Introduction

Barber Halil Usta[1] loved his shop and entertained very strong and longstanding ties in his neighbourhood. Originally from the city of Kayseri in Central Anatolia, Halil obtained his Usta certificate in 1977, but had worked in the profession since 1969, and always in the central Istanbul neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı. While the gradual decline of the area over the years had led to him losing many of his former customers, a phenomenon that accelerated with the Tarlabaşı renewal project, he preferred to spend most of his time in his small shop in Tree Street. When he was not in his shop he could be found in the Kurdish-owned teahouse down the street, where he indulged his one guilty pleasure: playing cards with his friends from the neighbourhood. However, Halil Usta did not live in Tarlabaşı. He had moved to a *site*[2] in the middle class neighbourhood in Bostancı, a district on the Asian side of Istanbul where he lived with his wife. While he often lauded his "modern apartment" and the area he lived in as "clean and quiet" and "good for a family to live in", he admitted that he barely knew any of his neighbours by name, something he did miss in comparison to Tarlabaşı. He was proud that he had put both his children through good schools and university with the help of his shop, and that they both worked in respected white-collar jobs: his daughter at a big international bank and his son as a lawyer.

The Usta had an excellent reputation as a barber and was famed for his "close shaves and smooth hands". A number of patrons, those who had moved away from the neighbourhood but did not want to miss out on Halil Usta's grooming and the local gossip, came from other parts of the city to enjoy his services. In short, Halil Usta was both very respected and very well integrated in Tarlabaşı, and yet, or so he told me on several occasions, he had preferred not to disclose the location of his small business at the parent-teacher meetings in the school of his children in Bostancı. He had feared the "bad reputation" that Tarlabaşı generally had amongst Istanbul residents, and the subsequent im-

1 In Turkey, the honorific "Usta" [Master] is used for craftsmen and artisans who have reached the highest level of competence and craftsmanship. It is used with the bearer's first name and used to address a master craftsman as a sign of respect in daily interactions. In the traditional Turkish apprenticeship system, the title is awarded at the discretion of an apprentice's mentor, who is an Usta himself, and not tied to an independent exam, as is the case for example in Germany. I will refer to all master craftsmen as Usta, as I did in every daily interaction with them during my fieldwork.

2 A group of apartment buildings often managed like a gated community.

pact it might have had on how teachers and fellow students would treat his children. This worry did not disappear as they went on to university, and later on started their professional lives. In front of their friends and colleagues, Halil Usta always remained rather vague, and preferred to say that he had a barber shop in Beyoğlu, the larger administrative district to which Tarlabaşı also belongs. In the end he simply stated that he was retired, which was factually true, and did not work anymore at all, a white lie that was meant to foreclose all further questions.

When the Beyoğlu Municipality officially announced the Tarlabaşı renewal project in 2008, Halil Usta was torn. He believed that the neighbourhood was in dire need of an upgrade, and that the government as he knew it would likely do what was best for inhabitants. He also voiced the opinion that in fact, Tarlabaşı residents had only themselves to blame for the bad state of the area, and, since they were largely squatters anyway, they should not complain about looming evictions. However, as the project progressed, Halil Usta felt increasingly uneasy. Neighbours and friends he had known for decades started to leave, making him feel "like an orphan". His already lagging business trickled to a halt. His landlord insisted on full rent while locked in a court case over the sales price of his property with project stakeholders. As a tenant, Halil Usta had no right to any compensation despite his progressing income loss. He felt increasingly unseen and unheard. Despite initial promises by the municipality, the project made his life, and that of many of his neighbours, not better, but worse. However, Halil Usta never engaged in any kind of organised resistance against the demolition of his neighbourhood. He did not join the Tarlabaşı Solidarity Association[3] that had been founded with the aim to help residents. Despite his lack of engagement, Halil Usta regularly challenged the negative narrative and the stigmatising discourse about Tarlabaşı. In conversations, he would underline what he thought was good about his neighbourhood and should be preserved. Halil Usta clearly valued Tarlabaşı, his life and his position there very much – so why did he go to such lengths to obscure this significant aspect of his life, his accomplishments, his social world, from others? What were the consequences Halil Usta was trying to avoid by distancing himself from Tarlabaşı? Why did he feel the need to blame his neighbours, many of whom he had an excellent and deep relationship with, for the bad state of the neighbourhood? And how to explain his ambivalent stance towards the renewal project? The simplest answer is this: Tarlabaşı suffered, and still suffers, from a bad reputation.

In this book I interrogate these questions further. True, Tarlabaşı *does* have a bad reputation, but there are micro-social processes and macro-political dynamics involved that structure the way that neighbourhood reputation sticks to particular residents in particular ways. These processes and dynamics also structure the diversity of tactics meant to manage or negotiate social life in a deeply stigmatised neighbourhood. This place-based stigma also has a profound impact on solidarity ties and trust networks, and therefore impacts the way a community is able – or not – to organise around collective action and resistance. Importantly, the various attempts to challenge the bad reputation of Tarlabaşı

3 The "Tarlabaşı Association of Property Owners and Tenants for Progress and Solidarity", founded in 2008. I will expand on the association, further referred to as "Tarlabaşı Association" or "Solidarity Association", in a later chapter of the book.

deserve attention, as they can provide insight into how residents tried to oppose the negative frame the renewal project trapped their neighbourhood in.

