Transient Liquidities
along the New Silk Road II
GRADUATION STUDIO
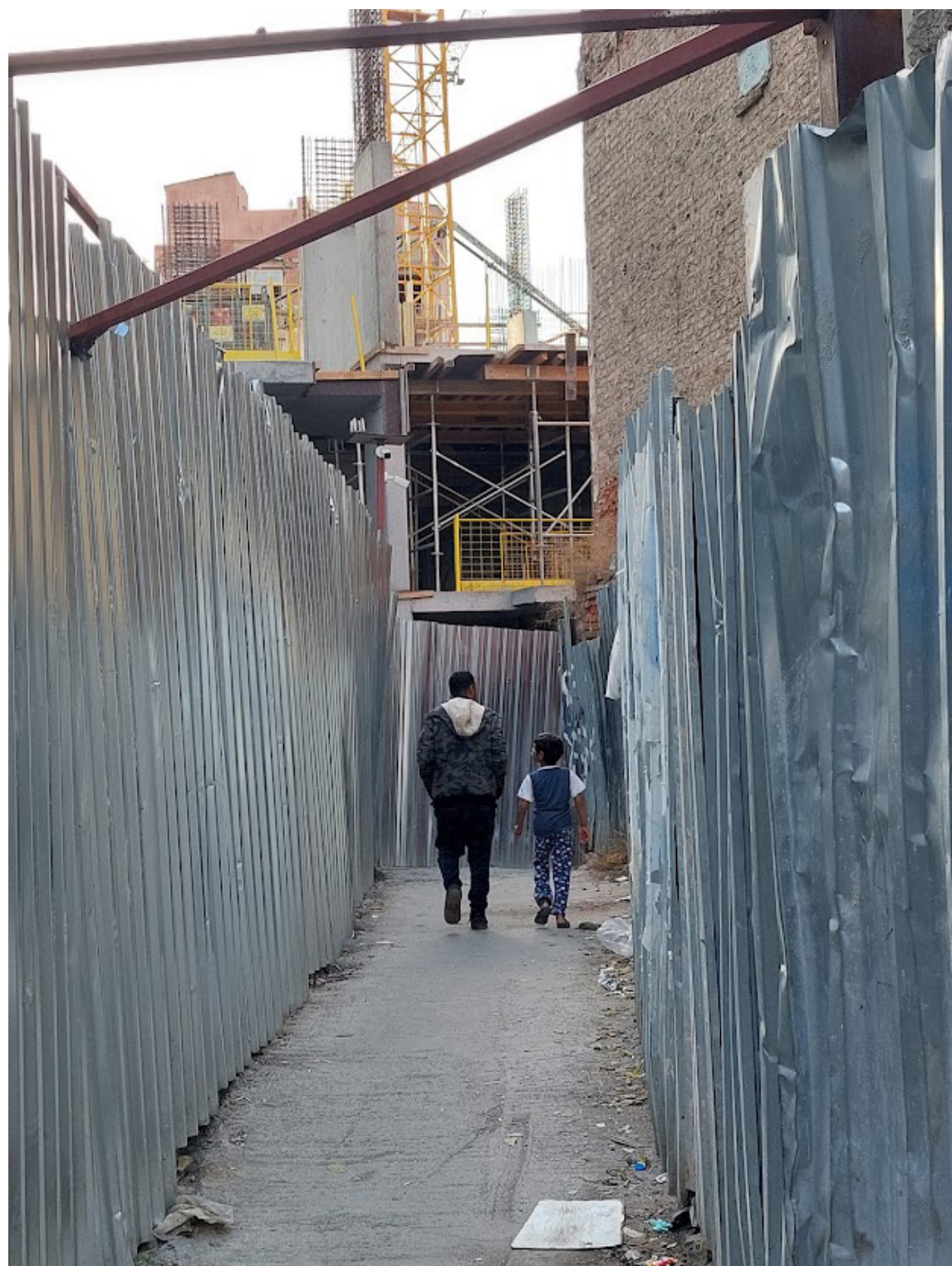
2022 – 2023

Transient Liquidities
along the New Silk Road II
GRADUATION STUDIO

INDIVIDUAL WORKS

MODERNIZING A CITY OF MIGRANTS

THE HIDDEN INFORMAL WORLD OF TARLABAŞI

Ron Weissenburger

ABSTRACT

In addition to its spatial impact, the global phenomenon of the neoliberal modernization of cities also has a major influence on its social and economic structures. Gentrification sets in motion a displacement of the poor and its informal world. Istanbul is also drastically reconstructing its urban fabric in an authoritarian neoliberal way, with the restructuring in the current plans to realise real estate markets and functioning land. This restructuring has major consequences for the established communities, whereby it is linked to the theme of spatial justice and the right to the urban centre. However, modernization of these neighbourhoods is indeed necessary, due to the risk of earthquakes, overdue infrastructure and to accommodate the humanitarian and social needs. How to modernise without compromising the rooted identity of an area? It is one of the most complex issues in contemporary urban planning, but also one of great importance. The main question that is central to this paper is: what is the impact of neoliberal modernization on the informal settlements in Istanbul and how can the modernization of the informal settlement be planned in an inclusive way? This paper aims to question the authoritarian neoliberal modernization of cities, and to address the value of informal territories and its community in the city through a literature review focused on the contemporary urban modernization case of Istanbul. At the end of the paper, a conceptual framework will be discussed to plan inclusive modernization of informal settlements.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the demolition of Taksim to make room for the new Gezi Park in Istanbul, demonstrations broke out nationwide on May 31, 2013. The slogan of the demonstration sounded as: 'everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance'. In a week, two and a half million people united in 79 cities. The political response was as follows: "We should find a way to keep poor people from the city of Istanbul" (Erdogan Bayraktar, chairman of the Mass Housing Administration of Turkey) (Ercan & Oğuz, 2014, p.1). These events describe the process of authoritarian neoliberal modernization of cities not only in Turkey, but around the world. In the United States, for example, about 135,000 people were displaced due to gentrification between 2000 and 2013 (NCRC, 2019).

The focus of authoritarian neoliberal modernization in contemporary urban planning is to accommodate economic change, but is often accompanied by cultural displacement. It is not so much about creating competition and free market formation, as the neo-liberal might indicate, but above all about political control, power and domination (Jessop, 2019). (Informal) neighbourhoods that have long been excluded from investment for maintenance or modernization experience increas-

"Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance."

es in land value, interest and home and property values due to the process of gentrification. As a result, the amount of affordable housing disappears. In addition, there is also forced eviction to make demolition possible. Both of these create a displacement of the poor, with communities facing the challenge of enabling economic revitalization without the consequences of disruption through displacement (Huq & Miraftab, 2020).

This paper will use gentrification in Istanbul to attempt to provide a new perspective on informality, discuss the impact of gentrification on this informality, and attempt to establish a conceptual framework in which a new inclusive way of urban renewal for the informal settlements is discussed.

2. DEFINITION OF GENTRIFICATION

Gentrification is a global phenomenon that has originated in the western world (United States, Western Europe & Australia). It is a form of processes of colonization and transformation in order to meet the needs of the ever-growing middle class. With the growing economy, gentrification processes in other countries have started later than in the western world. The process of gentrification has spread from metropolises such as New York, Sydney, São Paulo & Shanghai, to regional cities such as Leeds and now even rural areas in the United Kingdom. Cities such as Brussels and Berlin that were previously not gentrified are now also involved in gentrification processes (Atkinson

& Bridge, 2005).

