Emerging spaces of neoliberalism: A gated town and a public housing project in İstanbul

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Abstract

İstanbul has undergone a neoliberal restructuring over the past two decades. In this paper, we focus on two urban spaces that we argue to have emerged as part of this process—namely Göktürk, a gated town, and Bezirganbahçe, a public housing project. We examine these spaces as showcases of new forms of urban wealth and poverty in İstanbul, demonstrating the workings of the neoliberalization process and the forms of urbanity that emerge within this context. These are the two margins of the city whose relationship with the center is becoming increasingly tenuous in qualitatively different yet parallel forms. In Göktürk's segregated compounds, where urban governance is increasingly privatized, non-relationality with the city, seclusion into the domestic sphere and the family, urban fear and the need for security, and social and spatial isolation become the markers of a new urbanity. In Bezirganbahçe, involuntary isolation and insulation, and non-relationality with the city imposed through the reproduction of poverty create a new form of urban marginality marked by social exclusion and ethnic tensions. The new forms of wealth and poverty displayed in these two urban spaces, accompanied by the social and spatial segregation of these social groups, compel us to think about future forms of urbanity and politics in İstanbul.

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Introduction

We are witnessing with awe, horror or indifferent familiarity an İstanbul changing rapidly in terms of its spaces, the relations it comprises and its imaginary, as the city has undergone a neoliberal restructuring over the past two decades. Its skies are pierced by ever-taller and multiplying bank, office, and residence towers, as well as colossal luxury hotels. Its urbanscape is crowded by shopping malls, restaurants, cafes and night clubs whose numbers are rapidly increasing. Its arts calendar is getting busier every year, with evermore music and film festivals, exhibitions and activities in the newly opened museums, as well as the İstanbul Biennale.

Alongside all these changes, a new residential spatial arrangement is recasting İstanbul's urban space. Gated residential compounds are proliferating mainly, but not exclusively, in the peripheral areas of the city. These compounds housing the new groups of wealth began to emerge in the mid-1980s. Their numbers skyrocketed only in the late 1990s. According to one estimate, as of 2005 there were more than 650 of these compounds, with a housing stock in excess of 40,000.[1] The growth in the number of gated residential compounds has intensified since 2005.[2] Put differently, İstanbul's urbanscape continues to be littered by new residential compounds trapped behind gates or walls, as well as consumption, leisure and production spaces that are kept under constant surveillance through strict security measures. Hence, what we have at hand is an ongoing *gating of the city* at large, enclosing new forms of wealth and new forms of relations and non-relations that take shape in between the gates. In these spaces, new forms of living, governance, and social and political relations and non-relations are emerging and taking root.

Simultaneously and parallel to this process, *gecekondu* (squatter) housing that has absorbed and housed the successive waves of massive

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1   As Pérouse and Danış, who have generated the above figures acknowledge, it is very difficult to compile an exact figure of gated residential compounds, since the İstanbul Greater Municipality does not keep any statistics of this kind; due to the vagueness of the definition of gated communities it is nearly impossible to get any information at the district municipality level. The only means to generate exact figures would be to count these compounds *in situ*, which is an impossible task for individual researchers on a city-wide scale. See, Aslı Didem Danış and Jean-François Pérouse, "Zenginliğin Mekânda Yeni Yansımaları: İstanbul'da Güvenlikli Siteler," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 104 (2005).

2   Our count in Göktürk, one of the gated towns of İstanbul to which we will turn in detail below, shows that the number of segregated residential compounds has doubled since 2005. Taking into account the fact that Göktürk is no exception to the general pattern in İstanbul, Göktürk's growth may form a basis to approximate a parallel rate of growth applicable to the entire city.

rural-to-urban migration much needed to feed the labor needs of national developmentalism since the 1950s, has been renamed *varoş*,[3] partaking in the creation of the "new stigmatizing topographic lexicon" that renders these neighborhoods vulnerable to all interventions, including destruction.[4] The *gecekondu* was considered and treated as a transitionary category which was expected to melt away as the processes of modernization and urbanization deepened.[5] However, after the 1990s new waves of migrants—this time mainly Kurdish migrants from Southeastern Anatolia pouring into an İstanbul whose economy had undergone a major transformation—found themselves in places marked as *varoş*, denoting a permanent marginality and trapping them in new forms of poverty.[6] The *gecekondu* was not yet urban and modern, but already marked for modernization. *Varoş* names the time-space of that which has fallen off or been pushed out of the present and future of the modern and urban.

