# 4. Setting the Scene: Urbanization through Demolition and Redevelopment

## 4.1 Introduction

Tracing the history of Istanbul's land commodification and urban demolition is an essential prerequisite for an understanding of material reclamation activities. As a preface to a later empirical analysis, this chapter will mainly focus on the commodification of land from a political economy perspective. The current situation of construction waste excess is associated with the rebuilding of Istanbul apartment blocks that, from the 1970s onward, became the primary housing construction archetype.

Recall that we are here approaching the city as a rhizomatic multiplicity consisting of human and nonhuman assemblages. For example, regarding nonhuman agents, the earthquake in Istanbul changed seismic engineering policies and zoning regulations. These combined to increase the number of apartment building sites becoming real estate assets.

Additionally, *çıkmacıs*—with emergent capacities—have economically adapted to market dynamics and continue to coexist in the construction market. Through their supply yards, they provided affordable materials and even loans for the construction costs of informal settlements; this all happened at a time when there were no government public funds available for housing needs. This chapter highlights how the *çıkmacıs'* activities developed in a time in which neoliberal dynamics were pushing them from central to peripheral positions.

The chapter is structured in four parts. First, it focuses on the commodification of land starting from Late Ottoman modernization of Istanbul. Historically analyzing these processes, I illustrate how apartment blocks became spatial archetypes and significant assets in real estate. Secondly, I describe the urbanization processes of *gecekondu* in the 1950s during the in-

dustrialization of Istanbul and rural migration. The chapter continues with the liberalization processes in the 1980s that legitimized informal housing. The last part reflects upon the latest trends in the neo-liberalization period when global capital shifted their focus to large-scale projects, real estate, and finance (Korkmaz and Ünlü Yücesoy 2009). In each part, I describe the urbanization of the Kadıköy district, a middle-class neighborhood in Istanbul where the fieldwork was conducted (Figure 4.1).

*Figure 4.1: Location of Kadıköy district in Istanbul*



Source: Author's own

## 4.2  The Commodification of Land in the Ottoman Empire

During the Ottoman Empire, all lands were deemed imperial-owned unless explicitly described as 'private' or assigned to non-Muslim minority congregations. If they paid taxes on them, the peasants could use state-owned lands for agricultural cultivation but were not allowed to possess them as private property. In urban areas though, members of the public could buy property, for example, houses and gardens. Under imperial law, land was something that was

given by the empire, secured by the empire, and could sometimes be lost to
the empire again (Keyder 1999, 3). Because of this circumstance, land rights
depended on the dynamics of a moral economy between minorities, peasants,
and the state elite. During the modernization period in the nineteenth century,
the Ottoman empire passed new laws to address this situation; some of these
laws allowed for the private ownership of land while others placed various lim-
its on land accumulation and trade (ibid, 5).

The urbanization of Kadıköy, where my fieldwork was conducted, is very
representative of this land commodification process: In the late 19th century,
the improvements in public transportation and the new more liberal land own-
ership laws were essential requirements for developing Kadıköy as an Ottoman
summer resort in the Asian part of Istanbul. The ferry services that connected
villages along the Bosporus started to make regular stops in 1843 and later,
in 1873, suburban trains connected these services to inner parts of Kadıköy
(Akın 2010). After the establishment of the Haydarpaşa-Izmit suburban rail-
way line (Figure 4.2), the areas in the Asian part could develop into resort dis-
tricts around the suburban stations established by the Ottoman upper class.

*Figure 4.2: Suburban train line connecting Haydarpaşa to Tuzla in 1918*



Source: (Salah 2013)

The Land Code of 1858 facilitated the transformation of imperial lands
around the city into real estate, introduced a title deed of ownership, and
enabled the systematization of property records (Bayraktar 2016). By the be-

ginning of the 19th century, almost all of the urban land in Istanbul had turned into public estates[1], which were easier to use for private construction (Tekeli 1996). Additionally, the Construction and Building Law[2] in 1882 enabled the parceling and settlement of agricultural land such as vineyards and orchards on the periphery of Istanbul (Tekeli 2011). It also allowed private property development around mansions with large gardens. In Kadıköy, these were owned by Ottoman state officials, wealthy foreigners, Levantines, Armenians and Greek merchants (Cantürk 2017).

In the early 1900s, urban rehabilitation in Istanbul's historic urban center focused on creating public spaces and road constructions. The first Ottoman urban reform interventions were based on those of the French modernists and focused on developing public parks, transportation systems (roads and tram lines), and sanitation infrastructure (Bilsel 2011). Their strategic plan concentrated on organizing and clearing the inner city rather than foreseeing and preparing for an increase in the population. Demolishers at this time employed themselves in the second-hand trade of wooden and masonry construction materials (Çelik 2007, 241). The structuring of the inner-city through the demolition of public buildings and housing development continued into the early days of the Turkish Republic (1923–1950).

## 4.3  State-led Developmentalism in the Early Days of the Turkish Republic

In the early days of the Turkish Republic, developmentalism was a potent way to satisfy the pledge of nationalism that accompanied the creation of a new modern state, economy, and culture. As part of that, traditional wooden houses and some historic buildings were demolished to make way for a road construction project that was based on a master plan by the French urban planner Henri Prost. These demolitions were intensified during the regime of prime minister Adnan Menderes who shifted state development funds to Istanbul and away from Ankara, the new Turkish capital. The debris of traditional houses and Ottoman landmarks were used in the construction of new housing in Kadıköy (Bilsel 2011). This material salvage of buildings was inherited from a common practice during the Ottoman period (Türeli 2014). Subtraction and addition

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1    *Vakıf Arazisi* in Turkish.
2    Ebniye Kanunu in Turkish.

processes, in the form of demolish and develop operations, determined the physical transformation of Istanbul's built environment.

### 4.3.1  Menderes' Demolition Operations in Istanbul

Since World War I, as part of the nationalizing of the Turkish economy, the state has been seizing the assets of non-Muslim minorities. During the events of 6–7 September, 1955, also known as the Istanbul Pogrom, Greek residents and their buildings were attacked by nationalist mobs. After that, the Greeks—who constructed the main commercial areas of Taksim Square—were forced to abandon their houses and commercial establishments and emigrate out of Istanbul; this came as a result of the nationalist politics of the Menderes government (Ergur 2009). These emptied buildings were then squatted by rural Turkish migrants.

Top-down planning decisions without any site-specific research erased historical neighborhoods. In this period, minority's properties and historical landmarks were erased from Istanbul's urban history (Figure 4.3). These operations, driven by the liberal agenda of the state, left deep and painful scars in Istanbul. Menderes was pro-automobile and supported widespread freeway development and rapid industrialization (Boysan 2011). These motorways connected the industrial areas to a broader transport network. The city's population drastically increased because of immigrant workers.