However, it is necessary to critically examine the extent to which gentrification is linked to globalization. Gentrification takes place in different urban, cultural, religious and political contexts. It is therefore too easy to conclude that gentrification translates into the same technically everywhere spatially or in terms of planning. The process of gentrification is global, but its spatial translation is not (Lees et al., 2015). Therefore, this paper describes gentrification as a process of reforming an existing inhabited area to accommodate a wealthier group, often at the expense of established cultural identity and poorer residents. The displacement of the poor and social segregation is the negative effect that is often linked to the process of gentrification (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018). Gentrification is therefore also a means of power through exclusion/inclusion in spatial form, which is why the process of gentrification is often also used as a political tool.

3. MODERNISING THE MIGRANT CITY OF ISTANBUL

With the rapid population growth from 700,000 inhabitants during the beginning of the Republic of Turkey to more than 14 million inhabitants in 2014 (Turkish Statistical Institute, n.d.), Istanbul has long been a migration fueled city. Migration has therefore taken second place in government policy as the most important factor for Istanbul's growth. For the past 20 years, Istanbul has already been

a migration fueled city. Migration has therefore taken second place in government policy as the most important factor for Istanbul's growth.

For the past 20 years, Istanbul has already been involved in the ambitious process of restructuring and urban renewal, in which a process of demolition and reform takes place both spatially and socio-culturally (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011).

3.1 The process of neoliberalism in Turkey

Since the 1970s, the global neoliberal focus has been on institutional reforms aimed at establishing property rights and market behaviour. What was considered natural by liberal theorists in the 19th and 20th centuries was forgotten in the mid-20th century by the belief in the modernist state (Desai, 2004). This took different forms in the world. Communism arose in the USSR, in the US as the Great Society and in Turkey as Kemalism. The ideas for reforming the newly established Turkish Republic were aimed at uprooting Ottoman culture and religious piety. Atatürk took Western European countries as an example. The Turkish AKP (The Justice and Development Party) continued this development and drove it towards a neoliberal and Islamic way (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011). Here, urban renewal is seen as a necessary tool to erase certain parts of social and physical identities created in the last 50 years via programs of demolition and resettlement (Yavuz, 2009).

The current AKP government is guided by the concept of the "national will" in its decision-making within the historical specific political and economic context. Political parties always craft a narrative to carry out their leadership among all the socio-economic backgrounds they represent. Since the elections won by the DP in 1950, there has been a shift towards an extremely authoritarian neoliberal political system in Turkey. This led to the coup of 1960 and started the centre right's obsession with the 'national will'. The AKP has embraced the idea of the "national will" through its centre-right predecessors. The "national will" as conceived by the AKP is more focused on the party and its representation through the vote of an electoral majority (Bilgiç, 2018). The process of gentrification and/or urban renewal is therefore argued in an authoritarian neoliberal way with the narrative of the national will of the people's unity in Turkey. Authoritarian neoliberalism can be described as an ideology, where a group of the ruling elite uses a mode of governance in which market-oriented development processes are justified through a political government institution (Juego, 2018).

3.2 Authoritarian neoliberal modernization in Istanbul

In the 1960s and 1970s, an organised working class and chaotic urban development in Istanbul emerged in Turkey due to migration from the countryside to the city. This internal migration wave was led by the explosive growth of urban industrial centres. In present-day Istanbul, many residents

"Urban renewal is seen as a necessary tool to erase certain parts of social and physical identities created in the last 50 years via programs of demolition and resettlement."

still have close contacts with the countryside. The great migration flow and the scarcity of housing led to the emergence of the squatter houses called 'Gecekondu', which literally means: placed (built) overnight. The 'Gecekondu' is a quickly built house without permits and ownership of the plot of land. These informal neighbourhoods are stigmatized by the media and politics as criminal and dangerously extremist (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011). The migrant neighbourhoods are seen by politicians as a major problem. Erdoğan Bayraktar, the director of TOKI, said: "Today, the gecekondu is one of the most important two or three problems that Turkey faces. It is well known that such things as terror, drugs, psychological negativity, health problems and oppositional views all come out of gecekondu zones and irregular areas. For this reason, a Turkey that wants to integrate with the world, that wants to join the European Union, must rid itself of illegal dwellings. Turkey can not speak of development without solving the gecekondu problem" (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011, p.82).

Not only the gecekondular are politically seen as problem neighbourhoods, but also historic neighbourhoods, such as Beyoğlu located in the city centre. For decades, migrants and minorities have found refuge here through cheap rents or by inhabiting abandoned buildings. A large part of these neighbourhoods is in the middle of the process of gentrification (Tsavdaroglou, 2020). The 2005 gentrification process was simplified by the passed 'law on the protection of deteriorated historical and cultural heritage through renewal and reuse'. This gives local municipalities the power to carry out renovation & demolishing projects in historic sites without the consent of property owners (Islam, 2010).

These new expropriation powers indicate the highly authoritarian form of neoliberalism that constitutes today's Istanbul. The AKP has been committed to a governance model in Istanbul since 2002. This model is structured by legal and institutional regulations. In this way government institutions have power over the physical and socio-economic context of Istanbul. Think of Mass Housing Authority (TOKI), public-private partnerships and state-funded housing and infrastructure projects. All this attracts speculators and large-scale investors to these gentrification areas, with the gentrification translating into tourist and commercial centres in renovated centres, luxury apartments and gated communities built on the old gecekondular and shopping malls along the Bosphorus waterfront (Yetiskul & Demirel, 2018).

It is visible that gentrification in Istanbul is taking on the same characteristics as in other parts of the world (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018). However, the process of gentrification in Istanbul differs in the sense that it started much later than in other countries due to the late major economic growth from 1980. The gentrification in Istanbul began on the outskirts of the city and is now taking place in the urban centres, aimed at the informal living environment of migrants and minorities. The locations where gentrification takes place in Istanbul are guided by political and economic factors

(Ergun, 2004 & Tsavdaroglou, 2020). The institutional and ideological method by which neoliberalism is linked to authoritarianism is unique to Turkey and Istanbul. The use of media to glorify urban projects and developments, and the adoption of a version of modernising cultural politics to realise a city for the elite and disadvantaged residents who resist eviction, describe this unique coupling. Istanbul shows all these unique specificities of the current way of political urban restructuring in Turkey (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011).

4. RE-THINKING THE URBAN INFORMALITY

While thinking about Urban informality, people are quickly associating it with slums. However, urban informality also includes deteriorated urban areas, such as historic urban centres. It is difficult to describe the difference between an unplanned settlement, an informal settlement, a slum or an informal area. Often there is overlap between these different urban spaces in terms of their characteristics, functions and appearance (Karimi & Parham, 2012).