Aims

Building on Loïc Wacquant's theory of territorial stigmatisation, I focus on the questions of how territorial stigmatisation was produced, and how it was exploited by project stakeholders during the state-led renewal project in the central Istanbul neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı. However, I do not only explore the manufacture of place-based stigma in the dominant discourse, by the municipality and the media. I also analyse how residents in a low-income neighbourhood reacted to this stigmatisation, how they managed and occasionally opposed it through everyday practices. While Wacquant did not dedicate much of his writing to how territorial stigma might be contested, research has shown that residents use a variety of strategic responses to appropriate, reject, ignore, or rescript spatial taints. Furthermore, opposition against stigma can also be found in the way residents express belonging. Paul Kirkness and Andreas Tijé-Dra point out that "the fact that some people are capable of feeling place attachments to areas that are deemed to be threatening by anybody outside the neighbourhood is an important step towards the negation of the power of stigma" (Kirkness and Tijé-Dra 2017a: 3). This, too, is a phenomenon that I will explore. I want to assess the scope and methods of territorial stigmatisation in Tarlabaşı and examine if Wacquant's theoretical understanding of the concept applies in the context of this central Istanbul neighbourhood. Furthermore, I want to investigate how territorial stigmatisation impacted residents in the run-up to and during evictions for the renewal project.

The internalisation of stigma in Tarlabaşı was by no means uniform and did not manifest itself as evenly as Wacquant suggests. While a number of people expressed negative opinions and ambivalence towards their area of residence, very few thought that it was all bad. The internalisation was also not consistent: people who would harshly criticise the neighbourhood and their neighbours one day, defended both on another, depending on the context and the audience. Furthermore, taking into account recent research on intersectionality, this work aims to fill a gap in the research on how the experience of stigma in a low-income neighbourhood in Turkey heavily depended on the socio-demographic and gender identity of residents. People who were part of a strong solidarity or trust network, such as Kurds, with awareness of and/or connection to longstanding organised political resistance in Turkey, managed stigma in a different way than those who could not fall back on the experience of a political struggle. My fieldwork suggests a more interactionist understanding of stigma than Wacquant applies in his work on urban marginality, a thought on which I would like to elaborate.

In the context of Tarlabaşı and the renewal project, I understand territorial stigmatisation to "include a wide range of subjective experiences, namely, incidents in which respondents experienced disrespect and their dignity, honor, relative status, or sense of self was challenged" (Lamont et al. 2016: 6). This was the case when residents were treated rudely by municipal representatives or employees of the private developer *GAP*

Inşaat[4], when crucial information was withheld from them, when they were excluded from decisions that would deeply impact their lives, when they and their neighbours received poor services, when they were the victim of threats or violence– sometimes symbolic, sometimes physical–and when they were stereotyped as criminal, destitute, uneducated or dangerous. Stigmatisation in Tarlabaşı was always also an "assault on worth" (ibid: 7). Imogen Tyler and Tom Slater (2018: 727) show that "'stigmatisation is intimately linked with neoliberal governance', that is with attempts to manage and/or change the behaviour of populations through deliberate stigma strategies which inculcate humiliation and shame" The symbolic stigmatisation that people in Tarlabaşı faced justified and facilitated material marginalisation. During the planning and the execution of the renewal project, stigma became more entrenched. It was an integral part of the promotional material published by the municipality and the developer, a tool to legitimise and disregard residents as well as their concerns and their rights. For residents, reacting and opposing this project meant to an important extent interacting, challenging, managing, and deflecting this stigma. This work fills particular gaps in the literature on territorial stigma by focussing on the impact of spatial stigma not only during the planning phase of a large state-led urban renewal project, but during its execution and the evictions.

Territorial stigmatisation

What do we mean when we talk about a neighbourhood's "bad reputation"? In his extensive body of work on urban marginality, Loïc Wacquant describes territorial stigmatisation as the profound stigma that attaches to a geographical location, to a physical place, the proverbial stain on a map often portrayed as the "bad part" of a town, neighbourhood, or any other location generally assumed to be "dangerous", "dirty", "sketchy", or simply "unsavoury" (Wacquant 2007). Wacquant forged the concept of territorial stigmatisation based on a methodological comparison between an American "black ghetto" of Chicago's South Side with a French working-class *banlieue* in the Paris periphery (Wacquant 2008). His theoretical framework draws upon the seminal sociological work of Erving Goffman and Pierre Bourdieu, by adding "place" to both Goffman's three categories of stigma[5] and to Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power.[6] This makes it possible to better dissect and understand how urban marginality affects individuals as well as communities, and how it

4 *GAP Inşaat* is a subsidiary of Çalık Holding, a company with close ties to the AKP government.