The new "stigmatizing topographic lexicon" and other technologies of neoliberal urbanism which we will discuss below work together to enable and justify ongoing and planned "urban transformation," "urban renewal," or "urban rehabilitation" projects that result in the displacing and re-placing of new forms of poverty. In other words, in the shadow of the new skyline of İstanbul new spaces of poverty and wealth are emerging in a decidedly and progressively segregated manner.[7]

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3   See, Sencer Ayata, "Varoşlar, Çatışma ve Şiddet," *Görüş*, no. 18 (1981), Oya Baydar, "Öteki'ne Yenik Düşen İstanbul," *İstanbul*, no. 23 (1996), Serpil Bozkulak, ""Gecekondu"dan "Varoş"a: Gülsuyu Mahallesi," in *İstanbul'da Kentsel Ayrışma: Mekansal Dönüşümde Farklı Boyutlar*, ed. Hatice Kurtuluş (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2005), Tahire Erman, "The Politics of Squatter (Gecekondu) Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse," *Urban Studies* 38, no. 7 (2001), Deniz Yonucu, "A Story of a Squatter Neighborhood: From the Place of the 'Dangerous Classes' to the 'Place of Danger'," *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 52 (forthcoming).

4   See, Loïc Wacquant, "Territorial Stigmatization in the Age of Advanced Marginality," *Thesis Eleven* 91, no. 1 (2007): for a discussion of the power of this topographic lexicon.

5   See, Charles William Merton Hart, *Zeytinburnu Gecekondu Bölgesi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Ticaret Odası, 1969), Kemal H. Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London: Verso, 1987), Tansı Şenyapılı, *Gecekondu: 'Çevre' İşçilerin Mekanı* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi, 1981).

6   See, Oğuz Işık and M. Melih Pınarcıoğlu, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk: Sultanbeyli Örneği* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), for a discussion of the changing nature of poverty in İstanbul's periphery. For ethnographic accounts of new forms of poverty see, Necmi Erdoğan, ed., *Yoksulluk Halleri: Türkiye'de Kent Yoksulluğunun Toplumsal Görünümleri* (İstanbul: Demokrasi Kitaplığı, 2002). For the relationship of the changing nature of the state and new forms of poverty see, Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder, "New Poverty and the Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey," (Ankara: United Nations Development Programme, 2003).

7   Işık and Pınarcıoğlu discuss this as a transition from a "softly segregated city" to a "tense and exclusionary urbanism." Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk*. See also Sema Erder's research which takes into account the specific and local dimensions of new forms of urban tension in Pendik, Sema Erder, *Kentsel Gerilim* (Ankara: Uğur Mumcu Araştırmacı Gazetecilik Vakfı, 1997). Murat

İstanbul is far from being an exception in exhibiting the new pattern of social and spatial segregation that has become one of the most salient and dominant features of urban life globally.[8] This urban social architecture rests on an intertwined set of economic and political processes of a decreasing contribution of the industrial sector to the overall economy, and the movement of industrial production to small-scale specialized units. Hence, we witness a significant decrease in the size of organized labor, increasing rates of unemployment, part-time, seasonal, sporadic, and informal labor, and new forms of poverty that these changes have produced. Accompanied by the retrenching of the state from various areas of social provision, the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the new poor, concentrated in urban areas, vastly increase. The other side of the same process is the new forms of wealth that have come into being with the rising number of professionals employed in the service and finance sectors tagged to the increasing contribution of the latter in the economy. Since the 1980s, this macroeconomic, political and social restructuring has been discussed under various conceptualizations, albeit with varying emphases, such as disorganized capitalism, post-Fordism, flexible accumulation, or globalization.[9] In this article, we will employ the concept of neoliberalism to refer to this macroeconomic re-structuring that

Güvenç and Oğuz Işık offer a study of the increasing residential segregation in İstanbul of different status groups which they mainly define through occupation. See, Murat Güvenç and Oğuz Işık, "İstanbul'u Okumak: Statü-Konut Mülkiyeti Farklılaşmasına İlişkin Bir Çözümleme Denemesi," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 71 (1996).