Informality has manifested itself in Istanbul through urban growth. This is expressed in the urbanisation of Istanbul as a neighbourhood not built or planned by one architect, but as a development composed by small-scale developers and builders and non-professionals. Urban Informality is a term that is difficult to define. The process of urban informality can be described as the exception of the formal order of urbanization (Roy, 2005). Other scholars describe it as urban practices that fall outside the legal and economic framework or as the concept of participating in counter strategies against neoliberal political mechanisms, others define urban informality as a means by which the inhabitants of a city co-produce
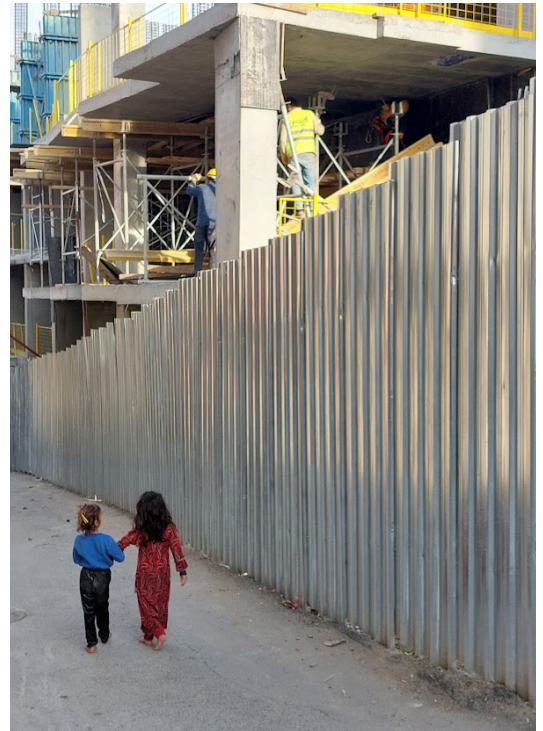

Figure 1. Photograph of gentrification inside the informal neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı in Istanbul, 2022. Photo taken by the author of this paper.

their urban context. All these definitions have in common that they describe urban informality as unplanned and spontaneous activities in the urban physical space through informal practices (Antonio Lara-Hernandez, et al. 2020).

Urban informality is receiving more and more attention in the literature, but there is still a lot of uncertainty about how we can deal with this phenomenon in urban design and architecture. In the words of Rem Koolhaas: "The result is a theoretical, critical, and operational impasse […] the entire discipline possesses no adequate terminology to discuss the most pertinent, most crucial phenomena within its domain nor any conceptual framework to describe, interpret, and understand exactly those forces that could redefine and revitalize it" (Prieto, 2021, p.20).

And so Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena describes a new look at urban planning as: "As architects, we live in a time of shifting paradigms […] and this calls for a new, more open approach. That's why I'm so interested in how architects and urban planners deal with other areas - economics, safety, environment and so on. Our challenge must be to go beyond architecture and speak the languages of these other disciplines, before translating our discussions into formal design proposals" (Prieto, 2021, p.20). The quotes of these respected architects are the voice of many, who want to indicate the relevance that a new urban language needs to be created in the current urban circumstances.

In addition, the distinction between informal and formal is often called into question. Urban informality can be seen as its own specific form of urbanisation. The driving force behind urban transformations is a system of norms that connects different economies and spaces (Roy, 2005). The informal and formal worlds both play a role in the contemporary city and are inextricably linked. It is the intersection between the two worlds that creates interesting frictions between the city and its identity.

In addition, the intersection between informal and formal leads to more involvement, involving small-scale developers and builders and inhabitants of the city in forming the urban context. In this way, new ideas and visions about the city can emerge. Recognizing formality and informality as practices linked in a dynamic, interrelated and complex system opens up the questioning of the current approach to the urban layout and its restructuring and can lead to new alternative urban spaces and understanding (Antonopoulou, 2022).

5. THE IMPACT OF NEOLIBERAL MODERNISATION ON THE INFORMALITY IN ISTANBUL

"Our story dates back to the 1950's. As we had not been able to live in our villages and towns due to the lack of investment, we moved to large cities. State And capital encouraged us to be workers in their growing factories, without any social policy on low income housing, [so that] we had to occupy public land. In spite of living in squatter areas, we created competitive industries and spectacular cities. But as these developed and became involved in spatially-wider networks, we began to be seen as rough workers unworthy to be living in inner cities. The state and companies are now seeking to evict us from our living places'' (Gündoğdu & Gough, 2009, p. 11). This is a quote from the Platform of Istanbul's Neighborhood Associations (PINA). It describes the displacement of the migrants, minorities and their work from the city, although these are inextricably linked to larger formal networks. The informal practices in Istanbul can be seen as a self-organised mechanism that solved the housing shortage for the migrant workers. Due to the long-term attitude of the politicians until 2000, the formal construction with the informal

stage 1: area of potential eviction
stage 2: planning process started
stage 3: eviction ongoing
stage 4: eviction completed
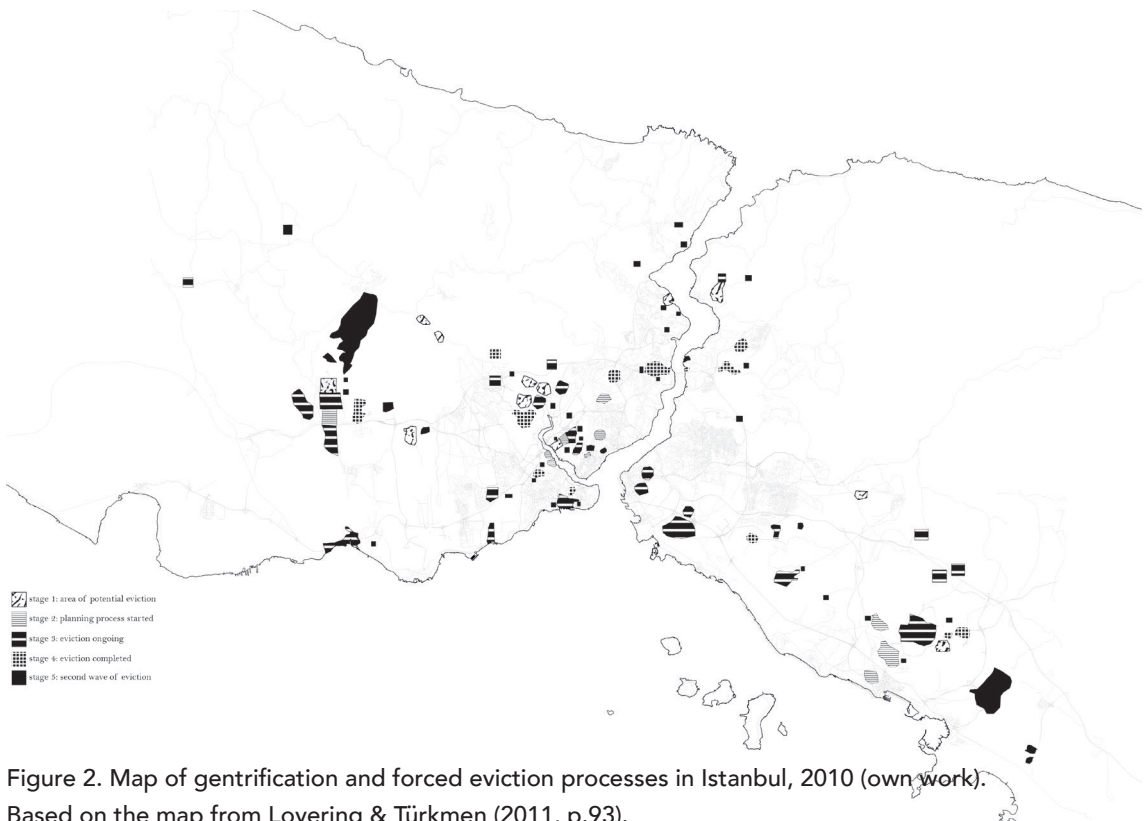stage 5: second wave of eviction

Figure 2. Map of gentrification and forced eviction processes in Istanbul, 2010 (own work). Based on the map from Lovering & Türkmen (2011, p.93).

one became entangled. After 2000, the authoritarian neoliberal attitude towards the informal settlements began and large-scale state-led projects emerged in collaboration with major investors, shaping the urban context according to their needs. The local authorities responsible for the modernization of the informal settlements have a top-down and rigid way of planning. The unique flexible, intrinsic and self-regulatory characteristics of the informal settlements are ignored in the restructuring plans. In Istanbul, there is no room in the modernization for negotiation and mediation between the existing self-organising systems, leading to generic neighbourhoods without economic flexibility and with social segregation, but also to a further decline of informal settlements (Enlil, et al., 2015) .