5 Goffman distinguishes three different ways, all three of them described in relation to what is considered "normal", in which individuals can become first "discredited", and then "disqualified" from society: "abominations of the body" (e.g. disability), "blemishes of individual character" (e.g. addiction, homosexuality, unemployment, imprisonment), and "tribal stigma of race, nation and religion" that can be handed down through lineages and taint several generations and family members through symbolic guilt by association. For all three forms of social stigma, Goffman attests "an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated" that results in the stigmatized being ostracised and discriminated against by "those who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations" of society, those that generally have access to political, economic and social capital and power (Goffman 1963: 3–4).

6 Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic power" is useful in considering the actual social processes through which stigma attaches to social actors. In that sense, symbolic power is the capability to construct

is produced and used by those who exercise power against those who submit to it, as well as how and by whom stigma and marginalisation are reproduced and perpetuated. Wacquant identifies a location-related and pervasive form of discrimination he links to a "blemish of place" (Wacquant 2007: 67), a stain attached to "isolated and bounded territories increasingly perceived by both outsiders and insiders as social purgatories, leprous Badlands at the heart of the postindustrial metropolis where only the refuse of society would accept to dwell" (ibid).

The idea of a "topography of disrepute" (Wacquant et al. 2014: 1273). is not a novel concept. Poor, derelict urban areas have attracted writers, researchers, and a both worried and titillated urban elite for more than a century, when, with the onset of industrialisation and rapid urbanisation, the idea of debauched, criminal and destitute slums began to take hold (ibid).[7] However, Wacquant, Pereira and Slater (2014: 1273–1275) point out that contemporary areas of spatial stigma differ from the description of these earlier slums in at least five ways: Firstly, territorial stigma has become "partially" independent from the stigma of class, ethnicity, "questionable" morality, street crime and degraded housing stock, thus both superseding and transcending negative stereotypes typically used to describe these attributes. This means that the taint associated with a certain neighbourhood has gained enough traction to exert its own real and devastating effects, attaching its own powerful stigma to people associated with it via stereotyping and a negative discourse, independently of and in addition to other types of discrimination. Secondly, the negative image attached to a stigmatised borough of the post-industrial metropolis is no longer only upheld amongst members of the social and cultural elites, but amongst the general populace and residents of the tainted neighbourhood as well. It has become so all-pervasive, that in some cases, stigmatised neighbourhoods have become synonymous with urban hellholes in international marketing and pop culture.[8] Thirdly, the stigmatised districts of today are being portrayed as places of disorder, chaos, and utter disintegration, whereas the working-class districts of the past were depicted as a "powerful and hierarchized counter-society" (ibid: 1274), where the so-called "criminal underworld" was a highly organised club with a strict pecking order, and where the working class successfully set up organised labour struggles, unions, and stringent political representation. The fourth difference is a "racialisation" of stigmatised districts through selective attention or fictive projection. This often happens via sensationalist reports of crime and violent incidents in the media that frame cultural differences as divergent from, or even hostile to, the dominant national norm and as dangerous, "branding" residents "as outcasts" (ibid: 1274). The mainstream media have regularly described clashes between the police and residents in French banlieues or British boroughs as "race riots" using martial and colonial language (Tyler 2013). More recently, several German media outlets claimed that "failed integration of migrants" and "cultural differences" were to blame for attacks on ambulances and firefighters on New Year's Eve in Berlin-Neukölln.

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reality and to turn representations into unassailable social truths, whether or not the prescribed characteristics of that 'truth' correspond with reality (Bourdieu 1991).

7 See for example Friedrich Engels' The Condition of the Working Class in England, or the works of English writers Charles Dickens, Henry Mayhew, or Arthur Morrison.

8 Wacquant, Slater and Pereira name The Bronx as one such example.

And lastly, the relationship of non-residents with the stigmatised neighbourhoods of today is one of largely negative emotions, of unambiguous revulsion and fear in opposition to times past, when the cultural and social elite made them "playgrounds for excitement, mysterious sites of social voyeurism, moral transgression, sexual fantasy, and artistic inspiration (ibid: 1275)." In Victorian London, "slumming" was a popular pastime of local urban elites who would take tours in destitute neighbourhoods in East London (Koven 2004). A phenomenon that is difficult to imagine now. This change cultivates and glorifies a punitive state approach to urban marginality, embodied by a zero-tolerance attitude, the so-called "broken windows theory" (Wilson and Kelling: 1982) of policing, corrective reactions, and efforts to "cleanse", "punish", and "restore order" in stigmatised neighbourhoods (see also Clear 2007; Wacquant 2009b; Beckett and Herbert 2011; Camp and Heatherton 2016; Müller 2016; Vitale 2017). One memorable example are the words of French politician and then interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy who, after violent clashes in the Parisian housing project Quatre Mille, said that he wanted to "clean out the scum" by using "a high-powered sandblaster" (Wacquant et al. 2014: 6) This change of policy makers' attitudes towards low-income neighbourhoods ran parallel to the change in attitude to poverty in general, to the switch from the "war on poverty" to the "war on welfare" (Katz 1989).