*Figure 4.3: Eminönü demolitions during the Menderes government*



Source: Burak Boysan Archive

Immediately after the demolitions were completed and due to the already-altered land ownership laws, the empty land on the side of the new boulevards was made available for the construction of new apartment blocks (ibid). The predominant 'build and sell' (*yapsatçılık*) method of *müteahhits* [construction contractors] emerged during this period. With the build-and-sell system, the contractors bought the land from the owner—who was part of the Ottoman elite—in exchange for a few apartments. Following the Condominium Act of 1965, which permitted individual ownership of apartments (Erman, Altay, and Altay 2004), Ottoman summer estates along the Marmara coast of Istanbul were demolished to build modern apartment buildings in both the Asian and Anatolian parts of the city (Korkmaz and Ünlü Yücesoy 2009).

Meanwhile, the Kadıköy suburbs continued to be a summer resort. The traditional mansions of the 1910s had already been replaced by modern masonry villas in the 1930s and 40s. The first zoning plan allowing three floors was passed in 1952 (Berkmen and Sırma 2019). The bureaucrats of the new Republic and the post-war bourgeoisie shared the residential district with the second-generation descendants of the old Istanbul families and the remaining non-Muslim minorities (Derviş et al. 2009). The opening of public beaches in Suadiye, Caddebostan, Moda, and Fenerbahçe in the 1930s reinforced Kadıköy's reputation as a resort, and, up until the 1960s, the large former estates were being divided into smaller parcels for two-story modern villas (Ekdal 2004). Soon these villas would be replaced by apartment blocks with structurally insufficient building stock that would later become second-hand components for current urban renewal projects.

### 4.3.2  Phase 1: Apartmentalization in Istanbul

The housing demand of the middle-class in Istanbul was met primarily by the construction of multi-story apartment blocks on privately-owned land in holiday resort districts. In Turkey, apartmentalization resulted from external influences, the shortage of financial resources, and the lack of accessible urban land (Balamir 1994, 29). In the 1960s, tremendous public pressure was exerted to lift construction restrictions so as to allow the ownership of Ottoman-era properties to be divided among shareholders (Keyder 1999). The result was the transformation of many single-mansion plots into several three to ten-story high apartments (Figure 4.4). Up until the Condominium act allowed individual apartment deeds, ownership was based on cooperative possession made up of owners (Bilgin 1988). In the 1960s, the emerging middle class dreamt of

owning an apartment in a new building rather than having a detached house in the suburbs because apartments represented modern ways of urban living (Bozdoğan 2010).

*Figure 4.4: An apartment block that was built after demolishing an old house on Bağ-dat Street in Kadıköy*
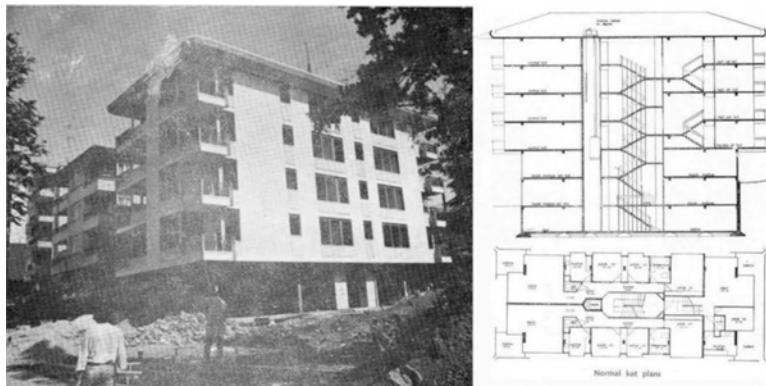


Source: (Arkitekt 1976)

The construction of middle-class apartment buildings was usually financed by provincial entrepreneurs with sufficient capital. The *müteahhits*, were predominantly from the Black Sea region, which had a tradition of seasonal migration to Istanbul since the 19th century (Keyder 1999). Furthermore, they had connections to mobilize a construction team, usually made up of workers from their hometown, and they could build without an architect (ibid, 21). In the Kadıköy district along the Marmara Sea, some property owners, heirs of the state elite, hired a *müteahhit* to demolish an abandoned Ottoman mansion and build a 6-story apartment block in its place. The contractor took half of the apartments in the block to finance the construction costs. Before construction was finished (preferably while the foundation was laid), the *müteahhit* was trying to sell the apartments to supply more financial resources. Indeed, prospective middle-class buyers paid installments to the contractor in the absence of an organized credit market for housing purchases (Işık 1995, 43). This method of construction financing (*yapsatçılık*) was the only available type.

The technical standards of the apartments were uniform: the contractors usually copied from a model that had been implemented before; and thus, hiring an architect was deemed unnecessary (Keyder 1999). The construction crew consisted of low-paid manual laborers who were rural migrants mainly skilled in farming. Practices that increase the exploitation of informal labor, such as employing workers with an extremely low hourly wage without insurance, or any social security, were frequently encountered in *yapsatçılık* (Işık 1995, 44). During the 1960s, the materials were manufactured locally by a construction industry where demand was proliferating. Quality could never be a concern as long as a protectionist foreign trade regime made importing materials impossible (Tekeli 1978). The low quality of the housing stock built in this period was considered to have a severe seismic risk (Bilgin 2000).

As in the rest of Istanbul in the 1950s, there were three critical developments in the Kadıköy district. The first was the rapid informal urbanization process emerging from intense migration to cities; the second was the urban development operations initiated by Adnan Menderes; and the third was the industrialization of the Asian part of Istanbul. Although Menderes' operations were mainly implemented in the European part of Istanbul, several new highways also were built. The main boulevard, Bağdat Street, dating back to the Byzantine era, was widened around Kadıköy in the Asian part (Akbulut 1994). Within the scope of these operations in 1958, the expansion of Bağdat Street was realized by the removal of tram lines and the expropriation of gardens on both sides of the street (Eyice 1994). Eventually, Bağdat emerged as the main transportation artery connecting residential areas on the Marmara coast with the urban center of Kadıköy.

Beginning in the 1950s, the low-density and low-rise aspect of the district was replaced by high-rise apartmentalization. The new development plans introduced a new transportation network. The housing production was of two types: cooperative housing and *yapsatçılık* initiated by small-scale contractors (Bilgin 1988). The maximum building height allowance was increased to five stories (Akbulut 1994; Bilgin 2000), which accelerated the apartmentalization of the area not only in the planned part of Kadıköy but also in *gecekondu* neighborhoods such as Fikirtepe. After the construction of the first bridge over the Bosporus connecting the European and Asian parts of Istanbul in 1973, Kadıköy and its surroundings became an attractive residential area for the middle class (Figure 4.5).

*Yapsatçılık*, as a construction practice with its payment schemes, played a fundamental role in the emergence, development, and growth of the urban

middle class starting from the 1960s. On the other hand, *gecekondu* urbanization enabled the rural migrants to be part of urban society and politics. Simultaneous with the construction activities of the middle class, *gecekondu* urbanization started to emerge as a self-help housing solution by rural migrants seeking work as unskilled labor in Istanbul.