It is the authoritarian neoliberal approach that does not want any cooperation with the established residents and their informal practices, perhaps because it goes against the Turkish political institutionalisation and ideology. The top-down view creates a lot of resistance among the local community and the gentrification processes in Istanbul are proceeding less quickly than planned (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011). Kaminer (2009) describes that the role of government in gentrification processes must move to a new Keynesian model rather than the neoliberalist one if it wants to achieve successful modernization. Which means that the government must play a more social active and social role in investing in, for example, housing for lower income classes.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 The misconceptions of state-led gentrification and integration

World-renowned urban plans, such as the Hausmann project in Paris, have moved the informal world to the outskirts of the city, rather than integrating it (Rideout, 2016). The beautiful new facades and straight axes hide the history of the social transformation that took place to design the city of the middle class. The division between rich and poor has been made definitive by Hausmann's plan. In many places around the world gentrification doesn't seem to have changed much in 150 years. Istanbul ignores the strong characteristics of the informal settlements and works with a top-down view in planning which causes a displacement of the poor. Modernization in these neighbourhoods is done without respect for the established socio-cultural identity of the area due to the authoritarian neoliberal method and the resistance of the established communities in the informal settlements. There is a danger that these neighbourhoods will fall into a vicious circle of decline, while land value, interest and home and property values will rise as a result of gentrification plans.

Secondly, in Western European countries, such as the Netherlands, The focus of gentrification is mainly on mixing the middle class with the low incomes. It is ironic that gentrification, a process that divides and polarizes, is used as a means of doing so. State-led gentrification in the Netherlands believes that social mixes lead to housing for the middle class and economic growth opportunities for the poorer class; a win-win situation (van der Graaf & Veldboer, 2009). However, the literature on gentrification projects with this intention shows that in the long run residents suffer more from the loss of the advantages they had living in a poor neighbourhood than
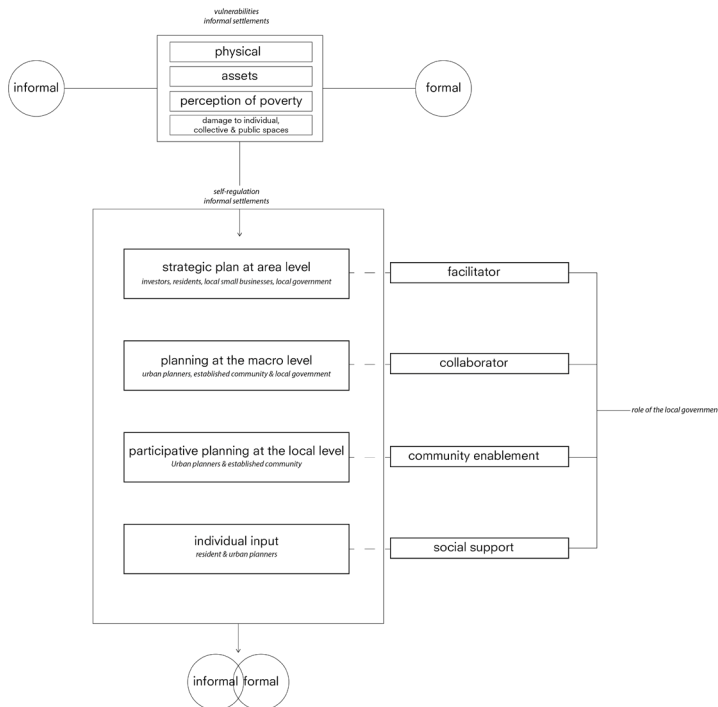

Figure 3. The conceptual framework for inclusive modernisation of informal settlements.

Illustration made by the author of this paper.

from living in a mixed affluent neighbourhood. Therefore, it may be more effective to direct social diversity and integration towards people themselves and not through people's movements. Residential areas should therefore not be treated as a static context, but as a dynamic one (Lees, 2008). The Dutch and Turkish way of gentrification do not differ that much from each other. According to my interpretation, both can be seen as the social engineering of cities.

6.2 The Framework
Thus the relevant contemporary question in urban planning is: "How can we frame a socially inclusive urban renaissance?" (Lees, 2008, p. 2464). Using

three existing sources in the literature (Karimi & Parham, 2012; Abbott, 2002; Tsenkova, 2012), an attempt will be made to establish a conceptual framework to transform this vicious circle of decline into a virtuous circle of improvement using the self-regulating effect of informal settlements (Karimi & Parham, 2012). In this conceptual framework, the focus is on the residents themselves instead of on creating the movement of people/classes.

All three sources talk about drawing up the vulnerabilities of the informal settlements. Modernization can take place on the basis of these vulnerabilities. Abbott (2002) talks about 4 forms of vulnerability. The

first are physical vulnerabilities consisting of topographical risks such as earthquakes, social risks such as eviction and individual risks such as becoming a victim of crime. The second form of vulnerabilities concerns the limitations of personal growth in possessions and value, or assets. People with many possessions are less vulnerable than people without. The greater the decline in their possessions, the greater the uncertainty. The third element of vulnerability Abbott calls the perceptions of poverty. This means that planners have respect for their own perception of poverty and what their priorities are for interventions in their context. The last vulnerability concerns the degradation of

individual, communal and public spaces. This means that, for example, poor paving reduces the accessibility of emergency services or garbage trucks.

According to Tsenkova (2012), an informal settlement should not be regarded as an island within the city. Integrating informality with its informal urban context should be seen as a buffer zone from which economic benefits arise. Creating a business plan with a clear identification of benefits for investors, residents, governments and small shop/business owners can create a local connection between informal and formal. By means of stakeholder participation in a strategic plan, regularization and a sustainable future can be worked on. Such a strategic plan has also been compiled in the framework of Karimi & Parham (2012).

Abbott (2002) proposes 4 organizational themes to work towards this sustainable future. The first theme is the strategic plan. This concerns the integration of the informal neighbourhood with its formal context. It is an area vision with which social integration can be achieved, without the need to relocate people. The local government has the role of facilitator in the first theme. The second theme is about planning the neighbourhood on a macro level. This involves cooperation between the established community and the local government. In this collaboration, vulnerabilities, economic opportunities and movements in the neighbourhood are discussed. The third theme concerns participatory planning with the established community. The aim is to design effective public and social spaces, through the input of the community itself. The last theme is related to individual input in the modernization of the informal neighbourhoods. The scale for this is the home. The local government offers social support for this theme. This new way of participatory reform of informal neighbourhoods also offers opportunities for regularization, especially where markets have failed to achieve social integration (Tsenkova, 2012).

The conceptual framework seen in Figure 3 blurs hard boundaries between informal settlements and its formal environment. The different scale levels involved in the participatory planning of modernization creates a relationship between private, semi-private, collective spaces and public spaces. In addition, informality and formality become even more connected, which offers economic opportunities and social cohesion, but can also lead to the emergence of new ideas and visions about the city. By replacing the top-down view of urban planning with local decision-making, the future of informal settlement can be planned in a structured and sustainable, but also more effective and creative way.

7. CONCLUSION

All in all, informal settlement is a global phenomenon that governments and urban planners find complex to deal with. This paper focused on the following question: what is the impact of neoliberal modernization on the informal settlements in

"In order to make the restructuring of informal settlements more inclusive, the two divisions between formal and informal must be avoided."

