strategies and tools used for neighborhood revitalizations in different European cities and the place-specific socio-historical and economic conditions of Istanbul, targeted to form a guideline for the possible methods and tools for neighborhood revitalizations in Istanbul learning from and rectifying European experiences.

<sup>85</sup> Urban Design Directorate was established under the General Directorate of Projects in 2000. The unit has been involved in streetwise revitalization in main arteries in the city with the implementations of urban design projects, various urban design activities etc.

<sup>86</sup> Leading Istanbul’s renaissance was the underlying aim of the directorate as the municipal authority, the founder of the unit put it (Interview with the metropolitan municipal authority, 24.03.2006).

<sup>87</sup> In the year of 2002, the existing directorate called New Settlements was restructured. Firstly, the name of the directorate was changed as the Directorate of Settlements and Urban Transformation

alterations. Later on, Urbanism Atelier Manager (UAM) was established in 2002 for the coordination and management of the regeneration process<sup>88</sup> through interdisciplinary collaboration among the special teams<sup>89</sup> formed within the unit. Involved in the preparatory activities such design of the pilot projects, research and planning activities for urban transformation process<sup>90</sup> (Interview with Metropolitan municipality authority, 24.03.2006), the unit focuses its work on the future transformations of gecekondu areas, the neighborhoods with high earthquake risks and the old industrial sites<sup>91</sup>.

In addition to these internal restructurings in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, three other institutions have taken important roles in the field of urban transformation. Firstly, in the year 2005, Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Center (IMP) was founded with its semi-public status<sup>92</sup> to strengthen the

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then renamed again as The Directorate of Urban Transformation. This institutional change perfectly reflects the shift in urban policy approach from urban development towards redevelopment.

<sup>88</sup> The unit announced its mission as “to contribute the shared vision of Istanbul by designing and implementing the Prestige Projects in line with the Information Age development models and carrying out urban regeneration programs to realize the vision that would carry Istanbul to a leading position” (Isat, 2003, the emphasis is ours).

<sup>89</sup> The organization of the unit was designed similar to the urbanism ateliers in the European metropolises but especially to its peer organization in Paris, Atelier Parisien d’Urbanisme (APUR), embracing five bureaus under its organizational chart, which are called Vision, Observation, Projects, Finance and Feasibility, Publications and Documentation.

<sup>90</sup> To mention namely about some regeneration activities of UAM, one could list 1) The initiation of the research on the strategies of European Union Neighborhood Associations 2) Strategic collaboration with State Planning Institute to draw the guideline for the long term strategic management of the urban regeneration process. 3) The investigation of the urban regeneration processes in Europe in the last century 4) The initiation of the Earthquake Master Plan study prepared by the four universities. 5) The preparations of the pilot projects for Zeytinburnu, Fatih, Küçük Çekmece districts with the collaborations of district municipalities and the prestige, landmark projects like Galata Tower and Galata Renewal Project (Interview with the metropolitan municipal authority, 24.03.2006).

<sup>91</sup> While the priority is given to the earthquake-focused urban regenerations, UAM, at the same time, pursues the strategic research with OECD and SPI to draft a “global roadmap” for Istanbul, which would base all the strategic efforts to a final agenda paving the way to a “global city Istanbul”.

<sup>92</sup> The center was found as an autonomous unit under Bimtaş, a municipal economic enterprise with a semi public status, which provides engineering and consultancy services for urban projects of any kind. In the center, several -around five hundred- experts and professionals from mainly different universities and research institutes work and/or provide their consultancy services on full time or part time basis in various teams around projects and specialized units.

urban planning and design capacity of the city and city government. IMP<sup>93</sup>, which was been established by the mayor as an autonomous organization to introduce a flexible, dynamic, scientific and strategic approach to urban policy field, is mainly involved in making the strategic plans for Istanbul. Besides, several urban transformation projects –for gecekondu neighborhoods, neighborhoods with high earthquake risk and old industrial sites- are designed by the center to modernize the city (see Figure 4.1. for these projects). Furthermore, to realize a visionary transformation in the city, the center is involved in place marketing strategies as evident with the initiations of emblematic regeneration projects designed by renowned star architects.<sup>94</sup>

Secondly, Kiptaş (Istanbul Public Housing Corporation), as municipally owned public housing corporation<sup>95</sup>, has been mobilized to take part in the transformation of the gecekondu areas through producing new housing units for the residents in the transformed areas to move. It also is involved in urban renewal projects in the historical sites<sup>96</sup>.

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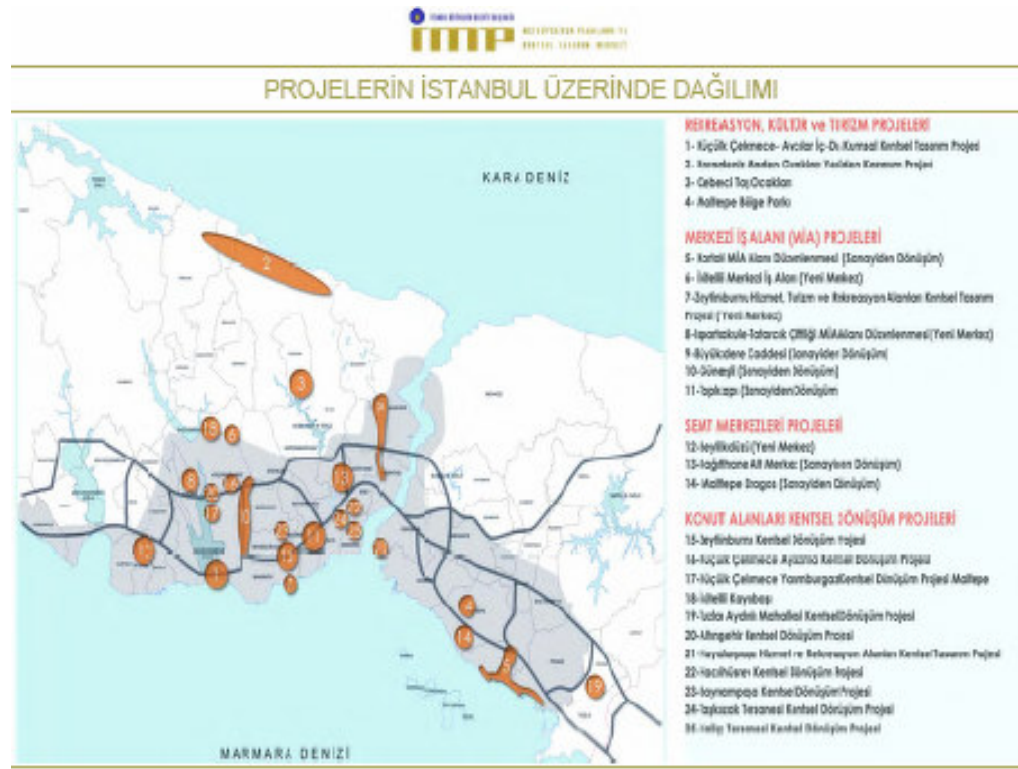
<sup>93</sup> The center defines its mission as: 1) the “formulation of the city vision to secure a global city status” 2) “producing the strategic plans of Istanbul as important tools that would bring about a valuable perspective to define and actualize the city’s economic possibilities and potentials based on a comprehensive approach which prioritizes the natural, historical and cultural values of the city” (IMP, 2006, p.2).

<sup>94</sup> The international competitions for the design of the urban regeneration projects for Kartal and Küçük Çekmece districts were held by the center for the visionary regeneration of the city for the first time in the planning history of Istanbul. While the big name architects like Zaha Hadid, Fuksas, Ken Yeang etc. were competing to sign the city landscape, for the competition many criticisms were directed mainly from the Chambers of Architects and critical experts mainly on the exclusion of the native architects from the competition and the postmodern design features of the projects which only focused on the physical regeneration putting aside the socio economic aspects of the process.

<sup>95</sup> the aims of the company are “to prevent the build up of slum and shanty areas and the consequent decrease in public health standards, to prevent overpopulation and over construction, and to keep urban development under control and in accordance with a planned development strategy” (Kiptaş, 2006 website).

<sup>96</sup> Engagement of Kiptaş in speculative operations regarding one historical renewal area – Süleymaniye renewal project- was highly debated in the media that the company authorities did threaten the residents with expropriations while assembling the property rights in the area for the project.

**Figure 4.1. The Distribution of Urban Transformation Projects Prepared by IMP-2007**



Source: IMP (2006).

Lastly, as mentioned before, Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ) has been mobilized to transform squatter neighborhoods with the insertion of Squatter Transformation Program and Social Housing Program by the central government. Entitled with strong public powers to access public land stocks to use in its operations and to intervene in gecekondu areas for transformation activities, the administration has taken a key role in transformation of squatter neighborhoods and it has also extended its activities engaging in renewal projects for historical sites in Istanbul<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> TOKİ gets involved in income sharing partnerships with the private construction companies, through which the association recapitalizes its land stocks and gets profit income and produces luxurious housing and villa projects for upper-middle and upper classes. While the purpose for such a profit-based engagement is backed mainly with the need to compensate for “losses incurring from the housing projects for the lower income groups”, it brings about important consequences regarding the distribution of urban rents and income among different income groups as well as deepening of

#### ***4.2.1.4. The Legal Aspects of Urban Regeneration***

A series of legal arrangements to prepare the basis for the urban transformation have been made after 2004<sup>98</sup> and more than the enacted laws<sup>99</sup>, though, there were draft laws prepared and altered constantly<sup>100</sup>. As their common characteristics, one can suggest that all laws engage in decentralization of the power to intervene into urban space to local level, though to varying extents. Providing the framework for urban transformation activities, these laws can be examined under two categories:

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the socio-spatial segregation patterns in the city as the administration secures the highest rent yielding lands for these luxurious project undertakings.

<sup>98</sup> Before 2000s, the urban renewal, conservation, renovation, rehabilitation activities and works were regulated by the articles and regulations under the conservation law for cultural and natural heritage (Law no. 2863 and the altered version of the law no. 5226) and Gecekondu Law no. 775 together with several development amnesties for mainly gecekondu areas (Laws no. 2981, 6785, 3290, 3366) in the course of the years.

<sup>99</sup> The long-lasting efforts to provide a comprehensive legal basis for urban regeneration have brought about series of draft laws, which were not enacted but altered constantly: Draft Law for Urban Regeneration-2004, Draft Law of Development -2004, Draft Law for Planning and Development- 2005, Draft Law of Urban Regeneration and Development- 2005, Draft Law about Regeneration Areas-2006.

<sup>100</sup> What underlie this heavy trafficking were firstly the heavy critiques posed to the draft laws proposed by mainly The Chambers of City Planners, The Chamber of Architects, and academics and to a limited extent the media and the public releases and protests organized by these parties. Secondly, the heavy negotiations over the powers and authorities to be redistributed among the local and central governmental levels –the draft laws do propose the dramatic transfer of power to intervene the urban space to the local level as will be discussed- (personal interview with municipal authorities) was another crucial factor to determine the high turn over rate concerning the proposals of the draft laws. This is very much related to the fragmented nature of the rights and powers to intervene the urban space distributed among various parties both at the local and national level- such as ministries like public works and affairs, the prime ministry, the ministry of culture, the ministry of tourism etc., local governments, mass housing administration, governorships, vakıflar etc. Thirdly, and related, the active role of the authorities from Istanbul to shape the laws –since Istanbul had very special conditions for regeneration issues that must be addressed and resolved in the laws, as one of the municipal authorities put it (personal interview with metropolitan municipality authority, 24.03.2006) - did result in the debate whether to have a special regeneration law for Istanbul or not. The municipal authorities and the experts from IMP did involve in the preparation of a special law for Istanbul only, the scope of which was suggested to extend for all cities by the central government authorities late on. This actually touches upon again the historical duality between Ankara and Istanbul or else between Istanbul and the “other” cities. Fourthly, the lack of experience to manage and determine the problems that would come up in the urban regeneration project implementation for urban regeneration issues is another point.



**1. General Laws<sup>101</sup> addressing urban transformation issues:** *The Law of Metropolitan Municipalities (2004, no.5216)* and *The Law of Municipalities (2005, no.5393)*, entitle metropolitan municipalities as well as the district municipalities with the right to designate project areas and undertake projects with redevelopment, restoration, preservation and development purposes.

**2. Specialized Laws on Urban Transformation:**

*The Law concerning the Northern Ankara Entrance Urban Regeneration Project (2004, Law no.5104)* was the pioneering law specialized on regeneration in Turkey, though with a piecemeal approach, prepared and enacted only for specific areas in Ankara<sup>102</sup>, namely the northern entrance to the city and its surroundings, -Esenboğa airport area and its surroundings.

The second specialized law is the law called *Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (2005, Law no. 5366)*, which is prepared for the renewal of historical urban sites. I will analyze this law in detail, since it provides the legal basis of urban renewal in Tarlabası as our case study of Tarlabası pilot project.

The third regulatory document is *The Draft Law about Regeneration Areas (2006)<sup>103</sup>* with its extended scope targeting both the urban and rural areas -no matter they are authorized or not. With this draft law, the local governments are entitled with the authority to designate the transformation areas and implement projects<sup>104</sup> to

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<sup>101</sup> These general laws regulate the management, tasks and responsibilities of the local governments.

<sup>102</sup> The law entitles Ankara Metropolitan Municipality as the responsible party for the preparation of a plan for the area, which is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement (article.4).

<sup>103</sup> This draft law has been still at the parliament during the time of the research. The reason behind its insertion was the insufficiency of the general laws to address the complexity regarding the different aspects of urban transformation. Before it was proposed to the parliament, the following list of legislative documents had been proposed and not enacted: Draft Law for Urban Regeneration-2004, Draft Law of Development -2004, Draft Law for Planning and Development- 2005, Draft Law of Urban Regeneration and Development- 2005.

<sup>104</sup> Following the designation of areas to regenerate, these areas are declared public after the approval of the municipal council and the local governments can either make the regeneration plans themselves or else have them prepared.

produce living environments mitigating natural disasters risks and urban risks; to upgrade; cleanse, renew and develop the areas characterized by physical decay, insufficient and unqualified social and physical infrastructure.

After this general account on relevant regulatory documents regarding urban transformation (see Appendix II for a detailed analysis) , I will focus on the law titled Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (no. 5366-2005) ,which frames the renewal activities in historical sites and which is crucial to understand for our case study of Tarlabası pilot project. To state precisely, the scope and aims of the law is analyzed, which is followed by a critical investigation with respect to how it allocates the powers and authority between local and central levels; frames the local authorities' relations with one the hand, private and corporate level investors, financiers and on the other local residents regarding the planning, decision making, finance, implementation phases of the urban renewal.

### ***2.1. Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (no. 5366-2005)***

Covering the historical sites of the city in its scope, the law titled Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (no. 5366-2005) aims

- to conserve the immovable properties of cultural and historical value through revitalization, reconstruction and rehabilitations especially in the dilapidated areas
- to decrease and/or mitigate the natural risks that these immovable bear
- Develop commercial, housing, social, cultural facilities (Law no.5366, article1).

#### ***a. Distribution of power between Local vs. Central Levels : Empowering the Local Authorities to intervene the urban space***

The law arms the local administrations to designate the renewal areas in the historical sites of the city within their jurisdictions that are dilapidated and taking

the approvals of the special area conservation committees and the council of ministers to prepare and implement the projects and plans to reconstruct and restore these areas.

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

Besides, all the Treasury Property are transferred to the use of local authorities for the rehabilitation purposes according to the law. Though the central powers are curtailed on behalf of the local level, increased amounts of public funds from the national budget are provided by the central government.<sup>105</sup> Likewise, all the transactions and costs within the project area are exempt from all the taxes, duties<sup>106</sup>. On the other hand, the law creates exceptionalities for the local administrations exempting them from the public law -e.g. the procedures of public biddings. In other words, the local administration could use all the public authorities and power but be exempt from the responsibilities and restrictions under the public law.

#### **b. Local Administration vs. The users of the Space: Exclusionary Approach to urban citizens' access to decision making and the right to housing & public funds, services**

While arming the local governments with strong powers and rights, it does not clearly frame (or else ignore) the public duties and responsibilities to protect the

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<sup>105</sup> The public funds that are collected through additional 1 % upon the real estate property taxes in the country and offered by The Ministry of Culture for the maintenance and rehabilitations of cultural and historical assets, can now be used by the local administrations so as to finance the relevant costs of the expropriations and other expenses related to renewal projects, e.g. the costs of the project designs and plans.

<sup>106</sup> The laws exempt all the construction taxes and outlays for the selected and approved plans, which means approximately 35 % reductions in the construction costs regarding the renewal activities to be undertaken.

residents' rights to housing, access to decision making, which puts a dark shadow on the local democracy and participation issues. As the only mechanism for participation, it foresees the meetings held by the local administration with the property owners and/or the local residents to inform them about the targets and implementation of the projects. That is to say, the property owners –but not necessarily the local residents- can give their opinions about the proposed projects. However, it does not specify any defined mechanisms and measures to ensure the participation of the property owners, local residents in each and every phases of the process -such as the designation of the renewal areas, planning, and implementation. In this respect, the law does leave the crucial issue of the access of the local residents to decision making in the mercy of the local governments. Furthermore, social policy measures such as resettlement plans, rent helps, the case of tenants –as the most vulnerable groups- are not covered at all. the renewal approach embraced by the law stays physical as it does not also cover any social programs, projects to be integrated into the renewal schemes.

As for another issue, local authorities' right to expropriate the properties in the designated areas announces the strengthened hand of the local administration to intervene the structure of the property ownership, which underlines the emergence of the right to expropriate as a symbolic power over space and its users, at the hands and interests of the local administrations.

**c. Local administrations vs. the financiers, developers, constructors etc.:  
Empowering the Corporate Agents:**

However, this exclusionary and ambivalent tone of the laws change to an empowering one, when it comes to their coverage of the public private and/or project partnerships to be formed for the implementations of the projects. According to the law no.5366, the implementation of the projects may be undertaken either by the local administrations themselves by public institutions or real and legal people. Local administrations can form partnerships of any kind with public, private agents as well as with the Mass Housing Administration.

What is of crucial importance is the insertion of public-private partnerships in the urban renewal field, through which the local administrations potentially gain a new role as powerful mediators between the private investors and the property owners as far as the project initiations, property rights, finance and implementations are concerned. This opens the way for developers, investors, constructors. financial institutes to be involved in the process as early as the planning stage and also the way for the (in)formal and exclusionary networks to gain importance, whereas the protection or the public good and rights of the users of the space barely depends on the negotiation powers and capacities of the local authorities in these deals with the private agents.

The law exempts all the construction taxes and outlays for the selected and approved plans, which means approximately 35 % reductions in the construction costs regarding the renewal activities to be undertaken. Through the partnerships that would be formed to undertake renewal activities, private investors are in a position to benefit from these reductions. Besides, thanks to these partnerships and the availability of the tax cuts, subsidies, the corporate agents as the private partners will not only be able to enjoy the powers of the local administrations to intervene into the urban space like planning right, expropriations, land use decisions etc. but also have the easy access to subsidies, tax concessions, other public funds and incentives<sup>107</sup> available<sup>108</sup>.

Needless to say, serving as the legal infrastructure for the new urban policies for renewal, this new urban renewal law dis/empowers various urban actors and provide the basis of their further actions.

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<sup>107</sup> With the law no.5366, as mentioned earlier, the rehabilitation funds provided by the Ministry of Culture, and with the draft regeneration law the extra budgets from the central budget are available for the financing of the projects.

<sup>108</sup> In the inherited urban political context, where the clientalist relations are regnant, the combination of, on the one hand, the presence of the mechanisms open for the corporate agents to be included in the process as early as the planning phase and on the other, the absence of clear-cut mechanisms defined to ensure the participation in decision making and implementation processes at the neighborhood level, could potentially mean the reshaping of these sites in line with aspirations of the powerful segments of the society and the exclusion of the less powerful.

#### **4.2.2. Categorization of the Emergent ‘Urban Transformation’ projects in Istanbul**

While all realignments in institutional and legal infrastructure to start urban transformation process have been under their way, as of the early months of 2007, the preparatory activities for the future transformation of Istanbul continue with further strategic planning and research activities to devise a future trajectory for the city<sup>109</sup>, preparations for specific urban transformation projects at IMP, UAM, TOKI and district municipalities, capacity building and training activities at local level (mainly EU projects) and spurred efforts for the enactment of urban regeneration law<sup>110</sup> to start further implementations.

On the other hand, there certainly is an inflation of landmark project proposals mostly inserted by the central government accompanied with neighborhood transformation projects devised by different public agencies. Some implementations have already begun and their effects have begun to be felt on the ground. Urban transformation project proposals, implementations so far can be separated into four main categories:

1. Transformation projects for squatter neighborhoods, and neighborhoods with high levels of earthquake risk:
2. Renewal Projects for the historical sites of the city:
3. Flagship prestige projects for mainly the landmark places in the city:
4. Transformation projects for Industrial Sites:

In the table below (Table 4.1), I provide the categorization of the urban transformation projects in Istanbul with respect to the characteristics of the area

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<sup>109</sup> Among these strategic planning activities involved first, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality’s research pursued by OECD to devise a global roadmap to determine the possible future pathways, opportunities for the city to reposition itself as a global city, secondly, strategic planning activities at IMP should be listed.

<sup>110</sup> As mentioned before, the Draft Law for Regeneration Areas has still been at the parliament during the course of this study. Many projects are waiting at shelves for their turn –e.g Zeytinburnu transformation project etc.- to be implemented since the law could not be enacted despite the proactive role taken by the authorities from metropolitan municipality and IMP.

they address, purposes, administration(s)/ actors involved, the relevant law that constitutes the legal basis of the implementations/proposals. Sample projects together with contestations and initial impacts regarding these project proposals and/or implementations are also provided for each project category. I will refer to these projects in the next discussion<sup>111</sup>, with a focus on the rationale, main elements of this still shaping urban transformation agenda, which underlie the basis of the transformation activities and strategies adopted (either has been or else to be pursued) and their initial impacts in the city.

The analysis in the next part will be based on my review of the strategic planning documents, policy and activity reports regarding urban transformation, the findings of the undertaken research activities, relevant projects and my personal interviews with the key authorities at relevant institutions, experts as well as informal talks with residents in some of the neighborhoods (five of them mainly) that are subjected to transform with the proposed projects and participation into neighborhood meetings.

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<sup>111</sup> Based on an analysis on the strategic planning documents, prepared regeneration programs, policy and activity reports, and the findings of the undertaken research activities and personal interviews with the key authorities at relevant institutions.

**Table. 4.1. Categorization of Urban Transformation Projects in Istanbul -2007**

Project Type/ Area	Vision/ Purpose	Administration/ Actors Involved	Related Law/ Regulation	Sample Project Areas in Istanbul	Contestations- Initial Impacts
<b>Squatter Neighbor -hoods &amp; Neighbor -hoods with high earthquake risk</b>	“Livable City”/ “Informational City”  1)Modernization of squatter neighborhoods  2)Mitigation of earthquake risks  3)Producing livable, healthy neighborhoods and halting ad hoc urbanization	Istanbul Metropo- litan Municipa- lity, District Municipalit ies, TOKI, IMP, KIPTAŞ	1)Municipalities Law and Metropolitan Municipalities  2)Draft Law for Regeneration Areas (though not enacted yet)  3)The law regarding the amendments in squatter legislation (No. 3414) that empowers TOKI	Küçükçek- mece, Kağıthane, Pendik, Maltepe, Kadıköy, Karanfil- köy, Kuştepe, Küçük Armutlu, Derbent, Zeytin- burnu among others	1. Demolitions, 2. Contestations with police, 3.Mobilizations against demolitions 4.Coalitions among academics&residents for participatory project planning 5.Public releases against demolitions by Chambers of Architects and City Planners, court cases opened against plans and demolitions
<b>Urban Historical Sites</b>	“World Culture City”  1)Renewal of the historical sites  2)Revitalization s based on culture and tourism industry  3)Fulfilling the requirements of the status of “Culture Capital of Europe”	TOKI, KIPTAŞ, IMP, IMM, District Municipalit ies	Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (no. 5366-2005)	Sulukule, Tarlabaşı, Süleymaniy e, (mainly the districts in the Historical Peninsula( Fatih, Eminönü, Süleymaniy e) and Beyoğlu )	1.Court cases opened against projects, 2. Neighborhood mobilizations against projects 3. New neighborhood associations established to organize the protests against the projects 4. Speculative rent increases in the inner city historical sites 5. EU Observation report in November-2006 that states the abolishings of the housing rights via projects.
<b>Old Industrial Sites</b>	“Informational City”  1)Decentralizati	IMP, IMM District municipalit	1)Municipalities Law and Metropolitan	Kartal, Pen dik,Tuzla, Maltepe,	1. The debates around the International competition for Urban Design Projects



	on of industry 2)Creation of new attraction centers in informational economy 3)formation of required infrastructure for leisure economy	ies, TOKI,	Municipalities 2)Draft Law for Regeneration Areas (though not enacted yet)	Büyük Çekmece, Çatalca-Silivri, K.Çekmece Beykoz , Bayram-paşa, Gaziosman paşa, Kağıthane	for Kartal, Büyük Çekmece, which held by IMP 2. Neighborhood mobilizations against the projects.
<b>Flagship prestige projects</b>	“World Culture City” 1)Image making 2)Increasing the tourism income and capacity of the city	Central Govern-ment	1)Municipalities Law and Metropolitan Municipalities 2)Draft Law for Regeneration Areas (though not enacted yet) 3) Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (no. 5366-2005) 4) Coastal Law	Haydar-paşa (Historical Railway Station), Galataport (an old Port Area)	1..Mobilizations against the projects 2. Public releases against demolitions by Chambers of Architects and City Planners, court cases opened against plans and demolitions 3. Unesco report (2006) declaring that the projects potentially would destroy the heritage of the city.

#### 4.2.3. Main Elements of the Emerging Urban Transformation Agenda

Broadly speaking, competitive repositioning of Istanbul as a global city with a visionary and planned redevelopment lies at the very center of the policies and strategies adopted for the transformation of the city. In the planning and policy discourse, “European Corridor”, “World Culture City” and “Informational City” are the visions and trajectories embraced to adopt the city to the global political economic dynamics (Vision 2023: Mega Urban Projects, 1999; Annual Activity

Report of Urban Transformation Directorate, 2005; IMP Leaflet, 2006, Istanbul Environmental Development Plan, 2006, the Draft Version of Istanbul Development Plan, 2007).

To realize this strategic visionary combination, in this policy discourse, there lie the responsibility of meeting two big challenges: firstly, fulfilling not only the requirements regarding city's "leading and proactive role" in EU accession and integration process of the country but also the requirements of "becoming the European Cultural Capital" and secondly, producing a "livable city" "with a full respect to its cultural, natural, historical heritage" through the mitigation of the accumulated urban problems and risks as the result of distorted and fast urbanization (Annual Activity Report of Urban Transformation Directorate, 2005; IMP Leaflet, 2006; Presentation by UTD, 2003).

For these purposes, the required restructuring of the city's spatial, social and economic base would be achieved through urban transformation/ renewal, which is posed as 'the mediated objective' to start 'civilization sprint' turning the urban crisis condition into an invaluable opportunity (Annual Activity Report of Urban Transformation Directorate, 2005). That is to say, the "inevitable" urban regeneration agenda would not only help to replace Istanbul's industrial and "ugly" face with a creative, innovative, attractive image of an informational and culture city but also, in turn, would result in the supposed economic growth hence social development.

The projects proposals empower 'heritage' and culture tourism in key historical sites of the city such as Historical Peninsula districts –Fatih, Eminönü, Süleymaniye- Beyoğlu-Galata area, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy etc. Among those projects, one can refer to Sulukule Rehabilitation Project<sup>112</sup> and the Museum City Project<sup>113</sup> in Historical Peninsula and Tarlabası Renewal Project to turn this dilapidated

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<sup>112</sup> For a critical evaluation of Sulukule Rehabilitation Project, see Sakızlıoğlu (2006).

<sup>113</sup> Historical Peninsula Project, Haydarpaşa and Galataport projects were criticized harshly by several professionals and international bodies such as UNESCO, these projects would potentially result in not only the commercialization of the local history and culture, privatizations of the public spaces, severe damage in the historical heritage but also gentrification-led displacements of the local residents and the reign of consumer citizenship.

historical neighborhoods at the heart of old culture and tourism center of the city into a flourishing culture and tourism attraction center, which will be explored in detail in the next section. While legitimized with the need to protect historical heritage in these neighborhoods, projects so far, have not embraced a comprehensive approach to renewal mostly leaving the social aspects aside rather they focus on creating new tourism and culture attractions. In this respect, high concentration of low income residents in these historical neighborhoods brings about the questions of displacement and exclusion from the city center on their part.

Likewise, urban transformation attempts are blended with strong place marketing efforts to recapitalize on urban space, which is evident with the insertion of flagships –e.g Galataport, Haydarpaşa. Highly speculative nature of these projects have been criticized harshly by several professionals and inter/national bodies such as UNESCO based on the fact that these projects would potentially result in not only the commercialization of the local culture and history, privatizations of the public spaces, severe damages in the historical heritage but also gentrification-led displacements of the local residents and the reign of consumer citizenship.

On the other hand, in line with deindustrialization targets and to create an advanced services, high-tech and cultural city, various projects and project proposals have been inserted for the transformation of the current and old industrial sites, the districts around the current business and transportation transfer centers together with the un/transformed squatter neighborhoods around them. As many of these places are called the new attraction centers (IEDP, 2006) and through technology, culture, entertainment and education-led targeted to be converted into high-tech valleys (Kağıthane, Tuzla, Silivri etc.), trades, advanced finance and trades centers, recreational, cultural centers (Kartal, Gaziosmanpaşa, Bayrampaşa, Pendik, Tuzla, Çatalca, Büyük Çekmece among others) etc. As for the implementation undertaken so far, on the one hand, IMP organized international architectural design contests, in which “world-class” architects competed for the prestige projects for two newly designated attraction centers - Kartal and Küçük Çekmece districts- and pursued strong place marketing tactics to ensure the competitive edge with these invaluable signatures on the cityscape.

On the other hand, in line with these plans, squatter transformation projects have been designed and some already started by TOKI, district municipalities or Kiptaş. These projects for squatter neighborhoods -as now most of them are called the new attraction centers- have brought about demolitions or the strong threat of demolitions for squatter residents. For instance, Kağıthane, Küçükbakkalköy, Derbent, Kuştepe, Kağıthane, Güzeltepe, Küçük Armutlu are among the neighborhoods, where widespread squatter clearances took place for the projects. Leveraging only the physical transformation of these neighborhoods, which are surrounded by highly prestigious business centers, high income residential areas, the squatter clearances realized for these projects involved in police force and contestation by the residents<sup>114</sup>, which bring about displacement and resettlement of the residents from these sites. Besides, many project plans are being designed and /or covered in the strategic planning documents are waiting their turns for the implementations in future such as the ones for un/transformed squatter neighborhoods like Feriköy, Gaziosmanpaşa, Bayrampaşa, Güngören, Bahçelievler, Zeytinburnu among others (IEDP,2006; Draft of IDP, 2007).

Considering that both the dilapidated historical neighborhoods and un/transformed squatter neighborhoods are now the areas with wide rent gaps- since they are surrounded by prestigious centers and high income residential areas- but cannot be transformed so easily due to fragmented ownership structure in these neighborhoods, these public interventions do ease the way for their recapitalizations. However, how these created rents would be redistributed is highly questionable for most of the cases. While the displacement of the low income and highly vulnerable groups from these prospectively prestige centers in the plans have been evident with widespread demolitions in these centers- e.g. Kağıthane, Küçükbakkalköy etc. on the other hand, key housing and real estate market agents

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<sup>114</sup> The severe social effects of rewriting these places through clearing the sites for new “Informational city” has become apparent in many districts during these demolitions. For instance, in Kağıthane district, where for the construction of a culture and sports center, around 11 gecekondu were demolished by the police. While the residents agreed to sell their places did get a symbolic ruinage compensation around 2-7 thousand YTL, the ones resisted the demolitions faced with the police violence. The squatters fired their own houses not to vacate it.

have started to put pressures on the government for further legal realignments to speed up the process as the strongest and organized interest group regarding urban transformation. As these capital groups mobilized around the promising opportunities in urban redevelopment sector with the new urban transformation policies, several meetings, conferences have been held by mainly with the leadership of the Association of Real Estate Trust Companies (GYODER) and ILU, on the issue of urban transformation. While the draft law for urban regeneration has been still at the parliament to be enacted, the leading figures of now the internationalized real estate sector, one after another, have been declaring through these conferences<sup>115</sup> and the media that urban transformation is a ‘must’. Another remarkable development has been that the Islamic capital groups<sup>116</sup> have began increasingly entering into the sector and/or extending their investments undertaking big scale commercial and residential projects around the city (Oktem, 2006).

Regarding the projects plans, implementations, at best, the social aspects of urban transformation are degraded to the resettlement arrangements for the residents in public housings constructed by TOKI and Kiptaş, which involve in the transfers of low income groups from newly designated attraction centers and historical centers to the less valuable, unattractive parts of the city. Through the implementation of the urban transformation project, as the new forms of intervention, one can easily assert that the economic and residential hierarchies in the city are being rewritten with these projects. This redistribution so far has taken place in a way that allocates

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<sup>115</sup> In the Real Estate Summit the fourth, during the panel themed on urban transformation, the president of ILU-Turkey was declaring that the ‘healthy’ growth of the real estate sector would be experienced with the enactment of the new law on urban transformation and that their target was ‘speed up urban transformation projects’ (Akşam Gazetesi- “Kentsel Dönüşüm Şart”, (Urban Renewal is a Must), 14.05.2005) likewise the president of the Association of Real Estate Trust Companies and a renown CEO of the construction group called Ağaoğlu give declarations in the same line emphasizing the necessity of enactment of the urban transformation law for the growth of the real estate and construction sector in the country that would supposedly bring about economic growth and prosperity.

<sup>116</sup> Construction groups like Torun, Kiler, Tasyapı, and big holdings like Ulker and Ihlas Holding have extended their operations in the sector. Many of these firms are renown with their close ties to government party AKP. During my personal interview with the representative of TMMOB-Istanbul (personal interview with the representative of TMMOB, 25.03.2006), the respondent pointed out the resurgent involvement of Islamic groups in the undertakings of urban transformation projects in the city. The latter point will be accounted in relation to Tarlabası Project in the following chapters.

the urban cores, prospective attraction centers on behalf of economically prosperous functions or people.

Besides, it is crucial to emphasize the potential social impacts of the relocations involved in the projects. I had mentioned above the importance of the established neighborhood solidarity networks, bonds in poverty alleviation in poor neighborhoods –though threatened and weakened under neoliberal policies-, with these relocation arrangements, these bonds and networks are under further threat of dissolution as the residents in these poor neighborhoods begin to scatter around the city. This would not only leave certain vulnerable groups exempt from the protection of informal mechanisms from poverty but also create potential social cohesion problems in the future. Thus, urban transformation, which is legitimized with the accompanying discursive constructions of earthquake risk mitigation and urban livability, emerges as the mediated objective and an important growth sector for the supposed future economic prosperity- though apparently at a potential cost of deepening inequalities.