8   New forms of social and spatial segregation in contemporary cities globally have become one of the most central themes of urban studies. Among the growing literature on the retrenchment of the new groups of wealth into their protected compounds see, Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Synder, *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), P. R. Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in Sao Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990), Nan Ellin, "Shelter from the Storm or Form Follows Fear and Vice Versa," in *Architecture of Fear*, ed. Nan Ellin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), Setha M. Low, *Behind the Gates: Life, Security and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* (London: Routledge, 2004), Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995). The processes of excluding the urban poor and marginals from the present and the future of the city have been discussed widely by Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

9   David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989), Scott Lash and John Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), Alain Lipietz and Malcolm Slater, *Towards A New Economic Order: Postfordism, Ecology and Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), Claus Offe and others, *Disorganized Capitalism: Contemporary Transformations of Work and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985), Roland Robertson, "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7, no. 2-3 (1990).

mobilizes "a range of policies intended to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout all sectors of society."[10]

Cities have emerged as the privileged sites of the valorization of neoliberal policies, implementations and strategies. Socio-economic and political processes of neoliberalism have paved the way for the social and spatial segregation of the emerging groups of poverty and wealth in urban spaces, or the emergence of the so-called "spaces of decay," "distressed areas," and privileged spaces. These dominant patterns have been analyzed in the emerging literature on neoliberal urbanism.[11] Interestingly, contemporary urban studies focus either on new forms and spaces of wealth, or on new forms and spaces of poverty. Yet, in contemporary cities new groups and forms of wealth and poverty grow and reproduce in an interdependent manner and feed into one another. The same socio-political and economic processes create new groups of concentrated wealth and resources, concentrated forms of economic vulnerability and poverty, and new urban spaces catering to and harboring these groups, all of which then reproduce this social architecture. More importantly, contemporary cities are increasingly defined through these social groups and spatial forms on either margin of contemporary urbanism. Hence, we argue that, in order to render the workings of neoliberalism in a particular urban context visible and legible, these groups should be studied together.

In this paper we will focus on two very different and indeed contrasting spaces that have been produced by processes of neoliberalization. Not their diametrically opposed built forms, social fabric and urban situatedness, but the parallels to which we will point, give us clues as to how neoliberalism writ large carves its way through İstanbul and how these new forms of wealth and poverty inform future forms of urbanity. By discussing these spaces that form the margins of İstanbul, albeit qualitatively different ones, we hope to show simultaneously their interdependence and emphasize that examining only one of them would remain a partial exercise. The spaces we will focus on are Göktürk and Bezirganbahçe (see map).

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10 Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of Actually Existing Neoliberalism," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002). See also Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, eds., *Millenial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