Istanbul and how can the modernization of the informal settlement be planned in an inclusive way? By looking at the current gentrification processes in Turkey and Istanbul, a new perspective has been cast on informality. This showed that the AKP has embraced and further developed the heritage of the 'national will' of its predecessors. In this way Istanbul distinguishes itself from gentrification processes elsewhere in the world, because of the authoritative neoliberal attitude that is maintained in the restructuring plans. Due to the long-term attitude of the Turkish government, the migrant city of Istanbul has grown informally in many places. These informal settlements are taken over by generic urban renewal projects. It uses a system structured by institutional and legal regulations, whereby government agencies have power over the physical & socio-economic context in Istanbul. TOKI towers give way to the middle class at the expense of the rooted cultural identity of the informal neighbourhood. It is a form of spatial injustice, where the poor have no right to the city centre. It leads to a displacement of the poor and social segregation. The strong characteristics of informal neighbourhoods should no longer be ignored in urban restructuring processes. In order to make the restructuring of informal settlements more inclusive, the two divisions between formal and informal must be avoided. It is precisely the intersection between informal and formal that leads to more involvement, involving small-scale developers and builders, temporary and permanent inhabitants of the city in forming the urban context. This can lead to the emergence of new ideas and visions about the city. The conceptual framework that has been developed revolves around the participatory planning of the modernization of informal neighbourhoods. Vulnerabilities can be solved in this way. Local planning can lead to structured, effective and creative modernization plans by involving the rooted community in the process. If Istanbul wants to create a sustainable city, they will have to divide the narrative of the national will into small pieces of local will. Perhaps then they will realise that the informal settlements are irreplaceable, because the informal takes over where the formal mechanism fails.

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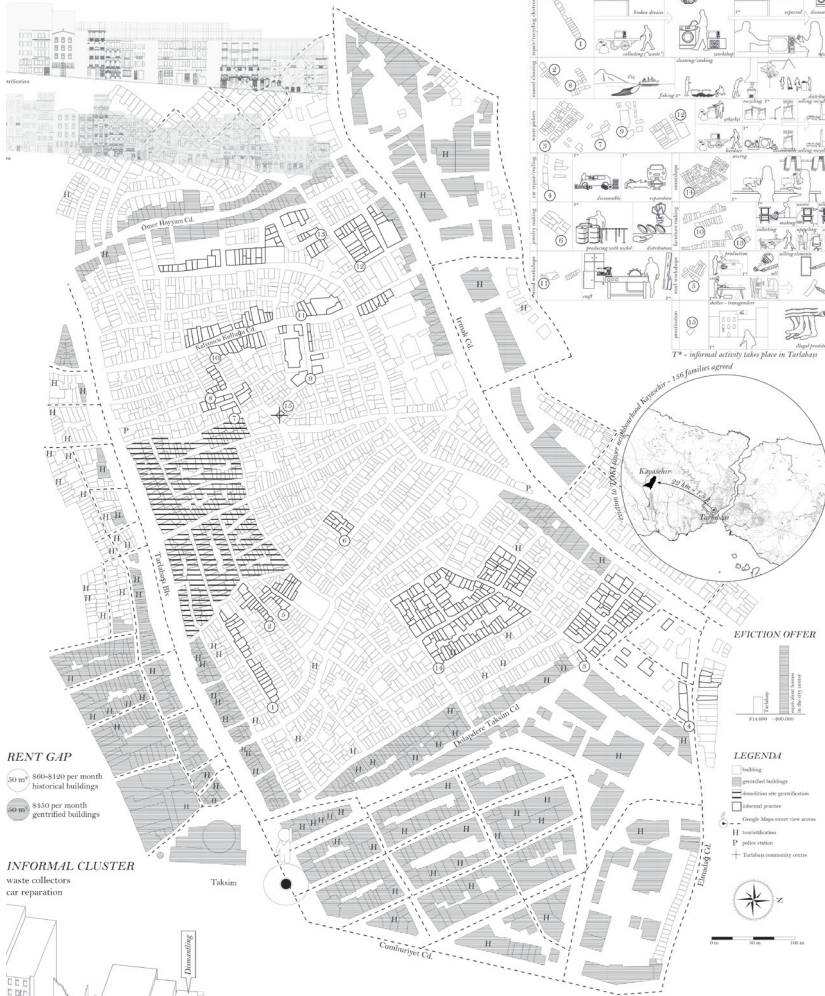
INFORMAL CLUSTERS - INDEX

T* - informal activity takes place in Tarlabaşı

INFORMAL WORKPLACES

GLOBAL INFORMALITY

INFORMAL ELEMENTS

EFICTION OFFER

$14,000 - $80,000

RENT GAP

50 m³   860-$120 per month
historical buildings

50 m³ $450 per month
gentrified buildings

INFORMAL CLUSTER

waste collectors
car reparation

LEGENDA

building
gentrified buildings
demolition site gentrification
informal practice
Google Maps street view access
H touristification
P police station
+ Tarlabası community centre

Dismantling
Recycling
Upcycling
Transport
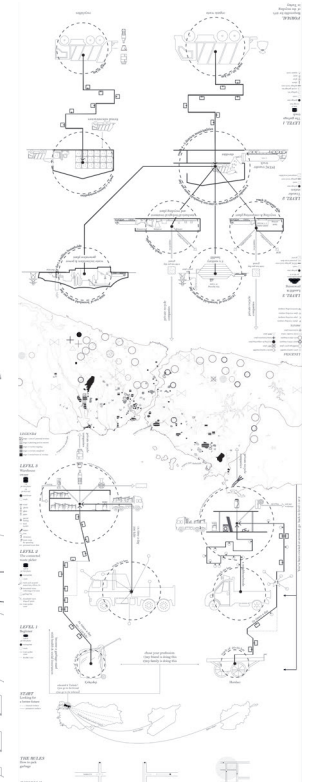
ANALYSIS

THE HIDDEN WORLD OF TARLABAŞI

The site of this project is the informal neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı in the middle of the city centre of Istanbul. It has functioned for decades as a neighbourhood for the poor and minorities such as Greek orthodox, Armenians, Kurds, homo sexuals and transgenders. Since 2007 this neighbourhood has been declared part of the urban renewal project. The main goal of the urban renewal project is for Istanbul to become a global city such as London, Dubai, New York or Hong Kong. The urban renewal project in Tarlabaşı is now ongoing, but it got delayed because the residents of Tarlabaşı united and were able to slow down the process of gentrification.

One of the reasons for this gentrification is the rent gap between Tarlabaşı and other dwellings in the city centre. Where you can earn more than four times the rent. The first wave of forced eviction already happened. In which the residents of Tarlabaşı were evicted to the TOKI neighbourhood Kayasehir on the outskirts of Istanbul, far away from their work and with no fair compensation for their property.

So how is this gentrification process manifesting itself in Tarlabaşı? The process of gentrification is hidden away, with the renovation starting at the edges of the neighborhood and processes of demolishing behind it. Also google maps street view is turned off inside Tarlabaşı and there is even police control on both sides of the neighbourhood equiped with an armored vehicle.

On the edges of the neigbourhood lots of dwellings are transformed into new luxury hotels. Hiding its informal world behind it.