Another dynamic during the shaping of the new policy agenda and implementations of the projects has been that several contestations, protests, neighborhood mobilizations have been experienced, organized throughout the city. As depicted in the table above regarding each type of projects, the projects, implementations are met by the formation of counterspace against them. Some initiatives were formed around participatory planning and project creation by the coalitions of residents, professional, artists, students etc. such as the ones in Gülsuyu-Gülensu and Sulukule neighborhoods<sup>117</sup>. Many protests were organized and undertaken by the Chambers of Architects and City Planners. These organizations as well could halt some of the implementations by the court cases they opened against the projects. Besides, international bodies, institutions like EU and UNESCO also got involved in the evaluations of the project implementations. A full account on these protests and countermovements emerging against the urban transformation project implementations is beyond the scope of this study, but let me suffice to say that a new line of mobilization has already stemmed from the initial implementations

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<sup>117</sup> See Sakızlıoğlu, (2006) for the critic of Sulukule Rehabilitation Project.

In this chapter, through the analyses on the shift in urban policy approach towards urban transformation, its context, rationale, the changes it brought about in the legislative and institutional configurations and undertaking an attempt to categorize existing projects to provide a clearer understanding of the characteristics of these projects, I tried to set the context of our case study in this study, which is the urban renewal process in Tarlabası. Tarlabası project proposal belongs to the category of the projects in urban historical sites as depicted among the four main types of urban transformation projects in the city.

The next chapters (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) will present the analysis on the renewal process in Tarlabası.

## CHAPTER 5. THE SETTING OF TARLABAŞI

### 5.1. Introduction

The main aim of the chapter is to introduce the setting of the neighborhood. The first part of the chapter provides an account on Tarlabası today, discussing firstly the characteristics of the built environment and secondly, the social and economic characteristics of the neighborhood. The data regarding the dilapidation rates, historical qualities, functional uses of the building stock are provided to discuss the physical condition of the neighborhood. The subsequent discussion focuses on socioeconomic conditions that inscribe Tarlabası today. Here I try to tackle with the questions of ‘*who lives in Tarlabası?*’ and ‘*under what conditions?*’ with a discussion on the social processes and dynamics that signify Tarlabası today, as a socially deprived and spatially dilapidated neighborhood.

The second part of the chapter, in retrospect, seeks to cast lights on how Tarlabası became ‘an island of decay in the sea of renewal’ (Hammel and Wyly, 1999) discussing the process of uneven development in Beyoğlu and Tarlabası through time. In other words, it aims to provide a synopsis of uneven development in Beyoğlu and Tarlabası, which helped to produce Tarlabası today and carried it on the thresholds of urban renewal. The account presented is partly historical but mostly concentrates on the interventions of public and private agents which took place in the course of the years 1980-early 2000. Besides, to put depth to this historical, descriptive analysis, I include the perceptions of the current residents, users of the neighborhood and the policy makers regarding these changes in time.

### 5.2. How to Make Sense of the “Labyrinth” of Tarlabası

*“Everyone has given a name for Tarlabası. Some say it is a place with all the troublesome. Yes that is true, here is the place of drug dealing, theft, prostitutes....that is true but we live here, the poor live here, that is my*



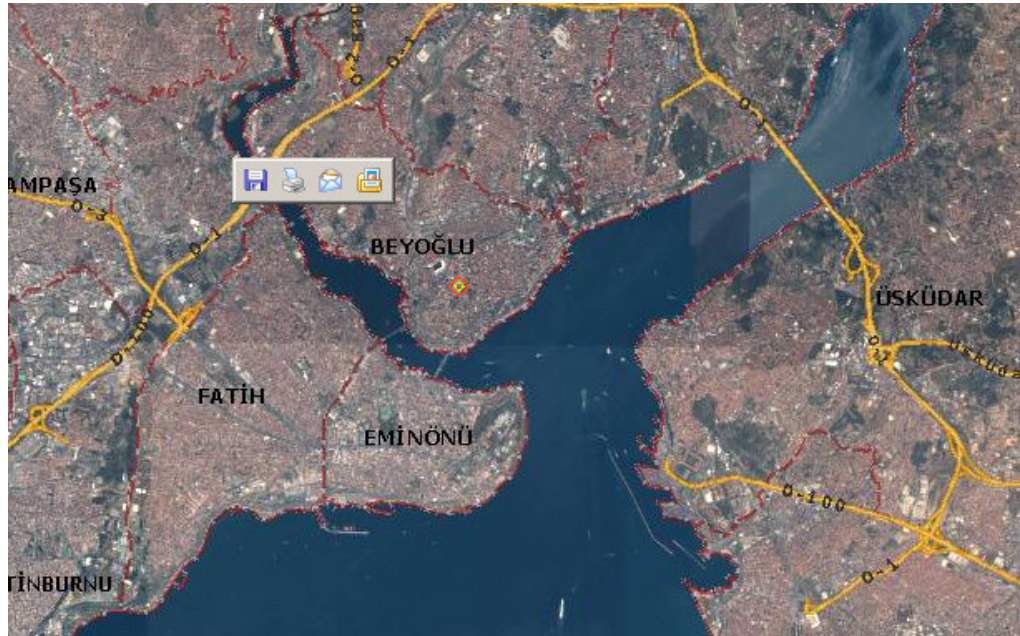
*neighborhood. Everyone has given a name for Tarlabası. I wonder what name you will give to it.”*

*(Tarlabası Resident, Personal Interview, 2006)*

### 5.2.1. The Setting: Where is Tarlabası?

Tarlabası is a socio-spatially deprived inner city neighborhood, located in the northern part of Beyoğlu, which is the historical cultural and commercial centre of Istanbul, located on the European side of the Istanbul just opposite to the Historical Peninsula. Tarlabası lies on both sides of Tarlabası Boulevard, the most important axis in the neighborhood which is parallel to İstiklal Road, the main pedestrian artery and the cultural and commercial heart of Beyoğlu. The Tarlabası Boulevard begins at the intersection of Cumhuriyet Road and Taksim Square, the biggest and the most important square in the area, and ends at where the UK Embassy building is located today on Refik Saydam Street.

**Figure 5.1. The Location of Beyoğlu in Istanbul**



Source: <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/MapForm.aspx?&rw=227&cl=3F4>

Among the forty five administrative neighborhoods in Beyoğlu, Tarlabası is not a single unit but rather consists of 8 quarters in Beyoğlu all in the northern part of İstiklal Road, namely Sururi, Kamer Hatun, Kalyoncu Kulluğu, Hüseyin Ağa, Bostan, Çukur, Bülbül, Şehit Muhtar -from the west to its east end.

Three of these quarters, namely Bülbül, Çukur, Şehit Muhtar, do constitute the research area in this study since the first stage pilot project area is in the borders of these three quarters mainly. To mention the general characteristics of these neighborhoods, Bülbül is located to the north of Tarlabası down the hill towards Dolapdere Street, bordered by Çukur quarter in the west, Şehit Muhtar in the south, Duvarcı Adem Street in the east. Bulbul quarter hosts the concentration of small-scale manufacturing workshops and a heterogeneous population. Bordered by Tarlabası Boulevard in its south, Çukur quarter neighbors Şehit Muhtar and Bülbül quarters in its east and Kalyoncu Kulluğu Street is drawing its west border. The quarter stretching down the hill toward Dolapdere Street hosts the Security Department on its west border and some landmark places like the Greek Orthodox Church. Çukur is predominantly a residential quarter. As the third quarter in our

**Figure. 5.2. The Location of Tarlabası quarters in Beyoğlu**



Source: <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/MapForm.aspx?&rw=227&cl=3F4>

fieldwork area, Şehit Muhtar lies on both sides of Tarlabası Boulevard. It has Cukur quarter on its west and Bulbul on its north. In its east, the quarter is bordered by Taksim and Feridiye streets while on its south there lies İstiklal Road. The northern parts of Şehit Muhtar shows a residential pattern, whereas in the southern part of the neighborhood, commercial use with small scale retail shops is more common.

#### **5.2.1.1. The Characteristics of the Built Environment**

This historical neighborhood is woven by very narrow streets with many dead ends, like a labyrinth as the famous poet; İlhan Berk (1990) describes it. The main transportation axes in the neighborhood are Tarlabası Boulevard, Dolapdere Road (parallel to Tarlabası Boulevard to the north), four parallel streets all perpendicular to Tarlabası Boulevard namely Turan, Sakızağacı, Kalyoncu Kulluğu, Ömer Hayyam from east to the west. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century building stock of high historical and architectural value characterizes the neighborhood and this built stock mostly consists of 3 or 4 storey small buildings, ranging between 50 and 100 square meters. Architecturally Mediterranean and Ottoman style features like terraces, courtyards (avlu), juts (cumba) mostly characterize these buildings (Ünlü et al. 2000). Though it varies among different neighborhoods the building stock is either between 30-50 years old and/or older than 50 years<sup>118</sup>.

The area was declared as a historical conservation site in 1994, which means that new constructions and demolitions are forbidden as well as that all renovations are subjected to special permits to be taken from the local conservation committee appointed by the central conservation council working under the Ministry of Culture. The area hosts various registered buildings of high historical value mainly with religious, culture and education functions, among which the Syrian Church, Greek Orthodox Church, and Central Mosque can be counted. Most of the

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<sup>118</sup> Unlu et al. (2000) also provides us the data regarding the ages of the buildings. While in Bulbul neighborhood 52% of the buildings are between 31-50 years old, 21% older than 50, these figures are 36% and 47% for Cukur neighborhood respectively and as for Şehit Muhtar, they are 20%; 60% respectively.

registered buildings concentrate on the Tarlabası Boulevard side of Çukur and Şehit Muhtar quarters<sup>119</sup> (Ünlü, et al. 2000).

Though their high historical value, most of the buildings in the area suffer from severe physical dilapidation, some of them so severely that they even do tear down and pose a potential risk and threat to the local people living in and nearby these ruined buildings. According to the research of Ünlü et al. (2000)<sup>120</sup>, in Tarlabası, on average 62% of the building stock is dilapidated while almost 11% is totally ruined and only 27% is in good condition as the Table 5.1 depicts.

**Table. 5.1. Physical Condition of Building Stocks**

				NonResidential
Quarters	Good in Repair	Dilapidated	Ruined	Use
Bülbül	10.7%	77.5%	11.7%	66%
Çukur	44%	48.6%	7.3%	33%
Ş. Muhtar	19.6%	63%	17%	65%
Tarlabası (Total)	26.8%	62.3%	10.8%	

Source: Ünlü et al. (2000), cited from Ünlü et al (2003), p.100

Dilapidation rate reaches as high as 78% in Bülbül quarter, where also 11.7% of the buildings are ruined, this is no less different in Şehit Muhtar, where 63% of the buildings are dilapidated and 17% is ruined.

Though Tarlabası is a predominantly residential area, the functional uses do show a rich combination. This data is significant in the sense that it provides a clue about social and temporal (night vs. daytime) uses predominant in the neighborhood. According to their research (Ünlü et al., 2003), the distribution of the functional uses with respect to the storey does vary according to the location of the buildings, whether they are on the main axis or elsewhere on the inner streets. While the ground floors of the buildings on the main axis are used for retail purposes, the

<sup>119</sup> As Ünlü et al. (2000) argues the existence of candidate buildings to be registered as of high historical value located down on the inner streets in these quarters but the historical value of the buildings decrease around Dolapdere Road.

<sup>120</sup> The research covers the inspection of 470 buildings in Tarlabası in three neighborhoods, namely Bülbül, Çukur, Şehit Muhtar as the table summarizes.

basement floors, if any, are used either for warehousing or manufacturing purposes. Whereas commercial uses like offices dominate the uses in the first and second floors, the upper floors are secured for residential use.

This picture changes in the inner parts, where a residential character predominates. Small scale manufacturing and retailing, though, are performed on some basement and ground floors. It should also be noted that the families involved in selling street food –such as stuffed mussels, rice and chicken etc.-do use mostly the ground floor, and basement of their houses for preparation of these foods. Ünlü et al. (2000), provide the proportion of nonresidential uses to residential use in three neighborhoods in Tarlabası namely Bülbül, Çukur, Şehit Muhtar as 0.66, 0.33, 0.65 respectively as the Table 5.1. above depicts. While in Bülbül quarter, the concentration of manufacturing workshops, specialized in furniture making, textiles, wig and dress-stand production, sheet metal production and some printing shops down the hill towards Dolapdere explains the relatively high rates of nonresidential use, in Şehit Muhtar quarter, the location of small scale retailers specialized in auto accessories, lightning, refrigerators and coolers is the reason for the high rate of non-residential use. Especially down to the northern part of Tarlabası towards Dolapdere, these ateliers are located in the basements since they are mostly informal (Personal interviews with mukhtars of Bülbül and Şehit Muhtar quarters, 16.03.2006).

As another aspect of use patterns in the neighborhood, the buildings are subdivided internally to make use of the space efficiently since the buildings are of small size. This is especially true for the buildings where large families live or in the cases that the owners do subdivide their places to rent it to the “newcomers” especially to their relatives, acquaintances and their townsmen (interviews with mukhtars, 16.03.2006). Added upon this, workshops, manufacturing spaces are also extended through this way. The subdivision of the space takes another version externally when the users do enclose the buildings’ exterior parts like terraces, balconies to use them as internal space. Another interesting fieldwork observation regarding the characteristics of the built environment is that the buildings with additional storeys - constructed by the owners illegally- do concentrate on the main axes, where the

chances for higher rents are much likely (interview with a real estate agent, 14.03.2006).

The property ownership structure is highly complicated in Tarlabası. Fragmented ownership, unknown owners are common, especially in areas with concentration of registered buildings as historical assets -mostly around Tarlabası Boulevard axis. The registered buildings of high historical value are minority –Greek and Armenian- foundations (vakıf)<sup>121</sup> properties. Other than privately owned buildings and the properties of minority foundations, there are also buildings that are publicly owned. The private ownership decreases down to 83% in Şehit Muhtar etc., thanks to the building stock owned by metropolitan and district municipalities, foundations (vakıfs), and the state property. The property ownership structure is illustrated in the table below based on the data Ünlü et al (2000) provide.

**Table 5.2. Distribution of Properties with respect to property ownership**

Property Owner	Metropolitan Municipality	Beyoğlu Municipality	Foundation	State	Private
<b>Neighborhoods</b>					
<b>Bülbül</b>	2.5%	1.5%	6%	3%	87%
<b>Çukur</b>	0%	1%	6%	3%	90%
<b>Şehit Muhtar</b>	9%	0.5%	5.5%	2%	83%

**Source: Ünlü et al. (2000) cited from Ünlü et al (2003), p. 80**

As the last point to make about the built environment, the same research (Ünlü, et al, 2000) reveals the fact that, despite the high dilapidation rates, the infrastructural condition of the neighborhood is not as bad as would be expected. As the table below depicts in a comparative manner with a neighboring gentrified area Cihangir, the infrastructural conditions are not strikingly different in the three Tarlabası quarters.

<sup>121</sup> Minority vakıfs are non-profit organizations established to collect donations and fund the activities related to minority groups.

**Table 5.3. The Comparative Infrastructural Condition of the Neighborhoods**

<b>The Infrastructural Condition (In percentages)</b>							
	<b>Water</b>	<b>Sewage</b>	<b>Electricity</b>	<b>Natural Gas</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Trans- portation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Quarters</b>	<b>sufficient</b>	<b>sufficient</b>	<b>cuts occur</b>	<b>(has)</b>	<b>(has)</b>	<b>(Sufficient)</b>	
<b>Bülbül</b>	64	66	20	0	93	70	56
<b>Çukur</b>	60	58	57	11	87	89	53
<b>Şehit Muhtar</b>	50	89	32	39	66	77	44
<b>Cihangir</b>	52	74	24	76	84	80	50

**Source: Ünlü et al, 2000, cited from Ünlü et al, 2003, p.103.**

To sum up the discussion about the characteristics of the built environment, the physical dilapidation is very severe in these three quarters, that poses threats for the residents as well degrades the historical value of the buildings. However, the infrastructural condition is relatively in good condition in contrast to what would be expected from a neighborhood with high levels of physical dilapidation. Whereas Çukur quarter is more of a residential character, Bülbül and Şehit Muhtar host nonresidential uses. While the subdivision of the internal and exterior buildings do indicate the modification of the built environment. It fulfills the quest for more space especially for large families and extension of production spaces. For some owners and users, this is a significant source of income; on the other hand, the illegal version is common as well. Some do occupy the abandoned buildings illegally and rent the place subdividing them as if they are the owners (personal interviews with estate agents, 14.03.2006; mukhtars, 16.03.2006). Besides, property ownership structure is highly complicated with multi-ownerships, unknown owners, which make it hard to undertake any rehabilitation or maintenance work in the buildings.

The high level of physical decay in the neighborhood is strictly related to high levels of vacancy, complicated bureaucracy to undertake even simple repair work, the low income levels of the residents. Besides, the latter can be related also to the high rates of tenancy. Based on informal talks with residents in the neighborhoods

and the information supplied by the mukhtars, I can suggest that the owners' care for their properties decrease since they get low amounts of rent income and moreover, tenants do have difficulty to pay their rents regularly -due to their precarious, low paid employment status or due to being unemployed.

#### **5.2.1.2. Social Characteristics of Tarlabası**

To shed light on the socioeconomic conditions that inscribe Tarlabası today, I try to tackle with the questions of *who lives in Tarlabası and under what conditions* – with an account on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of its population. Instead of presenting the raw census or second hand data from other sources, I will refer to them while discussing the social processes and dynamics that signify Tarlabası today, as a socially deprived and spatially dilapidated neighborhood. These social processes and dynamics are classified into and analyzed under three main headings: poverty, migration, and crime and sociospatial stigmatization, following a brief account on population data.

To begin with the total population of the neighborhood (including all 8 quarters), according to the census data (SIS, Census, 2000), the official population is 31,004 in Tarlabası, though estimations are around 35,000-40,000 people due to the abundance of unregistered residents (Dinçer and Enlil, 2002; personal interviews with the mukhtars, 16.03.2006). Among the highly populated parts of Tarlabası, Bülbül , Çukur, Şehit Muhtar take there place with their populations 5317, 4589, 2030 respectively (SIS, Census, 2000). To give a clue on the difference between official and unofficial population figures, the personal interview with mukhtar of Çukur neighborhood (16.03.2006) reveals that the number of registered residents are around 5500-6000 people whereas he mentions that around 1500 people are unregistered but live in the quarter of Çukur. This difference -though with different magnitudes- is valid for the other quarters as well. The population density in these three quarters in Tarlabası is higher than the one in Beyoğlu (264 persons/ha) at large and among the three quarters, Çukur has the highest rate -928 persons/ ha- and this quarter has the largest household size as well with 4.97 persons/ household (Ünlü et al., 2003).



Tarlabaşı suffers from severe social problems such as extreme poverty, crime, unemployment, child labor and territorial stigmatization. Let us now focus on the social processes, dynamics that inscribe the social and economic geography of Tarlabaşı today making a detailed account on migration, poverty, crime and stigmatization, which are discussed referring to relevant data gathered from second and first hand sources.

### **1. (Forced) Migration**

For more than 40 years, Tarlabaşı has been among the neighborhoods that have been shelter for the migrants. During the early processes of the rural to urban chain migration, this inner city neighborhood served as a transient settlement for mostly the single men and young couples, as discussed in the previous chapter. The neighborhood has been constantly attractive for new flows of migrants due to its central location, which offered an easy access to mostly informal employment in the center, its affordable rents, and available abandoned housing stock, which resulted from the flight of the non-Muslim residents<sup>122</sup>. Some of the properties of the non-Muslim population were sold or rented to the newly arriving ones. Besides, some of these dwellings were occupied by the migrants, as a consequence of the problematic ownership structure<sup>123</sup>.

Though migration has always played a significant role in the sociospatial making of Tarlabaşı, its effects got severed due to changing characteristics of the migration and in turn the migrants themselves, with the vast amount of forced migration flow from southeast and eastern parts of the country to the neighborhood. Tarlabaşı has been among the neighborhoods, where forcedly migrated ones settled intensely in

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<sup>122</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, this flight was the direct or indirect outcome of the political events in Turkish history -such as the Wealth Tax, 1942; September 5-6 events, 1955; Cyprus Operation, 1974 etc. This will be accounted again in the next part with the discussion on the sociospatial transformation of the neighborhood.

<sup>123</sup> Some owners are not known due to the flight of non-Muslim population, some buildings have multiple owners, some foundation properties are not used officially but occupied and then rented etc.

Istanbul<sup>124</sup> beginning from the mid-1980s but especially after 1990s. This concentrated settlement pattern could be explained with the existence of the former migrants from east and southeast regions in Tarlabası (see Table 5.4 below), besides, the low rent levels, abandoned building stock, central location of the neighborhood offering a relatively easy access to informal employment opportunities in the center etc.

On the contrary, the main reason of the forced migration after 1990s was political - the armed conflict between PKK and Turkish army in the southeastern and eastern parts of the country that forced people –mostly Kurdish population- to migrate to urban areas, mostly to the big cities like Istanbul, Diyarbakır, Mersin, Adana, Van etc. This process, as discussed by Erder (1995; 1996; 1997), Şen (2002), Işık et al. (2002), has been characterized by the entire family migration; 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, the lack in the use of solidarity networks, kinship, family ties to find housings and employment etc. (Erder, 1995, 1997).

In their study on Tarlabası, Enlil and Dinçer (2003) analyze Tarlabası population<sup>125</sup> with respect to arrival period of the migrants and they state that %51 of the total households arrived before 1990s, whom they call “old migrants”; 27% came after 1990 whom they call “new migrants”. The ones born in Istanbul constitute %18 of the total households, whereas “special groups” constituted by “international migrants, the ones who identify themselves as travesties, prostitute, drug addict, etc.” do constitute 4% of the households (ibid, pp.417-418). Based on their fieldwork in the neighborhood, the authors provide us the data regarding the migrants’ arrival periods and the place of origin (Table5.4.).

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<sup>124</sup> Among these neighborhoods, one can list Eyüp, Fatih, Zeyrek, Süleymaniye as the inner city neighborhoods and as for the squatter neighborhoods, the list contains Gaziosmanpaşa, Ümraniye, Bağcılar, Esenler etc.

<sup>125</sup> Though the authors’ fieldwork did cover all the eight quarters in Tarlabası, I will refer to their work to give a general impression about the composition of the neighborhood population at large.

**Table 5.4. Tarlabası Population with respect to the Arrival Periods and Regions of the Migrants**

<b>Tarlabası Population with respect to the Arrival Periods and Regions of the Migrants</b>						
<b>Regions</b>	<b>Arrival Period</b>					
	<b>Before 1960</b>	<b>1960-69</b>	<b>1970-79</b>	<b>1980-89</b>	<b>after 1990</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Central Anatolia</b>	13	33	44	13	15	23
<b>East Anatolia</b>	12	13	6	20	15	14
<b>Southeast Anatolia</b>		20	13	53	44	32
<b>Black Sea</b>	18	13	18	7	6	13
<b>Marmara</b>	38	13	13	7	12	14
<b>Mediterranean</b>		7	6		2	3
<b>Aegean</b>					6	2
<b>Total</b>	9	17	18	17	39	100

**Source: Dincer and Enlil (2003), p. 422**

As one of the mukhtars stated in the interview (Personal interview with the mukhtar of Bulbul, 16.03.2006), the early arrived migrants were from the cities of Sivas, Tunceli, Erzincan together with the migrants from Black Sea cities such as Kastamonu, Sinop as well as the ones from Marmara region. In this chain type migration process, Tarlabası was seen as a transient place for mostly the young single men and couples<sup>126</sup>, who found a cheap shelter in Tarlabası and an easy access to informal (and very rarely formal) job opportunities.

As the table above shows, after 1980s the share of the migrants from southeast and east Anatolian regions intensified. Though forced migration from these regions was experienced heavily during 1990s, the political conflict began in 1984 and this explains the high figures in 1980s as well. According to Dincer and Enlil's findings, 39 % of the migrant population migrated to Tarlabası after 1990s, 59 % of whom consisted of forcedly migrants from mainly the cities of Mardin, Siirt, and Diyarbakır but many other cities in the region as well (Enlil and Dincer, 2003, p.422). They also note that 73% of the migrants, who migrated to Tarlabası during

<sup>126</sup> Dincer and Enlil's study (2002) find out the early arrived ones were predominantly younger than 20- 88% of the migrants before 60s, 73% of the ones came to Tarlabası in 60s, 63 %of the ones in 70s were younger than their 20s. The authors discuss that since they were young, they could not participate into the struggle to get some piece of land (mostly the state land) in some part of the city.

the 1980s,<sup>127</sup> were from these regions. According to this study, all together add up that 46% of the migrants in Tarlabası are the forcibly migrated ones, who suffer from heavy conditions of the process (ibid, p.422).

In putting the share of the forcibly migrants in our research site in concrete terms, Yılmaz's study (2006) provides us a deeper insight. In her study, based on the comparative analyses on the census data 1990 and 2000, Yılmaz (2006) provides the information that in Tarlabası the share of persons, who were born in the cities<sup>128</sup> with a concentration of Kurdish population, increased from 13, 6% to 25, 2%, from 1990 to 2000 respectively. She as well provides the same share in the year of 2000 for the quarters, which consists of our research site, as such: Bülbül (27, 7%), Çukur (36, 5%), Şehit Muhtar (31%). This data shows the increased concentration of the forcibly migrated ones in Tarlabası at the first hand. Besides, though, it does not give a precise information on the actual figures regarding the Kurdish forcibly migrants in Tarlabası<sup>129</sup>, it still gives an insight about this concentration as well.

Though in its entirety, Tarlabası is characterized by its sociocultural heterogeneity in terms of its resident population, based on my fieldwork experience and the interviews conducted, I can insert that these different migration backgrounds do find their repercussions in the concentration of the migrant groups from different cities/regions in different quarters and streets. There exist some location clusters that migrants from the same cities live together. While in Bülbül, the migrants from Sivas, Erzurum, Kastamonu and some Roma people do concentrate, the Kurdish households do cluster in the southern parts of Bülbül quarter close to its border with Çukur quarter, where the residents are predominantly Kurdish<sup>130</sup> and Roma people

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<sup>127</sup> Though forced migration was experienced heavily after 1990s, the political unrest in these regions began in 1984. That explains the high share of the migrants from southeast that migrated to Tarlabası. In other words, Tarlabası was the neighborhood that hosted the early waves of forced migration.

<sup>128</sup> These cities are Mardin, Ağrı, Siirt, Batman Tunceli, Şanlıurfa, Van, Malatya, Elazığ, Şırnak, Bingöl, Adıyaman, Kars, Bitlis, Diyarbakır

<sup>129</sup> Since that everyone from these cities does not share the same ethnic identity.

<sup>130</sup> During our interview, the mukhtar of Çukur quarter stated that around %65-70 of the residents in Çukur is Kurdish (personal interview (16.03.2006). According to the information he gave, around 20% of the population of the quarter is Roma people.

(Personal interviews with mukhtars, 16.03.2006, interview with social worker at Tarlabası Community Center, 14.12.2006)). In Şehit Muhtar quarter, whereas the migrants from Sivas, Kastamonu, and Kayseri do settle close by to each other, there are some streets, where the migrants from Mardin, Siirt heavily concentrate. Given these patterns, however, it is still important to note the ethnic heterogeneity in the neighborhood in terms of settlement patterns.

International migration emerges as another fact determining the socio-demographic characteristic of the neighborhood. Though this is rather a recent phenomenon in Istanbul and the accurate data on the issue is missing, especially the migrants from Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia do concentrate in Tarlabası, which constitute according to official figures 1, 4% of the households in the neighborhood as Yılmaz (2006) provides this data for us. On the other hand, the report of YTUMF research indicates the proportion of only the African residents as 2% (YTUMF, 2000). While these groups do concentrate mainly in Çukur and Şehit Muhtar quarters and work in the informal sector (interviews with mukhtars, 16.03, 2006), recently opened call shop on Tarlabası Boulevard, which mainly serves for African migrants but for others as well with cheap call charges, may serve as a good indicator for the concentration (and increasing numbers) of international migrants in Tarlabası.

On the one hand, heavy migrant population in general and on the other hand, high share of migrants who were subjected to forced migration do underlie the existence of extreme levels and 'new' types of poverty in Tarlabası, compared to other neighborhoods in Istanbul where migrants do concentrate as well, which should be analyzed next.

## **2. Poverty**

Migration and poverty have been two intertwined factors shaping the socioeconomic geography of Istanbul, Tarlabası from 1950s on. While, in general, the use of social solidarity networks -based on kinship, family, townsmenships etc. - and engagements in informal activities in housing and labor markets have enabled

the migrant populations to plague themselves in the city in the lack of a strong welfare regime, the conditions of poverty have differentiated in time for different migrant groups settling in different parts of the cities (see Erder, 1996;1997; Erman, 1998a, 1998b; Güneş-Ayata, 1986; Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1997; Sen, 1996, Senyapılı, 2004).

To understand the poverty phenomenon<sup>131</sup> in Tarlabası, it is important to note the distinction between the conditions of poverty for the early arrived migrants to Tarlabası and their counterparts in squatter (gecekondu) neighborhoods. Resulting from the legalization process of gecekondu settlements and the entitlements of additional development rights granted through the amnesties for gecekondu neighborhoods, gecekondu migrants could take the economic returns from becoming a homeowner (c.f. Sen, (1996); Keyder, (2005); Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, (2001)). Appropriation of the ground rents through this way paved the way to an upper social mobility –to a lesser or greater extent- for they could strengthen their position in informal housing market. Hence this helped them to hand their poverty over to the late arrived migrants in time, which made scholars to discuss a special type of poverty –‘poverty in turns’<sup>132</sup>- (Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001) to conceptualize the poverty among gecekondu people or in other words poverty in peripheries.

In contrast to their counterparts in the squatter neighborhoods, for the migrants to inner city historically protected neighborhoods like Tarlabası, upper mobility chances stayed rather restricted. Tarlabası served as an easy entrance for the

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<sup>131</sup> In this study, poverty is discussed both in absolute and relative terms, whenever necessary to shed lights on the special experiences regarding the phenomenon. Describing the poverty conditions of the forcedly migrants in Tarlabası, the conceptualization of absolute poverty is referred. On the other hand, the concept of relative is used to differentiate the poverty conditions of firstly the early migrants to inner-city neighborhoods and their counterparts in squatter neighborhoods. Secondly, the term is used to describe different conditions of poverty between early migrants and forcedly migrants after 1990.

<sup>132</sup> ‘Poverty in turn’ is a conceptualization that shed lights on the unequal nature of power relations between the poor themselves. Poverty inturns is a mechanism, in which the poverty of the early arrived migrants is transferred to the lately arrived ones. The privileged position of the early migrants in informal housing and labor markets lie beneath the mechanism, where the late arrived ones using the relational networks find accomodation and employment in the city handing over the poverty from the early arrived migrants. Above we mentioned only the housing market side of the story but the relational networks established in the informal labor markets as well put the early arrived migrants in a better position compared to the late arrived ones (Isık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001).

migrants thanks to presence of vacant buildings to occupy and cheap dwellings to buy and rent. This rather did not offer as much economic returns through the urban rents created over the built environment as the amnesties offered for gecekondu settlers (Dinçer and Enlil, 2003). For the early migrants of Tarlabası, the way out to get some extra income over the built environment was to subdivide their places to rent them to the newcomers or their relatives, acquaintances from their hometown arriving lately. As Yılmaz (2003b, p.190) discusses it, residential mobilization by the early migrants to nearby inner city neighborhoods such as Elmadağ (Danış, 2006), Feriköy, Kurtuluş and squatter and peripheral neighborhoods such as Bahçelievler, Maltepe was realized by the ones, who could strengthen their economic position through mostly getting plagued into informal employment markets. However, as Dincer and Enlil (2003) suggest the early migrants –arrived before 1990s- do constitute still half of the households in Tarlabası. This figure reveals the fact that Tarlabası, which was expected to be a transitory shelter, has stayed as a permanent home even for the early arrived migrants in Tarlabası.

The limited chances for upper social mobility become evident in Guvenc and Isık's findings, who discuss in their unpublished work (1998) based on the 1990 census data, that the inner city neighborhoods were the places where the poorest groups<sup>133</sup> in the city resided. This is also evident with Dincer and Enlil's findings (2003), which state that the early migrants do still constitute the half of the residents in contemporary Tarlabası, most of which are with an income under poverty line<sup>134</sup>.

Secondly, the conditions of poverty impoverished deeply after 1990s, in a context shaped by the subversive style effects of the neoliberal structural adjustment policies on the urban poor at large and the heavy conditions of forced migration.

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<sup>133</sup> Dinçer and Enlil (2003), in the specificity of Tarlabası explain this finding with two facts indeed. The first is that most of the early arrived Tarlabası migrants were below their 20s when they came to Tarlabası, which apparently reduced their chances to incorporate themselves in the struggle for occupying an urban land in peripheries and further taking the benefits of urban rents created through amnesties later on. The second line of explanation the authors provide us is that early Tarlabası migrants were not in a strong position to make benefit out of the solidarity networks they had in the city to the extent that their counterparts in squatter settlements were. The authors discuss one of their findings that the help they took using these networks to find a job and housing did not go further than guidance (ibid. p.423). These all together worked for impoverished conditions for them.

<sup>134</sup> The authors do accept the poverty line in their research as it was declared by Turk-Is in March 2000 (p.420).

Due to the specific conditions of forced migration mentioned above, the migrants of 1990s appeared as the worse off ones<sup>135</sup> in the labor and housing markets (Işık et al, 2001). Even though Tarlabası could host the intensified number of Kurdish migrants after 1990s due to its low rent levels and high vacancy rates, the cut of ties with hometown, which meant the lack of material support to survive, further loss of properties in the villages, lack of preparatory time to find a job and housing all together meant severe impoverishment on the part of Kurdish families, who migrated as an entire family to Tarlabası. Hence, mostly they took their place among the ‘absolute poverty groups’ in the city (Senyapılı, 2004).

I will discuss this severe impoverishment, which characterizes the unprecedented levels of poverty among the forcibly migrants, further before concluding remarks about poverty in Tarlabası but it is necessary here to present a set of data regarding income, education, employment levels and tenancy status of Tarlabası inhabitants to secure a precise understanding of the conditions of poverty in the neighborhood.

As the findings of Dinçer and Enlil (2003) depict, 66% of the households have an income between hunger and poverty line while 15% are with an income below hunger line. What is significant is that even the ones with more than one source of income do not have the chance to halt their poverty but rather get stuck with low levels of income still. This reflects to the high rates of green card<sup>136</sup> holders (90%) in the neighborhood (personal interviews with the mukhtars, 16.03.2006).