*Figure 4.5: Distribution of buildings showing the number of floors in 2022*



Source: Kadıköy Municipality

## 4.4  Emerging Informal Urbanization and the gecekondu

In the 1950s, while agriculture in the villages was rapidly mechanizing, especially after receiving Marshall Plan aid[3] following the second world war (Bilgin 2000), the area between Istanbul and Ankara urbanized rapidly. With the private development of Istanbul's industry sector, the city in Ankara's shadow be-

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3    Between 1948 and 1950, some $164 million was obtained through this aid, 22 percent of which was spent on agriculture, mainly for mechanization (Şenyapılı 1981, 73).

came an urban center where capital was accumulating. When dislocated peasants began to migrate to Istanbul in large numbers, the state's resources for a "planned urbanization" were not enough to provide the housing needed since the state was already occupied in replanning the inner city through demolitions and factory development close to the main arteries. The rural migrants built their squatter dwellings on state-owned land, located close to the factories in Istanbul (Figure 4.6). The dwellings were named after the way they were constructed: *gecekondu* (plural gecekondus), which means "placed (built) overnight". As the city expanded its borders, some neighborhoods found themselves close to the city center, bordered by middle-class housing projects (Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008).

*Figure 4.6: Gecekondus in the Mecidiyeköy neighborhood of Istanbul (1959)*



Source: German Archeology Institute Archive

Focusing mainly on its national industry and ignoring its responsibility to provide housing, the Turkish state failed to commodify the state-owned land that formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire (Erman and Eken 2004). The state tolerated the self-help construction activities of migrant workers. However, the urban elite condemned these building's rural style as not being suitable for urban society's modernist ideals (Keyder and Öncü 1994). The informal and illegal means of *gecekondu* construction structured the commodification

of land and the integration of the rural into the urban population. Between the modern and the traditional norms, *gecekondu* urbanization was a transitional phenomenon that functioned as a societal and economic buffer mechanism (Kıray 1964). *Gecekondu* was viewed as a transitional urban space that was supposed to vanish as modernization and urbanization became increasingly advanced.

As each new squatter neighborhood sprang up, new urban centers appeared on the city's network (Keyder and Öncü 1994). In March 1949, in Istanbul, there were nearly 5,000 *gecekondus*. In 1950, there were 8,239; in 1959, 61,400; and in 1963, 120,000 (Duyar-Kienast 2005). At that time, 35% of the population, more or less 660,000 inhabitants, dwelled in these settlements (Pérouse 2004). Owing to their increasing political power due to their increased population, the legitimization process of these neighborhoods did not take long; within two decades, the rural-to-city migrants were able to ask local authorities for infrastructure and services (Balaban 2011). Their voting power was a bargaining advantage in populist politics. Additionally, they supplied cheap labor to the private sector. The agency of informality allowed them to create solidarity networks through relatives and village fellowship.

Until the mid-1980s, the government was legislating acts and amnesty laws that incorporated the benefits of *gecekondu*. For instance, the famous Law No. 775 in 1966 supported the improvement of squatter areas by providing long term loans for renovations and improving physical infrastructure and municipal services, the creation of public funds for *gecekondu* upgrading, the construction of apartments for low-income households, the land allocation for homeless migrants, the removal of *gecekondu* housing in geographically inappropriate areas and the restriction of new land occupation (Turkish Parliment (TBMM) 1966). To incorporate the benefits of *gecekondu* housing and favor the increase of urban growth as part of the national development strategy, the act aimed to integrate the benefits of this kind of housing when public resources were limited. In any case, the threat of demolition was constantly at their doorstep since the poor were always at the mercy of state authorities (Erman 2011).

New rural arrivals used whatever materials they could find to make their shelters (Duyar-Kienast 2005). The leftover building materials from Ottoman summer houses were sold by *çıkmacıs* to *gecekondu* builders (see also Ch. 7.3.3).

### 4.4.1   Construction Methods and Architectural Properties

At first sight, the *gecekondu* houses resemble make-shift, hovel-like, and scrappy rural houses, yet they contain essential utilities that support2 the complex livelihoods of migrants. Their architectural style originated in Anatolian villages and generally consisted of a small house, garden, and trees. They were often described with the discriminating term: 'non-urban' (Pérouse 2004). Tansı Şenyapılı's description of the building process reveals how this affordable and unique mode of construction had traces of vernacular architecture from rural parts of Turkey:

> The first *gecekondus* covered a 25–35 m2 area consisting of entrance space, one room, and a garden. The height of the house did not exceed 2.4 meters. At first, they dug the foundation and placed stones as a base for the surrounding walls. After placing the foundation, they buried it to hide it from the authorities. In the following stage, they placed the walls made of mud bricks [*kerpiç*] or used a wood-framed wall filled with rubble. Once the walls were constructed, they were covered with mud. Mud bricks were a mixture of earth and water with dry straw added as a connecting fiber. This mix was poured into a rectangular mold. The mud bricks were laid on top of each other over the stone foundation, leaving spaces for windows and doors bought from the demolishers. The roof was assembled with tin plates salvaged from factory leftovers or reclaimed wood beams from older houses. It was then covered with plastic coating insulated with tar, or the house was covered with tin plates collected from the industrial waste of neighboring factories. Sometimes the wood frame walls were prefabricated and placed on the site with the help of *gecekondu* dwellers. Occasionally for laying stone walls, old Byzantine graveyards were knocked down, and stone pavements were stolen. (Şenyapılı 1981, 181; my translation)

Their make-shift construction methods were a fast, easy, and affordable way for the *gecekondu* builders to make their shelters; their buildings were also expandable despite the fact that there was the ever-present danger of demolition by municipality officials. According to *gecekondu* Law No. 486 issued in 1924, a squatter house could only be demolished during the construction process; and if it was occupied, a decision from the court was necessary (ibid 2004). Struggling with authorities continuously made these builders fast, persistent and cooperative. To avoid demolition, they used tactics such as bribing the demolishing team, displaying the same political views as the team, stopping the bull-

dozers with barricades, and organizing neighborhood resistance groups (Şentürk 2016). Since the government barely tolerated them, the relationship with the municipal officials was a constant negotiation:

> If gecekondu dwellers realized that the demolition teams would certainly destroy their houses, they politely asked them to do the job with the minimum harm to the materials because they wanted to reuse the materials of their houses to rebuild them. Sometimes they dismantled the doors and the windows by themselves before the demolition. This last-minute bargain would reduce the cost of rebuilding. (Ibid 2016, 275)

Until they got some deeds for their occupied land, the *gecekondu* construction was continued with the help of local craftsmen and relatives:

> Ali, his brother-in-law, and Ibrahim kalfa [a skilled craftsman] began digging foundation ditches. These were completed after midnight and were packed with stones before dawn. Before the site was left, dirt raked over the level surface of the foundation to camouflage the activity. One week later, they assembled again, with two other men from the village and one fellow worker. Under Ibrahim's direction, they labored through the night, only managing to hang the door at dawn. Part of the roof remained incomplete, but Ali did not want to be late for work. The police had raided the site during the day, and two walls had been toppled to the ground. Ibrahim recommended rebuilding at once and sent a neighbor to ardiye [supply yard] for more bricks. This time they managed to complete the roof, and Fatma (Ali's wife) was brought to the house before Ali left for work. A week later, police notified Ali those legal proceedings had been lodged against him; Years later, he won the case. (Sewell 1966, 120)

Once the household's financial situation got better and the house was safe from demolition, they started to remodel the exterior walls and add rooms to the house (Figure 4.7). They replaced the mud walls by laying concrete bricks from the inside of the house and then removing the old mud wall (ibid). The assemblage of *gecekondu* construction brought together reclaimed materials, social relations, and interest groups. The network of social relations was the major component in this assemblage. Kinship, village fellowship[4] bonds and the support of the neighbors actively supported the process. Later, those networks de-

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4     Hemşehrilik in Turkish.

veloped into private associations that facilitated and influenced formal urbanization processes. Furthermore, *ardiyes*[5], that, discussed in the next chapter, became the primary resource in providing materials, granting installment payments, and giving credits.