Wacquant (2008: 169) argues that territorial stigmatisation is "arguably the single most protrusive feature of the lived experience of those trapped in these sulphurous zones." He describes a symbolic defamation of place reinforced from "below" through social interactions in daily life and the effects of stigma management, and from "above" in the form of symbolical power through stigmatising representations in sensationalist media coverage, in political and public discourse. Such reinforcement makes the socially and politically constructed blemish permanent and unshakable, whether or not a tainted area is really dangerous or "spoiled" (Wacquant 2007: 68). In the same way, works of fiction such as literature, films, TV shows, or online content contribute to a collective imagination of certain 'dangerous' areas and produce a public common-sense "knowledge" about certain neighbourhoods, even if those consuming such works of fiction in fact know little or nothing about the places that are being depicted. It follows that the stigma that is being attached to certain neighbourhoods, and sometimes entire cities, turn these places into "no-go zones" and areas to be derided, avoided, and looked down upon; also worth noting is the way this transcends the stigmatisers, the stigmatised, and all individuals who come in contact with an urban place so tainted. Wacquant (2007: 68) underlines that it does not matter if an area is "in fact dilapidated and dangerous, and their population composed essentially of poor people, minorities and foreigners" and that "the prejudicial belief that they are suffices to set off socially noxious consequences." Another important finding in Wacquant's (ibid: 5) research is that territorial stigma, by extension, also attaches to the people who occupy that space or are in any other way affiliated with it, such as Halil Usta and his barber shop: a location-based 'guilt-by-association'. He argues that residents of such stigmatised places are "tagged with […] an 'undesired differentness' whose 'discrediting effect is very extensive'", a fact that Halil Usta was clearly aware of when he decided to withhold the address of a business he was otherwise very proud of.

Territorial stigma, therefore, has a profound impact on the people who live in a stigmatised area. The negative individual and personal consequences that flow from such stigma, sometimes subsumed under the insufficient term of "address discrimination", can include limited access to employment, discrimination in schools and differential treatment by the police, by the court system, and in other public offices, such as welfare services (Sernhede 2011; Mckenzie 2012). A social worker at the *Tarlabaşı Toplum Merkezi* [Tarlabaşı Community Centre] told journalists that residents struggle with prospective employers, for example, whose "faces change when they hear that [applicants] live in Tarlabaşı" (Açıkgöz 2007). The specifics of how territorial stigma is justified in public discourse varies from context to context, and the 'reasons' particular neighbourhoods come to be stigmatised are also historical and context-specific. Territorial stigmatisation is not a static quality, but an ongoing process of continuous symbolic defilement in need of constant nourishment, work, and renewal (Horgan 2018).

Exploiting stigma

While territorial stigma has material effects on the people it attaches to, it is also "put to work" as a tool, to be used judicially and extrajudicially. Powerful actors, such as state representatives (Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014; Kornberg 2016; Paton et al. 2016; Yardımcı 2020), private businesses (Kudla and Courey 2019), the media (Devereux et al. 2011; Hancock and Mooney 2013; Kearns et al. 2013; Liu and Blomley 2013; Arthurson et al. 2014; Sisson and Maginn 2018; Butler 2020), or think tanks (Hancock and Mooney 2013; Slater 2014, 2018; Sisson 2020) put this tool to use as they reproduce relations of domination and subservience in capitalist societies. In her study of social abjection in neoliberal Great Britain, Imogen Tyler (Tyler 2013: 8) has shown that "stigmatisation [is] a form of governance which legitimizes the reproduction and entrenchment of inequalities and injustices". This offers profitable business opportunities to a variety of agents, such as eviction agencies, the news media, or social impact bonds (Sisson, 2020: 5). Kirsteen Paton (Paton 2018: 921) writes that stigma functions as a "'soft power' which is integral to governing" and "central to moral and economic class projects". Therefore, stigma is activated to "shame those who do not or cannot become more productive neoliberal consumer citizens" (ibid: 923). Graham Scambler (2018) even speaks of weaponization of stigma in the neoliberal era.

Alistair Sisson (2020: 5) underlines that territorial stigmatisation has been exploited "to obfuscate the structural causes and conditions of poverty and inequality, making poverty, marginality and deprivation seen and treated as the responsibility of the poor, marginalised, and deprived themselves, or the spaces they are purportedly concentrated within" (see also Dikeç 2002; Kipfer and Petrunia 2009; Slater and Anderson 2012; Hancock and Mooney 2013; Loyd and Bonds 2018, Tyler and Slater 2018). In other words, stigma "veils over a whole host of more fundamental cultural, political and economic questions regarding the distribution of distress in society" (Tyler and Slater 2018: 723). Behind such smoke screens, territorial stigmatisation provides powerful actors, such as the state, with the opportunity to enforce discriminatory housing laws, banking policies and to provide unequal access to public services which in turn propagates the

disenfranchisement of people and the seizure of private property (Wacquant 2008; Loyd and Bonds 2018; Tyler and Slater 2018; Sisson 2020).