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<sup>135</sup> Işık et al. (2001) discusses that forcibly migrated took their places at the bottom of the hierarchy in the functioning of power relations established among the urban poor through informal housing and labor markets, which they conceptualize as poverty in turns as mentioned above. Kurdish migrants became the ones that the poverty were transferred by the early arrived ones. However, the chances for them to hand their own poverty over to others were rather very limited. This is due to that the key formants of this hierarcial system had already become no more sustainable. Firstly, there was no more urban land to occupy and build gecekondus, actually this had become to be actualized by mafia groups but no more by the gecekondus settlers themselves in 1980s. Secondly, Kurdish migrants became the less privileged ones in the informal labor markets as well. Considering the heavy conditions put on the urban poor by the neoliberal structural policies and the further weakening burden that these policies put on the social solidarity networks, it became harder for the forcibly migrated ones to better off their conditions in the labor markets as well.

<sup>136</sup> Green Card is a social provision that entitles its users free health care in state health institutions. The requirements to have this card are having an income under minimum wage (less than one third of the minimum income), not being covered by any social security system, having no real estate property as the household possession.



Low income levels are strictly associated with the low levels of education and widespread low paid, precarious, temporary and casual employment in the neighborhood. To begin with the education level, the level of education in Tarlabası is not so much divergent from Istanbul at large, however, when it comes to the proportion of illiterate people, Tarlabası has a high percentage more than twice of the figure for Istanbul, 14.5%<sup>137</sup> and 6.6% respectively. This picture gets even worse when the proportion of people with few or no education (with an education background equals to or less than 5 years) is considered. This rate is 80,6% in Bülbül, 80,3% in Çukur, 71.7% in Şehit Muhtar quarter, whereas the figures do decrease to 64,2% for Istanbul and 69,3% for Beyoğlu at large (Table 5.5.).

**Table. 5.5. Population by literacy, education level Beyoğlu and Tarlabası**

Population by literacy, education level Beyoğlu and Tarlabası							
	Illiterate	Literate but	Primary	Primary	Junior	High	Higher
		without a	school	education	school&	school &	education
		diploma	(5years)	(8 years)	equivalent	equivalent	
<b>Bülbül</b>	14,8	22,5	43,3	2,3	7	7,6	2,6
<b>Çukur</b>	17,6	20,9	41,8	1,7	6,8	9	2,3
<b>Ş.Muhtar</b>	11,1	19,1	41,5	2,3	8	14	4,3
<b>Beyoğlu</b>	8,2	18,6	42,2	2,4	8,5	13,9	5,9
<b>Istanbul</b>	6,6	18,9	38,7	2,7	8,7	16,4	7,9

*Source: (SIS, Census 2000), modified from Yılmaz (2006), p.247.*

When it comes to explain the employment structure in the neighborhood, as the table suggests, there is a high proportion of services employment in three quarters (23%, 32,1%, 30,9 in Bülbül, Çukur, Şehit Muhtar respectively) can be observed compared to the figure in Beyoğlu (16,3%) and Istanbul (11,2%). These service employees mostly work in temporary, low paid jobs (dishwashers, waitresses, cleaning personnel) in leisure economy related to the restaurants, bars, hotels etc. in Beyoğlu or else in home-cleaning and private security services (Enlil and Dinçer, 2003, Yılmaz, 2006, interviews with mukhtars, 16.03.2006 ). The self employed are involved in small scale retail services and commerce operating small shops like groceries, coffeehouses, restaurants etc and household and electronic gadgets repair and maintenance services, while some involve in operating small scale

<sup>137</sup> The figure is calculated taking the average of the illiteracy rates in these three quarters.

manufacturing ateliers for textile production, shoe-making, furniture-making etc. (Dinçer and Enlil, 2002). Especially the textile workshops operated at home are common in the neighborhood. While these are mostly informal, child labor is widely used in these workshops (Yılmaz, 2003b). Street work like panhandling, garbage collecting, and street selling is a crucial part of the employment structure in Tarlabası (Yılmaz, 2003b; Dinçer and Enlil, 2003). Especially street vending of fruits, vegetable, prepared foods –such as stuffed mussels, chicken and rice- as well as bus tickets etc. are pursued commonly, in which child labor is an integral and important part (Yılmaz, 2001).

**Table 5.6. Active Population Employed by Professional Profiles**

<b>Professions of the Resident Population</b>	<b>Bülbül</b>	<b>Çukur</b>	<b>Sehit Muhtar</b>	<b>Beyoğlu</b>	<b>Istanbul</b>
<b>Scientific and Technical Personnel, Self employed</b>	6,6	3,9	9	10,5	11,4
<b>Entrepreneurs, Directors, high rank managers</b>	0,8	1	1,1	2,1	2,7
<b>Administrative Personnel</b>	6,9	5,3	9,2	12,5	12
<b>Commerce and Sales Personnel</b>	12,7	13	10,2	13,8	13
<b>Services Employment</b>	23,1	32,1	30,9	16,3	11,2
<b>Agriculture, farming, forestry, fishing workers</b>	1,7	0,7	0,3	0,3	8,3
<b>Non-agricultural, manufacturing employees</b>	48,7	43,8	39,5	44,3	41,3
<b>Active Population Employed</b>	<b>1662</b>	<b>1540</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>76941</b>	<b>3471400</b>

Source: SIS, Census 2000, modified from Yılmaz (2006), p.250

Unemployment is a severe problem in the neighborhood as the table below depicts. In actual terms the rates are higher since the census data does not include the figures regarding structural unemployment<sup>138</sup>, which is a severe problem in Tarlabası in

<sup>138</sup> The census data depicts the unemployment rates based on the definition of having no employment but having searched for job within last three months. This omits the figures regarding structural unemployment, resulting from the mismatch between the labor quality supplied and demanded in the labor markets due to conjectural changes in the economic structure –like the shift to services economy, which requires more educated, high or moderately skilled employees in the labor market

itself. To mention of the worst case, among the active population in Çukur quarter, while the rate of unemployment is 23, 5% among men and 39, 5% among women, these figures are 11, 5% and 15, 9% for Istanbul and 14% and 22, 4% for Beyoğlu.

**Table. 5.7 Population by Employment**

							Active Population					
	Population +12			Non-Active <sup>1</sup> Pop.		Active Pop.						
							Employed		Unemployed <sup>2</sup>			
	N	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
<b>Bülbül</b>	4046	57	43	23,7	80,1	76,3	19,9	79,9	71,8	20,1	28,2	
<b>Çukur</b>	3646	65	36	22,2	82	77,8	18	76,5	60,5	23,5	39,5	
<b>Ş. Muhtar</b>	1675	68	33	21,2	78,5	78,8	21,5	80,6	64,1	19,4	35,9	
<b>Beyoğlu</b>	186530	53	47	26,5	78,2	73,5	21,8	86	77,6	14	22,4	
<b>Istanbul</b>	7919177	51	49	27,4	72,7	72,6	27,3	88,5	84,1	11,5	15,9	
<sup>1</sup> Unemployed means the people did not have an employment but searched for employment in the last three months. <sup>2</sup> Nonactives include the categories like people who have not searched for employment within last 3 months, housewives, retired, students, other												

**Source: SIS, Census, 2000, modified from Yılmaz, 2006, p.249.**

An extreme level of poverty gets more than vivid in tenancy structure in the neighborhood, where the rents are cheaper. Though homeownership is widespread and very important in Turkey at large, the tenancy rates are very high in the neighborhood as compared to Istanbul figures. Once the average tenancy rate is considered in these three neighborhoods, the percentage of the tenants almost doubles the one of Istanbul increasing up to 69, 87%. This figure even reaches up to 76, 59 % in Şehit Muhtar quarter.

While all these are integral parts of extreme poverty in the neighborhood, it should be noted that social and economic aids provided by the state institutions for the poor in the neighborhood are available, though mostly arbitrary and irregular. Free medical care (called green cards), cash aid -though negligible-, provision of hot meals and coal for winter, and stationary substances for school children, substance (like wheel chair) help for the disabled are provided by the local and central governments.

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as well as women labor, this constitutes a major deterrent factor keeping the unemployed even not searching for employment in formal sector, hence counted in active population pool.

**Table 5.8. Households by Ownership of Housing Units**

	Number of Households by ownership of housing units			
	total	owner	tenant	not owner but <b>not</b> paying rent
Istanbul	<b>2550 607</b>	57,9	35	
Bülbül	1262	34,31	61,81	2,85
Çukur	1101	26,61	71,21	1,36
Şehit Muhtar	551	18,51	76,59	2,72
Tarlabaşı Avg.	2914	26,48	69,87	2,31

**Source: SIS, Census, 2000, modified from Yılmaz 2006, p.242**

However, they are far from being sufficient to reduce poverty nor are they regular and well organized but rather distributed arbitrarily and based on patronage relations for most of the times. As one municipal worker involved in distribution of social aid put it during the interview, they function like ‘dressing a wound’ (interview with social worker at municipality, 09.03.2006). What is more significant to note here is that in the social policy field, there is heightened involvement of the non governmental organizations, voluntary sector, with which the central and local governments are making strategic partnerships for the supply of social services, programs<sup>139</sup>. In June-2006, Tarlabaşı Community Center was opened with the strategic partnership between Bilgi University, Ulaşılabilir Yaşam Derneği and Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği and Beyoğlu Municipality to offer sociocultural, educational, health and skill improvement programs to increase the standard of living in Tarlabaşı. While the municipal contribution to this project, which is funded by EU for only nine months, kept restricted only with finding a building for the center, the center is highly involved in offering a wide range of educational, cultural, social programs, activities for Tarlabaşı youth and women<sup>140</sup>.

<sup>139</sup> For instance, Beyoğlu Municipality has opened up a independent unit -within the scope of well known program called Local Agenda 21- in the municipality called “Yerel Sivil Güçbirliği Merkezi”, which works actively with the NGOs to offer social programs designed and funded by NGOs through inter/national funds and supported with voluntary work from NGOs together with the logistical, technical and organizational contribution from the municipality.

<sup>140</sup> While engaged in these activities, the center suffers from the fragile financial position since the nine months funding from EU is to finish in June- 2007.

Considering the extreme levels of poverty in the inner city, recently some scholars do spell the concepts of ‘new poverty’ and ‘underclass’ to explain the phenomenon in the neighborhood. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001), underlining the differentiation between the urban poor in Turkey specifically in Istanbul, discuss that the inner city poor like those in Tarlabası -in contrast to poor in peripheries- do have commonalities with the ‘underclass’ in advanced capitalist countries (2001, p.39) and their conditions to some extents, match the definition of the ‘new poor’ as the urban poor, who have been economically, socially and politically excluded and ‘driven out from the system’, ‘exposed to chronic poverty’ and ‘lost its survival chances’ (2001, pp. 66-73). In her study on forcibly migrated Kurdish residents in Tarlabası, Yılmaz (2003b, forthcoming) also agrees with this argument only in the sense that experience of poverty to the most extreme levels is regnant in the neighborhood. However, the author rejects an understanding of Tarlabası poor as ‘hopeless, non-dynamic group’<sup>141</sup> hence, she refrains using the term ‘underclass’, with a comprehensive discussion on how poverty among Tarlabası Kurdish poor still an ‘integrated part of socioeconomic system’ (Yılmaz, forthcoming, p. 9). She discusses the “unprecedented poverty conditions that make them similar to the mentioned “underclass” (2003, p.1). At the same time, to show why Kurdish migrants are not the “drop-outs” of the system, she emphasizes the integrated nature of poverty in Turkey and mentions of the survival strategies of the Kurdish poor with poverty through tapping into informal activities as well as the strong solidarity bonds among themselves. Among the survival strategies, she argues of, living in Tarlabası, which enables the less expenditures on rent and an easy access to informal employment in the city center and secondly the mobilization of child labor as the “income maximizing strategies” of Kurdish poor. Besides, she mentions of the importance of the expense minimization strategies such as domestic provision of basic needs, collection of external aids mostly in kind and rarely in cash such as daily meals, medical needs, coal etc. in the bare survival of the Kurdish poor in

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<sup>141</sup> She especially makes an emphasis on still existing social solidarity networks that help involuntary Kurdish migrants in pursuing their survival strategies in the city first guiding and helping them to settle in the neighborhood. Secondly, the use of these ties for Kurdish employees to find a job getting mostly employed by a Kurdish employer is important. Hence ethnicity based solidarity networks function as a protective buffer from harsh conditions to some extent but the author also states that they are fragile considering the heavy burden put on them by the retraction of the social expenditures due to the neoliberal state policy (Yılmaz, 2003). The latter point is referred by some other scholars like Bora (2002), Enlil and Dincer (2002), Erder (1995).

Tarlabaşı (Yılmaz, 2001, 2003, forthcoming). While these mechanisms do all the way enable the bare survival and getting integrated into the socioeconomic system, however, the author emphasizes the difficulty for especially the forcibly migrated Kurds “to be integrated with the same means” in the long run. According to her, the unfavorable combination of the deepening poverty under neoliberal policies, which bring about the weakening of the social solidarity bonds and their capacity to cope with poverty<sup>142</sup>, and the Kurdish ethnic origin, which is a source of stigmatization, 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 “underclass” of Turkey, defined in a structural way” (Yılmaz, forthcoming, p. 1, the emphasis is original).

On the other hand, Dincer and Enilil(2003), investigating the different conditions of poverty for different groups in Tarlabaşı –old migrants, new migrants of post 1990 period and Istanbulites, born in Istanbul- do underline the impoverished conditions of old migrants, which made them stuck in Tarlabaşı in their struggle with poverty. More significantly the authors discuss about the severe poverty conditions of Istanbulites, who suffer from deepened and perpetual poverty and the lack and /or insufficiency of the established solidarity networks to cope with the harsh conditions. The authors represent this group of “Istanbulites” as the candidate group for the ‘new urban poor’ in Istanbul (ibid, p.424).

Opening up a discussion on ‘new poverty’ and ‘underclass’ is beyond the scope of this study, but let me suffice to say that, I do agree with Yılmaz’s argument in that poverty in Tarlabaşı cannot be understood as something marginal to the socioeconomic system in Turkey considering the fact that informality and poverty are integral parts of it (Yılmaz, 2003b, p.198) and regarding this, being ‘driven out of the system’ cannot be taken as the basis to explain poverty. In this sense, significant level of caution is required to use the concepts of ‘underclass’, ‘new

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<sup>142</sup> 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 Erdoğan (2002), Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç (2002), Keyder and Öncü (2004), Keyder (2005), Sen (2002).

poor' in any explanation of contemporary conditions of poverty, poor in Turkey at large. On the one hand, the unprecedented levels of socioeconomic impoverishment for the forcedly migrants –mainly Kurdish- in a context defined by steadily rising nationalism and ethnic discrimination in Turkey, on the other hand, the heavy conditions of the inner city poverty characterized by being exempt from economic returns through homeownership for the Tarlabası poor, who “could not” go elsewhere but had to stay permanently in this ‘transitory shelter’ as discussed in the previous chapter. These two crucial aspects of poverty in Tarlabası make it essential for further studies and new conceptualizations to explain the specificity of the poverty phenomenon at large and differences regarding the poverty conditions of different groups in inner city poor neighborhoods rather than clinging on easy formulations.

To sum up, the heaviest poverty conditions are present in Tarlabası signified by irregular, temporary, precarious employment, widespread unemployment, low levels of education and high tenancy rates, child labor etc. Concentration of poverty in this inner city neighborhood through years announced its socioeconomic and physical degradation, which will be discussed in relation to crime and sociospatial stigmatization of the neighborhood in the next part.

### **3. Crime and Socio- Spatial Stigmatization**

Crime and prostitution are important aspects of social life in Tarlabası. To begin with the issue of crime, based on the research of Ünlü *et al.*(2000) mapping crime in Tarlabası, among the most common criminal acts, petty crime (57,61%), gross misconduct (14,48) and arm to fire (8,86%) do take place (see Table 5.9). While, theft, burglary, pick pocketing, racketing are common, drug dealing is concentrated in Tarlabası especially in some known bars (interviews with shopkeepers). Ünlü *et al.* (2000) also mentions of the spatial aspect of crime arguing that it is concentrated along the main axes, where nonresidential uses are higher whereas in the side streets, with high residential pattern, it decreases considerably. The authors do explain this with a reference to community control within the residential parts.

To talk about crime in Tarlabası is a thorny issue as it is mostly elsewhere, since there is the organized aspect of it. Rather an important point to make here is that as much as unemployment gets widespread so does poverty, illegal activities appear as a way to generate income among economically deprived ones. As a social worker argued during the interview, Tarlabası youth, getting ‘squeezed’ between two drastically different socioeconomic and cultural environments of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası, ‘so close spatially but too far away from each other’ do sometimes involve in illegal activities as ‘a way to get what they cannot get with their own resources’ (social worker, 14.12.2006). Besides, since illegal activities are widely present as a “normal part of the life in Tarlabası”, such an environment considered together with the push factor of severe conditions of poverty, makes it possible for the youth to involve in illegal activities (informal interview with a shopkeeper). This fact is emphasized by Yılmaz (2003b and forthcoming), who states that the availability of illegal resources is a pull factor for the young members of migrant families to engage in illegal activities.



**Table. 5.9. The Distribution of Criminal Acts in Tarlabası through Years (in percentages)**

Category of Criminal Act	Years			
	1983	1988	1993	1998
Gross Misconduct	14,29	15,5	24,42	14,48
Petty Crime	37,36	27,91	19,77	57,61
Narcotic	0	1,94	12,21	4,43
Morals	2,2	1,55	0	2,07
Vandalism	12,09	6,01	4,07	4,28
Traffic	1,1	22,87	12,21	1,48
Political	3,3	0	4,07	0
Financial	12,09	4,46	1,6	0,3
Resistance to Public Officer	10,99	4,07	4,07	1,92
Abduction	0	0,39	0	1,77
Arm to fire	1,1	5,62	11,63	8,86
Other	5,49	9,69	6,4	2,81

*Source: modified from Ünlü et al. (2003, pp. 68-9).*

(Note: 1. Gross misconduct includes the murder, injuries, steering and hold up whereas petty crime includes the crime types like pick pocketing, theft etc.

2. The registers of the accused are taken as the basis rather than the complaints of the victims of the criminal acts, though the authors provide both).

Prostitution is a very visible aspect of night life in Tarlabası streets. Three factors underlie the fact that the neighborhood is known as the place for sex trade. First, the closures of the legal prostitution house and various illegal ones in the area pushed the sex laborers to concentrate in Tarlabası where they could find space for themselves (interview with shopkeepers). Secondly, the ones that were displaced from the nearby gentrified neighborhoods like Cihangir did move to Tarlabası (Saybaşı, 2006). Thirdly, the central location of the neighborhood, its proximity to Beyoğlu, which is known with its lively night and entertainment life, is another attraction factor. Especially late at night, the avenue hosts travesties, transsexuals, prostitutes, while prostitution bars, pubs are also abundant in the neighborhood.

This very existence of illegal activities and prostitution do constitute only part of the the reason why Tarlabası population is subject to sociospatial stigmatization. This high stigmatization finds it connotation with the very visible presence of the

police panzer constantly waiting just in front of the Security Directorate of Beyoğlu, which is located in Çukur quarter facing Tarlabası Boulevard. The neighborhood is on the list of the police department's 'kurtarılmış bölgeler' (rabel zones) list, which consists of ten neighborhoods in Istanbul with high rates of crime but especially with the high concentration of 'criminals' in the eyes of the police forces and popular representations. Being among these stigmatized neighborhoods means the frequent home searches in the neighborhood, randomly, during the operations against drug dealing gangs, 'illegal' international migrants etc. The effects of these frequent operations and random police home breakthroughs, which put the stigma on each and every resident in the neighborhood, are severe. As one social worker stated in the interview (14.12.2006), this not only causes unrest among the residents, who are symbolically criminalized and leaves negative psychological effects on the children but also decreases residents' trust to security forces, to the state at large.

Tarlabası, in popular media representations has a bad reputation as a space of disorder, all kinds of illegal activities, prostitution, violence etc. Regarding this, Ocak (2002) argues of Tarlabası as it is characterized by its very near location to the old city center in physical terms but very far away in cultural and social terms. This sociocultural distance gets severed on the one hand, with ethnic stigmatizations on Kurdish population, on the other hand, very well established stigmas on the Roma population<sup>143</sup> as being infamous with involvement in theft and pick pocketing within and beyond Tarlabası. Besides, these are accompanied with recently increasing institutional and popular stigmas, discriminations on international migrants. As Bourdieu (1993) and Wacquant (1998) would discuss it, this bad reputation of the neighborhood as a socially and spatially degraded place infamous with concentration of crime, violence, prostitution in popular media and public eye exert an extra symbolic degradation upon the neighborhood and put the stigmas upon its resident population at large. This -accompanied with ethnicity based stigmatization- creates the conditions for further impoverishment and repetition of

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<sup>143</sup> It must be stated here that the Roma population is mostly concentrated in Bostan quarter -one of the eight quarters in Tarlabası, which is not included in the research field in this study-, but the proportion of Roma residents is significant in Bülbül quarter as well as the mukhtar indicates it to be around 20%. Besides, I consider here the general stigmatization of the neighborhood to understand the stigmas attached to the neighborhood and its residents at large with a broader eye.

conditions of dispossession for Tarlabası residents through various mechanisms- e.g. hardships in finding a job etc.

Besides, it helps to create cleavages and tensions within the neighborhood as different ethnic groups and old and new residents begin to accuse each other of being responsible for this bad reputation. As much that Roma people living in mostly Bostan, a quarter in Tarlabası though not included in the area of field work in this study, are associated with engagement in theft, pick pocketing, they accuse the Kurdish residents as responsible for the 'dark' face of the neighborhood stigmatizing them with being terrorist, drug dealers, criminals (informal interviews with residents, interview with a social worker at Tarlabası Community Center, 14.12.2006, interviews with mukhtars 16.03.2006, 14.12.2006).

Another aspect of sociospatial 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. On the other hand, this bad reputation is adopted, embraced by the local government and used as a legitimatization basis for urban renewal activities though at the expense of the interests of some groups, which will be elaborated in the next section.

After this introductory section on the neighborhood setting with a focus on physical and sociospatial characteristics of Tarlabası, there appears the question of how Tarlabası became a socially and physically degraded neighborhood. Needless to say, the conditions of every locality could well be captured with an analysis, which discuss the changes experienced in a specific place through time in relation to its wider context. Thus, understanding the deteriorated social and physical conditions of Tarlabası requires a further discussion about sociospatial transformation and (re) production of Tarlabası through time in relation to Beyoğlu. The next section, in retrospect, tries to shed light on the historical developments but with specific focus on the ones which have taken place after 1980s that have produced Tarlabası today resulting from the public and private interventions into the neighborhood.

### 5.2.2. Sociospatial Transformation of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası through Time

Beyoğlu<sup>144</sup> is a historical district on the European side of Istanbul, opposite to Historical Peninsula and its ancient name, Pera, means `opposite shore` in Greek referring its location. The historical development of the district in sociospatial and cultural terms cannot be separable from its neighbor district Galata, an autonomous Genovese trade and finance center in Byzantines times, where the settlement dates back to 13th century. Likewise, the historical development of Tarlabası has been directly related to Pera/Beyoğlu (Çelik, 1998).

As opposed to the vital trade life and ancient settlement patterns in Galata, Pera was covered entirely by the vineyards and gardens till the 16th century. The settlement began following the allowance for settlement beyond the Galata Walls in the early 16th century by the Ottoman sultan. Firstly, the French Embassy was entitled to settle in Pera in 1535 (Gülersoy, 1998) followed by the other embassies in the 17th but mainly in the 18th century. Whereas Galata stayed mainly as a commerce center, Pera of the late 17th and the early 18th centuries was mainly a residential district with the concentration of foreigners (mainly the bureaucrats and employees of the embassies), Levantines<sup>145</sup>, non-Muslim minorities residing around the embassies, along the *La Grande Rue de Pera* (contemporary Istiklal Road) (Gülersoy, 1998; Akın, 1998).

As for Tarlabası, though the neighborhood was covered with plantations and vineyards throughout the 16th century and 17th century (Akın, 1998; Arseven, 1989), the settlement began in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century resulting from the expansion of Pera towards its northern end.

#### 5.2.2.1 Beyoğlu and Tarlabası in 19th century

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<sup>144</sup> Though the exact time that the district was named as Beyoğlu is unknown, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the area up behind Galata was called Beyoğlu (Istanbul Encyclopedia, Volume.5, p. 2703).

<sup>145</sup> Italian (Geneovese, Venetian), French or other Mediteranian origin people who lived in Istanbul (as well as in Izmir) in Ottoman times for generations.

In the new context of industrial revolution in Europe in the 19th century, which brought about the gradual decline of Ottoman Empire and the subsequent westernization reforms<sup>146</sup> by the Ottoman governments, Pera together with Galata emerged as the locus and focus of the westernization initiatives undertaken (Akin, 1998). They emerged as the Ottoman Empire's crucial gate to the western politics, economies and culture, thanks to the well established foreign trade and finance as well as diplomatic relations for centuries in the districts.

Thanks to high concentration of non-Muslim population in Pera and increased value attached to `western` style education, art, culture, life style enabled Pera to enjoy its increasing importance as the modern and western face of Ottoman Empire all through the 19th century. The social and cultural life in the district was revitalized with the gradual proliferation of French, Greek, Italian etc. institutions like schools, hospitals etc. and culture and entertainment places such as cabarets, patisseries, bookstores in the district.

Furthermore, a number of events signified the increasing importance of Pera in the 19th century. Firstly, the construction of Galata Bridge in 1846<sup>147</sup>, secondly the construction of Tunnel<sup>148</sup> in 1873, as the one the first subways in Europe, and thirdly, the Sultan's decision to move the Ottoman palace to Besiktas, a neighboring district all together contributed Pera to strengthen its status as commerce, culture, bureaucracy center (Akin, 1994; Kuban, 1970; Dökmeci & Dülgeroğlu, 1993).

As an elite residential area, Pera hosted the bureaucrats, people working in the embassies, foreign bankers and tradesmen as well as the Ottoman elite. Not only religion based segregation but also class based one were signifying the district. The composition of population in Galata-Pera-Tophane districts during 1885, as *Çelik (1986:8)* provides, was more of a mixed nature- 47% foreigners; non-Muslim

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<sup>146</sup> These reforms initiatives had increased with the declaration of Tanzimat Fermanı in 1839 as the first official document that foresaw radical reforms.

<sup>147</sup> The bridge linked Sirkeci-Eminönü -as two adjacent historical commerce and business districts in Historical Peninsula known as the old Istanbul- to Galata and Pera through Karaköy district.

<sup>148</sup> Tunnel onnects the commercial axis from Karaköy further up to La Grande Rue de Pera (contemporary Istiklal Road).

groups 32%; Muslims 21%- as compared to that of Istanbul, which was consisted of 44% Muslims, 42% non-Muslims, 14% foreigners.

As the symbol of the “modern”, “western” face of the Ottoman Empire, in Pera and Galata, the first local government reforms were implemented and the first city council<sup>149</sup> -called the 6th Daire-i Belediye- was established in 1855 (Akın, 1994). Due to the big fire in 1870, Pera was destroyed severely and several buildings in Taksim, Tarlabası, Galata got affected as well (Çelik, 1994).<sup>150</sup> In the late 19th century, luxurious mansions, many arcades Cicek Arcade, Suriye Arcade, luxurious hotels Pera Palas were constructed as the still the landmarks of Pera, with their architectural characteristics similar to the ones of London, Vienna and Paris in the era (Çelik, 1994). All in all, not only with its distinguished architectural features but also with the established western lifestyle in the district and mixed population, Pera was drastically different from Historical Peninsula, where muslim population concentrated.

Due to the increasing population and demand for housing in Pera throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the settlements expanded gradually towards the northern parts of the district. Tarlabası -together with Tepebaşı and Dolapdere- got affected from this expansion of the old center and became gradually a residential area through the 19th century. While Pera served as a residential area for the upper classes, in the second half of the 19th century, as Usdiken (1998) mentions of it, Tarlabası was hosting middle and lower-middle class residents, who could not afford the rising rents in Pera. Especially with the revitalization activities following the 1870 Pera fire, residential and commercial expansion in Tarlabası accelerated and the neighborhood was characterized by its moderate architectural design and

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<sup>149</sup> The council engaged in infrastructural upgrading such as street lightening, widening of the roads and main axis, upgrading in the water and sewage systems etc. as well as the delivery of the first urban services in Istanbul (Akın, 1994).

<sup>150</sup> The city council, setting up a committee for the reconstruction of the area, initiated the project called “nouvelle ville”, which could not be implemented due to financial reasons. However, the contemporary architectural design of the district was shaped mainly after this significant event with constructions of luxurious mansions all in line with the housing needs and lifestyles of elite in the district (Belge, 1995, p.226, Çelik, 1994).

mixed population of minority groups - Greek, Jewish, Armenians- and Muslim people as well.

#### **5.2.2.2. Beyoğlu and Tarlabası in the 20th century**

During the First World War, Beyoğlu had a migration inflow from Balkans and after the Russian Revolution there experienced a Russian migrant flow, altogether prompting a change in the population mix. Though Beyoğlu did, during the early Republican times, lose its initial vitality with the embassies moving to Ankara as the new capital of the Republic, it could keep its mixed population.

A series of political events taking place after 1940s, however, affected the demographic, socio-spatial structure of the district in general. With the imposition of Wealth Tax<sup>151</sup> in 1942, which put heavy burden on the minorities to a large extent<sup>152</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 and with the change over in the housing and business resulted in the decline in the minority population. Likewise, following the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, there had been decrease in Jewish population in the district. Likewise, the September 6th and 7th revolts in 1955 against minorities and the Cyprus operation in 1974 accelerated the outflow of Greek population from the area.

As the result of these political events worked against minorities, there experienced a dramatic change in the population of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası through time, as the outflow of the non-Muslim groups from the district was gradually matched with the inflow of migrants groups from the rural parts of the country increasingly after

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<sup>151</sup> The tax was enacted with the approval of the Grand National Assembly to be imposed once over the wealth and extraordinary earnings of the wealthy people in the country to overcome the budget deficits in the wartime economy.

<sup>152</sup> The figures related to the application of the tax are worth to shed light up on this point: The amount of the accrued tax, which was to be collected in a month at the latest and to the amount, of which the taxpayers could not object, was amounting almost to 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. The ones could not pay their accrued tax, around 1229 people, were sent to work in Aşkale (75 Years of The Republic Encyclopedia, Volume.I, p. 242-243).

1960s. Some of the abandoned properties of the non-Muslims were sold and/ or rented to the new migrants with their lawyers using the attorneyships or else the buildings were occupied illegally in the absence of social housing and employment programs to accommodate the migrant flows to the city. As revealed in the research by Dinçer and Enlil (2002), from the late 50s on, especially Tarlabası has kept as a very attractive site for the migrant population.

Another significant development affecting the area in the 1970s was the shift of the CBD from Beyoğlu towards Beşiktaş, a neighboring district to the west. This resulted in the further flight of affluent residents in Beyoğlu to more trendy middle and upper class neighborhoods such as Nişantaşı, Şişli (Osman, 1998). Beyoğlu lost its importance with a gradual stagnation in commercial, cultural life and suffered from a resultantly deepening socio spatial deterioration. Meanwhile, Tarlabası kept being an invaluable shelter for the incoming migrant groups with its low rents and abandoned building stock.

After this journey in time to evaluate socio-spatial development of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası up until the 1980s, now the turn is of an account on their development after 1980s. The next line of analysis will concentrate on the interventions of public and private agents that took place in the course of years 1980-early 2000, which carried Tarlabası gradually on the threshold of urban renewal.

#### **5.2.2.3. Beyoğlu and Tarlabası in the 1980s: “Bulldozer Approach” For the Entrepreneurialization of the city**

During 1980s, Beyoğlu and Tarlabası underwent drastic transformations as the mayor of Istanbul, Dalan, took radical attempts to restructure Istanbul as a global city. To revitalize Beyoğlu, he took a series of initiatives as they are called by Ekinçi (1994) as ‘Dalan Operations’, the result of which were growing socioeconomic disparities in the district.

- *Dalan Operations: “İstiklal, Taksim is New York, Paris for me”:*



The most significant planned intervention that shaped the socio-spatial characteristics of Tarlabası today was the widening of Tarlabası Street in 1986. Based on Beyoğlu Restoration Plan initiated by the mayor, massive amount of demolitions<sup>153</sup> were realized on Tarlabası Street, destroying the historic fabric of the neighborhood (Ekinci, 1994). This plan foresaw the revitalization of Beyoğlu through closing the main axis, Istiklal Road, to the traffic flow and creating a new transportation axis through Tarlabası (Bartu, 2000). Besides, the operation targeted to upgrade the transportation infrastructure of the city for the establishment of the new CBD –in Levent/ Maslak districts and to link the traffic route from Tarlabası to the new business center.

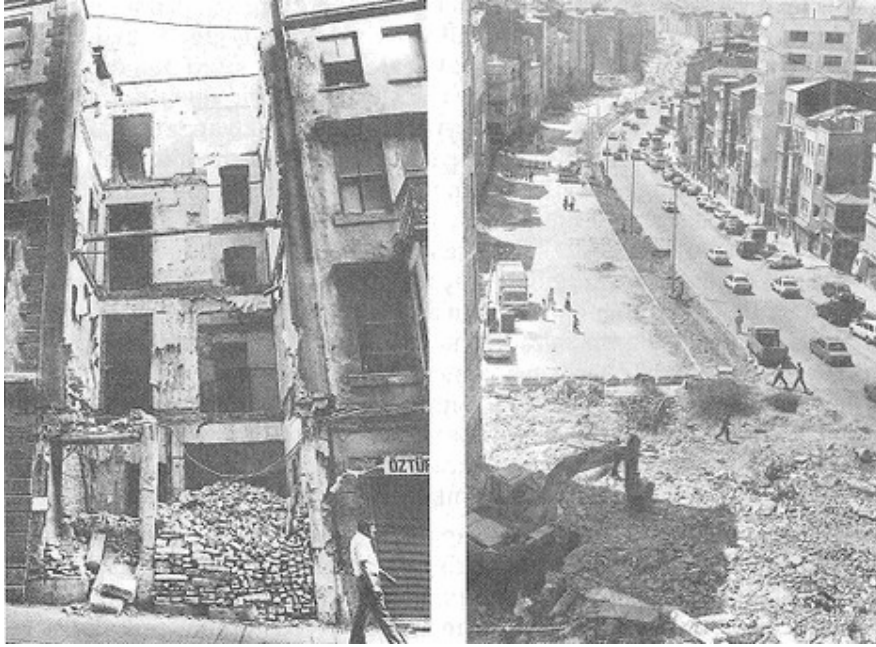
Despite oppositions<sup>154</sup> and legal investigations against the demolitions, the plan was urged to be completed in 1987 as it was legitimized not only for development purposes but also for “cleansing the area from prostitutes and drug smuggling activities” (Üçok, 1987, 78-79; cited in: Bartu, 2000, p. 48).

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<sup>153</sup> 386 building were demolished in total, among them 168 buildings were with their high historical value, which were registered as cultural and historical assets.

<sup>154</sup> The Chamber of Architects was the party framing the oppositions, which were based on the illegality of the demolitions and land speculation as their consequences (see Bartu, 2000, for further details). The demolitions as the result of the mayor’s strong ‘bulldozer approach’, was against to the conservation and development laws and destroyed the historical urban fabric in the district. The mayor defended the operation to upgrade the transportation infrastructure of the city for the establishment of the new CBD –in Levent/ Maslak linking the traffic route from Tarlabası to the new business center.