*Figure 4.7: Incremental expansion of a gecekondu in Tuzluçayır-Ankara*
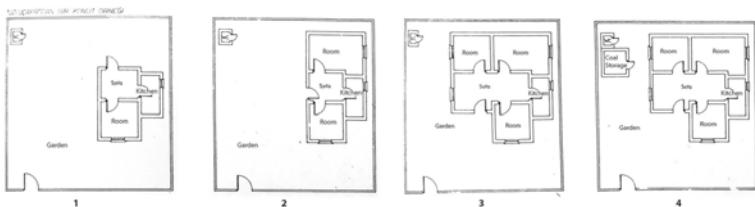


Source: (Şenyapılı 1981)

## 4.4.2  Role of Ardiyes as Supply Yards and Credit Providers

*Ardiye* supply yards, which were the origin of *çıkmacı* yards, provided affordable materials to *gecekondu* dwellers since the beginning of Istanbul's rapid urbanization in the early 1950s (Figure 4.8). These yards stored cheap construction materials and reclaimed construction elements from old buildings during urban rehabilitation and infrastructure projects (Şenyapılı 1981; Payne 1982; Duyar-Kienast 2005). Among many other informal solutions invented to account for the absence of certain necessities, *ardiyes* were established by rural migrants who had the financial means to start a business. In the very beginning, they were selling second-hand building materials in the city center; as Payne has stated:

> The ardiyes were an incredibly imaginative institution; faced with the great demand for cheap building components for the gecekondus and noticing the redevelopment projects starting in the city's commercial center, enterprising merchants salvaged the materials from buildings being redeveloped and resold them to self-help housebuilders. This recycling process soon becomes so extensive that architects involved in redevelopment schemes com-

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5    In Turkish, *ardiye* means 'storage', 'warehouse', or 'depot'.

monly had their fees paid in the form of the scrap value of materials from
the building to be replaced, whilst those needing components such as win-
dows to install quickly into a new house could, if they were lucky, get them
complete with glazing and even curtain rails. (Payne 1982,121)

Scrap from old buildings was valuable and profitable and the builders were
bartering their services with reclaimed materials because of the supply
scarcity and the speed of construction processes. Firstly, the *gecekondu* market
demanded cheap construction because of limited financial resources and the
immediate necessity of dwellings for newcomers. The quality of construction
in terms of durability and aesthetics could be improved when a job with a
steady income was found. Secondly, the mass production of industrial ma-
terials was scarce and expensive. After further development in the informal
market, *ardiyes* supplied second-hand and industrially manufactured ma-
terials according to their financial income (Payne 1982). The accessibility to
materials was as crucial as its affordability; thus, *ardiyes* were widely spreading
in new *gecekondu* neighborhoods; meanwhile, the old urban center had already
overloaded its capacity for new *gecekondus*.

As the *gecekondu* neighborhoods expanded in the periphery, new *ardiyes* ap-
peared in the new *gecekondu* settlements (ibid). The available material supply
from the original yards in the city center was getting harder to transport. Even-
tually, the supply was not enough; the peripheral yards started to manufacture
cheap wall blocks from reprocessed industrial waste and local material; win-
dow and door frames; or roofing trusses (ibid). The architectural properties of
*gecekondus* were based on the materials and components bought by credits from
the *ardiyes*. Occasionally, the materials purchased were not enough to finalize
the house, so the *gecekondu* builders had to finish it with whatever materials
they could find (Şenyapılı 1981). Because of that, some parts of the facades could
differ: one part of the wall might be mud and the other brick. The components
such as doors and windows might also not match.

Since the entrepreneurial model was based on cooperation in the earlier
stages of *gecekondu* urbanization, *ardiyes* were flexible with their payment
schedules. Due to the limited financial resources of the newcomers, *ardiyes*
were selling materials to them in monthly installments (Şenyapılı 1981; Şen-
türk 2016). Installment agreements between the *ardiye* owners and *gecekondu*
builders needed a financial guarantor who was part of the solidarity network,
e.g., a friend, relative, or fellow craftsmen (Duyar-Kienast 2005). Never-
theless, if some builders could not pay their installments, it did not cause a

financial problem for the owner of the *ardiyes* because there was always an increasing demand (Şentürk 2013). The non-monetary logic of earlier *ardiye* transactions began to shift due to the profit-seeking activities of some of these entrepreneurial migrants who were getting wealthier and wealthier.

*Figure 4.8: A remaining ardiye in Alibeyköy-Istanbul in 2017. In the background on the left, a new group of residential blocks can be seen*



Source: Author's own

Despite the self-help and other non-profit cooperatives, the nature of *gecekondus*, they were also already commodified by *ardiye* owners who got rich by supplying materials to *gecekondus* and construction mafia in the 1960s (Erman 2004). Because new migrants densely occupied the city, there were fewer empty spots on the central state land for squatting. As a result, *gecekondus* had to be built on private land, which was not free like the state land had been. Due to increasing demand, land speculation was escalating, and the cost of construction materials and skilled labor was rising (Özdemir 1999). In addition to the unavailability of land, labor, and materials, the emergence of organized interest groups like *ardiye* owners or local political strongmen also influenced informal urbanization dynamics.

Most *ardiye* owners were transformed into speculative contractors by squatting or buying land in their neighborhoods or by trading *gecekondus*; they

also became financers by offering loans to newcomers who did not have steady income (Payne 1982). By getting hold of the scarce material resources for their constructions and purchasing land, the monopoly of *ardiyes* enabled them to regulate the cost of *gecekondus*. Payne indicated that:

> [L]ike traditional agas or feudal chiefs… they were able to dictate the availability of credit and buy-up land on which to erect speculative houses, thereby inflating the prices of adjacent land and houses. (Ibid, 129)

Due to the lack of state authority, some local political strongmen started a 'land mafia' who controlled the land rights and decided who could occupy them (Şenyapılı 2004). Moreover, the squatted land is frequently prey to obscure real estate mafias, who grant themselves false titles of ownership or claim false rights in order to exert pressure on an already fragile population, and claim rents or other taxes by force (Pérouse 2004). As a result, new rural migrants had fewer opportunities to build their *gecekondus*. Solidarity between them were disappearing while the informal market was imposing a harsh capitalist system

As a result of the 1955 and 1966 Industrial Zone Plan, the Maltepe, Pendik, Kartal, and Tuzla districts were established as industrial zones in the Asian part, and a significant portion of the people who work in these areas settled around Bağdat Street and Fikirtepe (Yazıcıoğlu Halu 2010). The first squatter neighborhoods emerged around the Fikirtepe neighborhood close to the urban center of Kadıköy (Türk, Tarakçi, and Gürsoy 2020).