A considerable part of the literature focuses on the role of territorial stigmatisation in justifying and legitimising the displacement and dispossession through urban renewal projects, gentrification, and redevelopment, as well as punitive policy measures and urban reforms (Arthurson 2004; Kipfer and Petrunia 2009; Gray and Mooney 2011; Slater and Anderson 2012; Kallin and Slater 2014; Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014; Schultz Larsen 2014; van Gent et al. 2017; Horgan 2018; Paton 2018; Sisson and Maginn 2018; Slater 2018; Yardımcı 2020; Rivas-Alonso 2021). Portraying a disadvantaged area as "a lost cause", as "bad", "criminal", "rotten" or "derelict", as "destroyed", even "dead" is a "*consequential* categorisation" (Sisson 2020: 5, emphasis in original), as it grants an excellent cover for brutal state policies, such as increased surveillance and policing, or summary evictions and the demolition of an entire neighbourhood (Tyler 2013; Kallin and Slater 2014; Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014; Sisson 2020). A similarly negative framing of a wealthy urban area or business district, for example as a haven for money laundering or tax evasion, would not result in similar measures (Sisson 2020).

When it comes to poor neighbourhoods such discourse helps authorities and developers to self-portray as rescuers in a time of urgent need (Kallin and Slater 2014). At the same time, it also determines how resistance is shaped from the inside and seen from the outside, since opposition to policies depicted as "helpful" by the authorities is easier to frame as obstructive to positive change.

Managing / responding to territorial stigma

A large and growing body of literature focusing on territorial stigmatisation has investigated the experiences and behavioural responses of residents who live in tainted areas. Wacquant (2007, 2008) describes how residents of a stigmatised place accept and internalise the stigma associated with their neighbourhood, leading to resignation, feelings of shame, guilt, and self-loathing. Residents use a range of tactics to dissociate themselves from the tainted location, most notably "lateral denigration" and "mutual distancing" (Wacquant 2009a: 116). Some might exit the stigmatised neighbourhood as soon as they are able to. (ibid; Jensen and Christensen, 2012: 75). They might, as Halil Usta did, hide their address, or avoid having relatives and friends from outside their neighbourhood visit their home (Palmer et al. 2004; Warr 2005b; Wacquant 2007). Residents might also accept the stigmatising narratives about their neighbourhood and isolate themselves, retreating into the privacy of their homes (Warr 2005b; Wacquant 2007; Blokland 2008). In order to distance themselves from identity categories perceived to be of low symbolic value, residents might also deflect the stigma away from themselves and onto a "faceless, demonized other" (Wacquant 2007: 68; see also Palmer et al. 2004; Jensen and Christensen 2012; Eksner 2013; Contreras 2017; Cuny 2018; Verdouw and Flanagan 2019; Sisson 2020; Smets and Kusenbach 2020).

There are macro-social consequences to this, too. Territorial stigmatisation erodes solidarity ties and trust networks, therefore compromising the capacity and motivation of a community to organise around collective action. This might result in breaking down

possible organised – and unorganised resistance (Derville 1997; Arthurson 2004; Holloway and Mulherin 2004; Ruggiero 2007; Beach and Sernhede 2011; Duin et al. 2011; Glasze et al. 2012; Slater and Anderson 2012; Arthurson et al. 2014; Sakızlıoğlu and Uitermark 2014). It is disempowering (Wassenberg, 2004; Warr, 2005a, 2005b). Spatial stigma can also make non-resident solidarity less likely. Outsiders might shy away from rallying around a stigmatised neighbourhood deemed "unworthy" of any support. For example, during my fieldwork I encountered local activists involved in anti-gentrification and anti-eviction struggles who said that Tarlabaşı was "full of criminals and drug dealers" who "deserved being cleared out".

Neighbourhood social cohesion suffers as a consequence of territorial stigmatisation, especially when the focus of public discussions centres on societal morality and progress on the one hand, and less overt social engineering and development programmes on the other, as has been the case for Tarlabaşı. Alistair Sisson (2020: 7) underlines that territorial stigma "is deployed to legitimate status quo inequalities and injustices and novel interventions that reproduce, entrench, or intensify them [and] to manage populations and their behaviour". Another consequence of this internalisation relates to how residents of stigmatised neighbourhoods react to experiences of institutionalised discrimination and disenfranchisement that often co-occur with territorial stigmatisation. "Once a place is publicly labelled as a 'lawless zone' or 'outlaw estate', outside the common norm, it is easy for the authorities to justify special measures, deviating from both law and custom, which can have the effect – if not the intention – of destabilizing and further marginalizing their occupants, subjecting them to the dictates of the deregulated labour market, and rendering them invisible or driving them out of a coveted space" (Wacquant 2007: 69).