11 For a discussion of cities as privileged sites of post-1980s macroeconomic and socio-political restructuring see, Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Press, 1994). For neoliberal urbanism see, Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in Western Europe and North America* (Oxford; Boston: Blackwell, 2002), Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), Jason Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
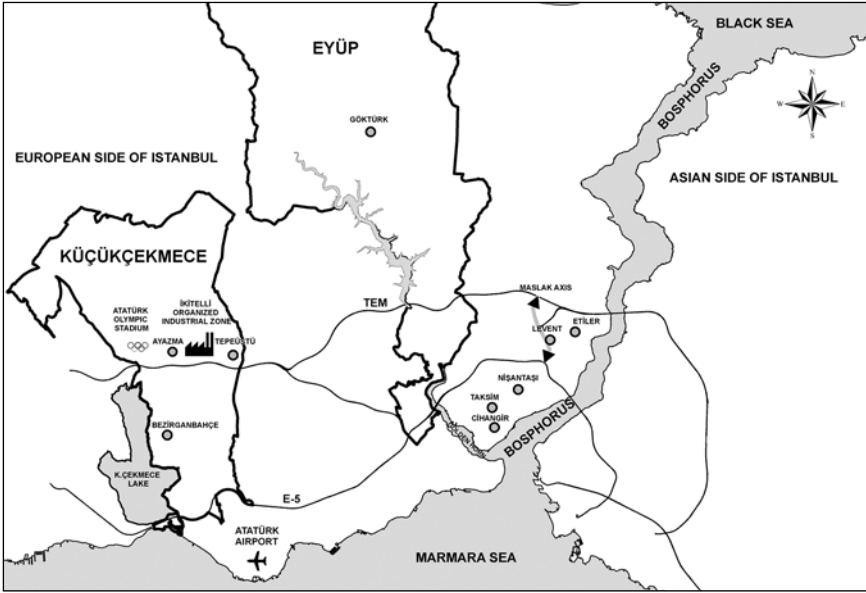
Map of İstanbul that marks the major sites mentioned in this paper. Map: Ahmet Suvar Aslan.

Göktürk is what we call a gated town. It showcases new forms of wealth emerging within processes of social and spatial segregation; privatization of urban governance; willing retrenchment from the city; and a turn towards the family. Göktürk is not an exceptional space in İstanbul. There are numerous other similar gated towns, such as Zekeriyaköy, Çekmeköy, Kurtköy, or Akfırat. We chose to focus on Göktürk because it includes not only the ur-gated residential compound in İstanbul, but also because it is the ur-gated town of İstanbul.

Bezirganbahçe is what we call a captive urban geography, created by an urban transformation project and forced and semi-forced re-settlements. Wrapped around in forced isolation, Bezirganbahçe showcases new forms of poverty, a process of expropriation, social exclusion, endangerment of the already precarious practices of subsistence and survival, and new forms of ethnic tensions and violence.

These two urban sites, we argue, emerge as spaces of neoliberalism where we see the simultaneous workings of the neoliberalization process and the forms of urbanity that emerge within this context. What we witness is the emergence of seemingly contradictory processes: in Göktürk's segregated compounds, voluntary non-relationality with the city, closing into the domestic sphere and the family, hype about urban crime and dangers, the heightened sense of a need for security and protection, and concomitant social and spatial isolation and insulation

become the markers of a new urbanity. In Bezirganbahçe, involuntary isolation and insulation as well as non-relationality with the city, imposed through the reproduction of poverty, create a new form of urban marginality. These are two margins of the city whose relationship with the center is becoming increasingly tenuous in qualitatively different yet parallel forms. In Göktürk, the local municipality and the services provided by it become irrelevant for the residents of the segregated residential compounds, which are run and protected by private management and security firms. In other words, one can observe the privatization and withdrawal of urban governance. In the Bezirganbahçe public housing project, however, we see the over-presence of urban governance through its monitoring of everyday activities and the regulation of the relationship between the local municipality and the residents.

The discussions and arguments in this paper derive from our ongoing fieldwork that we have been carrying out in two strands. One strand explores the urban transformation projects in the city and the processes of neoliberalization in İstanbul in general. The other has taken place since 2007 in the segregated residential compounds of Göktürk and in the public housing project in Bezirganbahçe. We have conducted in-depth interviews with the residents of these settlements, local and central government officials, real-estate agents and developers; we have collected residential histories from the residents of these communities; and we have carried out participant observation in the surrounding neighborhoods and shopping areas in order to provide additional contextual data.[12] The interviews were all conducted in the homes of the residents. We also collected local planning documents and material from the advertising campaigns of these settlements. The exclusive and isolated lives of the residents of Göktürk posed difficulties in terms of accessing this group for interviews, rendering it a particularly difficult group for ethnographic research.[13] We tried to talk to the residents of the different segregated residential compounds in order to observe the dynamics, patterns of living, and urban practices of the town in general. In doing so, we had to rely on snowball sampling and meticulously pre-arranged meetings. Despite our efforts, we largely failed to arrange interviews with men; as a result, almost all our respondents, except for two, were women.