## 4.5  Economic Liberalization in the 1980s

The 1980s marked the end of the nationalist developmentalism era, and the Turkish economy opened up international capital and commodity flows. The political and economic choices of the developmentalist state were not enough for Istanbul to compete in the global market. However, Istanbul was able to distinguish itself through the rise of its private sector and restructuring attempts. Unlike the previous one, this regime did not function with authoritarian military principles. On the contrary, it adopted conventional policies recommended by the IMF (Keyder and Öncü 1994).

During this time, inner-city demolitions intensified in order to further expand the freeway network so as to solve the traffic problems arising with the

ever-expanding population of Istanbul. In this economically liberal scene, *yap-satçılık* loans expanded into gecekondu neighborhoods that had finally received their land deeds after so many years of squatting. *Gecekondu* houses gave way to *apartkondus* (low quality apartment buildings) which lacked sufficient materials to withstand an earthquake.

### 4.5.1   Phase 2: *Gecekondu* Apartmentalization

In 1983, after a 3-year-long coup in Turkey, the Motherland Party (ANAP), led by Turgut Özal, won the elections as part of a right-wing coalition to fulfill the pursuit of liberalization and deregulation. Despite the previous restructuring attempts, their reforms resulted in lowered income distribution, subsidy limitations, and declining social expenditures (Boratav, Yeldan, and Köse 2001). Their political support came primarily from the rising populations of rapidly urbanizing major cities such as Istanbul; this was due to ANAP's invention of an urban populist strategy, which was primarily focused on the rural migrants in *gecekondu* neighborhoods (Öncü 1988). This urban populism promised prosperity for these low-income dwellers. They bought the dream of pushing their economic stratum upwards through a free-market system independent from former state controls. To accomplish this promise, ANAP took organized steps to legalize *gecekondus* (Dündar 2001; Balaban 2011). The squatted land functioned as a privatized asset that created economic opportunities. Landlords, once squatters, illegally demanded extra 'key money' from new rural migrants to profit from the high housing demand. The prices of housing increased due to profit-seeking activities from urban rent:

> By the mid-1960s, squatting in the traditional sense of the term had disappeared in Istanbul. Settlers had to pay local strongmen for the right to occupy even public land. In the mid-1970s, entrepreneurs with underground connections started controlling public lands in certain districts of Istanbul, selling land and monopolizing all construction activity. (Yönder 1998, 62)

Tahire Erman criticized the populist politics of ANAP for their taking advantage of the social and economic problems of low-income rural migrants:

> Populist politics opened wide the doors to the commercialization of *gecekondus*, which could be interpreted again as the government 'bribing' those who suffered the most from their liberal policies, thus silencing them

> by giving them the hope of becoming rich. When its legal approval backed up the tendency of the 1970s to regard *gecekondu* land as a commodity in the 1980s, the 'apartmentalization' of *gecekondus* became a widespread phenomenon. Thus, the once-owner-occupied/owner-built *gecekondus* were being replaced by high-rise apartment buildings. The owner of the *gecekondu* land owned several apartments ('the undeserving rich Other'). In brief, pessimism was felt deeply by some *gecekondu* people who experienced increasing deprivation, while other *gecekondu* people became economically better-off in a short period. (Erman 2001, 987)

After the passing of several land amnesty laws during the ANAP administration, *gecekondu* dwellers were permitted to upgrade their houses to multi-story apartment buildings (up to 4 floors) (Keyder 1999; Pérouse 2014). This allowed them to be the owners of several apartments that could be rented out to new arrivals from rural areas. This new type of housing was referred to as *apartkondus*. *Müteahhits* [contractors] situated themselves in these emerging neighborhoods which, although in the periphery, were still advantageously located because they were, for example, close to access roads, near residential neighborhoods, or in urban recreational areas (Dündar 2001). These processes resulted in a powerful social change among the squatters who, once disparaged as occupiers, had become suddenly wealthier through urban land rent (Bilgin 2000).

In the 1990s, urbanization in Turkey assumed a different dynamic: forced migration (Keyder 2005; Saraçoğlu 2010). Unlike previous migrants from rural areas, Kurdish villagers, permanently displaced by a decade-long armed conflict between Turkish military and Kurdish rebels, experience forced migration to urban areas. In addition, *gecekondu* districts were polarized by ethnic conflicts. The state's inability to support the arrival of displaced Kurdish people has resulted in social disorders, such as unemployment, overpopulation, health problems, criminality, and social disintegration (Erman 2013).

According to Keyder and Öncü (1994), there were three major policy adjustments adopted by the ANAP government that affected radical urban change in Istanbul. First, they created new financial resources for metropolitan governments by increasing national and local tax revenues and taking foreign credits for infrastructural upgrading and global investment projects. Second, they founded the Mass Housing Fund [Toplu Konut Fonu], which gave state subsidies for low-income housing. Third, and most importantly, they changed the metropolitan governance model into a two-tier system: the greater metropolitan and the district-level municipalities (Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008). Con-

sequently, the greater metropolitan municipality of Istanbul transformed into an entrepreneurial organization opened up to global investments. Urban planning processes assigned to local institutions led to the demolition of desolate neighborhoods and inner-city industrial areas.

These adjustments represented the decentralization of the central government's authority in favor of a more powerful local government. The control of Istanbul's critical governmental agencies, attached to central ministries in Ankara, was given to the metropolitan mayor of the greater municipality. In the two-tier municipality system, one part was responsible for garbage collection, repairs, and road maintenance. At the same time, the other part handled land use planning, building control, and building permits. Their bureaucratic power over issues such as local rent control made them remarkably influential. And yet, these changes, resulting from a series of legal amendments in local governance, did not solve the rapid urbanization problems. Instead of acting in the public interest to solve the housing and traffic problems, the officials accommodated the uncontrolled expansion of the Istanbul metropolitan area.

The metropolitan mayor of Istanbul, Bedrettin Dalan, equipped with new financial resources and administrative power, could have modernized Istanbul like Baron Haussmann did for Paris and Robert Moses did for New York[6]. In the next part, I will discuss the circumstances of Dalan's demolitions.