Residents that have internalised the stigma associated with their neighbourhood sometimes view such experiences of inequality as a natural consequence, a rational reality for them to face simply for living in a 'bad' place. "[The] physical disrepair and institutional dilapidation of the neighbourhood cannot but generate an abiding *sense of social inferiority* by communicating to its residents that they are second- or third-class citizens undeserving of the attention of city officials and of the care of its agencies" (Wacquant 2010: 217). However, various studies suggest that residents do not always internalise and submit to the stigma, and that responses exist on a continuum and can vary greatly. Wacquant has been widely criticised for disregarding the agency of marginalised communities (Pattillo 2009; Gilbert 2010; Jensen and Christensen 2012; Kirkness 2014; Geiselhart 2017; Sisson 2020) and the various ways in which residents reject and oppose stigmatising narratives of their places of residence (Garbin and Millington 2012; Jensen and Christensen 2012; Kirkness 2014; Kirkness and Tijé-Dra 2017a; Cairns 2018; Nayak 2019; Verdouw and Flanagan 2019; Sisson 2020).[9]

Residents might express ambivalence toward their stigmatised neighbourhood (Jensen and Christensen 2012; Garbin and Millington 2012; August 2014; Kirkness 2014; Cairns 2018; Jensen et al. 2021), and a number of studies have shown that residents oppose stigma through expressing a deep sense of belonging and community, and through showing pride in their neighbourhood (Jensen and Christensen 2012; Mckenzie 2012;

9 Sisson (2020) points out that a similar argument can be made regarding Goffman.

Slater and Anderson 2012; Kirkness 2014; Slater 2017; Cairns 2018). Others have focused on residents' efforts to resist spatial disrepute through symbolic struggles, including image management via community media (Dean and Hastings, 2000; Hastings and Dean, 2003; Hastings, 2004; Wassenberg, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2011) or other forms of counternarratives to the stigmatising frame (Kirkness and Tijé-Dra 2017b; Maestri 2017; Cairns 2018; Cuny 2018; Horgan 2018; Junnilainen 2020). A number of studies demonstrates physical struggles over territorial stigmatisation, such as the use of artwork (Garbin and Millington 2012), the construction of various community facilities (Maestri 2017), solidary squatting movements that foster deep attachment to place and provide new narratives (Maestri 2017; Queirós and Pereira 2018; Sisson 2020). Last but not least, scholars have pointed to the importance of everyday social relations and actions through which dominant practices and representations are being resisted in stigmatised urban areas (Garbin and Millington 2012; Mckenzie 2012; Kirkness 2014; Nayak 2019). Sisson (2020: 14) underlines that "resistance often occurs while people are busy doing other things". Recently, a number of scholars have also criticised the presentation of territorial stigma as a generalised experience for all residents of a tainted area and called for an intersectional approach to analysing stigma management, drawing attention to the fact that the lived experience of territorial stigma intersects with residents racial, classed or gender identities (Contreras 2017; Cairns 2018; Pinkster et al 2020).

Territorial stigmatisation in Turkey

A considerable amount of research has been published on territorial stigma, on how it is produced, how it is exploited by powerful agents, and how residents of stigmatised areas manage, internalise, or resist the spatial disrepute. However, most of this literature focuses on stigmatised neighbourhoods in cities in North America and Europe. A relatively small amount of research has explored this issue in cities of the Global South. These studies have focused on the production and consequences of territorial stigmatisation in Brazilian *favelas* (Caldeira 2000; Araújo and da Costa 2017; Kolling 2019), stigma deflection in an Argentine slum (Auyero 1999), on stigma management and counternarratives to stigma in Bangladesh (Fattah and Walters, 2020), a deconstruction of territorial stigma in Botswana (Geiselhart 2017), place attachment in poor quarters in Shanghai, China (Zhang 2017), and the exploitation of territorial stigma in India (Ghertner 2008, 2010).

In Turkey, recent studies of territorial stigmatisation have explored state-led territorial stigmatisation as a form of governmentality in a restive Ankara neighbourhood (Yardımcı, 2020), and image-making as preparation for state-led urban renewal and gentrification in an Istanbul *gecekondu* area (Rivas-Alonso, 2021). A notable part of previous research into territorial stigmatisation has focused on the political and societal attitude shift towards *gecekondu*[10] areas. This shift coincided with the neoliberalisation

10 Originally, *gecekondu* refers to informal housing built on the peripheries of large cities by rural migrants starting in the 1950s. The term can literally be translated as "landed overnight". It has since undergone significant reanalysis and critique (Pérouse 2004; Erman 2013).