**Picture 5.1. The Demolitions during the Widening of Tarlabası Boulevard**



Detaching the northern part of Tarlabası Boulevard –down to Dolapdere quarter– from Beyoğlu, from the city, widening of the boulevard functioned as a cleansing operation pushing all the ‘unwanted’ elements to Tarlabası away from Istiklal Road –the nice and clean shop window of ‘beautiful’ Beyoğlu (Saybaşılı, 2005). Thereafter, the widened boulevard, as “*the new frontier*” (Smith, 1998, Saybaşılı, 2005), separated Tarlabası from Beyoğlu politically and economically and Tarlabası was left to its ‘gangrene’<sup>155</sup> fate, which caused further physical decay and social deterioration in the neighborhood as the neighborhood became more and more the site for drug dealing, prostitution and petty crime alongside the severing levels of urban poverty. All worked for the increased socio-spatial inequalities, polarization, as one Tarlabası resident voiced it, “İstiklal, Taksim is New York, Paris for me” (Personal Interview, 3.03.2006).

#### **5.2.2.4. Beyoğlu and Tarlabası in the 1990s: Revitalization of the Old Center and Further Deterioration in Tarlabası**

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<sup>155</sup> As took place in the media, the current Mayor of Beyoğlu describes the condition of the neighborhood as ‘gangrene’ (see, Sezer, Mustafa, ‘Beyoğlu’nun değeri artıyor’ (Beyoğlu is Revaluating) based on an interview with Beyoğlu Mayor, Türkiye Newspaper, 7 July, 2005).

Beyoğlu witnessed sharpening uneven socio-spatial and economic development during 1990s. On the hand, local government's interventions to revitalize the district helped to increase its popularity as a cultural and tourism center and there proliferated the cultural and art festivals, consumption and leisure facilities in the district. On the other hand, thanks to restructuring of labor force as the result of the shift to service economy and accompanied changes in lifestyle, consumption and leisure patterns as discussed in the previous chapter, this old historic center became an attraction for new fractions of middle class such as managers, professionals, technical and media workers as well as the cultural elite. This spurred gentrification processes in the adjacent neighborhoods.

On the other side of the coin, the deterioration in Tarlabası was severing but before discussing this, let's now put our lens on the transformation in Beyoğlu of 1990s in general.

### **1. Pedestrationization of Istiklal Road and a Nostalgic Trip in Beyoğlu**

In the early 1990s, Istiklal Road was pedestrianized and widespread restorations on and around the road were undertaken by the metropolitan municipality and private sector. This found its echoes on the rapid commercialization of the district as fashionable shops, world cousin restaurants, cafes, boutiques, night clubs proliferated in time. The revitalization of the cultural, touristic, economic life in the district was crosscutting the image making efforts with a strong nostalgic appeal, which was embodied all in the construction of Nostalgia Trolley traveling along the avenue.

As these initiatives taken for the resurrection of the district went on, Beyoğlu regained its popularity as a cultural, entertainment and commercial center. This prompted the sharp rises in the property values as the district became an attraction not only for the corporate investors, tourists but also for the cultural and economic elite in Istanbul.

## **2. Gentrification Processes in Beyoğlu**

The revitalization of Beyoğlu had its repercussions on the adjacent three neighborhoods, namely Cihangir, Asmalımescit, Galata, where gentrification processes started. As mentioned earlier, these neighborhoods became attractions for the cultural and economic elite with their appeal to live in the historical city center. The low-income residents in these neighborhoods, who were mostly the migrants from rural areas -occupying architecturally and historically high value housings left by the flight of the non-Muslim minorities in time- were displaced. The new inhabitants were some famous artists, architects as the pioneers of gentrification processes, who were followed by cultural elite and professionals, media workers and private investors (İslam, 2005, 2006; Uzun 2001; Ergün 2003; İnce 2006).

Residential gentrification was reign in all three neighborhoods at the first instance. It kept its dominance in Cihangir, while, in Asmalımescit and Galata, commercial and residential gentrification went hand in hand though faster in the former (İslam, 2005). A discussion on the differences in the extent, speed and impacts of gentrification instances in these neighborhoods is beyond the scope of this study. I shall rather focus briefly on Tarlabası of 1990s now in relation to these changes.

In contrast to the revitalization in the old center, the picture in Tarlabası was drastically different. As much that the popularity of Beyoğlu together with Asmalımescit, Galata and Cihangir had increased, Tarlabası had been a very attractive destination for the forced migration wave after 1990s. Availability of abandoned buildings and low rents made it all the way a shelter for the migrants and socio-spatial and economic deprivation increased through 1990s.

Furthermore, though limited data is available about it - some displaced groups from the gentrifying neighborhoods, like transsexuals, travesties from Cihangir, came to live and work in Tarlabası in 1990s (Saybaşı, 2006). Besides, drug dealing, all sorts of illegal activities proliferated in the streets of Tarlabası as the other face of the revitalizing entertainment life in Beyoğlu.

#### **5.2.2.5. Beyoğlu and Tarlabası in 2000s: ‘Beyoğlu Turning Back to Itself’ and Tarlabası as a ‘Gangrene’ in ‘Beautiful Beyoğlu’**

2000s have been marked by the planned entrepreneurial interventions by the local and central governments to boost the image of the district, the last step of which is the Tarlabası Renewal Project as will be covered in the next section. Beautification and ‘aesthetization’ attempts, as Zukin (1998) discusses them, blended with strong place marketing efforts have been at the core of these revitalization activities, which were framed by the insertion of an umbrella project called Beautiful Beyoğlu in 2002. I will provide a detailed account of the projects initiated under this umbrella project but to begin with, it is important to mention about the key elements that lie beneath the revitalization strategies undertaken so far.

Firstly, the strong emphasis on the necessity of visionary urban (re)development has grounded the revitalization strategies adopted by the authorities both at metropolitan and district levels. The authorities underscored the importance of Beyoğlu as a culture, tourism and entertainment center -with its ‘distinguished historical heritage’- for the global repositioning of Istanbul (Beautiful Beyoğlu Project, 2002; IBB, 2001). They urged to revitalize the image of Beyoğlu/Pera in ‘peoples’ minds’ as ‘the most vital and favorable center of Istanbul with the initiatives undertaken from 2002 on (Beautiful Beyoğlu Project, 2002). This reimagination of Beyoğlu has been reinforced at the national level with government policy and vision to support and initiate tourism and culture-led urban development in Beyoğlu. As mentioned in the previous chapter, ‘3 Istanbul’ project initiated by the central government embraced the revitalization of Beyoğlu/ Galata as a crucial art tourism and business center of the reimagined Istanbul. Within the scope of the project, the government inserted the landmark prestige project for a cruiser port in Galata, which will be discussed in the next section further in its relation to Tarlabası renewal project.

Secondly, to revitalize the old image of Beyoğlu as a cosmopolitan, multicultural urban center and to make it a livable, attractive center, the priority has been given to change the negative image of decaying physical environment undertaking rehabilitation activities. The targeted physical transformation has been accompanied

by the process of ‘hard branding’<sup>156</sup> of Beyoğlu (Evans, 2003) with strong place marketing strategies<sup>157</sup>. While the revitalization initiatives and Beyoğlu itself are represented as ‘Our brand marks’<sup>158</sup> by the city officials, the priority has been given to streetwise renovations, restoration of the facades, construction of new lightning system, square and open space rearrangements, transfer of workshops from the district etc. On the other hand, landmark projects (e.g. Galataport prestige project), themed urban renewal projects (e.g. French Street as a ‘Miniature Paris’ in Beyoğlu) and upgrading in the public transportation system (e.g. the construction of the funicular system and extension of the metro line to the airport) were integral parts of revitalization activities undertaken<sup>159</sup>.

As third aspect of this revitalization process, for the city officials, opening space and creating the infrastructure for symbolic economy (e.g. Talimhane Rehabilitation Project, Istanbul Modern Art Gallery, and Miniaturk open museum<sup>160</sup>) has been among the priorities. Besides, local government inserted some projects (like the project called ‘Beyaz Zambak’ (White Lily) to assess and control the quality of eating places, ‘Işıl Işıl Beyoğlu’ (Alight Beyoğlu) to construct a new lightning system not only to increase the security but also to increase the attractiveness of the

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<sup>156</sup> Hard branding, as Evans (2003, p. 417) describes it, is a specific strategy of brand leaders to “capitalize on commodity fetishism and extend brand life geographically and symbolically”.

<sup>157</sup> Indeed, for the current Beyoğlu Mayor, contributing to “well advertisement and marketing of Beyoğlu” is the most significant service that he could produce for the district (see, <http://www.elegans.com.tr/arsiv/68/haber007.html>)

<sup>158</sup> In the website of Beyoğlu Municipality, the expression “Our Brandmarks” is given as the title of the projects undertaken (see <http://www.beyoglu-bld.gov.tr/>). Besides, image-based advertising products such as Beyoğlu souvenirs used to market Beyoğlu as a landmark, the logo of which was designed by a renowned designer.

<sup>159</sup> Further striking image making attempts to fashionize Beyoğlu were made with the adoption of special designs -with its authorized Beyoğlu logo<sup>159</sup> on them- for street furniture such as simit (local bakery), corn, and chestnut vehicles for the street sellers. Likewise, the official uniforms of the municipal personal have been redesigned by a renowned artist. Besides, the insertion of special credit card called ‘Beyoğlum Card’ for Beyoğlu residents -not only to pay their taxes to the municipality but also to enjoy the discounts at certain entertainment and shopping places in Beyoğlu -pronounced the commercialization of urban public services and encouraged a form of civic boosterism.

<sup>160</sup> Miniaturk is the first miniature entertainment park in Istanbul, opened in 2003 (see footnote 23 in Chapter 2). Istanbul Modern Art Gallery was established through the conversion of warehouses in Feshane into a modern art gallery, which hosted for the first time the eighth Istanbul Biennial. As for the Talimhane Rehabilitation Project, it will be covered in the main text later in this section.

area for new business etc.) to strengthen the competitive position of urban leisure economies in the district. This has paved the way for further commercialization of the district as big commercial stores, brand mark cafes', fancy patisseries; shopping centers proliferated especially on Istiklal Road. On the other hand, arts-led revitalization projects (construction of Pera Museum and Narmanlı Han restoration<sup>161</sup>) and the construction of new shopping mall, art galleries of commercial banks have been actualized by the private actors and big firms.

As another point to make, above mentioned strategies with a strong spatial and economic focus announced the subordination of social policy. The social aspects of revitalization have been degraded to trickle down effects –further employment, boosted tourism income for the local shopkeepers etc. More crucially, a redirection in social policy marked the revitalization process. Social programs offered by the local government through partnerships with non governmental organizations -such as job training and education programs<sup>162</sup>- have been realigned with market dynamics and needs –e.g. job trainings for hotel service personnel, tour operator etc. in a manner that supports labor force flexibility and acceptance of low income levels, though appreciated by the beneficiaries of the programs.

Having summarized the key aspects of the revitalization strategies adopted, the following part of the chapter will focus on specifically two revitalization projects

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<sup>161</sup> The renovation of Narmanlı Han (Khan), which is a historical building on Istiklal Road, began in 2001 with private initiation of a big holding company to convert the building into a culture, art and commercial center. On the other hand, another historical building in Tepebaşı- Beyoğlu were rehabilitated by to turn this old hotel building known as Bristol Hotel into the fully-fledged modern museum called the Pera Museum in 2005.

<sup>162</sup> To mention it firstly, municipality has established an autonomous center, under the protocol Local Agenda 21, that works with non governmental organizations collaboratively. While the activities of the center are supported by the city officials, it is non-governmental organizations that develop the social programs and find the funding for these projects mostly thorough international funds such as World Bank, European social program funds available. Most of the programs initiated are actualized through the active involvement of NGO voluntaries though the projects are pronounced among the social programs of the local municipality by the city officials. This points out the NGOization of social policy. To turn back to education and job training programs currently offered by the center, one can count among them a project tailored to bring in new entrepreneurs for the society, education programs for computer stylists and creative sales and marketing technics. Besides, various projects and programs are offered by the center: e.g. for women -like social budgeting project; for youth – Kefken summer camp, which is organized in Kefken for the children to engage in cultural and sports activities. These children do attend the schools in Beyoğlu district and are succesfull at their schools as they are selected by the district directorate of ministry of education to be able to attend the camp.

undertaken by local government within the scope of Beautiful Beyoğlu project. The third project that will be discussed is a themed one called French Street revitalization project realized by a private company. A brief account on the sociospatial effects of these projects will be integral to our discussions. Then the following part will focus on the initial attempts and projects to rehabilitate Tarlabası during early 2000s.

### **1. Beautiful Beyoğlu Project: Reimagining Beyoğlu**

*“In recent years, there have been made attempts to restore the state of old Beyoğlu, to restructure, revitalize and to protect what is left, as they were done in the past and will be done in the future...As an old Beyoğlu inhabitant and for sure as a Levantine, I follow all these plans, demolitions, make-ups, aspirations rather with surprise and wonder. Since, to me, to revitalize Beyoğlu, to be able to revitalize it is an impossible work, it is a real Beyoğlu dream”*

*(Giovannio Schimaglio, The Memories of a Levantine, 1990, p.9)*

In 2002, Beyoğlu Municipality established a new urban design unit and initiated the project called ‘Beautiful Beyoğlu’ with a strong claim for the protection of the cultural and historical heritage of Beyoğlu. This ongoing project takes its basis from the stated fact that ‘the cultural, historical heritage is not protected to the desired and necessary extent’. The current problems are framed with a strong spatial focus emphasizing the factors such as

- The high level of destruction due to the neglect of the owners of the property of high cultural value,
- High vulnerability against earthquake hazard,
- The loose sanctions and regulations against these destructions,
- Heavy bureaucratic procedures required for any rehabilitation work in this urban conservation area that work as a deterrent factor for the property owners to undertake any renovation.
- Decreasing cultural profile of the users of the space,



- Problematic property ownership structure (unknown owners, multiple owners etc.),
- The lack of aesthetic care for the historical buildings in the presence of severe decay,
- The uncontrolled nature of functional change in use patterns (among housing, commercial use and production uses) etc. (Beautiful Beyoğlu Project, 2002).

The aims of the project, as one urban designer from Urban Design Unit (UDU) puts it, are to overcome the deterioration in the historical built environment and to increase the touristic attractiveness of the area refunctioning and rehabilitating the building stocks (Personal interview, municipal authority, 27.02.2006).

Among four main activities embraced within the scope of the project, firstly streetwise and building based urban design projects, secondly, architectural projects and thirdly the design of the street furniture and lastly provision of consultancy by a municipal aesthetic committee, which controls the historic compatibility of the newly built or rehabilitated building stock can be listed. The unit providing architectural consultancy for the property owners to undertake renovations and maintenance work for their properties aims to increase the environmental sensitivity and historical consciousness and undertakes architectural projects to beautify Beyoğlu. I will provide an account on the urban design projects to renew the exterior buildings in selected streets and secondly on the rehabilitation project realized in Talimhane area.

***a) Strong Urban Design Focus: Building- Based Facadel Renovations on Selected Streets:***

The municipality plays a key role to mobilize the property owners in and around 20 streets to upgrade the exterior side of their buildings. The property owners are called by the Urban Design Unit for the rehabilitation activities to be undertaken and the property owners have to finance them though enjoying reduced bureaucracy and technical support and some subsidies. The unit obtains all the required permits

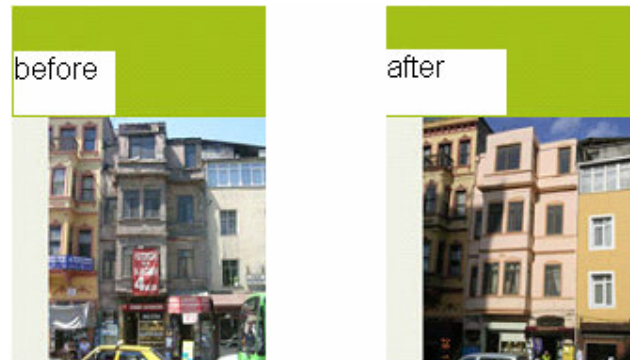
from the protection committees, offers cuts in regular duties and make the rehabilitation projects to encourage the property owners. Among the completed rehabilitations, one can list the renovations in Bankalar, İstiklal, Meşrutiyet and Tarlabası Streets etc. among 20 streets that activities have been undertaken. While these efforts help to upgrade the outlook of the district, this appeal to facades brings about the increase in property values (interview with a real estate agent, 26.03.2006).

***Picture.5.2. An Example for Facadel Renovations on Meşrutiyet Street***



***Source: <http://www.beyoglu-bld.gov.tr/>***

**Picture 5.3. An example for Facadel Renovations on Tarlabası Boulevard**



***Source: <http://www.beyoglu-bld.gov.tr/>***

### ***b) Tourism-Led Revitalization: “Champs Elysees Make-up” for Talimhane Area***

Talimhane area is located on the west of Taksim Square and consists of five streets opening to the square. In 2004, a joint streetwise rehabilitation project was pursued by Beyoğlu and Greater Municipalities to pedestrianize the area<sup>163</sup> just before the Nato Summit 2004, despite the initial oppositions of the local shopkeepers and tradesmen. While the area now serves for tourism industry -congress and cultural-hosting the five stars hotels, fancy restaurants and clothing stores, the implications on the real estate market and the public space have been twofold.

The real estate prices and rents rose up by five fold<sup>164</sup>, about what the local shopkeepers in the area do complain<sup>165</sup>. Alongside these speculative increases, the sanitized make-up of the area do shadow the exclusionary nature of public space since the area, closed to the vehicle traffic, is safeguarded by the private security guards and cleansed from the street sellers, beggars, panhandlers, homeless people who are blocked to enter into the area.

### **2. Opening of the French Street: Creating a Miniature Paris in Beyoğlu or “A dream which was made true”**

As the first themed streetwise urban rehabilitation project, French Street was opened in 2004 after the massive renovations of around 30 historical buildings on formerly Algeria Street. The project<sup>166</sup> was realized by a private company with the support of Beyoğlu Municipality and Greater Municipality of Istanbul. As the project directors describe the project as “a dream, which was made true”<sup>167</sup>, French

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<sup>163</sup> Initially, Talimhane was a busy but small business area with a concentration of small scale shops selling automotive replacement parts, various buffets and hotels. Hosting the bus and dolmus (minibus) stops, the area was a busy traffic node at the same time.

<sup>164</sup> For instance, monthly rent for 15 m2 shop increased up to 5 million YTL.

<sup>165</sup> Sabah, ‘Talimhane’ye Nato Öpücüğü’- “Nato Kiss to Talimhane”, 27.06.2004

<sup>166</sup> This first themed street project had a budget around 20 million euros.

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=120961>

street, as the Miniature Paris, hosts various French style cafes', luxurious restaurants, fashion and culture centers ambianced with a French music broadcast streetwise.

Whereas the street has been hosting art exhibitions, culture festivals organized by the cultural elite to revitalize the historical heritage of Beyoğlu under the nostalgic banners “Beyoğlu is turning back to itself”, “Once Upon a Time Pera”, as Zukin(1987) puts it, the ideology of historical preservation often shadows the removal of the street’s former residents<sup>168</sup> either indirectly or directly.

#### **Picture.5.4. Pictures of French Street Revitalized**



Moreover, nice and sanitized outlook of the street is now subject to the supervision of private security and the street is dressed up with the X-Ray machines, which puts question marks on the caharacteristics of public space. While new themed street projects such as Italian Street are considered in the agenda of the city officials, these projects save the imaginatively constructed past for the consumption of the affluent people, tourists and leaves a question mark on the publicness of the urban center.

As much that these –private and public- initiatives have functioned to underwrite the new socio-spatial outlook of as well as the spatial and social practice in their immediate target area, their further effects have also been significant in the sense that they found their initial echoes in further private investments both in restorations of landmark historical buildings and places like Narmanlı Han and Markiz

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<sup>168</sup> The project caused 50 families to move from the street in/directly.

Patisserie and in the proliferation of big-scale commercial undertakings -such as the opening of a new Adidas store, Starbucks cafes etc. and the construction new shopping mall on Istiklal Road.

#### **5.2.2.6. Initial Attempts, Projects to Rehabilitate Tarlabası in the early 2000s**

While all these revitalization initiatives have been their underway, Tarlabası has slowly turned into a neighborhood that attracted political, academic and economic interests of different actors, who pointed at the urge for its renewal beginning from the early 2000s.

Targetting to halt the spatial and social deterioration in the neighborhood, at the municipal level, a number of project initiations were made, which turned out not to be implemented. First attempt was done by a collaboration of three universities, Sao Paulo, Torino and Istanbul Technical University with the support of Beyoğlu Municipality in 2001. A joint team of professionals proposed to produce project plans by the mid 2001 to rehabilitate Tarlabası. Though the strong support was given by the former Beyoğlu Mayor (current Metropolitan Mayor), the project was never put into implementation<sup>169</sup>.

In the year 2003, another project called “Rehabilitation of The Dilapidated Areas in Beyoğlu for Active Use Purposes Within the Scope of European Integration Programmes”, was prepared by Istanbul Technical University (ITU) Urbanism Atelier. The project, was initiated and supported widely at the metropolitan level by Urbanism Atelier Unit under Urban Transformation Directorate at Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, despite the lack of support from Beyoğlu Municipality.

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<sup>169</sup> Despite the limited information about its details, the public information provided were only that it aimed at social and spatial revitalization of the area creating income generating activities for the residents to increase the living conditions in the area and the project team would mediate to find the funding from international financial institutions (Hürriyet, “Tarlabası’nı Gezdir”, (They Visited Tarlabası), 20.10.2000).

The pilot project area consisted of 1800 dwellings in three quarters in Tarlabası, namely Şehit Muhtar, Bülbül, Çukur and the project<sup>170</sup> aimed to safeguard social and spatial rehabilitation in the neighborhood with a concern for keeping the existing inhabitants while attracting new high income residents in. Resident participation through neighborhood meetings was given a crucial importance in the project proposal. Likewise the preparatory research activity<sup>171</sup> revealing the social, physical, cultural characteristics of the area took into consideration the local needs and expectations.

The pilot project was proposed to the Urban Transformation Directorate after final revisions in 2003. The project was not approved for more than two years by the municipal authorities and in turn, not implemented<sup>172</sup>. Meanwhile, ITU Urbanism Atelier involved in awareness raising activities about the renewal of Tarlabası organizing an international conference section titled “The Invisible Center of Istanbul: Tarlabası” at the World Conference of Architects in 2005. Indeed, this conference section was quite successful not only in opening Tarlabası renewal for

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<sup>170</sup> Taking inputs from the Earthquake Master Plan of Istanbul and benchmarking and complying with mostly agreed upon principles and measures regarding urban renewal policies in European Union countries the aims of the project were declared by Alper Unlu (2003) as 1) To rehabilitate the area and refunction it for culture, education and tourism purposes such as the construction of apart hotels, student dormitories etc. 2) To increase the social facilities in the area –such as the opening of neighborhood culture centers etc. 3) To increase the social services to the area to solve out severing social problems –to prevent the formation of “street corner society” decreasing the crime and youth gangs. 4) To achieve social –healthy *kentsel sızma*– through attracting higher income groups into the neighborhood but at the same time, preventing the displacement of the current residents and ensuring the participation of the residents into neighborhood meetings.

<sup>171</sup> Upon this preparatory research, the proposed short term strategy was to start the rehabilitations of around 160-200 buildings around four main identified rehabilitation cores in the project area, mainly the landmarks like historical churches, sinagogs etc., where the special characteristics of urban historical fabric would be foregrounded. These four main cores were chosen based on some other criteria upon the historical quality of these landmarks. Among these criteria, one can refer to 1) keeping the differentiation of social and physical urban fabric among the rehabilitation cores –to cover areas of different physical quality as well as include different social groups in the pilot project, 2) choosing the areas with less problematic property ownership structure to prevent expropriations and potential problems attached to it. 3) Maintenance of a balanced functional differentiation in the area to turn the tenets of pilot project into a basis for urban transformation strategy.

<sup>172</sup> Despite, Unlu meanwhile even had applied and got European Union funds for the project, undertaking the application procedures under the name of the project team at the Center for Urbanism Research and Implementation in ITU. The reason that it was not implemented, though never outspoken by the municipal authorities, can be linked to the very practical considerations of high organizational costs for its social concerns such as preventing displacements in such a deprived neighborhood while at the same time attracting new investments and apparently divergent political interests of the current administration to turn the neighborhood into an attractive tourism center.

inter/national academic debate with the participation of urban scholars from many countries but also in attracting the media attention into the potentials and problems of the neighborhood regarding its future revitalization.

Lastly, within the scope of Beautiful Beyoğlu Project, facadel restorations and installation of new lightning system in some streets of Tarlabası were realized by the initiation of the municipality. Resultingly, a number of streets and some buildings have undergone physical upgrading. Facadel restorations in Tarlabası Bulveard, Omer Hayyam Street were accompanied by very slow but recognizable commercial revitalization in these streets.

A municipal social worker, who lives in Tarlabası describes the effects of all these facadel renewals and lightning activities as such:

“With the facadel renewals carried out with the sponsorship of a private company in Omer Hayyam Avenue and the installation of street lights, the general condition has clearly changed around the area. The rents have increased and the residents are aware that the neighborhood is emerging as *“the second Cihangir”*. While passing through some streets even at nights, I became not feeling scared at all and in the avenue there is this revitalization for sure. For instance, a new music center has opened recently so has another kebab restaurant.” (Municipal Social Worker, Personal interview, 11.03.2006, emphasis is ours).

### **5.2.3. A Short Evaluation on Revitalization Initiatives**

*“To ask ‘Whose city?’ suggests more than a politics of occupation; it also asks who has a right to inhabit the dominant image of the city”*  
(Zukin, 1996, p. 43)

Resulting from the public and private interventions, Beyoğlu has experienced a gradual physical upgrading and an attached revival in its commercial, cultural life after 1980s. The cultural, social and economic changes that Beyoğlu experienced during the course of past twenty five years do have many commonalities with many

historical cultural centers with around the world: it hosts various film, music, cinema festivals, there proliferate the agents of culture and tourism industry on almost each corner, dynamic entertainment and cultural life is advertised in the inter/national media on each occasion, the real estate prices are among the top in the city, geography of gentrification as well as commercialization get widened around etc.

On the one hand, thanks to the widened geography of gentrification in the district with the accumulation of private initiatives in time, which goes hand in hand with its further commercialization, middle and upper middle class values, lifestyles have increasingly put their imprint on the everyday life in the district. Nothing but widespread media representations of Cihangir as the 'Cihangir Republic' and the further 'symbolic gentrification' of public imaginations, culture in the media that foreground certain cultural practices, lifestyles, values in Beyoğlu would give the clue about the extent of this reign, put aside -the brick and stone- proliferation of bistros, wine& dine houses, gourmet restaurants, bars, jazz cafes etc. The 'distinctive', particular rereading of the district's past blended with nostalgia not only presents the showcase of incorporation of culture and capital as the spaces of culture economy proliferate in the district, though sometimes making the cultural elite disturbed and even displaced from their gentrified homes. But also as Behar (2006) puts it, this reconquering of the city center, history by the cultural and economic elite brings with itself the discriminatory discourses, practices against the migrants, poor, travesties, Africans etc. living in nearby neighborhoods like Tarlabası, Kasımpaşa, who are perceived as 'disturbing', 'degraded' ones. This also finds its reflections on the boosted security concerns about the district (ibid, p.168).

On the other hand, the public initiatives undertaken supported the cultural hegemony of the middle classes. In the search of revitalizing the 'distinguished historical heritage' of Beyoğlu, city officials inserted culture, art, tourism-led projects, which strengthened the symbolic economy in the district. On the part of public authorities, the claims for its multicultural, cosmopolitan past to make the district a world class culture, commercial center, have been blended with the entrepreneurial city marketing tactics and the priority has been given to physical



upgrading, to facades, to what is seen. Social programs have been tailored in accordance with what tourism, culture industry would require to grow and local property owners, tradesmen, service providers, capital groups have been mobilized and encouraged either for the rehabilitations or upgrading of the infrastructure for economic revitalization. Their support indeed has been crucial to further developments undergone.

The benefits and costs of the resulting physical and to some extent economic revitalization in the old center, however, have not been distributed equally, in the lack of socially progressive policies for the less affluent. On the one hand, city officials affirmed and encouraged the appropriation and consumption of Beyoğlu by the economic and cultural elite. With their active promotion for and engagement in the aesthetization projects, city officials helped to link public culture with commercial culture as it is the case with French Street project etc. These initiatives supported and furnished the middle classes' identification with and claims for the old historical center, which is evident with extended of geographies of gentrification in Beyoğlu.

Likewise, making the district 'livable', in the eyes of city officials, has become associated with the proliferation of culture economies and extension of 'landscapes of consumption', thus incorporated an exclusionary connotation as one municipal authority put it in the interview:

"....like in the previous restorations such as French Street, once the cafes, restaurants, hotels are there in the area, the street gets revitalized and becomes livable" (Personal Interview, 27.02.2006).

On the other side of the coin, all these public and private interventions helped the production of Tarlabası as a distressed, decaying neighborhood- 'an island of decay in the sea of renewal' (Wyly and Hammel, 1999). While, in the popular

representations, Tarlabası took its place among the ‘back streets’<sup>173</sup> of Beyoğlu, associated with crime, disorder, insecurity, the neglected neighborhood has been suffering from the resurgence of inequality though plagued in the informal, precarious and illegal sectors of this uneven development. Equally important though, the impacts of these interventions have begun to give the signals for another trajectory of neighborhood change in Tarlabası putting it gradually on the map of gentrification. To put it in the words of the social worker quoted above, these interventions put Tarlabası on a path to become ‘*the second Cihangir*’.

This uneven development carried Tarlabası to the thresholds of urban renewal, which was initiated by Beyoğlu Municipality once the Tarlabası renewal project was proposed, on which the next section will focus and elaborate.

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<sup>173</sup> The term ‘Back Streets of Beyoğlu’ has been widely used to describe the side streets and opening to or nearby Istiklal Road as the places for crime, prostitution, all sorts of disorderly events in the popular media from the 1990s on.

## CHAPTER 6. RENEWING TARLABAŞI

### 6.1 Introduction

While the growing demand for Beyoğlu both residentially and commercially has been evident with the spurring private initiatives for rehabilitations and has reinforced the expanding geography of gentrification and commercialization, the public interventions has gone hand in hand with and trigger this demand and actually (re)created it with a specific revitalization focus, which prioritizes the renovations of the facades, streetwise revitalizations and lightening of the streets. On the other hand, private initiatives undertaken in Tarlabası, which have been encouraged and facilitated by the public authorities within the scope of Beautiful Beyoğlu Project, have been building-based and very slow in expanding. They clustered around main arteries with a privileged location –some buildings lying on both sides of the Tarlabası Boulevard but especially on the parts close to Taksim Square as well as the southern part of Sehit Muhtar quarter close to Istiklal Road and some buildings on Omer Hayyam Road.

Though these created an effect felt in the neighborhood with some new commercial undertakings, increasing rents and property values especially for commercial uses, one can easily assert that they have kept slow and far away from creating a significant demand for upgrading the neighborhood till the announcement of the renewal project. On the part of private agents, the lack of demand can be attributed to the low income levels of the resident population to undertake renovations, heavy bureaucracy, problematic ownership structure, and the bad reputation of the neighborhood associated with crime, violence, and prostitution. On the part of public agents, though the technical support has been provided for renovation projects, private sponsors are found to support the painting of the housings and the bureaucracy is decreased to some extent, these all have brought about the spot renovations by mostly the owners of commercially used buildings, who could take the financial burden. Besides, these public promotions all have stayed at physical

level with no social measures in them. Thus, put aside the social aspects, even at the physical level they could not reverse the continued decay, which was the result of accumulated neglect for the neighborhood by the public authorities in time.

However, in the early 2005, Beyoğlu municipality, in collaboration with the central government, took a radical step to develop and implement further renewal strategies for deteriorated parts of Beyoğlu but especially for Tarlabası. The resurgent concern has been to overcome the severe physical dilapidation in the immediate surroundings of the revitalizing commercial and cultural center.

**Picture.6.1. The Flyer of the Beyoğlu Renewal Proposal / “Dilapidated Urban Fabric is Being Renewed”**



Source: <http://www.beyoglu-bld.gov.tr/> (accessed on 09.05.2007)

Decisive attempts were made to reshape the legal basis of urban renewal in historical sites so as to eliminate the obstacles against renewal initiatives -such as heavy bureaucracy, problematic ownership structure- through strengthening the powers and authority of the local government to take a proactive role in reversing the deterioration.

The early announcement of intended renewal actions came from the mayor of Beyoğlu announcing in a media interview<sup>174</sup> that an area based initiative was on the agenda, which aimed for the upgrading and physical renovation of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası and the authorities were preparing its required legal basis.

This early renewal proposal foresaw that Tarlabası is chosen as the pilot area, where the first implementations are to be undertaken with the leading role of the municipal government. The buildings would be re-functioned so that the neighborhood gets revitalized with its new commercial, residential and tourism uses –apart-hotels, boutique hotels, residences, art and cultural centers etc.- and reinserted into the real estate market to be (re)utilized<sup>175</sup>. The key pillars of the renewal plans for Beyoğlu (and Tarlabası as the pilot area) were declared as the following that

1. It had an *area- based approach*: The renewal project(s) would be implemented within the renewal areas selected in Beyoğlu. Rather than undertaking building based renewals, 5-10 buildings, which constitute one lot all together, would be agglomerated and renewed as a single building block. The original historical fabric of the exterior buildings would be kept intact.
2. The municipal government would take a proactive role in the process *empowering and mobilizing the property owners for renewal actions*: The initiative to start the specific renewal plans and actions would be under the authority and power of the municipal government. The property owners would be called by the municipality to renew their properties within the framework of the renewal plans after getting the approval of the municipality. The owners would find the contractors to renew their properties themselves or else the municipality would help them doing so. Rather than undertaking renewals, selling the properties to investors, whom

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<sup>174</sup> Tercüman, “Tarlabası Kurtuluyor” (Tarlabası is Being Saved), 9.04.2005.

<sup>175</sup> Tercüman, “Tarlabası Kurtuluyor” (Tarlabası is Being Saved), 9.04.2005.

they would find or else municipality would, is also an option for the property owners in the renewal area.

On the other hand, if the owners' properties are included in a specific renewal project devised and proposed by either private or public agents or public private partnerships, then they would be called by the municipality to sell their properties for or else be a partner in this project. The owners' share in the project would be equivalent to the current value of their properties. If they disagree, though, municipality has the power to expropriate their properties so that these projects take place.