### 4.5.2  Mayor Dalan and his Demolitions

In the early 1980s, due to the ever-increasing population and unplanned expansion of *gecekondus*, Istanbul had major industrial pollution problems combined with a lack of housing, public transportation, and physical infrastructure. Instead of focusing attention on those problems, the municipal administration pursued profit-seeking activities for global investment. Bedrettin Dalan, a member of ANAP, initiated large-scale projects that promoted Istanbul as a world city within the context of globalization and liberalization (Keyder and Öncü 1994, 409). Dalan's efforts to renew the city center were based on plans for inserting transit routes to the Eminönü peninsula. Geared to the end goal of an international service center, these plans included new office buildings, hotels, cultural centers, and restaurants. During his service (1984–1989) foreign capital was invested in erecting hotel and bank buildings,

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6    They both initiated radical urban changes by clearing buildings in the inner-city areas and destroying historical cityscapes.

transforming Istanbul's skyline with high-rise development in the post-1983 period.

Dalan, like former city bureaucrats, made his urban renewal plans based on demolitions. Instead of solving long standing traffic problems by adding public transportation, he added more roads. With rapid action that bypassed bureaucratic paperwork and heritage preservation legislation, Dalan ordered 30 thousand condemned buildings and old factories along the Golden Horn to be torn down to 'make it green and clean again' (ibid, 410). In order to open a controversial new Tarlabası Boulevard[7], he used the preceding legal system to clear some parcels a nineteenth-century Ottoman neighborhood in the city center (Figure 4.9). Later, this boulevard turned the area into an inner-city Ghetto.

The *Ardiyes* and *gecekondu* dwellers were once again not left empty-handed by this spate of 1980s demolitions, which produced an incredible number of reclaimed materials. From the informants of the fieldwork, it is proved that *çıkmacıs* were active in this period. With the new legalization processes, the building of *gecekondu* settlements spread to the periphery of Istanbul, under the jurisdiction of district municipalities. As a rule, clientelism and patronage relations with district authorities dominated Istanbul's real estate market, which was also relentless when global players entered the game:

> The rapid articulation of the newly elected district councilmen with vested interests in the construction sector on the one hand, and the regional networks among their largely immigrant constituencies on the other, initially paved the way for a new wave of legalization and retroactive planning in the older informal settlements. (Ibid, 411)

For small and large entrepreneurs, the most popular option for 'making it big' was this construction sector that dominated the nationwide economy. Local governments began to demolish *gecekondus* to create prosperous neighborhoods where they could collect taxes (Keyder 2011). As a result of these developments, the city's periphery was divided into parts where the legal and the illegal coexisted (Erman and Eken 2004; Ayata 2008).

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7    Tarlabası cuts through one of the oldest Greek neighborhoods. The municipality of Istanbul demolished more than 300 Ottoman apartments in 1987 in order to open a main highway connecting the first Bosphorus Bridge. For further reading of the boulevard construction see (Bilsel 2011).

*Figure 4.9: A general view of the demolition and salvage activity in Tarlabaşı. On the right, reclaimed doors are leaning on the buildings. On the left, there is a heap of wood*



Source: Bayram Muhittin Archive

During the 1980s, Kadıköy witnessed major motorway infrastructure works. Between 1984–87, the coastal arrangement from Kalamış to Bostancı was applied by land reclamation from the Marmara Sea, and the new coastal road was built to reduce and rearrange the traffic on Bağdat Street (Eyice 1994). Large-scale road transportation projects such as the construction of the second bridge increased the accessibility of the district and allowed its complete integration into the city. As a result, real estate values increased drastically, and urban rent was consolidated in the district.

The liberalization of the economy in the 1980s changed the grounds of *gecekondu*'s informality; it did so by commodifying land through rent-seeking projects that spearheaded inner-city *gecekondu* demolition and replacement. Plus, this also had an impact on *how* reclamation, reuse, and scrap dealing adjusted to the new dynamics. The next section clarifies these new urbanization dynamics.

## 4.6  Neoliberal Development in the 2000s

In Istanbul, globalization dynamics are most clearly seen in the expansion of the finance center, high-rise constructions, and luxurious real estate projects begun during the liberalization of the economy in the 1990s. The redistribu-

tion of land ownership was mainly based on informal land occupation from the 1950s until this dynamic changed in the 2000s with the neoliberal economy. The dwellers of inner-city *gecekondus* were dispossessed by land-grabbing urban renewal projects. After the 1999 Düzce Earthquake[8], seismic risk was perceived as an opportunity to renew the aging and structurally weak building stock. Urban renewal can be rapidly executed when facilitated by policy changes. This subchapter focuses on how urban transformation projects took over the urbanization processes in the early 2000s in Istanbul by utilizing demolitions.

### 4.6.1   Government Interventions for Urban Renewal Projects

> Neoliberal activities in Turkey fall into three categories; 1. political projects that promote privatization, globalization, and the end of welfare; 2. economic philosophies or theories that prioritize private enterprise and capital accumulation on urban land; 3. modes of governmentality that see citizens as self-responsible subjects. (Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008, 46)

In contrast to earlier parcel-based investments in the prestigious central areas, neoliberal urban expansion focused on larger plots in the 2000s. With Kadir Topbaş coming to the metropolitan municipality's office in 2004, a new threshold was reached that redefines urban governance and development. Unlike the 1980s' partial development, top-down planning was tailored to large-scale mega projects like the third Istanbul Airport and the Istanbul Canal.

Since 2002, the AK party controlled government led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has ensured the administrative and legal grounds for urban renewal projects spanning over 18 years of governance. The most important change was the transformation of the Turkish Housing Development Administration (TOKI). As an institution that provided loans to housing cooperatives when founded in 1983, TOKI had undergone a radical transformation. With the

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8    Especially after the Düzce Earthquake, some districts in Istanbul experienced a great deal of demolitions. Istanbul awaits a once-in-a-century earthquake since it sits on the North Anatolian Fault. The earthquake revealed that the buildings which are built were not built to endure a 7.2 seismic magnitude. The corrupt contractors of the time did not make the constructions following the regulations. By bribing the authorities, the projects were approved. In some cases, they did not use sufficient structural materials during the construction. Some buildings were built with sand from the sea. In 2014, while I was documenting a demolition in Fikirtepe, I observed seashells in most of the concrete rubble.

abolition of the social housing fund in 2001, the acquisition of land and properties of the Emlak Bankası [Real Estate Bank] after its closure, TOKI became the largest property owner of state land (Pérouse 2013). Between 2002 and 2008, 14 legal regulations expanded TOKI's fields of activity and increased its resources (Balaban 2011, 26). When TOKI was given the authority to make any alterations, of any scale, on the lands it controlled, the institution became the state's construction administration and social engineering tool (Bilgin 2013). TOKI was authorized by the state as the institution with the highest authority over housing and land production.

Regarding the authorization transferred to municipalities to declare an urban transformation area with Law No. 5366, the demolition of 1 million houses in Istanbul was legitimized (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). With the passage of Law No. 6306, historic neighborhoods such as Sulukule, Tarlabaşı, Süleymaniye, Fener, and Balat were included in the scope of urban development (Figure 4.10) (Turkish Parliment (TBMM) 2012). In cooperation with TOKI, municipalities have initiated the 'zero- gecekondu policy' to alter squatter neighborhoods into expensive residential areas (ibid, 6).