So the hidden informal world inside these neighbourhoods exists out of a couple different practices which are clustered. A lot of these practices are about recycling and upcycling waste that have been collected by waste pickers called hurdacı and çekçekçi. But also other informal practices are taken place inside Tarlabaşı such as mussel cleaning, jewelry making and wood and steel work. A lot of these informal practices are runned by a minority group, so is the waste picking runned by a large group of Kurds, and the mussel cleaning by people from a town in east Turkey called: Mardin.

These informal practices and the people working in them depend on the city center to carry out their work. Conversely, the city center depends on informal activities. Gentrification causes people to be removed from their work and home, creating a displacement of the poor. In other words, an urban migration stream of evictions to the outskirts of the city, but also the same displaced group that will seize every opportunity to live and work in the city center again.

THE HIDDEN WORLD OF
TARLABAŞI

INFORMAL CLUSTERS - INDEX
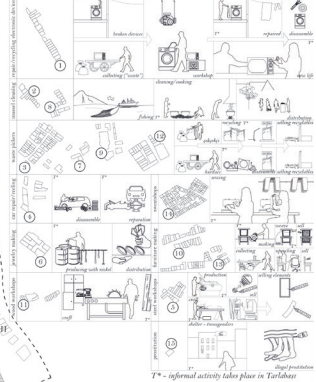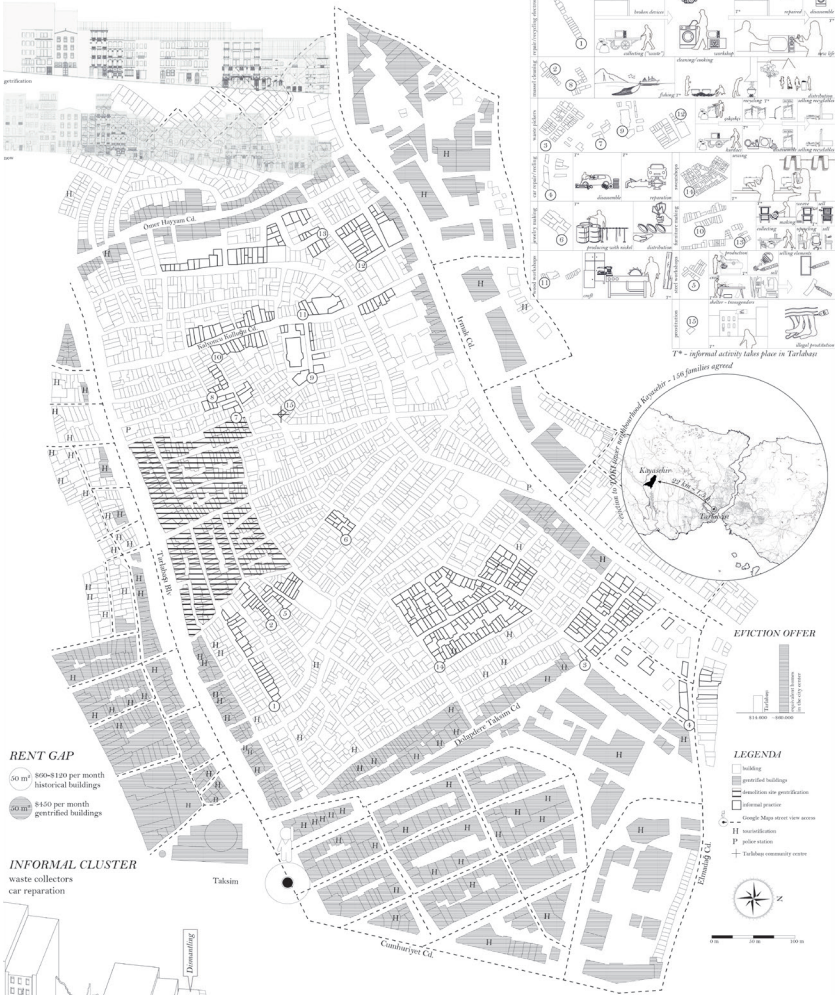
T* - informal activity takes place in Tarlabaşı

EVICTION OFFER

RENT GAP

50 m² $600-$120 per month
historical buildings

50 m² $450 per month
gentrified buildings

INFORMAL CLUSTER
waste collectors
car reparation

Taksim

LEGENDA

building
gentrified buildings
demolition site gentrification
informal practice
Google Maps street view access
H touristification
P police station
+ Tarlabaşı community centre

N

0 m   50 m   100 m

Omer Hayyam Cd.

Sıraselviler Cd.

Tarlabaşı Blv.

Dolambere Tahsan Cd.

Elmadağ Cd.

Cumhuriyet Cd.

Dismantling

Recycling

Dismantling

Recycling

Recycling

Transport

Recycling

Upcycling

Upcycling

Upcycling

27

THE SYSTEM OF HEMŞEHRI

So how is a minority group connected to a certain informal practice? This is due the phenomenon of hemşehri.which means common identity and solidarity between immigrants and settlements. These commons consist out of a couple elements: family, community, relationship, religion and ethnicity. But the strongest element of them all is the shared home-town. This phenomenon of hemşehri made it possible to create a migration flow from areas In Turkey, but also other countries to Istanbul for people to find work and housing.

Also the waste picking industry runned by the Kurds developed itself due to hemşehri. In the 16th century a huge number of Kurds started to settle in the center of Anatolia, where they became farmers. In the 19th century the first wave of migration started from this area towards Istanbul. The Kurds specialized in Istanbul as At Hamalı (back porters). They carried goods from the port into the city on their back. This job transformed into waste picking due to improvement of infrastructure. The connection between this job, the Kurds and migration flows of Kurds in the 70's and 90's led to the Kurdish ownership of the waste picking business.

A lot of these hemşehri workers are seasonal workers. They often get paid a low wage, but are offered a place to live and sleep for free. But also permanent workers are often given a place to sleep in return for their work. The waste pickers that were interviewed in Istanbul were introduced to this job via one of the hemşehri elements.

Even now you can see the huge impact of the hemşehri, with Sivas & Tokat being the two largest civic associations in Istanbul. In the 19th century the largest migrant worker flows were coming from these two towns located in central Anatolia and they still are. It shows the stability of this hemşehri system.

the phenomenon of hemsehri:
common identity and solidarity between immigrants & settlements

| family |
| community | relationship | religion | ethnicity |
| shared home-town |

migration

work & housing
in Istanbul

HISTORICAL, FUELED BY MIGRANTS
made possible by hemsehri

Albania — 1732
90% of hamams by Albanians

Greece — 1790
35% of orchards by migrants
Greek Rums run almost all 500 grocery stores

Albania — 1830
Greek Rums work as gardeners for Ottoman elites

Turkey — 1840
75% of bakeries runned by Armenians

Bulgaria — 1850
cloak making runned by migrants from Kalofer

Turkey — 1870
dock making specialized as back porters (at hamall & arka hamall)

77% of harbor workers are migrants

increase of migration to Istanbul due to hane industrialization

research of the hemsehri effect in the Kagit-hane district in Istanbul

1980

1970

every factory with less than 50 employees the owner because one of the elements of hemsehri

CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS IN ISTANBUL

SIVAS — 718
TOKAT — 431
ISTANBUL — 429
the biggest

LEGENDA
- province
- Istanbul population living in central Anatolia
- faced services area Kurds zones
- Istanbul
- ■ migrants entering mixed industry
- ● migrants entering waste industry

N

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waste pickers & hemsehri:

ALI AND FAMILY
warehouse owners

3 months
ISTANBUL
çekeçkçi – 4 years
seasonal worker

living & working
in Istanbul

family
living
with family

MIDYAT
farmer – 24 years
father
3 sons

ethnicity

1 month
ISTANBUL
çekeçkçi – 2 years
seasonal worker

EMRE AND BROTHERS
warehouse owners

3 months

family
living
with family

ASKALE
farmer – 30 years
brothers
sons
total 20

2 months
ISTANBUL
çekeçkçi – 2 years
seasonal worker

FURK AND COLLAGIES
warehouse owner

colleagues live in warehouse

NIGDE
farmer – 4 years
old hursaci

ISTANBUL
huradaci – 15 years
permanent worker

Ukrainian refugee
old friends

community
old hursaci
total 5

home-town

MUSTAFA AND FRIENDS
waste picker

Mustafa lives in warehouse

ISTANBUL
çekeçkçi – 30 years
permanent worker

TOKAT
construction – 4 years
construction
worker

home-town

community
friends introduced
him

TAHTABASI

KURDS IN MIDYAT
1800-1930's
home-town

SEASONAL WORKERS

DIRECT MIGRATION OF KURDS TO ISTANBUL

KANDIL

AKSARAY
NIGDE

TOKAT
[TOKAT] SIVAS
SIVAS
KAGITHANE
ERZURUM

SIVAS

KURDS IN CENTRAL ANATOLIA
1960's
ethnicity

FORCED EVICTION
1990's
2016

MARDIN-MIDYAT

THE GAME OF WASTE

One of the most interesting and important informal practice in Tarlabaşı is the waste picking. So how does this waste picking system work? There are three key players inside the system existing out of the informal one, the formal one and the private sector.

The informal side is responsible for 80% of the total recycling in Turkey. In this side of the waste system is a strong hierarchy, which makes it possible to move on up and earn more money. The hemşehri plays an important role in the introduction to this work. To work as a waste picker there are some important rules to take into consideration before playing the game of waste:

- There is no waste picking territory

- Some places are only allowed to enter by waste pickers during the night between strict time slots, such as the shopping boulevard: İstiklal Cd.

- When an other waste picker is picking a street you are not allowed to pick waste in this same street

There are two types of waste pickers: the hurdacı that collects steel. Recognizable with the wooden carts. And the çekçekçi that collect paper, wood, plastic and glass, recognizable with their carts with a huge plastic bag on it. With these carts they walk and search for recyclables or interesting elements they can use or sell on the local market.
The more advanced waste picker often has a truck and a large number of connections. They are being called when an office building or other connection has waste that they can pick up. Or they just drive around and ask for recyclables via microphones.

At the end of the system you have the warehouse owners. They pay the waste pickers per kilo of recyclables they collect and sell it to the private sector.

The formal side of the waste picking game is mainly run by municipal agencies. In addition, part of the collection collection work is carried out by private companies. The formally collected waste is taken to transfer stations. The waste is then further processed and recycled in recycling and composting plants. Waste that cannot be recycled is processed on sanitary landfills or incinerated at the waste incineration and power generation plant.

The private waste sector is at the end of the chain, on both the formal and informal side. Which gives them power over the total waste industry. This private side of the game of waste often exports the recyclables for example to Germany.

A lot of the private sectors are orientated around informal settlements, because that is where the informal waste picker warehouses are located. The formal waste industry is more orientated on the outskirts of Istanbul.

recyclables

organic waste

LEVEL 1
The garbage
truck

ISTAÇ transfer
truck

LEVEL 2
Transfer
station

recycling & composting plants

mechanical biological treatment
and recycling plant

LEVEL 3
Landfill &
incinerator

PRIVATE

private recycle
companies

LEGENDA

LEGENDA

LEVEL 3
Warehouse
owner

LEVEL 2
The connected
waste picker

LEVEL 1
Beginner

become a garbage man!
with health & social insurance

chose your profession:
1) my friend is doing this
2) my family is doing this

Çekçekçi

Hurdacı

START
Looking for
a better future

THE RULES
How to pick
garbage

INFORMAL
Responsible for 80%
of the recycling
in Turkey

INFORMAL WORKPLACES

So how are these informal practices manifesting themselves into spaces, materials and tectonics? A lot of the workplaces used to be old abandoned Rum Greek houses. In 1955 the Istanbul Pogrom against the Greek minority happened, also known as the Turkish Kristallnacht. Tarlabaşı, was the minority neighbourhood of the Greek Rum population in Istanbul. Most of the Greek Rum minority group living in Tarlabaşı left their dwellings and fled Istanbul after the events of 1955.

The abandoned neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı got occupied by worker migrants in the 1960's. It was this period that a lot of informal practices started to develop inside Tarlabaşı.

The old Greek houses were adapted to be able to function following the needs of the informal work inside. Often walls or roofs got demolished to have higher ceilings in order to accomondate work inside or because of growing business. Also Rum ruins got transformed into çekçekçi dwellings.
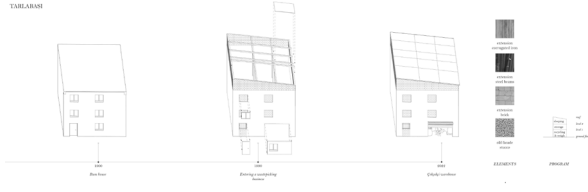
Areas demolished for gentrification are used as communal fields to accomondate more working space for the recycling and dismantling of collected waste.

Also self built warehouses are common where they used found materials to build constructions accomondating workplaces and/or housing.

Often location plays an important role in how a typology developed itself. Such as the car repair garages which grew into a business purely by the skill of these people and the location of their house.

So if we compare these typologies to other informal places around the world we can see that they often use the same materials and principles. They make use of recyclables to upcycle them in adequate structures according to their needs. This creates often self regulating areas and spaces with structures often created by the community and its local economy. These are aspects of informal structures which are very strong and sustainable.
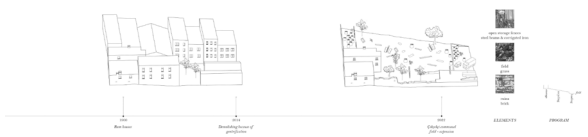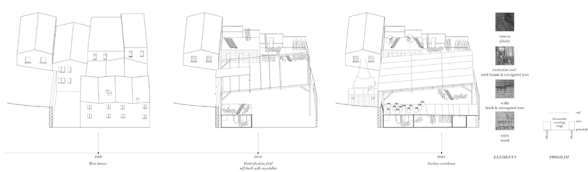
INFORMAL WORKPLACES
TARLABASI

transformed çekçekçi ruin

communal çekçekçi field

self-built hurdacı warehouse
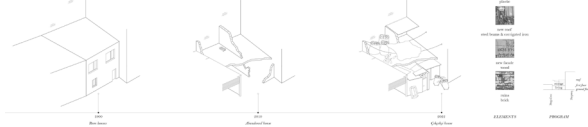
self-built çekçekçi warehouse
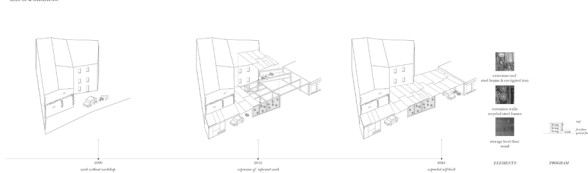

the informal basement

this is a business!
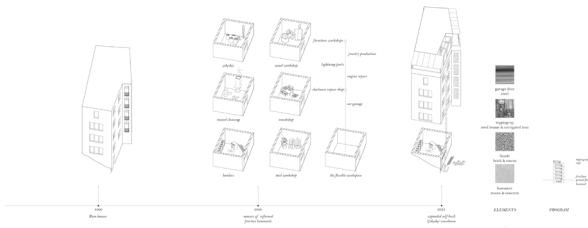
GLOBAL INFORMALITY

INFORMAL ELEMENTS

RECYCLE & REINVENT

Also a local system is in work while building self regulated informal structures. On the drawing on the right side of this spread is a self-built crane inside Tarlabaşı visible. These cranes are being used to lift up the çekçekçi bags onto the trucks.