of the country that began in the 1980s and intensified following the Turkish financial crisis in 2001 and the Justice and Development Party's [*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP*] rise to power in 2002 (Erman 2001; Esen 2005; Yardımcı 2020; Rivas-Alonso 2021). *Gecekondu* housing had long been tolerated as a social protection mechanism, and as what sociologist Tim Dorlach (2019) calls "social policy by other means". Tahire Erman (2001: 985) states that initially, during the 1950s and 1960s, *gecekondu* dwellers were represented as the "rural Other", expected to be assimilated "into the modern urban society". With the onset of the 1970s, under the influence of Western intellectual thought and international leftist movements sympathetic to marginalised groups and the poor, the *gecekondu* population was seen as "the disadvantaged Other" (ibid: 986). Following the violent military coup of September 12, 1980, and the installation of a right-wing government in 1983, Turkey opened up to Western foreign investment and pursued neoliberal economic policies. From this point onward, *gecekondu* residents were increasingly framed as the undesirable urban poor, as having undeservedly enriched themselves with squatted property, and as culturally inferior and unfit to assimilate into modern city life (Erman 2001; Lanz 2005). Finally, in the late 1990s, public discourse became even more punitive, and *gecekondu* dwellers were framed as "invaders" (Yardımcı, 2020), as dangerously different, "the threatening Other(s)" (Erman 2001: 988–989; Rivas-Alonso 2021: 99–100). The terms *varoş*[11] [slum] and *varoşlu* [slum dweller] appeared, initially mostly in the media, to describe disadvantaged and squatter neighbourhoods in Turkey, and were later adopted into dominant societal discourse (Erman 2001: 996; Yardımcı 2020: 1523). The focus shifted towards concentrated urban marginality, linked to moral panics about the "culture of degeneracy" associated with the urban poor and the neighbourhoods they lived in (Bartu-Candan and Kolloğlu 2008; Gönen and Yonucu 2012; Yardımcı 2020). This discourse became more entrenched with the election victory of the AKP in 2002. From then on, *gecekondu* areas and disadvantaged, often dilapidated inner-city neighbourhoods were increasingly described as an obstacle to making cities attractive for (predominantly foreign) capital and investment, to which large urban renewal projects were presented as a remedy (Bartu-Candan and Kolloğlu 2008; Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010; Ünsal 2013; Sakızlıoğlu 2014b; Demiralp 2016; Ay 2019; Yardımcı 2020; Rivas-Alonso 2021). These neighbourhoods were central to the AKP's economic strategy to fully integrate as much urban land as possible into the neoliberal real estate market. As a result, informal housing was criminalised, portrayed as "the sole responsible [agencies] of irregular urbanisation" (Ünsal 2013: 83), and informal neighbourhoods stigmatised as areas of concentrated crime and terrorism.

Scholars researching territorial stigmatisation have underlined the importance of the state in activating, (re)producing, perpetuating, and exploiting spatial disrepute in order to capitalise on land and real estate, and push through contested urban transformation projects to the detriment of a poor, marginalised population (Kallin and Slater

11 Hungarian in origin, the term *varoş* initially referred to neighbourhoods outside the city walls but was later used to describe any neighbourhood on the spatial or symbolic periphery of a city. In Turkish, the word carries strong negative meaning and refers to the unruly, violent, anti-state and criminal underclass (Erman 2001: 996).

2014). Öznur Yardımcı, in her study of state-led territorial stigmatisation in Dikmen Valley, an informal settlement on the outskirts of the Turkish capital Ankara, underlines the importance of exploring the state not only as an extension of the capitalist market, but also as an important actor pursuing political interests in framing a certain neighbourhood as "bad" and in need of renewal, thereby reasserting state power and authority. She writes that local and national representatives of the state "…use stigma in urban settings to pathologise political dissidence and enhance the desire to comply with official policies in a way that makes the (housing) rights dependent upon meeting the 'appropriate' patterns and norms defined by the state. Consequently, stigmatisation enables the state to legitimise itself as the main authority to define who is worthy of benefit from the prosperity promised by urban transformation, which in turn shrinks citizen power" (Yardımcı 2020: 1526).

The AKP government enacted sweeping reforms in regard to informal housing, and as a result, access to squatter housing declined considerably, as did political and public acceptance of it. In 2004, a Turkish Penal Code reform criminalised the construction of squatter housing and made it punishable by a prison term of up to five years (Republic of Turkey Law 5327, 2004). At the same time, the legal facilitation of new urban renewal projects led to the demolition of existing *gecekondu* settlements (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010; Dorlach 2019, Yardımcı 2020). These legal and administrative changes in urban policy were accompanied by a stigmatisation campaign against squatting. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then prime minister of Turkey, made *gecekondu* housing a central topic of his policies. He referred to informal housing areas as "tumours that have surrounded our cities" and claimed that their population "undeservedly occupied the land without the right to live there" (Yardımcı, 2020: 1526). He later called the banning of *gecekondu* construction and squatting a "revolution" (Dorlach, 2019: 279), and demanded that squatter housing should not be tolerated and "mercilessly demolished" (NTV, 2004).

Chapter outline

Chapter one, "Looking for Resistance in All the Wrong Places", is concerned with the methodology used for this book. The chapter explores the reasons why my research focus shifted from everyday resistance against the renewal project towards territorial stigmatisation and stigma management in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the chapter describes the methods used during fieldwork, elaborates on the concept of engaged ethnography, and considers the reasons why I was always more than an outside observer. It also pulls apart difficulties of access and positionality.