The *gecekondu* districts and old factory lands within central inner- city areas have become global investment assets for office buildings and financial centers. The government's plan embodied dislocating the poor, confiscating their land, privatizing public assets, and marketing the land for international investment (Aksoy 2014). The government excluded these neighborhoods—legitimated in previous administrations—by defining them as problematic districts with poor living conditions that were inhabited by marginal groups.

With the 5237 Turkish Penalty Code passed on June 1, 2005, the legal expression of the discourse against *gecekondus* became solidified: it imposed a prison term of one to five years for the construction of illegal houses, which it termed a 'crime against the environment'. *gecekondus* always had a temporary status, and their properties did not gain political autonomy. This situation made it easier for local authorities to clear *gecekondus* from peripheral areas. With the help of the government, the real estate sector was able to develop luxury residences equipped with shopping centers, leisure facilities, and office towers for the wealthier groups in those areas.

*Figure 4.10: Inner-city urban renewal projects in Istanbul. White traced areas are historic neighborhoods (Tarlabaşı, Sulukule, and Süleymaniye) mentioned in the text*



Source: http://megaprojelerIstanbul.com/

*Gecekondus*, which can be regarded as the city's periphery both socially and geographically, were transformed by forced evacuations and demolitions (Altay 2013). The fact that the government declared forty of these areas 'seismically risky' in Istanbul between July 2012 and December 2013 illustrates the scale of urban renewal at that time (Yalçıntan et al. 2014).

The consequence of urban renewal for the inhabitants of the *gecekondus* has positive and negative results. Those with a limited bargaining capacity with *müteahhits* due to the disadvantageous location of their *gecekondu* land could have an apartment in TOKI houses (Erman 2013). What was more, some lacked a legal title to their property, and these tenants lost access to affordable housing built by TOKI. Urban renewal projects were blamed for removing the urban poor to the periphery and replacing former *gecekondu* settlements with luxurious megaprojects designed for tourism and leisure (Karaman 2008). Briefly, the legal foundations of the neoliberal urban transformation were prepared by

the parliament[9]. The most important of all is Law No. 6306 which is also known as Earthquake Law.

### 4.6.2  Law No. 6306 on Disaster Prevention and Transformation of High-Risk Areas

According to official figures, 18,243 people lost their lives, and 48,901 people were injured in the Izmit earthquake on 17 August 1999 (Figure 4.11) and the Düzce Earthquake on 12 November 1999. In two earthquakes, 377,879 building units were damaged to various degrees (Tan, Kanıpak, and Safer 2016). After this extreme loss, earthquake regulation and building security have become essential aspects of the country's policy. The urban renewal projects specified by Law No. 6306 in 2012 were supposed to create more livable and safe urban spaces (Turkish Parliment (TBMM) 2012). The earthquake showed that the buildings constructed by corrupt *müteahhits* did not withstand an earthquake over seven magnitudes. In the whole region, including Istanbul, the apartment blocks were built with defective materials without official control (see Ch. 4.5.1), and the seismic construction regulations were out of date.

The environment and Urban Planning Ministry announced that half of the country must be demolished and renewed within 20 years when the disaster law was legislated in 2012 (Pérouse 2013). Due to rapid, illegal, and cheap urbanization during the apartmentalization of *gecekondus*, AK Party used a proposed plan of tearing down and rebuilding all 7 million residential buildings as an electoral promise (Balaban 2011). With this necessity based on the seismic risk, the *gecekondu* demolitions, which were infrequent in Istanbul, were accelerated; 11,543 units were demolished in Istanbul from 2004 to 2008, which was an all-time record (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010, 6). More recently, regarding the damage that will be caused by the next big earthquake, the current metropolitan mayor of Istanbul from the Republican Party (CHP), Ekrem Imamoğlu, stated that;

> Whereas the residential population of Istanbul is 15 million by night and 6 million by day, 255 thousand of the total 1 million 166 thousand buildings in the city were built before 1980, 533 thousand were constructed

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9    Key legislative changes between 2000–2012 are Law No. 5226 in 2004, Law No. 5327, Law No. 5366 in 2005, Law No. 5293, Law No. 5582 and Law No. 6306 (Angell, Hammond, and Schoon 2014, 651).

between 1990–2000, and 376 thousand between 2000–2019. According to the "Earthquake and Damage Loss Estimation Study" conducted by the IBB Earthquake Analysis Directorate and the University of Boğaziçi in 2018; as a result of a devastating earthquake scenario of 7.5 magnitudes, the number of heavily and severely damaged buildings in Istanbul will be 48,000. The number of medium and higher damaged buildings will be 194,000. According to these figures, 22.6% of the buildings will be demolished. 25 million tons of debris will be generated. 30% of the roads will be closed. There will be a total structural and non-structural economic loss of 120 billion TL. (Imamoğlu 2019; my translation)

*Figure 4.11: The destruction caused by Izmit earthquake in 1999*



Source: Daily Sabah

Using these statistics, demolition and redevelopment were increasingly promoted by state officials. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, TOKI, and metropolitan and district municipalities initiated urban transformation projects by organizing a "destruction feast" (Adanalı 2012). In 2010, the former President of TOKI, Erdogan Bayraktar, stressed the importance of turning vacant lands into lucrative assets and bringing them into the economy (Ünsal 2011, 55). The statistical data above depicts an urban resource that can be reused and recycled; however, the governmental authorities continue to ignore the potential of this resource.

The purpose of Law No. 6306 is to determine the principles and practices of improvement, clearing, and redevelopment for safe buildings and healthy living spaces in accordance with technological and architectural norms and standards in the "high-risk areas". The legislation identified "high-risk zones" that may result in loss of lives and property, and accordingly, "risky buildings" in those zones as "reserve development zones", where new residential buildings could be built. The legislation specified strategies for determining high-risk zones and buildings; processes of evacuation and demolition; and post-demolition development projects. The law also describes the obligations and roles of state bodies.

Figure 4.12: Buildings and areas at seismic risk in Kadıköy
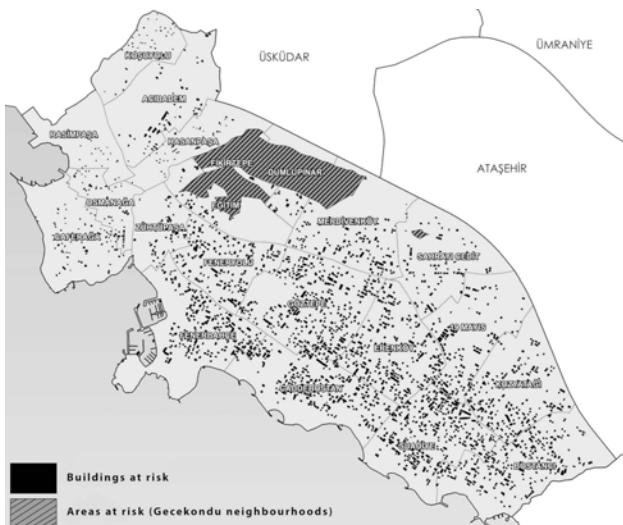


Source: Kadıköy Municipality

This law did not provide an environmental approach to disaster; instead, it mainly had stipulations and loopholes that bypassed NGOs, conservation laws, and questions of human rights violations. It also did not acknowledge disasters other than earthquakes, e.g., climate change. Nor did it have a social policy dimension: it did nothing to address poverty. It only emphasized the regeneration of physical space for redevelopment. Besides giving the ap-

pearance of recognizing secondary sectors—such as risky building detection, building control, demolition, and excavation—the policy changes did not prescribe guidelines for the deconstruction of the buildings. Instead, demolitions were accomplished as rapidly as possible to open up space for new construction. In between these rapid processes, scrap collectors also became *çıkmacıs* in Istanbul. The following section addresses the urban transformation process based on seismic risk in Kadıköy (Figure 4.12).