A lot of the building materials for these structures are bought from informal çakmaçi workers that sell materials from buildings that are going to be demolished. Also materials are used that they find themselves during the process of waste picking.

Electronical devices are repaired inside the neighbourhood and structures are welded by steelworkers in Tarlabaşı. In this way al local process of craft is being used in making one structure.

The informal world generates a cycle between the formal and informal world, but the informality also creates its own local cycle by reinventing and upcycling.

RECYCLE AND REINVENT

the reinvented crane

the reinvented crane – exploded

çıkmacı (scrap dealer)

building is
going to be
demolished
or renovated

materials are sold in
scrap dealer shops

çekçekçi

collecting items for
the crane

repair shop

repairing electrical
devices

metal workshop

welding of
construction

route of the crane

completing the circle

raw materials → production → usage → waste

recycle

informal usage

collect/dissamble   usage

formal
informal   reinvent & upcycle

35

MODI OPERANDI

Site model.

SITE

The site model is an abstract interpretation of the Tarlabaşı location and a critical point of view towards the current modernization of informal neighbourhoods. The informal neighborhood is enclosed by the static gentrified blocks placed with a top down view. The informal neighborhood is an interpretation of a phenomenon that appears chaotic at first perspective, fragments that are part of a larger entity, but also reflect instability and dynamics. The formal and informal neighborhoods in the current urban planning context are divided into two parts. They come together in the public space. Together they form the city, its life and its economic context. A two division between both worlds must be replaced into areas where informality and formality meet or in wich they can collide or connect. In this way it can create a space for experimentation and new communal structures. The reflection of the shards shows the importance to which we are even connected, for example through the export of waste or the production of clothing. The hole in the informal neighborhood is the decomposition of the soil. Sous les pavés, la plage; which means that under the pavement, is the beach. It symbolizes the freedom of the beach. Beneath the formal world of the pavement lies the freedom that the informal world stands for and where the formal world begins.

Assemblage model.

ASSEMBLAGE BY DISASSEMBLING & REASSEMBLING

In this model the technique of the hurdaci is being analyzed in which they use disassembling and reassembling in the process of recycling waste. Instead of recycling or upcylcing the collected materials were organised as architectural functions such as, columns, roofs etcetera.

The disassembled devices used to be an audio box and a headphone. These were disassembled into elements and given architectural functions. Together they form an architectural assemblage.

The conclusion of this analysis is that this method can be very interesting in creating ideas for architectural assemblages, because it gives you

limitations, but in the same way forms that are in harmony with eachother.
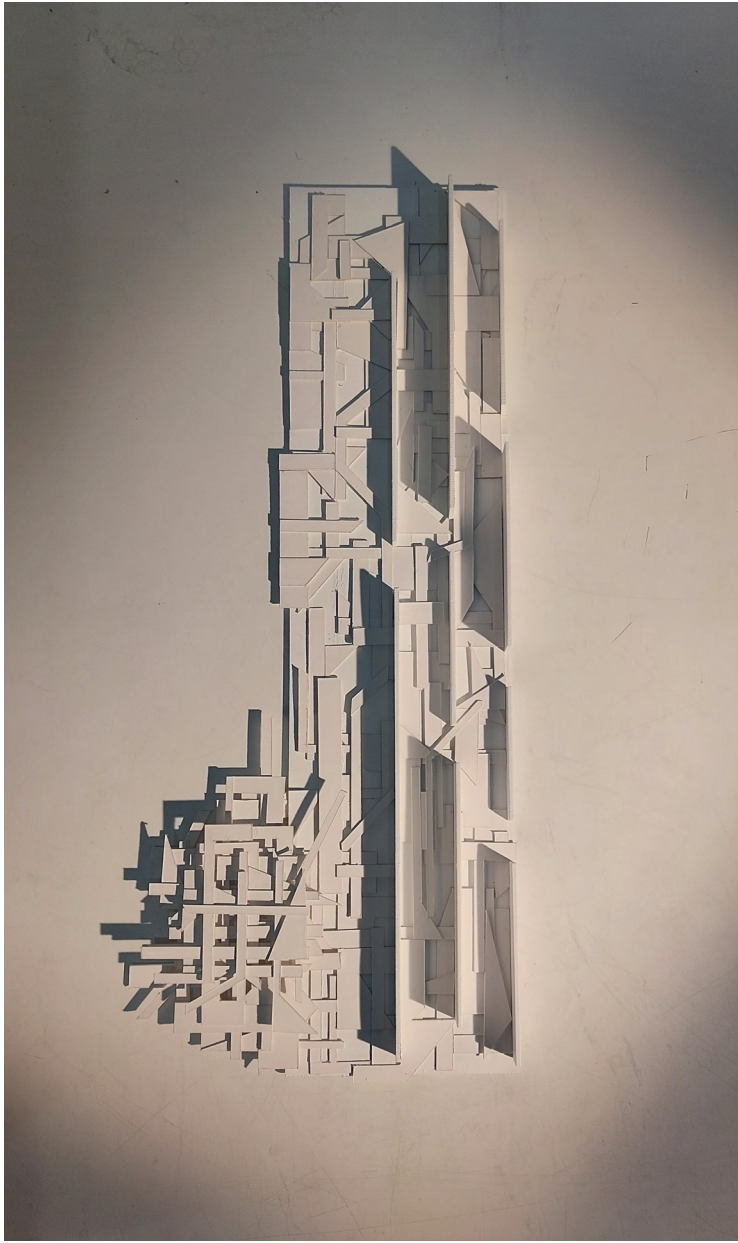
Spatial situation model.

SPATIAL SITUATION; LOSING CONTROL

In this model it is analysed how to lose control over a spatial situation. The interest in analaysing this theme was mainly developed, because of the self regulating effect of informality.

To analyse self regulation a framework was created, existing of the back side and the three dimensional strips. In between the process of stacking carton is being used. The carton itselfs is cut out of large strips via horizontal, vertical and diagonal cutting. With the first framework there was the limitation of the three dimensional strips. After the stacking of carton inbetween the strips, the first framework was being demolished (the three dimensional strips). In this way the model became a field. So one barrier of spatial regulation was lost. Than the demolishing of teh second framwork started. The back side was cut off and the stacking of carton became three dimensional. All spatial regulations were gone.

The conclusion of this model was that I still had control over the spatial situation, because even with all the frameworks gone the carton was being stacked in a system.

The graduation studio 'Border Conditions along the New Silk Road' focusses on sites where spatial conditions have emerged that are 'teeming with suggestive meanings and unexpected potential' but are hardly analysed within contemporary architectural discourse. The studio investigates contemporary border conditions within the larger urban and territorial scale, with a special emphasis on the relationship between architecture and its socio-political context(s). B&T views the contemporary city as an 'urban universe' of spatial conditions, which consists of constellations of elements seemingly without any relative weight. To think of an 'architectural project' in such a context means to engage in a speculative approach directed to alternative formulations of architecture, all based on a fundamental understanding of fragmentation and complexity. In the graduation studio, these new reformulations are instigated by, and at the same time applied to the controversial 'New Silk Road'.

BORDERS & TERRITORIES