Chapter two, "Waking the poisoned princess", describes the history of the stigmatisation of the neighbourhood. Providing a brief history of Tarlabaşı, this chapter then shows how the municipal district of Beyoğlu, and in extension Tarlabaşı, have been framed and stigmatised in the past, and how that informs the current image of the neighbourhood. This is followed by an empirical analysis of how territorial stigmatisation was driven in contemporary Tarlabaşı and in the dominant discourse. I focus in particular on the state as one of the main actors invested in the urban renewal plans. The chapter will further examine the various ways in which state actors fed, maintained, and exploited the terri-

torial stigma to justify and legitimise the contentious redevelopment. Finally, the chapter will explore how stigma made certain neighbourhood aspects, and certain types of residents who fit certain "problem profiles" hyper-visible, while at the same time erasing actual Tarlabaşı residents from the scene and the narrative.

Chapter three, "Judging Books by Their Covers", traces a detailed history of the renewal project and the drastic changes it underwent through a close text-object analysis of two different project catalogues published over the course of five years. An analysis of the changes to these promotional materials draws attention to the fact that the renewal project was constantly changing and shifting, both in how it presented itself to residents and outsiders, and in terms of how project agents engaged with Tarlabaşı residents. This happened in ways that were not publicised and involved state agents reneging on promises made very publicly at the beginning of the project. The chapter will also provide an exploration of the immediate context and history of the project, with a careful eye to how the status of the project changed, how a shift in potential investor profiles affected the relationship between project actors and residents, the way that these actors exploited existing stigmatisation, and if, or how, they took potential opposition to the project into account. Such a close text-object analysis will provide an anchor for the historical, economic, and social context in which the renewal project developed over time, as well as for the history of the project itself.

Chapter four, "Experiencing Stigma in Tarlabaşı", expands on the experiences of Tarlabaşı residents regarding territorial stigma in their neighbourhood, with a focus on how stigma played out during the execution of the renewal project and in the run-up to evictions. The different negative stereotypes connected to place-stigma in Tarlabaşı were not experienced equally by all residents. A more detailed analysis of how different residents perceived and interpreted their marginalisation and discrimination shows that these experiences depended on residents' social, ethnic and gender identity. This analysis builds on the definition of the "ordinary iconic profiles" discussed in chapter two.

Chapter five, "Belonging", rebukes Loïc Wacquant's claim that residents of a stigmatised area will disengage and distance themselves from their neighbourhood, or that they will seek to exit it as soon as they are able. In Tarlabaşı, many residents expressed a profound sense of belonging to their neighbourhood for a wide variety of reasons. With the help of the thick ethnographic description of different nodes in the interlinked neighbourhood structure, this chapter will highlight the workings and the importance of networks of socio-economic interdependence in a "traditional" Turkish neighbourhood, the *mahalle*.

Chapter six, "Have You Heard", explores different forms and functions of rumour during the run-up to evictions and demolitions, and shows how rumour was linked to territorial stigmatisation in Tarlabaşı. The municipality's strategy of actively withholding or confusing reliable information had profound legal impacts and material consequences for residents who had to base most of their decisions about how to navigate the project timeline on unverifiable hearsay. Furthermore, this chapter will consider how different experiences of the various communities and interest groups within Tarlabaşı led to different conclusions about the reliability and accuracy of rumours, which in turn put considerable strain on neighbourhood cohesion and solidarity. At the same time, rumours were also a discursive tactic residents used to question and oppose both the nega-

tive narrative framing Tarlabaşı and the renewal project itself. The argument of this chapter is that these rumours, and the massive amount of interpretative labour that went into their assessment and interpretation, were part of peoples' tactics to cope with the material consequences of stigma.

Chapter seven, "In the Eye of the Beholder", argues that territorial stigma functions as a prefabricated lens that skewers outsider interpretations of residents' presentations of self and of their physical surroundings toward more negative interpretations. People have to work harder, therefore, to try and rectify negative narratives through various tactics. Rather than as opposition to territorial stigma, these individual attempts at impression management and at successfully performing respectability can be read as individual residents' tactics to preserve a sense of themselves as good, as decent, and as worthy of respect. The chapter will demonstrate that the urgency of successfully performing respectability is gendered in a particular way, and that the stakes were not the same for all residents.

Chapter eight, "Giving in to Stigma", examines how the territorial stigma in Tarlabaşı was internalised by residents, and how they attempted to deflect this stigma onto other individuals and marginalised communities, blaming them for the bad reputation of the neighbourhood. The most important question is not if internalisation and lateral denigration happened, but *how* it happened, and why. The chapter explores fissures and fault lines of denigration against the backdrop of a broader political context in Turkey, shows how ethnic Turkish residents weaponised nostalgia as a means of stigma management, and introduces the concept of "Turkness" as a position of structural privilege.

Chapter nine, "Speaking Back", demonstrates different ways through which Tarlabaşı residents tried to make themselves seen and heard against this effort to invisibilise them and their experiences in the run-up to evictions. This chapter will show what verbal impudence under the threat of eviction looked like, and how such "backtalk" accomplished two key things: it gave voice and form to residents' humiliations, their anger, and their attempt to circulate a counternarrative to the stigmatising discourse that targeted their neighbourhood and themselves, but it also opened cracks in the façade of project stakeholders' pretence that the stigma was the "objective", "natural" state of Tarlabaşı, rather than what it was–a fabricated prejudicial lens that itself required enormous amounts of work to build, maintain, and renew.