3. The local government would use *enlarged public authority and sanctions to ensure the progress of the projects*: The municipality would expropriate the properties with problematic ownership structure (e.g. the properties with unknown owners, multiple owners), which makes it hard for renewal projects to take place. Besides, if the property owners in a municipally approved project area would reject the above mentioned two options –sell or be a partner-, then the municipality would have the right to expropriate their properties as well. Consensus making with the property owners would be the priority but in the cases of disagreement and problems in the ownership structure, the municipality's legal right to expropriate the properties was proposed as an efficient tool to combat the problems and potential 'obstacles' to renewal initiatives. Right to expropriate in these cases was also proposed in association with municipality's public responsibility to protect the public good through preserving the 'historical heritage'

While the laws and regulations were still on the agenda of the national parliament to be enacted, thanks to the heightened media coverage of the initial renewal proposal, public releases, interviews given by the municipal authorities, newspaper headlines were declaring that 'Beyoğlu would be revaluated'<sup>176</sup> and 'Tarlabası is to be

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<sup>176</sup> Radikal, "Beyoğlu'nun değeri artacak" (Beyoğlu is to be Revaluated), 11.04.2005.

saved'<sup>177</sup> with 'a new face'<sup>178</sup>. The leading role of the district municipality, which has undertaken all preparations, has put its imprints on the framing and proposal of a general renewal plan. The strong entrepreneurial role played by the mayor himself marked the process from the beginning on. Yet, as the mayor stated, the central government has been strongly supporting the initiatives<sup>179</sup>.

In this section, I will discuss, in detail, the content and main characteristics of the renewal plans for Tarlabası in general. An account on the scope, vision and the targets of the Tarlabası renewal proposal, which framed and provided the input for the preparation of final renewal design and implementation project, which was not yet announced<sup>180</sup> during the course of this study. Besides, the actors involved in the renewal process will be discussed. Secondly, I will focus on the renewal approach of the proposal and the different attitudes taken by the local government -as the central actor in the process- towards different stakeholders in the process in relation to the strategies adopted will be discussed. Attached to the analysis on renewal approach of the proposal, I will provide the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the local authorities to the issues of crime prevention and livability, which are among the main targets of the renewal proposal. Besides, though the implementation of the project has not been started during the course of this research, I will as well cover the initial impacts of the proposal at the neighborhood level. The concluding part of the section will provide a systematic summary of the key discussions regarding the targets, strategies, priorities of the renewal initiative led by the municipal government in the relation to the question of whether the renewal plans promote/encourage gentrification of Tarlabası or not. The analysis will be based on my fieldwork.

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<sup>177</sup> Tercüman, "Tarlabası Kurtuluyor" ("Tarlabası is being Saved"), 9.04.2005.

<sup>178</sup> Gazete, "Tarlabası'na Yeni Çehre" ("A New Face to Tarlabası"), 8.07.2005

<sup>179</sup> Radikal, "Beyoğlu'nun değeri artacak", (Beyoğlu is to be Revaluated), 11.04. 2005

<sup>180</sup> The final implementation project has not been declared by the public authorities during the course of the research and it will be announced after that the approvals from the higher municipal committes are taken.

Yet, before these analyses starts, the initial task of this chapter is to identify and discuss the political, economic motives, dynamics behind the rise of the renewal proposal. I want to begin this discussion by posing and discussing one crucial question. On the part of the local government with its strong political interest and will to initiate and undertake renewal project(s) –but, also on the part of the central government supporting it- the mobilization of renewal initiatives apparently signified a policy turn after years of negligence of the neighborhood. But why now has the renewal of Tarlabası become so important for public authorities? Or, why to take this public initiative for a neighborhood like Tarlabası that the authorities themselves see challenging to pursue any renewal strategy? Answering these questions requires a discussion that politically contextualizes the rise of the renewal initiatives taken for Tarlabası and I would propose three underlying political dynamics driving the process that I depict: the first one is *the strategic fit and harmony between the central and local governments*, which stems from the fact that the authorities at these two levels are from the same governing political party. The second dynamic is the *central government policy striving to reprofile Istanbul as a tourism city and the importance of Beyoğlu to realize this vision*. The third factor that played a triggering role in the process is *the designation of Istanbul as the Culture Capital of Europe*, which has accelerated and supported the policy makers' attempts on “how to create a culture capital?” (Zukin, 2001).

The following section will discuss these dynamics and then the analysis will proceed with the discussion on the key components of the pilot project proposal and its formulation process.

## **6.2. Political Dynamics and Motives behind the Emergence of the Renewal Proposal**

### ***6.2.1. Strategic Fit and Harmony between Local and Central Government Levels: Solving the Problems of Tarlabası:***

As mentioned in the previous chapter with the discussion regarding the “actually



existing entrepreneurialism” in Istanbul<sup>181</sup>, the political party match between different governmental layers has been a crucially enabling factor for more assertive and entrepreneurial initiatives, projects to be undertaken at the local level. In the same line, having AKP as the ruling party at central, metropolitan and district governmental layers has played a significant role in the initiation of Tarlabası renewal project.

Though the district municipality appears as the key actor regarding the initiation of renewal process in Tarlabası, what encouraged and enabled this attempt has been the facilitator role taken by the central government –actually the current prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself. Resulting from AKP in power at three governmental levels –district, metropolitan and central- and the strong personal ties between the Beyoğlu Mayor and the prime minister<sup>182</sup>, the strategic fit in political interests has driven the way for the district government to initiate the renewal plans. Indeed, it was made public by the Beyoğlu Mayor that the prime minister was strongly supporting the project with a call for urge to ‘save Beyoğlu’<sup>183</sup> and was calling the attention of the mayor to take actions for Tarlabası, in his words, “May you solve the issue of Tarlabası”<sup>184</sup> as it was covered by a media interview with the mayor. This promotion later had its echoes on the preparation and enactment of the law titled Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (law no. 5366-year 2005)<sup>185</sup> to reshape the legal basis of urban renewal in historical urban sites as

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<sup>181</sup> For the discussion see page no. 9-10 in Chapter 2, and also footnote numbered 14.

<sup>182</sup> As the party members of AKP and friends from the same neighborhood Kasımpaşa in Beyoğlu.

<sup>183</sup> See, Erdem, Selim Efe, “the History is revitalizing”, 20.04.2006, Radikal. As we mentioned of it, the prime minister’s visionary project for “3 Istanbul” -one of which is Beyoğlu- does comply with the recent political interest in the revitalization of Beyoğlu. One could take the initiation of Galataport project as the first step of this visionary project to make Beyoğlu a tourism, culture center and as the second step Tarlabası renewal is now underway.

<sup>184</sup> Erdem, Selim Efe, “the History is Revitalizing”, 20.04.2006, Radikal

<sup>185</sup> The original Turkish name of the law is ‘Yıpranan Tarihi ve Kültürel Taşınmaz Varlıkların Yenilenerek Korunması ve Yaşatılarak Kullanılması Hakkında Kanun’. The number of the law is 5366 and it was enacted on 16.06.2005 by the parliament and put into implementation after it was published on the Official Gazette on 05.07.2005, see the entire text at <http://mevzuat.basbakanlik.gov.tr/sour.ce/index.asp?sourceXmlSearch=&aramayeri=&mevzuatNo=5366&tarih1=&tarih2=&mevzuatTuru=%7C0%7C1%7C> (accessed on 11.05.2007).

analyzed in detail in the previous chapter. An informal committee was formed<sup>186</sup> to prepare the legal basis for the renewal of Tarlabası and other neighborhoods in Istanbul.

As the mayor, who himself took an active role in the preparation of the law, states in a media interview that, this committee drafted the new renewal law no.5366, which was put in force early July, 2005<sup>187</sup>. The strong facilitator role of the prime minister was important in the acceleration of the law-making process<sup>188</sup>. Resulting from these decisive and cooperative efforts of the central and local governments, the law became to be represented as ‘Tarlabası Law’<sup>189</sup>.

#### ***6.2.2.. The Central Government Policy and Vision for Istanbul: Creating the “Tourism and Culture City” of Istanbul as Brand mark: Eyes on Beyoğlu***

The facilitating role of the prime minister originates from the government’s economic policy to boost tourism income to cure the budget deficits and create jobs through making Turkey and specifically Istanbul a “brand mark” as discussed in the previous chapter.

Having tailored an image of a vital culture, art and tourism center for ‘new’ Beyoğlu among the “3 Istanbuls”-the visionary flagship project designed for Istanbul as discussed in the previous chapter-, the first attempt to refashion Beyoğlu

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<sup>186</sup> The committee was consisted of the prime minister himself, some members of parliament, metropolitan mayors, the head of interior commission, a retired military judge, a civil service inspector.

<sup>187</sup> Though the law was put in force at this date, the preparations of its regulations, which clarifies the details of the implementations of the laws, lasted till November-2005 and the regulation of the law was gradually enacted on 17.11.2005 and thereafter the project preparations began officially.

<sup>188</sup> Indeed, The law no. 5366 has been among the laws with shortest time of enactment at the parliament.

<sup>189</sup> As we analyzed before, this law decentralizes the power to intervene into urban historical sites with renewal projects devised, which strengthens the hands of local governments with extraordinary powers (urgent expropriations, being exempt from public law etc.) to combat the physical decay. Though decentralization policies are integral part of the structural adjustment programs in power, it can be still be assumed that this transfer of powers and authority to intervene urban space from central to local level would not be this smooth but politically conflictual if the central level support and political party match were not there considering the inherited political culture in Turkey.

subservient to this project has been the insertion of Galataport prestige project by the central government, which envisioned the flagship redevelopment of the old port area in Galata/Beyoğlu into a cruiser port complex with residential and commercial facilities. With this project, the tourism potential of the city has been assumed to increase and the tourists, who arrive in the city, would easily reach to the urban center –Taksim/Beyoğlu- up through the Galata hills and Tarlabası.

Though the project could not be implemented as the result of the protests against it and the court case opened by the Chambers of Architects, it is still on the agenda of the government. Metropolitan Municipality underwent and still has ongoing investments in the transportation infrastructure of the area<sup>190</sup>. Galataport project has turned the eyes of investors to the area with the lucrative real estate premises and underscored the strategic location of Tarlabası since in case that it is realized, the negative image of Tarlabası would not be appealing to the tourists flowing to the city through Tarlabası and Galata<sup>191</sup>, as it is assumed. All in all, for Tarlabası to fit ‘new’ image of Beyoğlu, the rehabilitation of the neighborhood emerged as a significant political priority as is implicit in the words of the Prime Minister quoted above.

### ***6.2.3. Istanbul Cultural Capital of Europe- 2010 and The Concerns over “How to Make a Culture City?”***

Playing the tourism and culture cards to create a ‘new’ Tarlabası became stronger with the designation of Istanbul as the Culture Capital of Europe for 2010.

In line with the boosting city marketing efforts at the central and metropolitan levels, at the district level, becoming the Culture Capital has been perceived as an invaluable ‘opportunity’ to realize ‘physical rehabilitation’ and ‘the transformations

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<sup>190</sup> Such as the construction of the finicular system that would link Taksim to Kabatas and from there to the airport through tram and metro line.

<sup>191</sup> The impacts of the insertion of this flagship project are also discussed by Enlil and Islam among the triggering factors for the extending geography of gentrification in Galata. The authors discuss that besides this project, the new law allowing foreigners to buy real estate properties in Turkey (law no.5444, year of enactment 2005) also created the conditions for a new momentum in the gentrification of Galata in 2000s (Enlil and Islam, 2006).

of blighted areas' 'as the actual permanent gains' from such flagship events, that would increase the status of the city within the global urban hierarchy as the mayor of Beyoğlu put it<sup>192</sup>. Focusing on the question of "How to create a Culture Capital" (Zukin, 2001) and how to 'deserve' the status of a cultural capital, he emphasized, on a TV interview, the strategic importance of Beyoğlu as the old cosmopolitan culture center of Istanbul, which is the 'new' Culture Capital of Europe. He argued that 'opening Beyoğlu to the world' necessitates undertaking projects for the rehabilitation of the physical environment. Making the streets beautiful and safe would attract and inspire artists, intellectuals which would, in turn, revitalize Beyoğlu as a 'livable' 'cultural treasury' for tourists 'to buy'. Making this vision come true would require to get rid of the 'hunchbacked' and 'cancerous' fabric in Tarlabası and turn it into a culture and tourism center<sup>193</sup>.

Thus, on the one hand the peculiar context that the governing authorities at central and local levels are from the same political party and on the other hand, the government policy, which reinforced the modernization and the marketing of the historical tourist sites in Istanbul to make it a brand mark tourism and culture city, backed up the local entrepreneurial approach to urban revitalization as a competitive strategy. Furthermore, the fact that 'How to Create a Culture Capital' (Zukin, 2001) of Europe have kept policy makers busy with reimagining and revitalizing Istanbul and Beyoğlu with global aspirations both at local and central government levels provides the political and decision environment, within which tourism, art and culture-led urban renewal strategies emerge inevitable for the policy makers, hence triggering the initiation of Tarlabası pilot renewal project.

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<sup>192</sup> see "Rethinking and Reimagining Beyoğlu1-1", The Panel on Culture and Tourism-led Revitalization Strategies, Arkitera Haber Merkezi, and Beyoğlu Mayor, TV interview, Cine 5, Yansima, [http:// 213.238.130.152-Beyoğlu TV](http://213.238.130.152-BeyoğluTV)

<sup>193</sup> See "Rethinking and Reimagining Beyoğlu1-1", The Panel on Culture and Tourism-led Revitalization Strategies, Arkitera Haber Merkezi and Beyoğlu Mayor, TV interview, Cine 5, Yansima, [http:// 213.238.130.152-Beyoğlu TV](http://213.238.130.152-BeyoğluTV)

### 6.3. Tarlabası Renewal Proposal

After the law “Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties” was enacted in early July 2005 and so did its regulations in November-2005, Beyoğlu Municipality started the renewal process undertaking actions to realize the initial proposal. Preliminary activities and the procedural steps as the law required were taken. These steps undertaken were that

- a. The six renewal areas<sup>194</sup> in Beyoğlu, at large, were determined by the Beyoğlu municipal council. One of these areas was Tarlabası. The criteria for selection were the historical and cultural characteristics and the natural disaster risk as specified by the renewal law. The area maps, the documents, information regarding the current condition, property ownership structure functional uses etc. were piled together and presented to the metropolitan municipal council to get the approval for the selected areas.
- b. The approval from the metropolitan municipal council was taken.
- c. The proposal regarding six renewal areas were approved and designated by the Council of Ministers as the renewal areas in Beyoğlu at large (Figure 6.1).

After the designation of the areas to be renewed by the final decision of the Council of Ministers in late March 2006, Beyoğlu Municipality chose Tarlabası as the pilot area to launch renewal projects. The authorities decided to undertake the renewal implementation in Tarlabası in stages. Designated renewal area in Tarlabası is constituted of 21 lots<sup>195</sup> in total and the authorities chose 9 among them as the first stage area<sup>196</sup>, where the first implementation would take place. Eight of these lots are located in the quarters called Cukur, Sehit Muhtar, Bulbul, most facing

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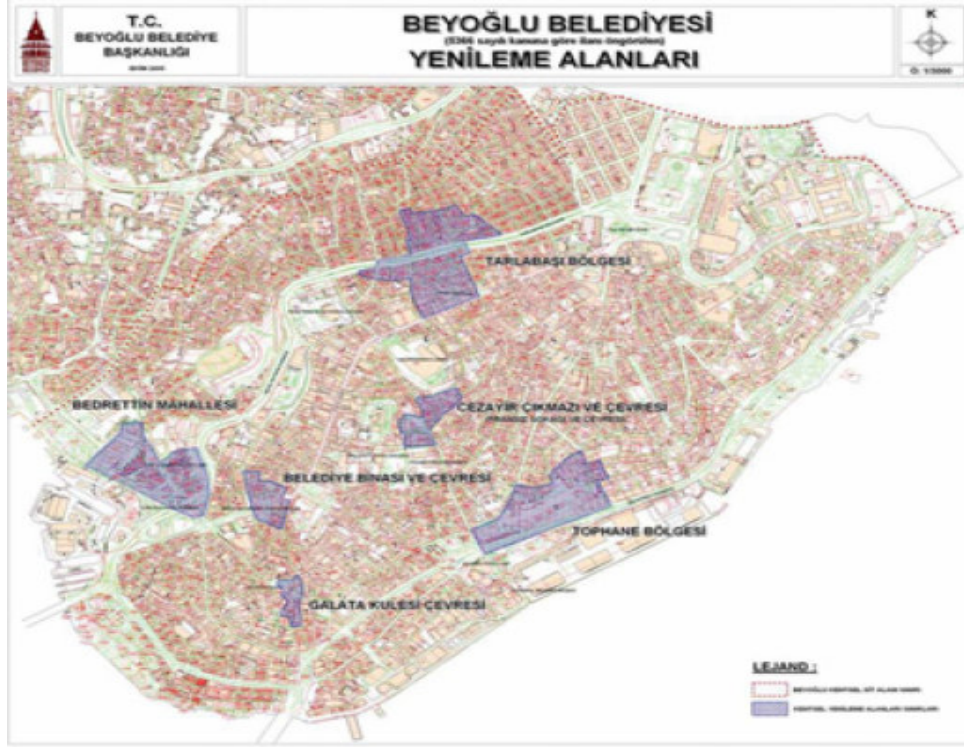
<sup>194</sup> Six renewal areas selected are namely Tarlabası, Galata Tower and its surroundings, Cezayir Çıkmaşı and its surroundings, Municipality Building and its Surrounding, Bedrettin Quarter, Tophane Area., as the above figure depicts them.

<sup>195</sup> See, Electronic Official Gazette, 28.03.2006 for the authorized decision and relevant renewal areas and lots in Beyoğlu.

<sup>196</sup> The regulations regarding the renewal law defines the term ‘stage area’ as ‘the subarea determined within the renewal area’ (article 4).

Tarlabası Boulevard with favorable locations and only one lot is located in Huseyin Aga quarter<sup>197</sup>.

**Figure 6.1. Designated Renewal Areas in Beyoğlu**



Source: Beyoğlu Municipality, <http://www.beyoglu-bld.gov.tr/>

For the design and implementation of the project to be undertaken in this first stage area, municipality took a proactive role in pulling private investors into the process to make a project partnership<sup>198</sup>. While some private meetings with potential investors took place in the municipality, meetings with property owners in the project area followed in time. In the meantime the municipal authorities worked to complete the preparations and then announced the bidding for the investors that

<sup>197</sup> Lots are aggregates of 5-10 buildings. The selected lots were the pilot project were the 4 lots numbered 360, 361, 362,363 in Cukur quarter, three lots no. 385,386, 387in Sehit Muhtar quarter, the lots numbered 593, 594 in Bulbul Quarter. The last lot in included is the one numbered 338 in Huseynaga quarter.

<sup>198</sup> The renewal law, as analyzed before, allows the municipality as the authority to devise and implement the renewal projects either itself or to have them prepared and implemented by other public and/ private parties.

would prepare the final design and implementation project and start the implementations for the first stage area.

Initiating the first stage implementation project, the municipal authorities have expected to trigger further project undertakings by private investors and/ or property owners in time. On the part of municipality, the idea has been to pioneer this renewal process with the first stage project but not necessarily to undertake all the subsequent renewal initiatives itself. This has been more than evident with place marketing efforts the authorities have engaged in. For the other lots in the entire renewal area, authorities have strongly encouraged the investors to prepare their own projects providing all the knowledge they require during the private meetings held at municipality as well as using the media extensively, which will be covered in detail in the proceeding parts of the chapter. But, the analysis shall focus on first the content and characteristics of the renewal proposal.

### **6.3.1. The content and main characteristics of the renewal plans and first stage project proposal**

#### **6.3.1.1. The Scope and Targets of the Renewal Plans**

As the new renewal law (no.5366) frames the general scope of any renewal activity, which was covered in the previous chapter, renewal plans for Tarlabası aim to conserve the historical and cultural immovable in the area; to take precautions against natural disasters; to develop housing, commercial, social facilities through rehabilitation and reconstruction of the dilapidated building stocks (article1, Law no. 5366). Within this general framework, the local government embraced a new vision for Tarlabası as a vital culture, tourism and art center in Beyoğlu, which is intended to be realized through the undertaking of the first stage renewal project (and the proceeding ones in the future).

As for the peculiar targets of the renewal plans at large and of the first stage pilot project proposal in specific, they can be listed as follows:

- Physical upgrading of the neighborhood conserving the historical fabric
- Revitalizing the cultural and commercial life in the district through adoption of new functions for tourism, culture, art, residential and commercial uses for the buildings to be renewed.
- Preventing crime
- Increasing the quality of life/ urban livability in Tarlabası

As an umbrella target, attracting capital investment to Tarlabası has been inserted as the crucial one to realize the targets above. Tourism, residence and commerce are determined as the main functions for the renewal areas. While developing apart hotels, boutique-hotels, residences, shopping centers, student dormitories etc. is targeted for the commercial and cultural revitalization of the area, small scale manufacturing facilities, crafts shops like electronics, automobile workshops, textile ateliers etc. are envisioned to be transferred from the area.

#### **6.3.1.2. The Agents and Stakeholders Involved**

There identified five main groups of actors involved in renewal process:

1. Public Agents: Metropolitan municipality, District Municipality, Central Government
2. Corporate Actors: Investors, Builders, Real Estate Trusts, Financial Institutions
3. Property Owners, Tenants, Occupiers, Shopkeepers and Local employees in the neighborhood.
4. Professionals, Academicians, Non-governmental Organizations, Tarlabası Community Center
5. Media

To begin with the public agents involved in the process, Beyoğlu Municipality is the central actor with the strong entrepreneurial role taken by the mayor. Yet, the facilitator role of the central government is crucially important as discussed before,



whereas the role of the Metropolitan municipality is restricted only to the procedures like approvals of the declared renewal areas, plans etc. by the Metropolitan Municipality Council. Likewise the Special Conservation Committee, appointed by the Ministry of Culture, takes part in approval of the renewal plans checking their compatibility with historical preservation measures and steering the implementation process as well, so as the Council of Ministers finalizes the decision regarding the designation of the renewal areas.

As for the corporate agents, though they have not taken a direct role yet, they are pulled into the process by the local government to take the leading role in the implementation of the project resulting from the entrepreneurial role and strategies taken by the district municipality, as we will discuss in the following section in detail.

At the neighborhood level, the property owners take a role as they were called for an owners' meeting and consulted by the municipal authorities about what they think of the project proposal. The groups such as tenants, occupiers, local employees in the neighborhood though (were) kept as the "silent" stakeholders so far.

The professionals, NGOs, academicians entered into the process with the panel "Rethinking and Reimagining Beyoğlu1-1", with a specific focus on the culture and Tourism-led strategies held by the initiation and contribution of the local NGOs and inter/national academics, in which the municipal authorities participated as well.

Lastly, media played an important role not only in the dissemination of the renewal plans publicly. But also it can be asserted that the heightened coverage of the proposal by the media played a crucial role in triggering the investment demand of the investors into the designated renewal areas.

### ***6.3.2. Shaping the Agenda for Renewal***

#### ***6.3.2.1. Putting the Lens on the Renewal Approach of the Proposal and The Local Government's Approach to Different Stakeholders in the Process***

Regarding the initiation of the renewal process, the role internalized by the municipal authorities can best be stated in the words of the mayor, who describes it as working like an ‘intermediary institution’, a ‘business development and consultancy firm’<sup>199</sup> that mediates between the local property owners and investors for the renewal and revaluation of the district. This entrepreneurial role involves in using local public authority’s extended powers based on the law, -as analyzed in the previous chapter- to trigger investment demand for the renewal area, in other words, to release the obstacles to capital investment. For the project to take place, basically, municipality acts as the legal representative of the property owners in the pilot project area to find the financial resources for renewal through making partnership deals with the investors so that the properties are reinserted into the real estate market.

Holding this strategic position, yet, municipality has taken different attitudes, towards different stakeholders involved in the process, which is directly related to proposed approach to renewal. The task of this part is to shed further lights on the part played by the municipality in the process. This will be done through the presentation of the analyses on the crucial questions of what characterizes the renewal approach of the proposal and municipality’s attitudes to different actors involved in the process.

The approach of renewal plans will be discussed in relation to the issues of how the social, economic, physical aspects of renewal are tackled in the plans and the expectations, meanings and legitimizations attached to the decisions, targets regarding renewal will be the focus of analysis while depicting the general renewal approach of the proposal. Besides, to put further depth into the analyses, the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the public authorities to the targets of the crime prevention and livability will be included, which are based on the interviews conducted and the media analyses undertaken. Secondly, the attitudes taken by the municipality towards different actors involved in renewal will be presented, which focuses on the relations between municipality and three important

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<sup>199</sup> Dunya Online, an interview with the Beyoğlu mayor, 14/12/2005.

stakeholders involved in the process: the investors, property owners and tenants to depict how the interests and demands of different actors/stakeholders are served by the plans and the actions undertaken so far. But, let me open up the discussion on the municipal government's approach to renewal first.

#### **A. Approach to Urban Renewal:**

##### ***1. Visionary and Physical Approach to Renewal:***

*“Is the city a product to be sold on the tourism market and/or a location in which to invest money? Or is the city a place to live, where people can express themselves, even if it is in terms of resistance to, rather than rejoicing in, the dominant culture?”*

*(Bramham et. al, 1989, p.4; cited from Holcomb, 1999, p.54)*

From the early announcement of the renewal purposes on, a visionary approach to renewal has been regnant in the shaping of the renewal process, as, in the eyes of the municipal authorities, the revitalization of Tarlabaşı lies in making it a tourism, culture center in Beyoğlu. The hypothesis is that with the renewal initiatives, Tarlabaşı would be ‘rescued’ from its severe socio-spatial dilapidation and become the ‘Champs Elysees’ of Istanbul. This would contribute for Beyoğlu to become a ‘world class brand mark’. These both are seen as key developments for the creation of a strong culture-based urban economy, which in turn is viewed as central to the economic revitalization of the city –and of the country at large. Embracing historical preservation as an entrepreneurial strategy and a mediated objective for economic revitalization, the mayor discusses the basic philosophy of Tarlabaşı renewal initiatives such that

“Recreating all those streets, making them attractive for the people again, developing its tourism capacity...This is at the core of the problem, the starting point for us....in the sense that we keep one or two days more the people, who come to these hotels, these places, to prepare the living space for it. That is the entire planning.” (Sabah, 17.05.2006, “Tarlabaşı: Favorite of the Investors” Tarlabaşı yatırımcıların gözdesi, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2006/05/17/gun100.html>).

For the authorities leading the process, the conditions of urban ‘blight’ in Tarlabası are to be eliminated by attracting new investments to undertake renewal projects in this historical neighborhood, through which the basic infrastructure for culture and tourism industry would be established. The small size of the buildings, lack of parking garages in the area, which do not satisfy the contemporary residential needs of ‘people’, deteriorated environmental conditions due to severe blight are identified<sup>200</sup> as the causes regarding the lack of investment into the area, which needs to be tackled with. The approach stays physical as the focus of renewal is not on the people living in Tarlabası, who suffer from severe socioeconomic and spatial problems like unemployment, poverty, low education, poor living conditions etc.

Though, in the discourse of municipal authorities, there is always reference to social problems surrounding the neighborhood, the explicit emphasis on physical and economic revitalization is not accompanied with any social programs integrated into the renewal proposal nor are social service provision units included into the decision making and preparations regarding renewal. On the one hand, the units under the municipality, which work to provide social services such as White Table and Beyoğlu Local Civic Power Union, are not included in the preparations of the renewal plans. On the other hand, Tarlabası Community Center<sup>201</sup>, which was opened in 2006 to develop and implement educational, cultural, health and art projects for Tarlabası people -especially for youth and women- with the collaboration of Bilgi University, Accesiable Life Association and with technical support of the municipality, has not been encouraged to participate into the preparations and decision making process regarding the renewal of Tarlabası. Given these, it is basically the units such as urban design, planning, legal affairs and some

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<sup>200</sup> CNNTURK, “Kentsel Dönüşüm” (Urban Transformation), Yenigun, [http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu\\_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586](http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586)

<sup>201</sup> Tarlabası Community Center is a newly established center, which was opened in June- 2006 with a project proposed by the collaboration of Bilgi University, Accesiable Life Association. This project is financed with the social risk reduction funds of World Bank. Beyoğlu Municipality helped to find the building, where the center is located. Though the center works actively pursuing several activities, and continous education, culture, art programs for the children and health education, literacy courses, handicrafts training etc. for women , due that the project funding is only for nine months period, the center suffers from an instability condition due to lack of support from the municipality and other related institutions.

leading municipal authorities that take active roles in the preparations and the decision making regarding renewal.

Likewise there are no fixed social policy measures, e.g. set for keeping the tenants in the renewal area. Although rent/ cash helps and transportation support for the tenants to move from the neighborhood are considered to be integrated during the implementations, these also are not based on some fixed measures but left to the negotiations with investors. How the social policy aspects are dealt can best be described referring to mayor's comment, during a TV program about Tarlabası renewal plans. He replies the question of whether they develop a new solution for the families, which 'illegally' occupy the buildings in Tarlabası as such:

“...if money enters into an area, if investors enter, the problems are anyhow solved out, How are they solved out? They<sup>202</sup> sit and come to an agreement. While reaching an agreement, things like consigning dwellings for the ones, who are with difficult circumstances, are solved out. The problem lies in that the investors do not show interest to this place. If you make the investors attracted, it means you begin to solve the problems out.”<sup>203</sup>

Regarding the renewal activities, this relation between on the one hand, spatial and economic policy and on the other, social policy needs to be elaborated further. First point to make is that, under the lack of a comprehensive approach embracing physical, economic and social aspects of renewal, social revitalization is at best expected to come by automatically with trickle down effects –e.g. with the jobs created in tourism and culture industries- after spatial upgrading. In this sense, releasing the obstacles to capital investment into built environment becomes a priority for realizing this revitalization. This, indeed, underlies the entrepreneurial role taken by the local government, who promotes to close the rent gaps with real estate driven initiatives, through which some social problems are expected to be solved. To say it with the complementary quotes from two interviewees,

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<sup>202</sup> He refers to the parties involved: the investors, the property owners and the municipality.

<sup>203</sup> CNNTURK, “Kentsel Dönüşüm” (Urban Transformation), Yenigun,  
[http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu\\_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586](http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586)

“When spatial renewal is actualized, there will appear the urban rent and people will come and want to settle here. Now this does not happen with the will and effort of the current residents in the neighborhood. We wanted to intervene in this. Through the channel of public authority, we wanted to intervene, produce projects and strengthen the legal basis for it. Through implementing one or two pilot projects, the area will revitalize, rent will appear, and it will become an attraction center.” (Personal interview with a municipal authority, 7.03.2006)

“The aim is to recreate here, also in a way that would contribute Beyoğlu people. This renewal will create new job opportunities, especially the job opportunities in tourism sector will be important.” (Personal interview with a municipal authority, 28.03.2006)

Though the primacy of spatial and economic policy over social policy puts its imprints on the renewal proposal, based on the interviews I conducted at municipality, I could depict a variety of opinions among the respondents regarding the questions of how they relate and/ or integrate social and spatial transformation policies and of how sufficient the existing social programs devised to resolve the problems. I will try to list and discuss the authorities’ viewpoints in relation to these questions.

To begin with, despite the fact that during this initial stage of renewal, there have been no social programs and no fixed social policy measures integrated into the proposal and that the units involved in social services are nor included in the project preparation phase, most of the interviewees think that deterioration in social and physical conditions in the neighborhood are interrelated facts. However, the ways they suggest to tackle with these interrelated issues through renewal initiatives do show divergent patterns. Firstly, some strongly expect that the social revitalization will come immediately after the physical one resulting from the trickle down effects. In this understanding, already existing social programs led by the municipality such as job trainings for hotel service personnel, tourism operators etc. would function to match the people participate in these programs to the jobs created

in tourism sector after the projects. Regarding this viewpoint, under the lack of specifically designed social programs for renewal, even one assumes that this supposed match would be there, one crucial question still keeps unanswered: will these jobs created –often low-paid and part time though- would compensate the work opportunities potentially to be lost in the neighborhood –e.g. small scale ateliers, street work etc. Likewise, upper social mobility chances for property owners that would be created through the revaluation of their properties in real estate market are seen as an important way to solve economic difficulties of some property owners.

Secondly, it is the authorities involved in social services, who assert the need for an integrated approach. They underline the importance of physical upgrading activities but express the need to tackle with the social aspects of the renewal in the agenda. They underline the existence of related social programs, projects designed to improve the social conditions in Tarlabası. But at the same time, regarding the renewal initiatives, they pinpoint the lack of collaborative work between the units and authorities involved in urban design and social service provision to integrate social aspects into the activities.

After this account on how the spatial and social aspects are handled and related to each other by the interviewees at the municipality, as the next step, the analysis should go deeper focusing on the discussion on the targets of crime prevention and livability. This time, though, the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the public authorities to these targets will be our focus. This would help us to put more lights on the general relationship between the spatial transformation and social transformation regarding renewal plans.

## ***2. The viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the public authorities to the targets of the crime prevention and livability***

### ***2.1. The Target of Crime Prevention and the Issue of Social and Visual Order Creation***

*“The material reproduction of urban society depends on the continual reproduction of space in a fairly concentrated geographical area. Certainly the prime factors have to do with land, labor and capital. Yet the production of space depends in turn on decisions about what should be visible and what should not; the concepts of order and disorder, and a strategic interplay between aesthetics and function.”*  
(Zukin, 2001, p. 44)

Crime prevention is among the key objectives of the renewal proposal. I will point out the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the authorities to the issue of preventing crime through renewal activities. The analyses will be based on the interviews at the municipality and other public agencies and on the media analyses.

Physical revitalization is appreciated by some authorities as a mechanism through which, on the one hand, certain ‘acceptable’ behavior patterns, social practices, values and norms would be settled in everyday life while some would be eliminated, and thereby social and visual order would be (re)created and maintained in the district. Firstly, the viewpoints regarding the ‘civilizing’ effect of the ‘upgraded’ environment and secondly, the perceptions embracing spatial renewal as a way to prevent/displace crime in/from the neighborhood are two lines of tendencies among the local authorities as I could depict them.

To begin the analyses with the former, physical approach to renewal embraced by the authorities attains on the one hand, a ‘civilizing’, ‘disciplining’ and ‘exclusionary’ tone when it comes to putting the relationship of spatial rehabilitation to social rehabilitation especially on the issues of certain ‘unwanted’, ‘uncivilized’ practices, groups, norms and values and poverty, etc. For instance, for Beyoğlu mayor, as the beautification activities get realized, “people see and



learn what being a city-dweller is”<sup>204</sup>. Appreciating the “civilizing” effects of the ‘upgraded’ physical environment, he argues at length that

“Our citizens -or people- have a psychological characteristic. When you bring the person, who throws paper tissue to the ground or behaves indifferently while walking in an ordinary public square, to Akmerkez (one mega shopping center in Istanbul) or to any shopping center, you recognize that he does not spit or throw something to the ground because the environmental factors surround him anyway. They *force him to behave in an appropriate manner*. For instance, we have Talimhane area, a hotel area. There I recognize that *no street vendors* attempt to enter in. The reason is simple. The environmental conditions have improved a lot. In this sense, he cannot enter, even if he does so, he recognizes that he cannot sell anything there, hence he has *discarded entering* there. As the places get upgraded, people begin to behave *in an appropriate manner*.”