### 4.6.3  Urban Renewal in Kadıköy due to Earthquake Risk

The second wave of construction in Kadıköy occurred after the Izmit Earthquake in 1999, which was felt strongly in Kadıköy, located along the Marmara coast. While supporting the growth of the construction and real estate sector, 'demolish-redevelop' method in Kadıköy to facilitate urban renewal under the cover of earthquake-proofing. According to the Kadıköy Center - E5 (D100) Motorway Master Plan in 2005, the buildings were once more allowed to be built with additional floors. The legislation of Law No. 6306 provided benefits for the homeowners to renew their dwellings and create lucrative investments for the real estate market (Figure 4.13).

According to law no. 6306, it is the duty of the local municipality to offer rent support to homeowners for 18 months. Additionally, to stay in business, the construction firms offer rent assistance to homeowners. The new zoning code requires the construction firm to have an additional floor that secures construction costs and even profits from selling new units. Usually, after 18 months of construction, the owners move back to their renewed apartments. In most cases, the urban transformation results in increasing the value of the apartments and the neighborhood without any cost to the homeowners, who also receive financial resources that support the costs of moving and rent support throughout the urban transformation process. As a result of these developments, the Kadıköy district turned into a dangerous construction site. Pedestrians were killed in accidents due to dangerous maneuvers of dump trucks in traffic (D. Öztürk 2019). The air pollution increased because of the construction dust. The verdant garden that was Kadiköy lost its glow to the jungle of new apartments as they ate up more and more space.

*Figure 4.13: One of the remaining Ottoman Mansions in Kadıköy, Istanbul: Cavit Paşa Villa in Bağdat Street. In front, there is an old Ottoman fountain. At the back, the construction of buildings via Urban Transformation.*



Source: Alp Eren Archive

*Figure 4.14: Urban renewal in Fikirtepe*[10]
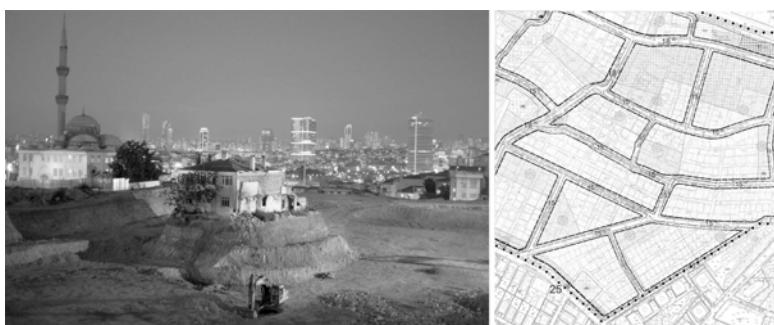


Source: Author's own based on 140 Journos Archive (left), Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (right)

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10    On the left is a house that was previously a gecekondu standing alone after a disagreement with the developer in Fikirtepe. On the right is a 1:1000 scale master plan showing new parcels combining small lots of previous buildings in Fikirtepe.

This transformation process is experienced differently in other neighborhoods, especially in Fikirtepe, which used to be a *gecekondu* neighborhood. Fikirtepe is located on the Anatolian side of Istanbul within the Kadıköy district. The main transportation link, the D-100 (E 5) State Highway, passes through the northern section of the area. The neighborhood emerged as one of the first *gecekondu* districts since the 1950s, and was legalized in the 1990s with state-given land deeds. Its small workshops, sweatshops, and scrap depots served as a multi-functional site combining small-scale production and housing use.

In order to improve its physical, social, and living standards, the Fikirtepe district was declared a 'special project area' as a part of the 1/5000 master plan (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB) 2005). In order to provide urban improvements to the district, urban consolidation incentives for land assembly were initiated by turning small, divided joint-owned buildings into larger units. To accelerate the process, the government declared the district a risky area in 2013 under Law No. 6306. However, without the regulatory presence of local authorities and the state, the whole planning process failed by resulting in unresolved agreements between homeowners and developers and unfinished constructions after massive demolitions due to bankrupt developers (Türk, Tarakçi, and Gürsoy 2020). Some homeowners who disagreed with urban transformation measures became a symbol of victimization due to the confiscation of their land rights (Figure 4.14). In addition, some of the small-scale production and service sectors, including scrap collector warehouses, had to move to peripheral locations or change to different temporary locations.

The number of construction licenses issued by Kadıköy Municipality in 2010 was 185; this value approached 521 in 2014, 612 in 2015, 826 in 2016, and 1000 in 2017 (Berkmen and Sırma 2019). This exponential increase also represented the number of demolitions becoming resources for building salvage. Local scrap collectors took over salvaging from demolishers and started material reclamation to sell discarded materials to recycling factories and trade second-hand components. Due to this surplus, depots that already existed in the Asian part extended their capacity and number. However, inner-city depots in Fikirtepe were relocated to peripheral sites. Eventually, they moved closer to the official industrial zone.

## 4.7  Conclusion

This chapter gave an overview of Istanbul's urbanization process. During the shifts from state-led to globalized to neoliberal economy, the city has been repeatedly demolished and redeveloped. *gecekondu* squatters provide a prime example of how state land is distributed to the rural migrant population. Illegal land occupation was allowed by the populist regime because the governments did not have a housing plan and sufficient economic resources. The history of land commodification describes how current multi-story dwellings are built in formal and informal neighborhoods. Apartmentalization occurred in two main phases: the creation of middle-class housing estates in the 1950s and the upgrade of *gecekondu* dwellings in the 1980s.

Within an environment lacking any official deconstruction guideline, the *çıkmacıs* have adapted to the wide array of historical transformations. The reclaimed materials were often used in the *gecekondu*s. Such informal housing expanded the borders of the city where we live now. The *ardiyes* provided resources to the overnight squatter constructions while pragmatically profiting from them. They became one of the major infrastructures supporting 'right to housing' for new rural arrivals.

Today, *gecekondu* construction is no longer allowed by the state. The customers for second-hand materials have changed. The material cycle has shifted. That's why it is critical for the scope of this study to understand how these small *çıkmacı* businesses adjusted to the new market dynamics while neoliberal dynamics shaped by earthquake regulations and the demolitions continue on a mass scale. For instance, Kadıköy went through major development of individual apartments.