(TGRT, Başbaşa Programı, the interview with the Beyoğlu Mayor, [http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu\\_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586](http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586), emphasis is mine).

Likewise, another municipal authority, while mentioning about the ‘future’ of Tarlabası, asserts, referring to the current residents’ daily practices, that

“S/he will not be able to stretch the clothes line from one balcony to another one or rather than sitting in front of the street door, will sit at the inner court” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 7.03.2006).

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<sup>204</sup> Media Interview with the Beyoğlu Mayor, “Tamamen AB’ne Endekslenmiş Durumdayız”, (We have totally been indexed to EU), see, <http://www.elegans.com.tr/arsiv/68/haber007.html> (accessed on 12.05.2007).

**Picture 6.2. A view from the streets of Tarlabası**



Source: Şengül, Buğra, “Tarlabası Sokakları Bir Başkadır”, [www.bugrasengul.com](http://www.bugrasengul.com)

As these excerpts would suggest, the inscription of certain ‘acceptable’ behavior patterns, social practices, norms, values into the inner-city everyday life practices (of urban poor) through the improvement of the physical environment is inserted as a ‘correction’ or else ‘voluntary’ cleansing, ‘displacement’ mechanism. In this understanding, this would promote visual and social order, though at the expense of lived social practices, and abandonment of certain groups from public space. It would discipline and ‘civilize’ the neighborhoods, people with some practices and values inscribed in the commercialized ‘upgraded’ built environment and the ones associated with consumerist citizenship or else cleanse those people from public spaces.

Secondly, when it comes to the viewpoints directly attached to the target of crime ‘prevention’ on the agenda, the conceptions of spatial renewal as a social and visual order creation mechanism get more crystallized. While the mayor states that through the renewal activities, they strive to ‘save’ Beyoğlu from the ‘hands of the thieves, pick-pocketers’<sup>205</sup>, for some other interviewees as well, physical upgrading is appreciated as a crucial way to eliminate crime and illegal uses in the district or else disperse them to other areas while securing Tarlabası from the problem. Nothing but the quotes from the local authorities would help to elaborate on this point:

“At this point, spatially, it (referring to physical upgrading) prevents it (crime) and gangs, stealing and snatching, arrogation here gets decreased. But, of course, for this district only... I do not know where the other dimensions of the problem would go” (Personal interview with a local authority –from Town Hall- , 8.03.2006)

“You cannot solve the security problem under the current conditions. There are underground passages, tunnels under the buildings. They (criminals) hide there and catch them if you can...What we want to do is to legalize this illegal condition here and if we do not do this, here the bulldozers will talk. The usage of here is illegal, if you do not legalize this, then, there stay the parking garage mafia, pick pocketers. However, under the new conditions (with renewal) they understand that they cannot reside here and go away.” (Personal Interview with a policy maker, 6.04.2006)

Another interviewee discussing crime prevention among the main aims of renewal project handles the issue with a mention of nostalgia to Beyoğlu’s past and a reference to the deterioration in Tarlabası, blended with socio-spatial stigmas.

“A suit that is bought from Vakko<sup>206</sup> should not be used as pyjamas. Here must be *cleansed* from these groups. Beyoğlu used to be drastically different district. Then it became a place for *common herd* (ordinary people) (avamlaştı). It became a

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<sup>205</sup> Altıntaş, Özkan, “Demircan: Tarlabası’na 100 milyon dolara yeni kimlik kazandıracağız” (“Demircan: We will bring in a 100 million worth new identity for Tarlabası”), 29.03.2007, [http://www.turkiyeturizm.com/news\\_detail.php?id=1492](http://www.turkiyeturizm.com/news_detail.php?id=1492) (accessed on 25.05.2007).

<sup>206</sup> Vakko is a fancy, expensive clothing company.

*negativity center* especially in the case of Tarlabası...Now what we target with this law is to renew this *redundant* urban center that is worthy than any place in the world: to reveal out the existing treasury” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 28.03.2006, my emphasis).

In contrast to these viewpoints that appreciate renewal of the built environment as a way to eliminate crime from the district, among the interviewees, a social worker stated that physical renewal activities like lightening, rehabilitations function as a deterrent factor to crime, but they would not resolve crime as long as the complex factors underlying the problem –unemployment, socio-spatial inequality, and severe poverty levels etc. - are not handled in an integrated way.

As the latter respondent, though stays marginal to the tendencies among other authorities, who appreciate spatial renewal as the sole mechanism for crime prevention, emphasizes it, understanding crime as a spatial problem and producing the spatial remedy of urban renewal to solve it, certainly would leave the complex factors underlying the problem untouched. In this understanding, crime prevention means sweeping away this severe social problem and the ‘criminals’ out of sight. Besides, existing social spatial stigmas about the neighborhood and the people residing in Tarlabası are recruited to justify the renewal actions that would not resolve but displace the problem.

## ***2.2. Making Tarlabası ‘Livable’: For whom?***

The approaches regarding how to tackle with complex social problems in the scope of the renewal agenda, how to maintain social order, what should be visible and what is not after the renewal activities undertaken, get intermingled and appear more outstanding when the concept of livability, as one of the main targets of the renewal proposal, is questioned. Here I will refer, on the one hand, to the interviewees’ perceptions of livability and how livable, beautiful Tarlabası of future-as it is targeted- would be like.

The perceptions regarding Tarlabası of today, which is aimed to be transformed, will be presented in relation to the issue that for whom the Tarlabası of future will be ‘livable’. I will discuss them in relation to each other and try to show how the visionary approach set, brings about an exclusionary, top down and sometimes vengeful attitude towards certain groups in society. This attitude is legitimized through the reproduction and use of dystopian image of Tarlabası.

To begin with the questions of what ‘beautiful’ and ‘livable’ would mean and how ‘beautiful Beyoğlu, Tarlabası’ would look like; the list contains the perceptions such as:

“Livability means *security*; there is no entrance and exit whenever you want to be there. This is not possible under the current circumstances in the neighborhood. People are managing the situation but how they do so is suspect. The property owners are not staying there since they cannot *live safe and restful*: to prevent this. Solving the problems regarding property ownership would decrease the occupancies, hence, the security increases” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 27.02.2006, emphasis is mine).

“Like in the previous restorations<sup>207</sup>, *if the cafes, hotels, restaurants locate in the area*, the streets get revitalized and become livable” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 27.02.2006, emphasis is mine).

“Livable, beautiful Beyoğlu is a district, which *would respond to the needs and expectations of the users of the neighborhood*” (Personal Interview with municipal authority, 28.03.2006, emphasis is mine).

“I imagine of a Tarlabası, where the *streets would be clean and where cafes would be located*” (Personal Interview with municipal authority, 28.03.2006, emphasis is mine).

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<sup>207</sup> The interviewee refers to the French Street Revitalization here. In Chapter 5, the analyses had covered this revitalization.

“I think of a Tarlabası *where waterfalls would fall*, where the boulevard would pass underground” (Personal Interview with municipal authority, 07.03.2006, emphasis is mine).

“Have you been to abroad? When you go Australia and Germany and sit on a square, you rest in peace; the space offers you *different alternatives*. It is so *beautiful and well maintained*. This is not the case here. A Beyoğlu, which you would enjoy, would be *full of spatial beauties*. The crucial issue is to have people to look after it, to work to set this *feeling of belongingness* to Beyoğlu” (Personal Interview with municipal authority, 07.03.2006, emphasis is mine).

“There comes to my mind a tableau, where there exist *gentlemen and gentlewomen* or a *cultural, religious or congress center*. But these are hard to take place under the current circumstances” (Personal Interview with local authority, 31.03.2006, emphasis is mine).

“To make this cultural treasury livable is to create places, in the streets of which people would *breath and smell Istanbul* in great quantities....places, where *women, musicians, artlovers* could *walk safely day and night*, breathing Istanbul.” (Beyoğlu Mayor, CNNTURK, TV interview with the mayor, “Kentsel Dönüşüm” (Urban Transformation), Yenigün, [http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu\\_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586](http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586), emphasis is mine)

To present a general picture from the authorities’ conceptions of livability, livability is attached to:

1. security concerns,
2. reaffirmation of the appropriation of the ‘livable center’ by cultural elites or middle, upper-middle classes –by gentlemen, gentlewomen, who can pay for and enjoy the cafes, restaurants.
3. the presence of cultural elite, culture and art facilities
4. (re)commercialization of the neighborhood- proliferation of cafes, restaurants, -the agents of symbolic economy to generalize it.

5. an appeal to aestheticised living environment full of spatial beauties
6. settled feeling of belongingness
7. a place meeting the needs and expectations of the users

As a tendency among the interviewees, on the one hand, equating livability to a commercialized urban environment, to the presence of cultural industry, and on the other, the approval of cultural hegemony and lifestyles, values, concerns of middle classes underline the exclusionary nature regarding what is understood from livability. I want to focus on one of these perceptions specifically: ‘a place meeting the demands and expectations of the users of the neighborhood’, and I want to pose the further question of whose expectations and needs, the ‘livable’ Tarlabası would fulfill after the project. Searching for the answer of this crucial question, my aim is to depict the concrete effects of interviewees’ conceptions regarding livability on the shaping of renewal process.

To put it first, in assessing the needs and determination of residents’ problems to tackle through the implementation of the renewal agenda, there were no mechanisms to involve the residents in the process. Rather the spatial problems due to the lack of investment have been depicted as the primary problems of the neighborhood as stated above. In the lack of a consideration regarding the locals’ needs and problems, this physical and visionary real estate driven agenda has been shaped by the public authorities’ perceptions regarding the neighborhood and its problems, needs. Thus, mapping these perceptions would help us capture how they deal with Tarlabası of today to remake the ‘livable’ Tarlabası of future and provide the clues for whom the neighborhood is targeted to be ‘livable’ in the future.

To begin with mapping the interviewees’ perceptions regarding the neighborhood, firstly a strong dystopian image of Tarlabası in the discourse of the public authorities should be noted here. The bad reputation of Tarlabası as a place with severe levels of physical ‘blight’ and as a place for crime, prostitution, drug dealing etc., is recruited, reproduced and the deterioration in the neighborhood -both in physical and social terms- is represented as an urban pathology, which is apparent

in the words of the mayor, who describes the physical state of the neighborhood as ‘gangrene’<sup>208</sup>, as “a cancer patient at the emergency clinic”<sup>209</sup>.

Among other city officials interviewed, excluding the ones involved in social service provision, this dystopian perception is mostly shared. Before focusing on this widely shared dystopian perception, I shall begin with how the interviewees involved in social services perceive Tarlabası. Keeping sensitive about the stigmas attached to the neighborhood, these interviewees did underline the severity of the problems in the neighborhood and for Tarlabası people. They rather pointed out the complex social factors –like forced migration, severe levels of poverty and unemployment, sociospatial inequalities pushing people to crime- that surround the neighborhood and the people and that require a comprehensive approach to tackle with the problems.

On the other hand, in the dominant dystopian understanding, the neighborhood is represented with social and spatial stigmas attached such as a ‘center for crime’, a ‘ghetto’, a ‘degenerated area with its cancer fabric’, ‘a center for negativity’, ‘a neighborhood full of unwanted groups like glue-sniffers, homeless’, ‘a place where you cannot walk safely at nights’ (Personal Interviews with local authorities, 7.03.2006, 6.04.2006, 28.03.2006 and the media interviews with the mayor). This dystopian image and socio-spatial stigmas attached to Tarlabası and its resident population is nothing new as we covered in previous section, but to a large extent are recruited and reproduced by some city officials. What is significant, moreover, is that there appears the tendency among some interviewees to incorporate and make use of these stigmas as a legitimatization basis for the visionary and physical approach to renewal. I shall elaborate this point in relation to livability discussion presented above and the question of who will have the right to live in ‘livable’ Tarlabası after the project.

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<sup>208</sup> Sezer, Mustafa, ‘Beyoğlu’nun değeri artıyor’ (Beyoğlu is Revaluating) based on an interview with Beyoğlu Mayor, Türkiye Newspaper, 7 July, 2005

<sup>209</sup>The interview with the mayor at TRT evening news program, [http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu\\_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586](http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586).



Though, in the discourse of municipal authorities involved, there is always a reference to that renewal plans will be realized with being ‘just’ to every group of stakeholders (‘win-win’ approach<sup>210</sup>) with a special emphasis on keeping the current property owners (but not the tenants) in the neighborhood. However, when asked about who will be the new users of ‘livable’ Tarlabası, most of them agree that the composition of the residents would change as an in/direct result of the renewal initiatives. As the following excerpts would communicate:

“We want everyone to keep at their places but have their incomes increase through the projects. But of course the residents will change. Most will want to sell or rent their places. But their incomes will increase with properties they sell” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 28.03.2006).

At a later point in the interview the same authority goes on that

“For me, after the project, families, I mean the ones with children, do not stay here. The demand of this place will come from somebody else.”

“The change that will be experienced here will be different than Cihangir etc. The houses are small and historical. There is a new demand revitalizing. And here a quite different life will begin. There will come upper income groups, intellectuals, artists etc.” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 28.03.2006).

Likewise, two other interviewees confirm the new users would be different, with higher economic social status, as the following excerpt suggests:

“Tourism- led culture and art center is aimed. Artists and students are encouraged to settle in the neighborhood.” (Personal Interview with a municipal official, 7.03.2006)

“It would be a radical transformation. For sure, the socio-economic profile of the neighborhood will change, most probably; middle classes will come since here is

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<sup>210</sup> Sezer, Mustafa, ‘Beyoğlu’nun değeri artıyor’ (Beyoğlu is Revaluating) based on an interview with Beyoğlu Mayor, Türkiye Newspaper, 7.07.2005

not that matching to the demands of the upper classes. For instance, there could be constructed 1+1 flats. Some lots could be destroyed entirely and an environmental arrangement could be undertaken. I do not think that families would want to come and reside” (Interview with a policymaker, 6.04.2006).

The same interviewee later in the interview carries this stance incorporating a revengeful tone this time once asked about what would happen to tenants in the neighborhood:

“What is to be done is to increase the quality of living environment here. Suppose that we completed the project renewing the area and give them back to the tenants, back to the residents there. This would make it worse again. The people here are unemployed; earning their lives through illegal activities and this constitutes the actual threat indeed” (Urban Professional, Personal interview, 06.04.2006).

It is possible here to suggest that these convergent viewpoints about the new users of the neighborhood are the outstanding result of the incorporation of historic preservation and aestheticisation of the built environment as a cultural strategy of economic redevelopment. These strategies bring with themselves opening the space for cultural elite and culture and tourism industry in the district in line with and spurred by the reimaginings of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası in Istanbul -the Cultural Capital of Europe. Hence, the explicit aim has been posed by the mayor to create ‘living’ environment for tourists, to beautify the built environment that would ‘ensure the return of the cultural and artistic life into the district’ and would ‘respond the already existing trend that the people involved in cultural and artistic life do want to come back to the historical sites, to especially Beyoğlu’<sup>211</sup>. All announce the privileging of certain lifestyles, values, norms, interests of the cultural elite, middle and upper-middle classes in relation to the explicit support for art and culture as the promoter of renewal.

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<sup>211</sup> Beyoğlu Mayor, TV interview, Cine 5, Yansıma, [http:// 213.238.130.152-Beyoğlu TV](http://213.238.130.152-BeyoğluTV).

No matter how above quoted viewpoints may include divergent stances from each other in their attitude towards the residents in Tarlabası and that they may or not be put into action or there may result many scenarios during the implementations, what they share in common is that it is the middle and upper middle classes, whose expectations and needs apparently are targeted to be fulfilled in the ‘livable’ Tarlabası of future.

After these specific accounts on the perceptions, viewpoints regarding crime prevention and livability posed by the different public authorities at large, the next part proceeds with the focus on the municipality’s role again with the discussion on the attitudes taken by the municipality towards different actors involved in the renewal.

## **B. Municipal Government’s Approach to Different Stakeholders in Renewal Process**

It was declared by the municipal authorities that with the leading role of the local government, a “win-win” model<sup>212</sup> would be implemented regarding the renewal activities, through which every party involved –property owners, investors and municipality- would “win” as the term suggest<sup>213</sup>. In this part, I want to question this asking who is/are potentially to ‘win’ more and in what terms, in relation to the local government’s approach and attitude towards different stakeholders in renewal activities as the key agent mediating between different interest groups. Though the process is far away from pushing forward concluding remarks about this question, I still think that such an analysis would illuminate our understanding about who emerge(s) as un/privileged in the process, resulting from the stance taken by the local government. It will also help to trace the transformation in the role of the local

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<sup>212</sup> Based on the discussion on the approach to renewal incorporated, it can immediately be inferred that ‘winning’ mostly connotes the gains from revaluations of the built environment, which by itself puts a questionmark on local government’s claim to be ‘just’ to each party regarding renewal proposal once the established power relations are considered in the functioning of the real estate market.

<sup>213</sup> Sabah, “Tarlabası Yenilenecek” (Tarlabası is to be Renewed), 06.07.2006, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/07/06/gun99.html>

government through this process. The stakeholders I focus on in this part will be limited to the major ones at the neighborhood level, namely, the investors, property owners and the tenants.

### ***1. Entrepreneurial and empowering Approach towards Investors: “Open Door” Attitude:***

An entrepreneurial stance has marked the process from the beginning on. Attracting capital investment becomes the main priority for the municipal authorities not only to start the renewal process for the sake of visionary development come true but also assumedly to solve out the problems of the neighborhood<sup>214</sup>. Hence eliminating the obstacles to investment emerges as the main task for the municipality so that the investors are pulled into the process as partners

In exchange for extended local public powers regarding the process, which originate from the new urban renewal law -such as cuts in renewal costs<sup>215</sup>, expropriations, assembling of property rights, reduced bureaucracy etc. - the private investors are expected to undertake the planning and implementation of first stage renewal project. This puts the investors in a privileged position to benefit from the local government’s authority and powers, which would eliminate the hardships of undertaking renewal initiatives in the area –e.g. fragmented ownership structure and high money and bureaucratic costs of renewal undertakings in the neighborhood etc. Thus, this partnership offers the investors the chances to deal only with a single body –local government- and to close the rent gaps in the area, which the investors would find hard and risky to manage by themselves<sup>216</sup>. On the part of municipal

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<sup>214</sup> Here the comments of the mayor, in a media interview, would illustrate this understanding that “If investors enter into a place, anyhow, the problems go away; it means that you bring the money; it means that you solve the problems out” (CNNTürk, ‘Kentsel Dönüşüm’ (Urban Transformation)).

<sup>215</sup> These cuts amount to thirty five percent of the total costs associated with the renewal projects.

<sup>216</sup> This latter point was made explicit, during my personal interview, by the manager of an urban development firm operating mainly in Galata, Cihangir real estate markets that undertaking a rehabilitation project in Tarlabası is something highly questionable and risky for them. On the one hand, this hardship is related to the tasks of dealing with all the heavy bureaucracy, complex property structure, occupancies etc. On the other hand, it is risky for two reasons, the first of which is the existence of already established real estate demand for real estates in gentrifying neighborhoods –Galata, Cihangir-, that drain any investment in Tarlabası. At the same time, considering the environmental conditions, bad reputation of the neighborhood, he declared it risky to invest in Tarlabası.

authorities, having a private partner for the pilot project is expected to help realize their renewal targets through the recruitment of financial resources and organizational capacities of the private investors attracted.

Municipal authorities have taken a proactive role in sharing their renewal purposes, providing technical details and database about the selected lots, property ownership structure etc. They have encouraged and provided the ease for the investors to develop their specific renewal projects for the lots that they are interested in taking renewal initiatives. Place marketing efforts to trigger investment demand for Tarlabası renewal involved in heightened use of media at the first hand and secondly, private meetings have been held with the interested investors at the municipality. These place marketing strategies have proven effective as large companies declared one after another their interest in the renewal of neighborhood through media<sup>217</sup>. Besides, the specificities of the bidding for pilot project have been formulated especially to pull the large investors in the neighborhood. This selective pulling of investment demand from the large companies has been due to that municipal authorities wanted to make sure that the pilot project would be a success so that further investment demand would be ensured. At the same time, the prestigious project undertakings by the large scale investors would be a reputation by itself.

This ‘open door’ attitude of the municipal authorities has helped to recruit private investors into the process as early as the project design and planning phases, which has been finally embodied with the call for the bidding to undertake the planning and implementation regarding the first stage of the pilot project. I will cover the details of the bidding process in relation to the locals’ participation into decision

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<sup>217</sup> The effectiveness of this place marketing efforts can best be exemplified with referring to the arguments made by the manager of Beyoğlu A.Ş. -an effective urban development company operating in Beyoğlu, which has taken active roles in gentrification of Cihangir, Galata, Çukurcuma. During the interview I conducted right after the municipality’s early announcement of the renewal purposes, for him, Tarlabası was a problematic and highly risky area to invest not only that there proliferate easy profits in the nearby areas like Cihangir, Çukurcuma, where the supply is low though the demand is very high but also that deciding on the function, estimating the demand for the area and the itself required for any investment in Tarlabası was demanding. Whereas this was the case for the earlier times in the process on the part of investors, as the process went on, many investors including large companies declared their interest for the renewal of Tarlabası.

making. But before it is important to give an account on the attitudes of the local government, on the one hand, towards property owners, for whom it is the legal ‘representative’ and on the other hand, towards the tenants, in managing the renewal process, which shall be of the focus of analysis in turn.

## ***2. Selectively Inclusive and Authoritarian Approach towards Property Owners: “Be a Partner or Sell or I Expropriate” Attitude***

For the entire renewal area -21 lots in total- in Tarlabası, there have been no general neighborhood meetings for the residents held by the municipality to share the renewal plans, provide the information about the new law and their rights etc. At the neighborhood level, property owners in the first stage project area have been the only addressees of the local government regarding the renewal process. This lack of open communication, indeed, has put most of the residents in the neighborhood in an ambiguous and unrest position that they have shaped their knowledge by hearsay and from the media. Given this exclusionary transfer of information, on the part of property owners in 12 lots –the renewal area excluding the selected first stage renewal area- has meant that they kept unaware that they had the right to renew their own places.

As mentioned above, property owners in first stage renewal area have appeared as the key stakeholders addressed by the municipal government. To shed lights on the attitude towards them, the meetings with property owners held by municipal government and the decision making before the bidding process should be presented here.

As mentioned before, the initial announcement of the renewal purposes was made through media releases, interviews given by the mayor in the early 2005 even before the law was enacted. After the completion of preparations to start the renewal process, municipality organized meetings with property owners in the selected project area following the renewal law (article 7). These meetings took place in the period of April- August 2006 and their aims were

- to provide the general information about the law and the purposes, methods, procedures of renewal in Tarlabası
- to inform the property owners about the options available for them regarding the future implementation: either being a partner to or selling their properties for the project that would be devised in time. Otherwise their properties were to be expropriated by the municipal government.

There were no specific projects designed at the time of the meeting, yet, the new functions decided for the area, namely, tourism, commerce, residence, were declared to the owners. Once the specific projects would be designed, owners would be consulted in another meeting to be organized. The idea behind these informatory meetings was to mobilize the property owners around the renewal plans and make consensus<sup>218</sup> about the further implementations. A crucial point about these meetings is that although they were devised and presented as participation mechanism, they kept ‘formalistic’ and informatory as talking about municipal renewal plans, ‘telling people what they should do’-‘sell or be a partner or I will expropriate’<sup>219</sup> and taking their consent about it were the main logic behind them. In this sense, they kept formalistic rather than serving as a tool to assess the needs and problems that should be tackled with renewal plans. The focus was only kept on the sharing information and making consensus on a real estate driven renewal plan in principle.

According to the information municipal authorities provide, most of the owners (%80), supported the renewal purposes in principle, though there were no specific

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<sup>218</sup> Since that in Tarlabası, the property ownership structure is complicated with multiple ownerships, unknown owners, owners, who abandoned their buildings, it is hard to take some action for renewal, if intended to do so. Buildings do have more than one owner and it gets hard for the owners to get together to decide on further renewal. Besides, the bureaucratic procedures have been deterrent enough. In this sense, the meetings did function to bring the property owners together to make a decision about their places, with the organization of the municipality, though this decision is questionable, as will be covered in the main text.

<sup>219</sup> CNNTURK, TV interview with the mayor, “Kentsel Dönüşüm” (Urban Transformation), Yenigün, [http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu\\_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586](http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?ContentId=586)

project devised during the meetings.<sup>220</sup> Here, I suggest looking at the reasons why some, though they are among the minority (20%), did not consent with the plans, the discussion of which is presented in the box below. The information presented is based on the interviews I conducted with the shopkeepers in the neighborhood (see Box. 6.1).

Before discussing the decision making in bidding process, I want to underscore one important point about expropriation right of the municipal government. Though it is mainly stated by the authorities that this power is to be used for solving the problems related to complex property ownership structure in the area –such as for properties with unknown owners, multiple owners etc. - as in the words of an urban professional, who took an important role in the preparation of the law, it also ‘functions as the sword of Damocles’ to overcome the conflicts with property owners, who would not agree with the terms of the projects either to sell or be a partner in the projects devised (Personal interview, 06.04.2006). Another respondent during our interview stated that the prior aim is to make consensus with the property owners protecting their rights and stakes and expropriation is the “last solution to the cases with no solution” (Personal interview with a municipal authority, 28.03.2006).

However, the existence of this symbolic ‘weapon’ that strengthens the hand of the local government, even if it may not be used at all, puts shadows on the democratic character of this ‘consensus making’ idea. The way this tool represented and communicated public through the media sometimes has gained a rather strong authoritarian tone. In the extremist sense, the mayor communicated what would happen if non of the options were not accepted by the property owners such that

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<sup>220</sup> From the field observations, informal talks, I can suggest that this could be explained by the problematic relations with the tenants, who do not pay them regularly or who are involved in illegal activities, by that many owners are absentee landlords, who already abandoned or rent their places or have them occupied illegally, by that booming real estate prices offer a chance for upper social mobility and that many families are unhappy about the environmental and social conditions living in the neighborhood. Under these conditions, it is not unlikely that many owners do support renewal actions, provided that their rights are protected in the plans and implementations.



“Then may no one overlook it unpleasant, I expropriate with no hesitation and no one can say a word. Owning a building in Beyoğlu is not something predicated on one’s pleasure. Here is Istanbul, my brother, here is Beyoğlu...We will not let the city destroy anymore” (<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/04/04/gnd101.html> Balçiçek Pamir, ‘Avantajım Genç Olmak’ (My Advantage is Being Young), Sabah)

Furthermore, the possible use of this right is legitimized with the local government’s responsibility to protect the public good securing the ‘historical heritage’. Considering the cases that the terms and conditions of the projects would not be ‘just’ for the property owners to accept, this symbolic ‘weapon’ would leave them with no alternative but accept the terms of the agreement. This in turn would mean the privatization of public good<sup>221</sup> and transfer of resources on behalf of private investors since the private investor, who are the partner of this public power would be the most privileged beneficiaries of this forced ‘agreement’<sup>222</sup>.

**Box.6. 1. Voices from the neighborhood**

During my informal interviews after the owners’ meeting with municipality with some owner-shopkeepers , who have their business in the project area, most are retail shopkeepers, and employees they underlined the formalistic nature of the meetings because no actual condition or project was clarified but a mention of renewal intentions was provided by the authorities. They communicated their caution about how well their rights would be secured in the process. Below I present their opinions about these meetings, different aspects of renewal process with the quotes voiced up:

<sup>221</sup> It must also be noted that the costs of the expropriations, which would be undertaken for the projects, are covered by the funds offered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism , which are accumulated through the collection of additional 10% property taxes from the residents in the country.

<sup>222</sup> According to expropriation law, if one property is subjected to urgent expropriation by state agencies, the owners do not have the right to object the expropriations but only to the expropriation prices they are offered. As well, the property values are most of the time expropriated below the market value of the properties and the administration does have the opportunity to pay the value of expropriation within five years installments. This process anyhow brings about lengthy payments, loss in the value of the properties etc. for the property owners.

“You know, municipality organized a meeting and told that here will be demolished. They asked to us ‘do you support’. But the content is not definite, they told that they would gather us again later and tell about it. but from then on, they have kept mum. It is not known yet. Some said it will be a shopping center, some another thing. But according to the municipality, the property owners would decide. Yet we do not know anything. There was a project mentioned in Beyoğlu Magazine that a shopping center was to be constructed but...” (M.A., property owner in Tarlabası, 24.11.2006).

“We asked them to provide the project for us and then we have it done, but they rejected this. We have the economic resources for renewal of our palce but the municipality does not approve this” (M.A., property owner in Tarlabası, 24.11.2006).

“Municipality organized a meeting and we went of course. What a meeting it was. They say they will renew here based on their own tale (kafalarına göre), then ask ‘What do you think?’ (F.F., property owner/shopkeeper in Tarlabası, 14.12.2006).

“It is like teasing, it not clear what it will be like, just this uneasy feeling. But I don’t sell, they caused this place to be like this, is it me to pay the burden?...There was an owner in the meeting, who lives in France, said that s/he would sell. Then I said ‘it is easy for you of course, you do not live here. It is better that you get your home new, maybe. But we live here, our lives are in here.” (F.F, property owner/shopkeeper in Tarlabası, 14, 12, 2006).

“Municipality expressed its opinions but they do not ask us. Everything is left in the air, there is nothing concrete. If it were done professionally, then it would have been told like here the shops will be resettled. You know they say Polat (a big holding company in Turkey) will make a project, you see the project there and then you say Ok, there will be something to happen. But now everything is unclear. You see it has been

told like a story and there is no resettlement etc.” (N.B., employee in Tarlabası, 24.11.2006).

“We have heard of course, municipality made a meeting in august. But they did not tell that this lot will be renewed like this or that. Hence everything is unclear... they say here the tourists would come and this would contribute to the local shopkeepers but all must be arranged, these things do not happen with unclarity....then one thinks whether this place would be saved for us. Big firms are buying up places around. If they would not know something , would they buy and invest in such a place like Tarlabası?” (A.B, employee in Tarlabası, 23. 11, 2006).

“They told us the purposes. The law says the property owner can do it himself but the municipality did not tell about this option to us. Maybe I will renew it more cheaply, let me say for 100, while the municipality will have it for 200. But what they offered just creates no alternative. For the construction costs they make people go into debts” (A.B, employee in Tarlabası, 23. 11, 2006).

“..How would I have done it? You, as the mayor, go to the people as a mayor and tell I want to end this hardship out. You ask people what they think, what their problems, ideas are. Then everyone would tell. Noone would know the problems of here better than the ones living here. ...they (referring to the municipal authorities) made the project then come and ask you about your ideas and then call this as consensus making. You (referring to municipal authorities) already decided to make that project , it does not make any difference whether you call me or not. But if you have called before you prepare the project, then it would have been different” (A.B, employee in Tarlabası, 23. 11, 2006).

Having mentioned these, the turn is of an account on decision making in bidding process. After the meetings with property owners, municipal authorities worked to

prepare the conditions and terms of bidding they devised to collect the biddings<sup>223</sup> from private investors to undertake planning and implementation regarding the first stage of Tarlabası pilot project. Municipal authorities decided on the highest bid offered by a big holding company- Çalık Holding<sup>224</sup>. The projects designed for two lots by the company have been sent to the Special Preservation Committee to test and approve their compatibility with preservation laws. If approved, they will be announced to the property owners -and to wider public- in the further meetings to be held by the municipality. Property owners then are to choose how they will (or not) take part in the projects. Apparently, during the selection of the projects, investor, the participation of the property owners into decision making was absent.

There, in the meetings, having faced the decision made and whatever the terms and conditions of the projects would be, the property owners are to choose among 'be a partner, sell or I expropriate' options. If they agree on the former two options, they are to provide their attorneys to the municipality so that as the single legal representative body, municipality pursues the implementations together with the investors. If 'sell' option is chosen, the properties will be sold to the municipality so that the implementations start. If both rejected, urgent expropriations will be there and municipality would buy the properties at a price determined by the relevant laws, which is generally low than the market prices often paid in installments.

As the crucial part of the mediatory role between the property owners and the private investors in and after the bidding process, municipal government acts as the legal representative of the property owners carrying their property rights on the bargaining process with the private investors, thus in a position to represent the interests, stakes of the property owners. However, this representation gains an

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<sup>223</sup> The biddings have been based on percentage deals over the renewal undertakings. The contractor firms, which entered the bidding, offered the percentage deals that they would undertake the renewal and the municipality selected the best offer among them. The winner holding offered to give back 42% of the buildings back to the property owners after it renews the buildings.

<sup>224</sup> The holdings entered into the bidding are renown with their close ties to the central government. The owners of these companies- Ihlas and Calık Holdings- are close friends of the prime minister. As for Calık Holding, as covered by the media, the prime minister's son-in-law was appointed as the general manager of the holding two weeks after the bidding was realized. The company as well won the bidding for Fener-Balat renewal project as well. These all attracted the attention of the media, which reflected these developments

authoritarian character in the lack of any mechanism to involve the property owners in decision making process and the existence of a powerful tool such as expropriation to take their 'consent'. On the other hand, property owners are at best offered to benefit from the potential revaluation of their properties in the real estate market after the projects, for which most of them would support though the extent of this benefit is highly dependent on the market conditions and the decisions taken by and deal making skills, powers of the municipal authorities. What is more significant though, with this real estate based initiative the stakes are on exchange value rather than the use values of the buildings, which are subjected to the negotiations and this exchange value but not the needs and problems of the owners - or residents at large- is considered as the starting point for renewal.

***3. Attitude towards the Tenants: Total Negligence or Leaving the fortune of the tenants in the hands of investors or “We will see what will happen by experiencing” attitude***

To note it first, regarding municipal government's renewal plans, there have been no *general* neighborhood meetings to secure open communication between the municipal government and Tarlabası residents and to ensure their involvement in the process. Moreover, though they constitute the largest group in Tarlabası, municipal government has not considered the tenants as its addressees in the process. This was more than evident in that they were not called to the informatory meetings organized for the property owners. Furthermore, no clear cut social policy has been developed and inserted into the renewal proposal to keep them in the area, hence, they are not considered as right holders to live in Tarlabası. Rather the provision of rent or cash support for a short term and/or transportation support for them to move from the area is considered to be supplied by the authorities; however, this is also subjected to the negotiations with the investors. As one municipal authority, who has been involved in preparing the conditions of the bidding, put it in the interview,

“Now on the issue of tenants, there may be cash/ rent support but this, to some sense will be determined by the investors themselves. Or else we will intermediate

and want this from the investor. There is nothing set yet. We will see what will happen by experiencing. But what is considered is something like a rent support not resettlement. Our primary addressees are the property owners” (Personal Interview with a municipal authority, 28.03.2006).

Apparently, the fortune of the tenants is left as an issue to be tackled in the deal making process with the investors rather than having clear cut policy to protect the rights of tenants and keep them in the neighborhood. Besides, high dependency to deal making powers of the local authorities puts the imprints on the vulnerable position of the tenants in the process. This approach puts the tenants under the certain threat of potential displacements from Tarlabası. This issue gets more complicated when it comes to the tenants with no legal contracts, which is very much common in Tarlabası as covered earlier –e.g. the tenants, who rent the subdivided housings mostly from a family member or acquaintances from hometown, international migrants with no legal document, bachelor workers, who come and stay seasonally at their places in Tarlabası for which they pay rent but not make a legal contract and ‘illegal’ occupiers of the abandoned housings.

After covering crucial aspects regarding the targets, priorities of renewal agenda as well as the approach to renewal and attitudes to different stakeholders in the process, the turn is of questioning the future of the neighborhood.

### **6.3.3. Questioning the Future of the Neighborhood: A State-Led Gentrification?**

As covered earlier in this chapter, Tarlabası, though at the very center of Beyoğlu, has been lodged into severe social and economic decline due to the direct interventions and negligence of the public authorities. Though Tarlabası has all the qualifications that would make it a target for gentrification -such as its central location, architecturally and historically attractive housing stock etc.-, in contrast to neighboring gentrifying areas, Tarlabası has kept unattractive for new investments by private companies and individual gentrifiers due to its highly stigmatized

reputation, the concentration of crime, prostitution, drug dealing and occupancies<sup>225</sup>, perpetuating conditions in the neighborhood.

Though on the spot rehabilitations and very slow commercial revitalization in Tarlabası have been experienced resulting from public interventions –Beautiful Beyoğlu Project-in recent years, perpetual physical deterioration and social deprivation has kept at an alarming rate in the neighborhood so has it kept as ‘the island of decay in the sea of renewal’.

As we analyzed, deteriorating conditions in Tarlabası, after years of negligence, have entered into the consideration of the local government, which took proactive role in framing the new law for renewal of the district, which has changed drastically the nature of all renewal initiatives to be undertaken in the historical sites (Figure 1). The impacts of this new law for renewal are summarized in the figure 1.

**Figure 6.2. The Impacts of New Renewal Law on the Renewal Initiatives Undertaken in Tarlabası**

	<b>Before the Law</b>	<b>After the Law</b>
<b><u>Nature of the process</u></b>	1. Building-based renovations 2. Sporadic	1. Renewal Area-based 2. Organized 3. Project-based
<b><u>Actors</u></b>	Individual Property owners, Public Agents	Municipality, public-private partnerships, owners, urban developers, international actors
<b><u>Bureaucratic Procedures/ Authority</u></b>	1. Central Preservation Committee (CPC) Approval 2. 2005- KUDEP legislation eases the bureaucratic procedures for the simple renovations. Project bureau was established at municipality which approves the renovation projects instead of the central	Special/Local Preservation Committee for the Renewal Area/

<sup>225</sup> During my interview with the manager of the company, which took active role in the gentrification of Galata, he stated that making investment is highly risky in Tarlabası since it is hard to deal with illegal uses, stigmas attached to the neighborhood, gangs etc. besides, well proven real estate markets in gentrifying neighborhoods kept the investments away from Tarlabası as the interviewee suggested.

	committee.	
<b><u>Municipal Role</u></b>	1. Encouraging role 2. Street wise rehabilitations at main streets (Omer Hayyam, Tarlabası), lighthening at some streets within the scope of Beautiful Beyoğlu Project 3. Infrastructural/Organizational Support for project designs: Urban Design Unit providing professional help about design projects 4. Finding the sponsors for some renovation/rehabilitation activities 5. After 2005, through Kudep bureau, bureaucratic procedures are cut back for simple renovations.	1. Initiation of Tarlabası Pilot Project 2. Proactive Role: Active mediator between the investors and the property owners 3. Extended power A. Selection of the renewal areas and new functions B. Form partnerships/issue property rights for each storey/aggregate the property rights C. Expatriate the property the owners of which would not agree on the terms of the projects
<b><u>Financial Aspects</u></b>	Privately Financed:Property Owners Small public subsidies only	Subsidies like construction outlays Tax exemptions Construction cost decrease by %35
<b><u>Steps to go</u></b>	1. Preparation of the restoration project and plans for individual buildings and Approval from CPC for the renovation 2. Implementation	1. Selection of the renewal area by local govn. 2. Formation & Approval of the SPC 3. Approval of the National Parliment 4. Initiations of the Projects Implementation of the project

Designed accordingly and framed by this law, Tarlabası pilot project will apparently affect the future of neighborhood. Will it become the Champs Elysees of Istanbul as the local government suggest? How will the project affect the destiny of its resident population? Will the deprived conditions surrounding the people and the neighborhood be overcame? Who will be the users of this new Tarlabası? Since the implementations have not been started yet, all these questions cannot be answered straight away. Yet, the initial impacts of the pilot project are felt on the ground in the neighborhood, which will be the focus of analysis in the following part.



### 6.3.3.1. Initial Impacts of the Renewal Plans

#### *1. Revitalization and Speculation*

Beginning from the early announcement of the renewal plans in the early 2005, there experienced a significant mobilization in the real estate market. As early as in October 2005, the real estate agents in the area I talked to mentioned about the increase in demand for the dilapidated buildings with cheap prices and little salvage value. Though this demand was increasing at a slow rate, even its emergence was shocking for the real estate agents (interviews with real estate agents, 3.10.2005). After the law was enacted, there began the heightened coverage of the renewal plans in the media as the result of the public releases, interviews given by the municipal authorities. The speculative buy-ups in the neighborhood continued and the buildings -especially the abandoned ones- began changing hands at increasing prices, even up to two-three folds of the previous year's values. As the real estate agent channeled the information that some architects, real estate agents, as some other individual investors were in search of buying the housings (interview with real estate agents, 3.11.2005 and 10.03.2006). Since the expectations of the property owners regarding future gains from the revaluations increased, the property values went up further after the meetings held in municipality.

This mobilization in the real estate market later in the process accelerated as some key agents of real estate market pointed out in the media the lucrative profits of real estate investments in the area. While the president of the Chamber of Real Estate Agents in Istanbul was declaring that Tarlabası would be the 'star area' in near future, an administrator of TURİYAP was pointing out the attractiveness of investment profits in the neighborhood<sup>226</sup>. Likewise, large scale companies' announcements of their demand for the renewal of the area<sup>227</sup> had a significant

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<sup>226</sup> Milliyet Emlak, "Eski Semtlere Akın Eden Zenginler Kentin Dokusunu Değiştiriyor" (the wealthy Flowing to Old Neighborhoods Are Changing the Urban Fabric), 24.04.2006.

<sup>227</sup> Among the first has been a Polat Holding, which declared one billion dollar project that foresee the renewal of two hundred buildings in Tarlabası into residences. ("Polat Beyoğlu'ndaki 200 binayı Residansa Dönüştürecek", (Polat will transform 200 buildings into Residences, 16.09.2006, <http://www.konutdergisi.com/habergoruntule.asp?bolum=612>) The holding was followed by the other big investors such as Global Yatırım, Koç Holding, Ulusoy Holding, Çalık Holding,

effect on the accelerating property values in Tarlabası as some corporate investors have began their search for buying 5-10 buildings together in a lot to incorporate their investments in the area in line with the renewal plans. As the result of these speculative buy-ups in the neighborhood, the property values have gone up by 400-500 percent within the course of two years.

Underlying this skyrocketing real estate values, the role of the media has been significant and the municipal authorities have used this tool efficiently with public releases, interviews to communicate the plans and as well the investment demand emerging in the area. Heightened coverage of the renewal plans in the media has worked to raise the expectations regarding real estate market as ‘Tarlabası to be revaluated’, ‘Tarlabası: the Favorite of the Investors’, ‘Tarlabası to be Secured’, ‘Bosses are Competing for Tarlabası’, ‘Blighted Areas, which are occupied by glue-sniffers, are to be Renewed’, ‘Everybody’s Eyes on Tarlabası’<sup>228</sup> have been headed in newspaper columns. These factors all together prepared the conditions for the ‘symbolic gentrification’ of the neighborhood, which underlie the skyrocketing real estate values in time.

The effects of the ‘symbolic gentrification’ have been for the locals more than evident with the interest of middle and upper middle class to turn back to the neighborhood, though slow. As one shopkeeper told me during our interview that

“The ones, who used to live here in the past, do want to come back here. They buy places or for instance the ones, went to live abroad from here or abandoned their buildings, want to come back and settle here. They also say that foreigners do buy

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Demirören Holding, all of which in time declared public their interests in the renewal. Among other investment demands forwarded, Dubai Powers International, an American university, which wanted to construct its campus in Tarlabası etc. can be listed.

<sup>228</sup> See Radikal, 20.04.2006, ‘Metruk Evlere Veda Edin’ (Farewell to Dilapidated Housings); Zaman, 15.07. 2005, ‘Herkesin Gözü Tarlabası’nda’ (Eyes on Tarlabası); Sabah, 17.05.2006, ‘Tarlabası yatırımcıların gözdesi’ (Tarlabası The Favorite of the investors); Hürriyet, 11.04.2005, ‘Yık-yap modeli gelecek Beyoğlu değer kazanacak (Demolish- Build model will come: Beyoğlu is to be Revaluated); Radikal, Beyoğlu’nun Değeri artacak (Beyoğlu to be Revaluated), 11.04.2005; Beyoğlu Gazetesi, 10.11.2006, Tarlabası Galata’nın Yolunda İlerliyor (Tarlabası Following the Path of Galata); Sabah, 30.10.2006, ‘Patronlar Tarlabası için yarışacak’ (The Bosses will Compete for Tarlabası); Sabah, 30.10.2006, ‘Tarlabası Savaşları’ (Tarlabası Wars) among others.

properties here but, this, I do not know” (Personal interview with a shopkeeper, N.B, 24.11.2006).

Needless to say, these developments affected the residents, local employees and the absentee landlords of the neighborhood. From the early announcement of the plans in the media, the ambiguity about the plans surrounded the neighborhood. There took place no general meetings held by the municipality for the neighborhood to inform them about the law, their rights and municipal plans etc. , and that is actually the reason behind that residents knew about the plans only from hearsay. Media and real estate investors were the sources of information for them as one shopkeeper told me during the interview (M.B., shopkeeper /owner, 11.2006). This was confirmed by a social worker at Tarlabası Community center as well underlining the lack of sufficient information about the renewal plans channeled to the residents by the municipality (Personal Interview, social worker at Tarlabası Community Center, 14.12.2006).

According to the information the real estate agents and shopkeepers provided during the interviews, informal talks, some property owners –absentee landlords mainly- did respond quickly to the increasing demand for the real estate properties in the neighborhood and sold their properties. On the other hand, based on my fieldwork observations and informal talks with the shopkeepers, I can insert that after the neighborhood meetings the property owners, especially the ones who work and/ or reside in the project area, has kept cautious about the mobilization of the real estate market. As for the tenants in the area, as one social worker at Tarlabası Community Center mentioned during our interview that “the families with deep economic difficulties that stay here paying very little rents are the ones who will suffer from this project most but they even do not know about the project” (Personal Interview, social worker at Tarlabası Community Center, 14.12.2006).

To sum up the initial developments that have signified the process, one can list them as such: mobilization of the real estate market, increasing property values, speculative buy-ups, increased investment demand for the project especially by big holdings, the emergence of the neighborhood as the ‘star area’ for future

investment, interest posed by middle and upper-middle classes for the area accompanied with unrest among most of the residents due to the lack of knowledge regarding the process. All these signify that Tarlabası emerges as a site for reinvestment, which signals a potential sociocultural transformation and functional change in the neighborhood.

Under the light of these initial impacts of the renewal policies pursued by the municipal government, the task of the concluding part of this chapter is to map systematically the key discussions presented in this chapter regarding municipal government's approach to renewal and different stakeholders, putting their relation to gentrification as a likely path of neighborhood change in Tarlabası.

#### **6.3.3.2. A State-Led Gentrification?**

As discussed and clarified in the literature review section, in this study, gentrification is understood as a neighborhood change involving in/direct displacement of the previous users by 'higher socio-economic status users', 'together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital' (Clark, 2005, p.258). Given this definition, I will here provide a systematic summary of the key discussions regarding the targets, strategies, priorities of the renewal policies being pursued by the municipal government in relation to qualifiers of gentrification process. By doing so, it will be possible to give clues about the answer of the crucial question in this study: Can we say that renewal plans promote and encourage gentrification or that gentrification is incorporated into renewal agenda? In other words, is it an integral strategy, an emergent tool for the municipal government to renew this distressed neighborhood?

#### **1. Encouraging a New Reinvestment Cycle in the Neighborhood:**

The policy makers take an active role in pursuing a real-estate driven renewal strategy, which prioritize physical upgrading to recapitalize the neighborhood, and in making it attractive for further capital investment to ensure that this pilot project would trigger further market-driven renewals in the area. To halt the obstacles to

reinvestment, public powers and authority are mobilized and shared with private investors; hence the market forces are directed and encouraged to undertake this renewal. This entrepreneurial role is significant in the sense that the situation of severe disinvestment in the neighborhood would not be halted by the private investors alone, who have found it risky to invest -though the rent gaps have been high enough in Tarlabası.

These entrepreneurial strategies have managed to turn the investor's eyes on the neighborhood putting it on the list of 'star areas' for investment as mentioned above. As has been directed by the new image tailored by the municipal government for Tarlabası, reinvestments are expected to take place alongside cultural tourism industry as it is encouraged the construction of hotels, boutique hotels, residences, shopping malls, cafes etc. and also residential use for the entire renewal area of Tarlabası. Especially the interest posed by the big holdings as covered above is important to show the strength of the reinvestment trend triggered by the municipal authorities' renewal initiative. As well, the entrepreneurial attempts of the municipal government has continued even after the bidding process –e.g. Mayor's attendance in tourism firms' monthly meeting to encourage their further investment in Tarlabası.<sup>229</sup>

## **2. Encouraging a Radical Sociocultural Transformation in Tarlabası**

On the one hand, there are no clear cut measures incorporated into the proposals to keep the tenants in the neighborhood and their rights to housing is left to negotiations with the investors. Provision of 1-2 months rent support for them to move as the only measure considered, does certainly help to generate an easily displaceable group in the neighborhood, though with the hands of public authority. On the other hand, physical approach to renewal announces that the lack of private investment in Tarlabası is taken as the main problem to tackle with and this disregards the actual needs and problems of the property owners regarding renewal

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<sup>229</sup> As reflected into the media accounts, in the monthly meeting of the Association of Tourism Entrepreneurs and Operators held on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007, the mayor of Beyoğlu invited the investors for further investments into the area after giving information about the bidding results and municipal plans for the area.

plans. Besides, the shadows over the democratic nature of consensus making process, with the absence of participation mechanisms in decision making process, have marked the process. Or better to say, (only) property owners are recruited into the process provided that they agree on the terms and conditions of the projects just to reevaluate their properties in the real market.

At the other side of coin, the explicitly put aims to create the living environment for tourists and to pull back the cultural elite to the district through the beautification of the built environment reaffirm substantially the economic and cultural elites' claim for inner city. On the other, spatial upgrading emerges as a vital objective to achieve so that this cultural upgrading takes place. On the other, physical upgrading is also expected to help displacing from sight as well as civilizing the certain social practices, behavior patterns, which endorses further manicuring of the public space to accommodate 'upgraded' lifestyles, values, norms.

Thus, firstly, the local government encourages and actively seduces the reinvestment demands for the renewal area by sharing the public powers and authorities. On the other hand, cultural strategies of economic redevelopment embraced is expected to pave the way for the inflow of cultural, economic elite, tourists, agents of culture industry into Tarlabası, who are very well known as the actors of gentrification. This promotion though is not offered for the tenants at all and selectively offered for the property owners, who would not agree with the terms and conditions of 'participating' in the renewal projects. Especially the tenants emerge as the easy targets to displace considering that their rights to keep in the neighborhood are not guaranteed with any measures fixed for all. Besides, using spatial renewal as a social control mechanism is appreciated by some authorities; to bring about the cleansing of some certain groups from the commercialized public spaces or else civilize some unwanted social practices, behavior patterns to manicure the public space.

To sum up, radical transformation is targeted in the neighborhood to actualize the new vision, which would carry Tarlabası from a severe dilapidation to aestheticized

culture, tourism center. To meet this objective, through the renewal initiatives, it is targeted to ensure

1. a new reinvestment cycle,
2. the attraction of higher socioeconomic status users into the neighborhood while leaving the question of potential displacement of current residents, users as an open question,
3. the elimination of the negative image (through displacing criminals, paddlers etc. certain social practices) that poses threats to transformation of the neighborhood through the upgrading of the neighborhood..

These targets to remake Tarlabası, more than sounds like what qualify gentrification process: ‘in/direct displacement of the previous users’ by ‘higher socio-economic status users’, ‘together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital’. Thus, if the final renewal projects are launched and implemented to realize these targets in future, a real possibility exists for gentrification to take place as future path of neighborhood change in Tarlabası led by the renewal policies implemented. This process would be one that is organized, driven, promoted by the local government.

## CONCLUSION

*“In reality the bourgeoisie has only one method of settling the housing question after its fashion- that is to say, of settling it in such a way that the solution continually poses the question anew. This method is called “Haussmann”.. by Haussmann” I mean the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches into working class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those, which are centrally situated, irrespective of whether this practice is occasioned by consideration of public health and beautification or by the demand for big centrally located business premises or traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways or streets, etc, no matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same the most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but –they appear again at once somewhere else and often immediate neighborhood.”*  
(Frederick Engels, 1975 edn: 71, cited from Williams and Smith (1986, p. 221))

### 1. Introduction

After years of excessive and speculative growth, which was led and maneuvered by the state and state agencies, Istanbul has become subjected to a policy turn towards redevelopment, renewal, regeneration, revitalization attempts, all of which have been combined under the common term of ‘urban transformation’ policies in 2000s. To examine the rise of these new policies for ‘urban transformation’ in Istanbul of the 2000s for the entire restructuring of the city has been the first and broader aim of this study. The political economic, social, dynamics that lied beneath the policy shift toward urban transformation; the associated alterations in the institutional and legislative configurations have been the focus of analysis. Categorization of the existing projects in the city and the presentation of the main elements of the recently shaping urban transformation agenda have been among the tasks of the study.

The second interconnected and more specific aim of the study is to investigate the underlying features and intents, impacts of the new urban policies designed to renew the historical neighborhoods of Istanbul with a specific focus on the role of the municipal government as the key actor in the process. Attached to this, it is specifically targeted to examine the relationship between these new urban renewal policies, strategies and gentrification in inner city historical neighborhoods. To this



end, the case of Tarlabası renewal process, a deprived neighborhood in the old commercial and cultural center of Beyoğlu-Istanbul, is analyzed giving detailed accounts on the renewal approach and the municipality's attitudes towards different stakeholders in the process, the impacts of the process in the neighborhood and lastly on the relation between renewal initiative and gentrification.

The initial broader aim regarding the urban transformation policies are incorporated into the study to set the context of the case study of Tarlabası renewal process. Renewal policies, strategies for the historical sites are only one dimension of the broader 'urban transformation' agenda that has been shaping in Istanbul. The broadness of this aim though let the study be limited with a task to draw only a general picture of the rising urban transformation policies in Istanbul. I did not aim to provide a detailed account on each and every aspect of these new policies and implementations proliferated in the city. Rather I tried to develop a framework, which would enable the general understanding regarding the rise and shaping of urban transformation policies and activities in the city, which have occupied a central policy concern in 2000s. Through developing this framework, I aimed to locate the neighborhood renewal process in Tarlabası in the broader context of new urban transformation policies designed to restructure the city at large.

Since the study is mainly an exploratory attempt to secure an in-depth understanding on the complex issues and processes, perceptions, approaches related and attached to urban transformation/ renewal, which are mostly context dependent, qualitative methodology is employed in the study. A variety of qualitative data collection techniques have been used to generate the data that serve to shed lights on the main concerns of the research. These techniques are namely semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analyses, media analyses, participant and direct observations.

In this study, urban renewal and gentrification are viewed as integral parts of wider processes of economic and socio-spatial restructuring of the city. Therefore, I presented in Chapter 1, a critical literature review on theoretical conceptualizations and empirical evidence on the new policies, strategies for urban (re)development/

renewal adopted by city governments and their relations to gentrification in a context shaped by neoliberal socioeconomic restructuring in the post-1980s. In such a context, as city governments became much more involved in economic growth and competitive restructuring –however different the strategies they may entail- urban renewal and redevelopment projects, activities have become prioritized to aestheticise and upgrade the outlook of the cities blended with place marketing and image making policies. In this sense, redevelopment, renewal projects, activities emerged crucial in the search for economic growth and needless to say, with their costs and benefits accruing unevenly to different groups in the city.

One crucial dimension regarding the impacts of these policies is their relation to gentrification, which is understood in this study, as a neighborhood change involving indirect and direct displacement of the previous users by ‘higher socio-economic status users’, ‘together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital’ (Clark, 2005, p.258). Embracing a theoretical stance that employs a synthesis of cultural and economic explanations for gentrification, I gave space to analysis on the more active role of local governments, state agencies and urban public policy in gentrification processes in different cities around the world, to which urban scholars draw our attention. Especially two specific types of urban (re)development/revitalization schemes are mostly discussed in the literature in relation to the processes of gentrification. First one is the property-led revitalization schemes based on tourism (business, history, religion themed), entertainment, into which cultural strategies have been inserted and which have been employed to serve for the global repositioning of the cities. As discussed by several urban scholars, these tourism, culture-led revitalization schemes developed by the city officials reaffirm and promote gentrification through the endorsement of ‘symbolic economy’, creation of ‘critical infrastructure’ for urban consumption and of aestheticised touristic and cultural zones in the cities. On the other hand, large scale urban redevelopment programs, projects designed for deprived neighborhoods to deconcentrate poverty intermingled with social mixing, social balance and community investment strategies are given account in the literature as they promote gentrification in these poor neighborhoods and their

immediate surroundings. The review of the theoretical and empirical accounts on restructuring initiatives both with tourism, culture- based strategies and poverty deconcentration strategies resulted in the picture marked by the extended involvement of the public/urban policy in gentrification in many cities around world.

Like many other cities, Istanbul, as the economic growth pole and the most populated city in Turkey, underwent a dramatic economic, socio-spatial restructuring in the post-1980s with the neoliberal policies put in effect. At the same time, Istanbul kept growing in its geography and population, as it stayed as an attraction center for new migration flows –especially the forced migration of the 1990s with its severe impoverishment effects. The transformation of the city has been a highly uneven, piecemeal, and speculative one, which was marked by heightened socio-spatial differentiations and fragmentation resulting from the changing economic, demographic, employment structures in the city. Not the strategic plans, programs but the market dynamics, ad hoc solutions of different actors, urban coalitions, informalities, political balances between different governmental layers have been significant in the shaping of this speculative urbanization (Turel et al, 2006). The role of the state and state agencies in this transformation appeared crucial in maneuvering the excessive growth of the city and orchestrating the unequal distribution of the urban rents among different social classes through various mechanisms. Urbanization and urban development emerged as important public policy and investment area as the state took a facilitating approach towards market driven urban development blended with the rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city and with the primary policy target to realize a competitive socio-spatial and economic restructuring. On the other hand, resulting from urban populism, which was, as well, mobilized in line with market driven approach, the emergence of squatter housings as commodities made land occupation and squatter construction impossible for the new migrants.

In Chapter 2, I provided descriptive analyses on the socio-spatial, economic restructuring of Istanbul under the neoliberal policies after 1980s to discuss the “actually existing” neoliberal transformation of Istanbul. I especially focused on

how the emergent sharpening inequalities were translated and mediated into the spatial forms with the crucial role played by new urban/public policies, non/interventions mobilized by public authorities, who entered into new coalitions, relations with different urban groups with their different stakes and claims regarding this transformation. The chapter presented the analysis on five types of project-led commercial and residential transformation processes as the integral parts of the neoliberal restructuring, which underwrote Istanbul as the arena for market oriented economic growth. These project-led initiatives, which all together reworked the residential and commercial landscapes of the city, were analyzed under five types: flagship commercial development projects; tourism and culture-led revitalization projects in the historical urban cores; transformation of squatter neighborhoods into apartmentalized neighborhoods through the building amnesties; big scale middle and upper class residential projects; and gentrification in the inner city neighborhoods.

The analyses enabled a deeper understanding on the dynamics behind and the role of the public and private interventions, urban and public policy in the extended geography of gated communities, gentrified neighborhoods and new business, commercial and cultural and entertainment centers, transforming squatter neighborhoods, which are part and parcel of the uncontrolled, uneven, excessive growth of the city after 1980s. With these project-led transformation processes in the city at large, not only socio-spatial polarizations accentuated with the heightened class based residential segregations and with the new city centers becoming unaffordable for the large segments of the population. But also urban and environmental risks increased as the city grew with both gated communities and new squatter formations expanding through city's water basins, forests, agricultural lands etc. As discussed based on the review of the relevant studies on these project-led transformations, as much that creation of urban rent turned into a major capital accumulation mechanism, the realization of these transformations worked through the mechanisms that transferred urban resources from lower to upper classes and from public to private sector (Kurtuluş, 2006). Furthermore, un/transformed squatter neighborhoods and deprived inner city neighborhoods became pressured by the rent gaps as they gradually became surrounded with gentrified neighborhoods,

gated communities and prestigious business centers as the result of these uneven development processes. In line with this, the shrinking geography of working class neighborhoods in the privileged sites of the city- e.g. along Bosphorus coastline- served as the evidence of these transformations, which secured the city for the affluent. This line of urban development squeezed the live chances of the urban poor in the city, especially for newcomers, who were forced to migrate and did have no easy access to entirely commercialized housing markets.

## **2. Summary and Evaluation of the Research Findings**

Let me provide a summary and evaluation of the key research findings presenting them under the relevant research questions of the study.

### **Main Research Question 1:**

How can we explain the rise of new urban policies, strategies for urban transformation in Istanbul in 2000s?

In 2000s, Istanbul became subjected to transformations this time with the shift in policy approach from leading excessive growth towards managing ‘urban transformation’. In the Chapter 4, I explored the rise of the new policies for the ‘urban transformation’ in Istanbul of the 2000s. The general aim was to understand the context of and the rationale behind the shift in urban policy approach.

**Sub-question 1:** What are the political, social, economic dynamics behind the shift in urban policy approach towards urban transformation in 2000s?

Analysis on political, economic, social dynamics behind this policy shift emphasized the factors such as

1. Accumulated problems of excessive and uncontrolled growth, which formed the widespread acceptance that the city needed an urgent transformation
2. City reached to its geographical limits, which triggered the efforts for transformation of the existing built stocks.
3. European Union integration process, which put further conditions in line with which the urbanization and urban policies had to be altered.

4. Central government's decisive attitude to make urban redevelopment attractive for undertaking entrepreneurial strategies to displace the crisis condition, which increased the real estate sector's interests in the issue.

The latter point is indeed an apparent feature of the housing and urban policies after 2000s, mainly during AKP's (Justice and Development Party) term of office. The investigation into these policies has led the conclusion that sharpening market driven approach in housing and urban policies has marked the era, which has signaled the further retreat of the state from its already weakening populist political attitude. As the analyses pointed out, on the one hand, the policies have been mobilized to make attractive the urban (re)development sector for the inter/national investments to recapitalize on urban space as the crisis displacement and economic growth mechanism. In line with this, in this period, urban transformation emerged as a mediated objective on the way to economic growth.

**Sub-question 2:** What are the alterations undertaken in the institutional and legislative configurations to form the basis of urban transformation activities?

'Urban transformation' projects, strategies entered into the urban political realm in 1999 as a bulk agenda with the pioneering visionary urban program called 'Istanbul Vision 2023: Mega Urban Transformation Projects', which was followed by strategic research activities, realignments in the institutional and legislative configurations to form the basis of urban transformation activities. As I discussed in detail, institutional reconfiguration has been marked by the internal restructuring of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and activation of some housing and planning institutions, centers such as IMP, Kiptaş, TOKİ, İşat etc. -each involved in different types of transformation and housing projects, plans in the city. Accompanying this, 2000s witnessed the accelerated efforts to prepare the legal infrastructure of urban transformation, which has been marked by the inflation in the laws and draft laws prepared –and some enacted – for further implementations. Among these legislative documents, the new urban renewal law was successfully enacted in 2005, which regulates the urban renewal activities to be undertaken in historical sites of the city. The analyses on this law yielded the conclusions that the law is signified by its one-

sided physical focus, an encouraging approach to investors and it does not provide a framework, which ensures the participation and involvement of the urban citizens into decision making for and implementation of renewal activities.

**Sub-question 3:** How can we categorize various urban transformation projects, proposals in the city?

Besides putting lights on the realignments in legislative and institutional configuration regarding transformation activities, this study aimed to make a categorization regarding the several projects in the city, which all in all have been proposed under the common denominator ‘urban transformation’ though they have different scopes, aims etc. To secure a clearer understanding on different types of projects, their scopes, relevant laws and actors involved, based on the analysis, I categorized the existing projects, proposals into four main types: namely, transformation projects for squatter neighborhoods and neighborhoods with high levels of earthquake risk; renewal projects for the historical sites of the city, flagship prestige projects for mainly the landmark places in the city; and fourthly the transformation projects for industrial sites.

**Sub-question 4:** What are the main elements of the urban transformation agenda, which has been shaping in this period?

Based on the further inquiry into the main features and elements of the shaping urban transformation agenda, which encompasses all these different transformation projects, activities, I argued that

1. Transformation policies, strategies for the city have revolved around the targets to reposition the city as a global one realizing a visionary and planned redevelopment. To alter Istanbul’s industrial base the new visions, trajectories embraced are ‘World culture city’, ‘Informational city’ and ‘European City’
2. Through urban transformation projects, as the new forms of intervention into the urban space, existing economic and residential hierarchies in the city are being rewritten. This reshaping so far has been realized in a way that urban cores,

prospective attraction centers are allocated on behalf of economically prosperous functions or people.

3. In line with deindustrialization, creation of heritage and culture tourism in historical parts of the city and advanced services, high-tech industries in the city at large is targeted to refashion the city's economic base. Inline with these proposed restructurings, dilapidated historical inner city neighborhoods and un/transformed squatter neighborhoods, which are already pressed by the rent gaps, are now being or else will be transformed with the inserted projects by public initiatives. However, these projects downgrade the social aspects of urban transformation as they are designed with one sided physical focus blended with place marketing efforts to involve investors into the process. Thus, the rhetoric of making Istanbul a global city, prevention of urban and environmental risks and preservation of historical assets of the city operate as the legitimizing basis of the transformation projects, through which the uneven redevelopment of the city is being rewritten.

4. The social aspects of these urban transformation processes are downgraded at best to the resettlement arrangements, which transfers mostly low income urban citizens from the new 'attraction centers' as they are designated, to fringes, unattractive parts of the city. This does not only increase the class based residential segregations in the city securing the privileged sites for the affluent and prosperous functions. On the other hand, these relocation arrangements totally ignore the functioning of the established neighborhood solidarity networks and informal mechanisms, which protect the vulnerable groups against the severe conditions of poverty. Through resettlements in different parts of the city, these networks are threatened to be dissolved, which potentially leaves the vulnerable groups deprived of the protection of informal mechanisms against poverty. From a broader perspective, the urban citizens' rights to housing, to decision making regarding renewal are discarded together with their survival chances in the city.

### **Main Research Question 2:**

What are the underlying features and intents of the urban renewal proposal for Tarlabası?



After depicting this general picture of urban transformation policies in the city at large, this research study has put its lens on one of the four types of urban transformation projects for further investigation: urban renewal projects designed to restructure the historical inner city neighborhoods, the pioneer of which has been the project proposal for Tarlabası, deprived inner city neighborhood in the old commercial and culture center of Beyoğlu.

After years of disinvestment, socio-spatial deprivation and negligence, Tarlabası has recently entered into the agenda of the public authorities as a new site for urban renewal. The study investigated into this shift in urban policy approach and Chapter 4 and 5 explored into the new urban renewal policies, strategies with the case study of Tarlabası renewal process, which has been initiated by the district municipality. Understanding the dynamics and features of and the part played by different actors –especially the municipality- within the process as well as its initial impacts were the focus of the investigation throughout these chapters.

Firstly, the today of the neighborhood was pictured with full accounts on the physical and socio-demographic characteristics of Tarlabası. As the analyses in these parts yielded, severe levels of physical dilapidation signifies Tarlabası and the social geography of the neighborhood is marked by its heterogeneous population, which suffers from advanced levels of poverty, the impacts of internal and international migration especially from the impoverishment effects of forced migration concentrated into the neighborhood. The central location of the neighborhood, which offers easy access to informal labor markets in the center, cheap rent levels, available abandoned building stock underlie the existence of very diverse and the least privileged groups in the neighborhood: Roma people, forcibly migrated Kurdish families, international migrants, old migrants from several different cities around the country, marginal groups like sex laborers, illegal groups such as drug dealers etc. as well the single men, who has transitory residence in the neighborhood during some months they come and work in the city. The concentration of these very diverse groups in the neighborhood actually is the factor that lies beneath the circulation and reproduction of its bad reputation in the popular accounts as a neighborhood for crime, prostitution, illegal activities etc. This

stigmatization works to deepen and repeat the perpetuation of the poverty and deprivation conditions.

The contemporary conditions in Tarlabası are the product of uneven development through time, which deepened after 1980s under the neoliberal policies. In this respect, the analyses showed how contemporary Tarlabası was produced as a dilapidated, deprived, stigmatized neighborhood right at the heart of the revitalizing center surrounded with the gentrified neighborhoods as the result of uneven development through time. Through depicting this process, I tried to show the drastic shift in policy approach from thorough neglect to urban renewal blended with city marketing attempts.

Let me summarize the further main arguments and findings regarding the case study of Tarlabası. I will present them in the sequence of the chapters and with the relevant questions they are attached to: the political dynamics behind the emergence of the renewal proposal for Tarlabası, the renewal approach of the proposal, perceptions of the local authorities regarding the renewal plans in relation to crime prevention and livability targets, municipal attitudes' towards different stakeholders in renewal, impacts of the process and its relation to gentrification.

**Sub-question 1:** What are the targets, visions and strategies adopted in the proposal?

The renewal proposal for Tarlabası was discussed firstly with the political contingencies that lied beneath the current attention or mobilization of urban renewal initiatives for Tarlabası as they were the political dynamics of

1. Strategic party fit and political harmony between local and central governments, which enabled the entrepreneurial and radical initiatives to be undertaken at the district level
2. Central government policy to create Istanbul as a brand mark for the city's global positioning as a tourism and culture center, for which Beyoğlu has a significant role

3. Triggering role of Istanbul's designation as a "culture capital" of Europe, which has been viewed as an invaluable chance for Beyoğlu as the old cosmopolitan culture center to reopen itself to world after revitalization initiatives.

While these all pointed out that tourism, culture and arts-led renewal initiatives emerged as the way out for the global re-positioning, Tarlabası has took its place among the six renewal areas in Beyoğlu designated by the municipality following the enactment of urban renewal law, where the pilot project would be deployed. The targets of the renewal plans included the physical upgrading, crime prevention, increasing the livability and the revitalization of the cultural and commercial life in the neighborhood. Through the insertion of cultural strategies into urban renewal and putting their relation to the ambitions for becoming the Culture Capital of Europe, the visionary revitalization to turn Tarlabası into a cultural core is the main aim of the renewal proposal, indeed.

**Sub-question 2:** What characterizes the renewal approach of the proposal?

The investigation of the renewal proposal is yielded the conclusion that it is featured by a visionary, physical and one-sided approach to renewal. Renewal proposal for Tarlabası has been marked by a visionary approach as to turn the neighborhood into a "new" tourism, culture center in Beyoğlu and to make it "Champs Elyse" of Istanbul has been at the heart of the plans. This has been proposed to be a must for the creation of a strong tourism and culture-based urban economy through which economic revitalization would be attained. As the culture is mobilized as a base for economy, which is marked by the cultural strategies incorporated into the renewal plans, historical preservation is embraced as an entrepreneurial, image-making strategy by the municipal government to create the 'critical infrastructure' for urban consumption all the way through promoting the intensification of the symbolic economy in the district. The latter announces the embracement of historical renewal as a mediated objective for economic revitalization, which is the supposed outcome of the renewal initiatives undertaken by the municipality as is the case with many other cities around the world (Swygedouw et al, 2002).

Yet, this visionary approach has stayed one-sided with that physical rehabilitation of the neighborhood with real estate driven initiatives has been taken as the priority. Realizing the visionary development in the neighborhood passes through attracting new investments into the area in the eyes of the authorities, along which the entrepreneurial role is embraced to halt the reasons behind the disinvestment. Hence, it is not the people living in Tarlabası, who suffers from the severe conditions of economic, social-spatial deprivation that the renewal plans focus on rather the lack of investment is targeted to be dealt with. This physical approach has been commensurate with that no social policies, programs has been integrated into the culture and tourism-based urban renewal scheme and no fixed measures were undertaken to keep the current population of Tarlabası in the area while improving their living conditions. Though there is always reference to social revitalization as the part of the renewal initiative, under the lack of an integrated approach, social revitalization is expected to come by after economic and physical revitalization through trickle down effects. Regarding the latter, as discussed earlier in the literature review part, the realization of these trickle down effects –such as job creation, increased tourism income etc. - has been highly uncertain in similar projects in other cities (see Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Rodriguez, et al., 2001; Zukin, 1995 among others). Thus, amalgamation of one-sided physical approach to renewal not only leaves the social policy issues to the dynamics of market mechanism but also downgrades social problems to spatial level as I will refer below with the issue of crime once again.

Even though the realization of trickle down effects is taken for granted, there stays the open ended question of whether the created jobs in the area would compensate the work opportunities potentially to be lost in the neighborhood or not -such as small scale ateliers, street work etc. - as the result of functional change or else the displacement of these people from the area. Furthermore, there is no fixed policy to match the ones, who would potentially lose their jobs in the neighborhood as the result of the renewal activities, to these supposedly to be created new job opportunities.

**Sub-question 3.** What are the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the local authorities to the issues of crime prevention and livability, which are among the main targets of the renewal proposal?

The investigation into the viewpoints, meanings, legitimizations attached by the authorities to the targets of crime prevention and livability has yielded the depiction of some tendencies among the respondents. To begin with the crime prevention, physical revitalization is appreciated by some authorities as a mechanism to (re)create and maintain social and visual order in the neighborhood. The first tendency among the respondents has been depicted as giving credit to ‘civilizing’ effects of the upgraded built environment, which is viewed and inserted as a ‘correction’, ‘voluntary cleansing’, and displacement mechanism though at the expense of lived social practices and abandonment of certain groups from the public space. Secondly, conceptions regarding spatial renewal as a social order creation mechanism get vivid with the deployment of viewpoints on that physical upgrading is appreciated as a way to eliminate and displace crime, illegal uses, and criminals from the district. Leaving aside one social worker’s ideas, who argued that physical renewal would not be enough to resolve the crime, in these conceptions, inscription of certain values, practices into the everyday life practices and sweeping away severe problem of crime and criminals out of sight lie at the heart of upgrading the image of the neighborhood. This strengthens the tendency to downgrade this severe social problem to spatial level and besides, is used as a legitimization basis for the renewal initiatives as it fuels more the boosted security concerns in the district.

As for the perceptions of the authorities regarding livability and how livable Tarlabası would be like in the future, livability is attached to security concerns, re-commercialization of the neighborhood with the proliferation of the agents of symbolic economy, approval of cultural hegemony, lifestyles of the middle classes, cultural elites etc. Once the question of for whom Tarlabası would be livable concerned, our inquiry has shown that most of the authorities do agree and actively and or passively promote that the socio-economic profile of the neighborhood would change after the renewal activities.

Indeed, cultural strategies of economic development incorporated into the plans such as the historic preservation and aestheticisation of the built environment function as a call for cultural and economic elites “back” to this old cultural and commercial center. This finds its reflection on and actually stems from the conceptions of ‘livability’, which implicitly reaffirm the elites’ re-appropriation and consumption of the city center. This reaffirmation works to support and prioritize the certain behavior patterns, social practices, norms and lifestyles, values that would be inscribed into spatial and social practice in the neighborhood. Tying this latter point to the viewpoints that value spatial renewal as a way to create social and visual order in the neighborhood, another in tandem inference would be made further: as tourism and culture are incorporated as the progenitor of the further renewal activities to enhance the image of Tarlabası, the visible presence of the elements, groups that are not compatible with the ‘new’ livable Tarlabası of future are to be eliminated from the sight. These all converge under the city marketing endeavors to re-image and brand mark Beyoğlu and Tarlabası as the prestigious culture and art centers in Istanbul as the Culture Capital of Europe.

**Sub-question 4:** What characterizes the attitudes taken by the municipal government towards different actors/stakeholders involved in renewal?

As for another finding, holding a strategic position in the process, municipal authorities have taken different attitudes, approaches towards different stakeholders involved in the process. On the one hand, an entrepreneurial and empowering approach to investors is embraced to secure and release the obstacles to capital investments. This involved in pulling investors into the process through providing the ease, sharing the technical information, making them partner to the public powers. This encouraging attitude puts the investors in a privileged position to benefit from the local government’s authority and powers to eliminate the hardships of taking investments in the area and tailor the shaping of the projects to meet their sectoral and locational needs through the renewal activities in the area (McLeod, 2002). Thus, the already concentrated nature of investments in the downtown locations like Beyoğlu is getting intensified through the renewal initiative, which

brings about the reworking and further strengthening of the uneven development in the city at large.

At the other side of the coin though, the lack of open communication and participation mechanisms to involve the neighborhood population into renewal process was a significant factor in the shaping of the entire process. At the neighborhood level, no general meetings were organized to share the plans publicly. On the one hand, authorities do prioritize consensus making with the property owners mobilizing them around the renewal plans, yet with a top down and selectively inclusive attitude. The meetings with property owners kept formalistic as the municipality disseminated the plans and these meetings were only inclusive for the property owners within the pilot projects area. The bidding process has been realized with no consultation even to the property owners but the decisions regarding the new functions, uses have been left to the interests of the market agents.

As for local government's attitude towards tenants, though they are the most vulnerable group, tenants are not considered as actual right holders, addressees in the renewal plans. Hence they were totally excluded from the process. Their situation is subjected to negotiations under the lack of any social measure set to protect their rights and stay in the neighborhood. The lack of properly defined participation mechanisms for the planning, decision making phases of renewal and instead the embracement of top-down, exclusionary approach, put dark question marks on the distribution of costs and benefits of the renewal. Attached question is just that for whom the neighborhood is to be revitalized if the immediate users are not involved in these processes and whose needs are to be fulfilled if there is no mechanism to get to understand the needs and demands of the residents in Tarlabası.

### **Main Research Question 3:**

Can we discuss that municipality's renewal plans for Tarlabası encourage/ promote gentrification?

I tried to answer this main question through the innerconnected analyses regarding two sub-questions:

**Sub-question 1:** What are the initial impacts of the renewal plans in the neighborhood?

Though the renewal process is still in its very early phases, the study investigated the initial impacts of the renewal plans at the neighborhood level. To say the crucial finding regarding this investigation first, the entire picture depicted from the early influences of the renewal initiative, indicates a path of neighborhood change which would be potentially marked by a radical sociocultural transformation, functional change and revaluation in the neighborhood. Among these impacts there explored: mobilization of the real estate market, increasing property values, speculative buy-ups, increased investment demand for the project especially by big holdings, the emergence of the neighborhood as the ‘star area’ for future investment, interest posed by middle and upper-middle classes for the area accompanied with unrest among most of the residents due to the lack of knowledge regarding the process.

The sharpest impact has been the mobilization of the real estate markets, which is marked by the speculative increases in the property values up to 4-5 folds of the previous year levels within the course of two years. From my first exploratory visit to Tarlabası on, the steady increases have continued as the speculative buy-ups resurged from the subsequent developments within the renewal process. The striking and unimaginable development for such a deprived and stigmatized neighborhood as Tarlabası has been that it took its place as the ‘star area’ for future investment as it has been pointed out by the leading actors in the real estate sector.

As another point to emphasize regarding the process, the role of the media can easily be argued to be significant in raising expectations in the real estate market and this has been triggered by the efficient and heightened use of the media by the municipality to disseminate their renewal plans and create investment demand for the renewal, which lied beneath the mobilization of the real estate markets. News headings like “Everybody’s Eyes on Tarlabası”, “Tarlabası to be secured”,



“Tarlabaşı: The Favorite of Investors”, needless to say, help to prepare the ground for the ‘symbolic gentrification’ of the neighborhood.

This has been accompanied by the emerging -though still weak interest- posed by middle and upper-middle class people and/or absentee landlords for the neighborhood during the process. Needless to say, this speculative development through the working of the real estate market, in general, decreases the life chances in the center for the urban poor of Tarlabaşı, as the low levels of rents and property prices have been among their crucial survival strategies against the heavy conditions of the poverty they are surrounded with. Moreover, the unrest among the residents has stemmed from the lack of proper information disseminated by the municipality for the entirety of the renewal area residents and the media accounts and real estate market agents channeling the hearsay about the plans have constituted the background of the uncertainty in the neighborhood. Shortly, initiation of the renewal process by the municipal government has served for the emergence of speculative endeavor and expectations in the real estate market marking Tarlabaşı as a new site for reinvestment, whereas the same process put the residents in an ambiguous position about the future of the neighborhood and their residence there, while some even had no idea about the developments.

Given these impacts, I then searched for the answer of the crucial research question in this study:

**Sub-question 2:** Considering these impacts together with the priorities, aims of the proposal, can we say that gentrification is promoted by the authorities?

As I discussed from the very beginning, gentrification is understood in this study as a neighborhood change involving in/direct displacement of the previous users by ‘higher socio-economic status users’, ‘together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital’ (Clark, 2005, p.258). I provided the systematic summary of the key findings and arguments in this research in relation to what qualifies gentrification as a distinct path of neighborhood change such that:

1. Municipal government encourages actively for a new reinvestment cycle pursuing a real-estate driven renewal strategy. Private investors are made partners to the public authority and powers to reverse the conditions of disinvestment, which is assumed to be the main problem of the neighborhood. The municipal entrepreneurial stance turns a very risky investment, which the private sector would not take even though the rent gaps are high enough, into an invaluable one.

2. This new reinvestment cycle is promoted to take place along culture and tourism industry as to turn Tarlabası into an aestheticised tourism and culture center is targeted through this transformation. With the cultural strategies of economic development employed in the plans, a drastic socio-cultural change is encouraged in the neighborhood with the expected inflow of cultural, economic elite, tourists and the various actors involved in culture industry, which are all well known agents of gentrification. The appeal to bring culture elite back to the neighborhood, which is posed in line with the search of how to make a culture capital, targets to reopen the neighborhood for the appropriation of the middle and upper middle classes. This is reflected in the local authorities' perceptions of livability, which revolved around security concerns, the presence of cultural elite, culture and art facilities, recommercialization of the neighborhood with the proliferation of the agents of symbolic economy. Furthermore, the viewpoints of the local authorities that perceive spatial renewal as a social and visual order creation mechanism do potentially point the future elimination of the unwanted groups from the neighborhood.

3. The facts that the renewal proposal stays physical and does not incorporate any clear cut measure to keep the existing residents, tenants in the area and that their rights to affordable housing is left to negotiations do generate easily displaceable groups in the neighborhood. Just the rent and or cash supports are considered for them to move out from the neighborhood. Even though the first implementation is restricted with only nine lots in Tarlabası, it is a well proven fact that the functioning of the real estate and the diffusion effect of these revitalizations into larger areas would put these vulnerable groups under the threat of easy

displacement. If high share of the tenants in the area 61, 81%; 71, 21%; 76, 59% for Bülbül, Çukur Şehit Muhtar respectively- is considered, huge amount of people under the threat of potential displacement get vivid. Besides, if occupancies, tenants with no legal contracts, irregular tenants are considered, the problem gets deeper since they have no legal position, they will not be covered apparently even under the cash rent support schemes if made available for the tenants to move out.

The conditions of disinvestment appear to change resulting from the district municipality's intervention into area, designating it a renewal site and launching the renewal proposal thereafter. After years of negligence, this revitalization scheme encourages a drastic socio-cultural and economic change in the neighborhood. However, the effects of this revitalization on the low income vulnerable groups are uncertain leaving them under the threat of potential displacement.

At the beginning, it may be expected that the project gets welcomed by some of the property owners, who would be in favor of the revaluation of their properties - provided that they agree on the terms and conditions of the project. Even though they do not agree, municipality's right to expropriate the properties potentially would act as the "sword of Demokles" to have their "consent" on the implementations. In the long run, though, the property owners, who lack the sufficient income to renew their places and stay in Tarlabası after the project would sell their places to the investors and move away from the neighborhood.

Moreover, the renewal scheme is supported by the popular media, which announces the plans as the operations to solve the security problems in the area and to protect the historical heritage while contributing the image of Beyoğlu. The emphasis on solving the security problems in the area rewards the boosted security concerns about the district, which is a complimentary aspect of the stigmatized perceptions regarding the population living in deprived neighborhoods like Tarlabası, Kasımpaşa, Hacıhüsrev etc. as "degraded", "disturbing". Using crime prevention as a legitimate basis to get the support for the projects, disguises the unequal nature of operations, that has a potential to cause the displacement of majority of the people

living in the area or to put it in other words, as cleansing operation to sweep the “problematic” groups (drug dealers, travesties, prostitutes, pickpocketers, international migrants with no legal documents), “unwanted” sectors (small scale ateliers, groups involved in pandhandling, garbage collecting, street selling) from the area to the city’s other deprived areas.

It is apparent that viewing spatial transformation as the way to solve the severe problems of the neighborhood such as crime, socioeconomic deprivation will not put an end to these problems but rather displace them to other parts of the city while ‘securing’, or better to say cleansing Tarlabası, Beyoğlu from these ‘problem’ groups, who would not match the new image of ‘new’ Tarlabası after the implementations.

This has severe consequences for the urban poor living in Tarlabası, since, as discussed earlier, living in Tarlabası itself enables the urban poor not only an easy access to informal labor market at the center –street work like pandhandling, garbage collecting, low-paid services and small atelier work. But also the affordable rents available in Tarlabası constitute a major survival strategy for them, which is now under threat. They will be deprived from this strategy and try to move to another part of the city, which means that chances for the poor to live in the city center are curtailed severely.

Based on these points, I discuss that gentrification is promoted by the renewal plan of the local government –though now outspoken- and the infrastructure for the gentrification as a likely path of neighborhood change is being created, hence, Tarlabası is being produced as a gentrifiable neighborhood with the hands of the local government within this renewal process. If the renewal plans would be launched in the way they are proposed –with no measures and precautions against gentrification to take place- then, the likelihood for gentrification to take place in Tarlabası may easily be asserted. This process of gentrification, if occurs, would not only be a state-led, state- promoted one. But also making use of the rhetoric of historic preservation, neighborhood revitalization, elimination of earthquake risks and crime, the district municipality would cause the reworking of the uneven

development through the mobilization of the cultural strategies of economic development for the competitive repositioning of Tarlabası and Beyoğlu.

### **3. Suggestions for Further Research**

At the very beginning, this study was designed to include the in-depth interviews with the Tarlabası residents as the key group -besides the local authorities- to get their ideas, perceptions of Tarlabası renewal plans. Hence the study would serve to illuminate questions at three levels: institutional, neighborhood and household. However, it had to be limited with the first two mainly. The residents of Tarlabası did have no or very little knowledge about the renewal plans when I started the pilot interviews at an early phase of renewal. They rather asked information from me to clarify the information they had at best based on hearsay. I chose not going on with the formal interviews recognizing the anxiety of the residents during the interviews and rather I chose to go on with informal talks whenever possible to understand the ideas, reactions regarding urban renewal plans. In this sense, further penetration into the household level to get to a deeper understanding regarding the tangible impacts of the renewal at the household level plans would be the next step upon this research.

Such a future inquiry taking the residents at the center of the search would yield practically invaluable knowledge about the needs and expectations about the residents regarding renewal, which could as well inform policy making and implementation.

Needless to say, the impacts of the renewal implementations could be different for diverse groups living in the city, especially in the neighborhoods like Tarlabası. It looks as if the Tarlabası renewal implementation is to create the “relatively” better off and some worse off groups among the disadvantaged as well. For instance, if one considers the high tenancy rate among the forcibly migrants, which means the higher threat of displacement, in contrast to Roma residents and older migrants, among whom the homeownership is more common, forcibly migrants emerge among the worse off groups as the result of the renewals. This “on the surface”

observation based on my fieldwork has many social and political connotations, that require further investigation -e.g. the impacts of renewal implementation on urban poor, the differentiations likely to be created among the urban poor as the result of renewal and in their relations to ethnic discriminations involved as well etc.

Another point deserves further investigation is the likelihood of displacements in the neighborhood if gentrification takes place as it is promoted by the municipal plans. Revealing out the costs of the renewal and how they are distributed among different groups passes through the investigations focusing on especially the unprivileged groups. Considering the widespread renewal- transformation projects in the poor neighborhoods in the city, the survival chances of the poor in the city is shrinking as the potential displacees would be in strict hardship to find another home in the city. This in fact puts the burden for the radical urban researchers, activists to reveal out the “actually existing revanchism” in Istanbul that has been shaping all with the neoliberal urban policy implementations from mainly 1990s on. Related to this, politically informed sociological inquiry would also put critical lens on the policy change from urban populism, which shaped the sociospatial and economic geography of Istanbul till the end of the 1980s mainly, a revanchist response on the privileged groups that is becoming more outstanding with the renewal implementations. This new area of inquiry deserves a critical investigation in regards to its implications in the city at large.

These and many more areas are open to further research since urban transformation and renewal activities cannot be downgraded to a spatial level but they have many sociospatial, political economic consequences for different groups and the city at large, about which the policy makers and implementers are apparently not aware of.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I –Mass Housing Project Implementations and Luxurious Residential Projects of TOKI in Istanbul -2007

1. İstanbul Mass Housing Implementations					
Project name	Proje Type	Proje Status	Constructo r Firm	Number of Housings	Level of comple tion
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 10. Region (SPRADON)	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	Kuzu Toplu Konut İnşaat Ltd. Şti.	370	%0
İstanbul Çatalca Hadımköy 2. region 904 housings	Administratio n Housing Implementati on	On constructi on	Hazinedaroğ lu İnş.	904	%73
İstanbul Ataköy Housings	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	Mutlu İnşaat Tic.ve San. A.Ş. Ve Ortakları ortak Girişimi	950	%50
İstanbul Ataşehir east part (Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş.)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Cengiz İnşaat	675	%0
İstanbul Ataşehir (Batı) 1. Bölge (KentPlus)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Emay İnş.- İpek İnş. Ortak Girişimi	2.044	%41
İstanbul Ataşehir (Batı) 2. Region (UpHillCourt)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Varyap İnş.- Teknik Yapı Ortak Girişimi	1.742	%20
İstanbul Ataşehir (Batı) 3. Region Housing and Working Places (myworld)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Akdeniz İnş. (Ağaoğlu)	3.639	%19

İstanbul Ataşehir 1864 lot housings and trade center	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Soyak İnş. ve Tic. A.Ş. - Soyak Yapı İnş. San. ve Tic. A.Ş. Ortak Girişimi	3.300	%0
İstanbul Ataşehir 4. Etap housings and working places	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	completed	Or-Han İnşaat ve Tic.Ltd.Şti. - Grant İnş. Dış Tic. ve Tur.San.Ltd. Şti. ortak girişimi	180	%100
İstanbul Avcılar Ispartakule (Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş.) 460-62/1 Parsel	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. projesi	On constructi on	Tulip Gayrimenku l-Mertkan İnş.-İlci İnş.-Fms İnş.	1.700	%0
İstanbul Avcılar Ispartakule 1. region and social facilities	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	İhlas Holding- Atmaca İnşaat	840	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 3. Region (Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş.)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Ekşioğlu- Gülbüz - Kare İnş Ortak Girişimi	590	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 4. Region	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	İntes-Finans Gayrimenku l ortaklığı	271	%2
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 460-62/1 lot	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On constructi on	Tulip Gayrimenku l-Mertkan İnş.-İlci İnş.-Fms İnş.	1.700	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 5. Region (UpHillCourt)	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	Varyap Varlıbaşlar- Teknik Yapı	448	%5
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 6. Bölge (SPRADON)	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	Kuzu Toplu Konut İnşaat Ltd. Şti.- Garipoğlu İnş.	300	%5

			Ortaklığı		
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 7. Bölge	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Hona İnş-Mehmet Çelik İnş. Ort.	320	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 8. region housings and trade center	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Hona İnş. Demirkaya İnş. Mehmet Çelik İnş. ortak girişimi	450	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir 9. region (SPRADON)	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Kuzu Toplu Konut İnşaat Ltd. Şti.	150	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir Antique Center and environmental ordering project	Infrastructure and social facilities	On construction	3K İnş.Tur. San. ve Tic. A.Ş.		%91
İstanbul Bahçeşehir Ispartakule 1.region and trade center	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On construction	Emlak Pazarlama İnş.-Fideltus İnş.Tic.A.Ş-Öztaş İnş	2.131	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir Ispartakule 2. region and trade center	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On construction	Emlak Pazarlama İnş.-Fideltus İnş.Tic.A.Ş-Öztaş İnş.	2.232	%0
İstanbul Bahçeşehir T1 region	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Kontaş İnş. Canberk İnş. ortak girişimi	395	%26
İstanbul Bakırköy Kartaltepe (Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş.)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On construction	Taş Yapı İnş.	194	%0
İstanbul Beşiktaş Ortaköy	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Aşçıoğlu İnş. - Yimtaş İnş. ortak girişimi	55	%0
İstanbul Büyükçekmece M.Sinan (Emlak	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On construction	Emay İnş.	660	%23

Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş.)					
İstanbul Çatalca Hadımköy 1. phase social facilities	Administration housing implementation	On construction	Kobalt İnş.	392	%77
İstanbul Çatalca Hadımköy 3. phase social facilities	Housing and social facilities	On construction	Çakır Yapı İnş.	696	%51
İstanbul Çatalca Hadımköy infrastucture work	Infrastructure and social facilities	On bidding process			%0
İstanbul Esenler İkitelli (misistanbul)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On construction	Mehmet Çelik İnş. - Tek Çelik İnş. - HTM Mimarlık Müh. İnş. Joint initiative	888	%0
İstanbul - Gaziosmanpaşa Taşluk 1. region social facilities	Housing and social facilities	On bidding process		750	%0
İstanbul Gaziosmanpaşa Taşluk 2. region (606) + social facilities	Administration housing implementation	On bidding process		606	%0
İstanbul Halkalı 1. region	Administration housing implementation	On construction	Kuzu Toplu Konut İnşaat Ltd. Şti.	1.116	%0
İstanbul Halkalı 1. KöprülÜ construction	Infrastructure and social facilities	On construction	Gökdelen İnş- Sinan İnş.		%0
İstanbul Halkalı 2. region	Administration housing implementation	On construction		912	%0
İstanbul Halkalı 2. KöprülÜ construction	Infrastructure and social facilities	On construction	YSE Yapı Sanayi		%0

İstanbul Halkalı 3. region	Administratio n housing implementati on	On constructi on	Ve-Na İnş.& Koçoğlu İnş.	1.264	%0
İstanbul Halkalı 3. Etap social facilities	Infrastructur e and social facilities	completed	Ekit İnş.San. ve Tic. A.Ş.		%99
İstanbul Halkalı 3. phase social facilities	Infrastructur e and social facilities	On constructi on	Demars İnş. Tur. Tic. Ltd. Şti.		%95
İstanbul Halkalı 3. Köprülü Kavşak İnş.	Infrastructur e and social facilities	On constructi on	SNH İnşaat		%0
İstanbul Halkalı 4. region	Administratio n housing implementati on	On bidding process		784	%0
İstanbul Halkalı 5. region	Administratio n housing implementati on	On bidding process		1.108	%0
İstanbul Halkalı hospital construction	Infrastructur e and social facilities	On constructi on	Yavuzlar İnş.		%0
İstanbul Halkalı 550 lot	Administratio n housing implementati on	On constructi on	Kuzu Toplu Konut İnşaat Ltd. Şti.	560	%6
İstanbul Halkalı 6. Bölge	Administratio n housing implementati on	On biding process		876	%0
İstanbul Halkalı social facilities	Infrastructur e and social facilities	On bidding process			%0
İstanbul Halkalı IV.region	Income sharing in return for land sale	On constructi on	Özsaya İnş.A.Ş. & Güner İnş.Ltd.Şti Ortak Girişimi	1.368	%77
İstanbul Halkalı culture Center Restoration	Restoration	completed	Çakır İnş. Tic. Ltd. Şti.		%100
İstanbul Halkalı social facilities	Infrastructur e and social facilities	On constructi on	Aras İnş.		%0

İstanbul Halkalı social facilities	Infrastructure and social facilities	On construction	Aydur İnş.		%32
İstanbul Halkalı road and gas constrction	Infrastructure and social facilities	On construction	Çevik İnş.		%0
İstanbul İkitelli 1. phase	Low income group	On construction	Delta İnş. San. Tic. A.Ş.	678	%93
İstanbul İkitelli göçmen konutları	Administration housing implementation	On construction		20	%100
İstanbul Kozyatağı	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Baytur İnş. Taah. A.Ş.	800	%74
İstanbul Küçükçekmece Halkalı (Olympiakent) 1. phase	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Soyak İnşaat ve Ticaret A.Ş.	1.364	%95
İstanbul Küçükçekmece Halkalı 4. phase (664) ve 3.phase (1564) (Olympiakent) 2. phase	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Soyak İnşaat ve Ticaret A.Ş.	2.228	%70
İstanbul Küçükçekmece Halkalı (182/1) 1. phase	Squatter transformation project	On construction	Tek-Art İnş. A.Ş.	912	%78
İstanbul Küçükçekmece Halkalı social facilities	Squatter transformation project	On construction	Tek-Art İnş. A.Ş.	576	%73
İstanbul Küçükçekmece Halkalı (182/1) 3. phase	Squatter transformation project	On construction	Tek-Art İnş. A.Ş.	1.152	%78
İstanbul Küçükçekmece Halkalı II. region 447/1-17 reions (912+300)	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Albayrak Turz.Sey. Tic. A.Ş.	1.212	%23
İstanbul	Income	On	Turan	364	%52



Küçükçekmece Halkalı III. region 451/10 parcel (276+88)	sharing in return for land sale	construction	Haznedaroğlu - Özyazıcı İnş. ortaklığı		
İstanbul Pendik Şehli Mah. 1. bölge (592 Alt Gelir Grubu)	Administration housing implementation	On construction	Hazinedaroğlu İnş.	1.056	%65
İstanbul Pendik Şehli Mah. 2. region + Social facilities	Housing and social facilities	On construction	Seç Yapı İnş. Tur. Tic. Ltd. Şti.	680	%57
İstanbul Ümraniye Çekmeköy Kemerdere 856 housings + 3 schools	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On construction	Birlik Proje İnş.Ltd.Şti.	856	%19
İstanbul Ümraniye Taşdelen	Income sharing in return for land sale	On construction	Mehmet Çelik-Buket İnş.-Tokal İnş.-Hat San. İnş. Ortak Girişimi	400	%3
İstanbul Üsküdar Burhaniye (EGYO)	Emlak Konut G.Y.O. A.Ş. project	On bidding process			%0
İstanbul Üsküdar Fatih judicial building restoration work	Restoration	On construction			%0
İstanbul-Bahçeşehir 243/1	Income sharing in return for land sale	On bidding process		50	%0

Source: TOKI, [www.toki.gov.tr](http://www.toki.gov.tr)

## 2. Sample Luxurious Residential Projects of TOKI- Istanbul/2007

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>City/District</b>	<b>Constructors/Investors Involved</b>	<b>Type/m2</b>	<b>Price (Thousand YTL)</b>
<b>Kentplus</b>	Ataşehir/Istanbul	Emay-İpek Partnership Enterprise	Flat/110-150 m2	260-295
<b>MissIstanbul Houses</b>	İkitelli-Istanbul	Tek Çelik A.Ş	Flat/124-237 m2	178-436
<b>Myworld</b>	Ataşehir/Istanbul	Agaoglu Construction Co.	Flat/ 120-318 m2	240-887
<b>Soyak Olimpiakent</b>	Halkalı/Istanbul	Soyak Construction Co.	80-140	157-297
<b>Uphill Court</b>	Atasehir/Istanbul	Var-Yap Construction	Flat/ 52-222	173-718

## Appendix II - Legal Aspects of Urban Transformation

Providing the framework for urban transformation activities, these laws can be examined under two categories:

**1. General Laws<sup>230</sup> addressing urban transformation issues:** *The Law of Metropolitan Municipalities (2004, no.5216)* and *The Law of Municipalities (2005, no.5393)*, identify the development of urban transformation projects among the powers and authorities of the local governments. With the former, the metropolitan municipalities have been entitled with the power to vacate and demolish the buildings bearing high natural disaster risks and constituting a threat to the security of life and property within their jurisdiction, which enabled them to initiate the projects for risky urban areas later on. As for latter, it enabled the municipalities to designate the areas for urban regeneration or development purposes to undertake projects to redevelop and restore the derelict urban sites, to preserve the urban historical and cultural fabric, to develop residential, industrial and commercial areas as well as techno-parks and social facilities and/or to take precautions to decrease earthquake risks<sup>231</sup> (c.f., article, 73). These laws, in their framing urban regeneration, are poor in the sense that some important issues such as financial, social aspects, implementation methods, property rights, participation etc.- put aside and even the definition of urban regeneration areas was left untouched.

**2. Specialized Laws on Urban Transformation:** *The Law concerning the Northern Ankara Entrance Urban Regeneration Project (2004, Law no.5104)* was the pioneer law specialized on regeneration in Turkey, though with a piecemeal approach, prepared and enacted only for specific areas in Ankara<sup>232</sup>, namely the

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<sup>230</sup> These general laws regulate the management, tasks and responsibilities of the local governments.

<sup>231</sup> For these activities, the regular duties are cut back to 25%. The vacations, demolitions and expatriations in the regeneration and development areas are principally based on the agreement with the property owners and/or the users.

<sup>232</sup> The law entitles Ankara Metropolitan Municipality as the responsible party for the preparation of a plan for the area, which is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement (article.4).

northern entrance to the city and its surroundings, -Esenboğa airport area and its surroundings. While its aim is to improve the physical conditions and the outlook of the area, increase the living standards through the construction of healthier settlements in the area, the framework of the law stays with its physical one-sided approach under the lack of social and democratic participation<sup>233</sup> aspects covered.

The second specialized law is the law called *Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalizing of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties (2005, Law no. 5366)*, which is prepared for the renewal of historical urban sites. The detailed analysis of this law is provided in the main text.

The third regulatory document is The *Draft Law about Regeneration Areas (2006)*<sup>234</sup> that directly address and regulate the urban transformation activities. This draft law, which has been highly debated and is still at the parliament to be enacted at the timing of this study, targets all the urban and rural areas -no matter they are authorized or not. The local governments are entitled with the authority to designate the regeneration areas and implement projects<sup>235</sup> to produce living environments mitigating natural disasters risks and urban risks; to upgrade, cleanse, renew and develop the areas characterized by physical decay, insufficient and unqualified social and physical infrastructure. . The draft law declares the primacy of the regeneration project plans over the upper scale plans requiring the necessary alterations in the upper scale ones in case of any mismatch between them<sup>236</sup>.

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<sup>233</sup> No participatory mechanism is inserted and besides, the extraordinary rights over the properties in the area, including the expropriation of the properties of the nonconfirming owners shadow the democratic nature of the implementation considering the property owners have no space to say a word about but to confirm the plans

<sup>234</sup> This draft law has been still at the parliament during the time of the research. Before it was proposed to the parliament, the following list of legislative documents had been proposed and not enacted: Draft Law for Urban Regeneration-2004, Draft Law of Development -2004, Draft Law for Planning and Development- 2005, Draft Law of Urban Regeneration and Development- 2005.

<sup>235</sup> Following the designation of areas to regenerate, these areas are declared public after the approval of the municipal council and the local governments can either make the regeneration plans themselves or else have them prepared.

<sup>236</sup> With this fragmentary approach to planning, it relegates all regulatory plans disregarding a comprehensive perception of urban space and thus, urban regeneration projects appear as a very powerful and effective ways of intervention into the urban space.

While the financial and organizational powers<sup>237</sup> of the local governments are increased for regeneration activities, the draft law only covers the physical aspects of regeneration putting aside the socioeconomic development issues and it does not involve the local residents<sup>238</sup> and the users of the space neither in the decision making process nor in implementation phase. It covers the resettlement programs and rent helps for the local residents with an ambivalent tone.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> The local level authorities gain the extended power over the public land and properties in the urban regeneration area that they themselves designate subordinating all the existing norms and procedures related to land use and control. Besides, the draft law empowers the local administration to involve in forming a project partnership for the implementation of the projects with public institutions and agencies and or any real and legal persons as a new strategy for urban regeneration as well as to establish firms, real estate investment trusts or to engage in partnerships with existing ones. Furthermore, the hands of the local administration as the legislator of the private property in the regeneration areas, are strengthened with the rights to transfer the property rights to another area, exchange of properties, *menkulle; tirilmesi* of the real estates, aggregation of the property rights, purchase the properties etc. for the sake of the project.

<sup>238</sup> The residents, only if they are property owners, can object only the designated regeneration areas. With no mechanisms for participation of the residents into the all phases of the process defined, the participation is restricted to this objection only.

<sup>239</sup> On the one hand, it states that for the *gecekondu* owners within the project area, who would document that they construct their *gecekondu* before 12.10.2004, the administration may give the right to own a place in the new housings or else social housings constructed in the project area, provided that they undertake the debt burden of the excessive value of the these new residences compared to the value of their own property. This article, though it seems egalitarian at the surface, does entitle the right to have a share in social housings for each and every unauthorized property owner not considering the very differentiated socioeconomic statuses of the these owners. On the other hand, the draft law states that the local administration may provide the property owners with rent helps and temporary housings during the implementation phase. This vital issue held this way, the draft law is pregnant to new inequalities since it offers the flexible basis that would bring about different and contradictory implementations in different areas by different administrations.