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12   Unless noted otherwise, all quotations from interviews in this paper are taken from the in-depth interviews we conducted with officials and residents in Göktürk and Bezirganbahçe.

13   For a discussion of the challenges of studying powerful groups, "studying up," and the ethical issues involved in this process see, Low, *Behind the Gates*, Laura Nader, "Up the Anthropologist-Perspectives Gained From Studying Up," in *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell H. Hymes (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

The article is divided into two sections. In the first section, we will provide the larger context of neoliberal urbanism within which both gated towns like Göktürk and captive urban geographies like Bezirganbahçe can come into being and share an existence in a new urban context. In the second section, we will turn to a more detailed discussion of the workings of the neoliberalizing process and the emerging forms of urbanity in Göktürk and Bezirganbahçe.

Neoliberalizing İstanbul

İstanbul has gone through major urban restructuring since the mid-1980s, as a result of a series of transformations in local governance, which have been enabled and legitimized through a set of legal changes wrapped in neoliberal language; implementation and planning of mega-projects; major changes in real-estate investments; and a new visibility and domination of the finance and service sectors in the city's economy and urbanscape. These processes, which can also be observed in other cities around the world, have been conceptualized as neoliberal urbanism.[14] In this section, we will discuss the context-specific forms that neoliberal urbanism has taken in post-1980s İstanbul, with a special emphasis on the 2000s as a period during which the neoliberalization of İstanbul not only has become more visible, but also deepened and more entrenched.

The liberalization of İstanbul's economy and urban management began with radical financial and administrative changes in İstanbul's metropolitan governance, starting with the municipality law of 1984. The 1984 law brought a two-tier system, consisting of the greater municipality and the district municipalities. It introduced new financial resources for the local governments and changes in the organizational structure, such as bringing agencies formerly attached to central ministries in Ankara (for instance, the Master Plan Bureau, and the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority) under the direct control and jurisdiction of the metropolitan mayor. All this rendered the mayor's office more powerful with its enhanced administrative and financial resources. These changes led to the emergence of an entrepreneurial local government acting as a market facilitator, and the privatization of various municipal services such as transportation, housing, and provision of natural gas. The implementation of these changes also enabled the then metropolitan mayor Bedrettin Dalan, who belonged to the center-right Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP), in the late 1980s to engage in a series of urban renewal projects in İstanbul. These projects

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14   See, Brenner and Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of Actually Existing Neoliberalism," Comaroff and Comaroff, *Millenial Capitalism*, and Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

majestically initiated dramatic transformations in the urban landscape of the city, through mega-projects, Hausmannian in nature—such as the opening of the Tarlabaşı boulevard, a major axis of the city connecting the Taksim Square to the Golden Horn; the demolition of industrial complexes along the shore of the Golden Horn, which recast the entire urbanscape of this former industrial and working-class district; and the relocation of various industries from within the city to its periphery.[15]

Although there is a continuity in the project of transforming İstanbul into an "aesthetized commodity"—that is, making it attractive to foreign capital and marketable to a global audience[16]—the 2000s, a time when the self-defined conservative-democratic Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) took over the greater municipality and many of the district municipalities in İstanbul, mark a turning point in the liberalization process. Municipality laws introduced in 2004 and 2005, currently in effect, made the already influential office of the mayor even more powerful. These new powers include: (1) broadening the physical space under the control and jurisdiction of the greater municipality; (2) increasing its power and authority in development (*imar*), control and coordination of district municipalities; (3) making it easier for greater municipalities to establish, and/or create partnerships and collaborate with private companies; (4) defining new responsibilities of the municipality in dealing with "natural disasters"; and (5) outlining the first legal framework for "urban transformation," by giving municipalities the authority to designate, plan and implement "urban transformation" areas and projects.[17]

Along with these administrative changes, another set of laws has been introduced, the constellation of which have enabled and legitimized the ongoing urban restructuring in the city. These laws include Law no. 5366 (Law for the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Real Estate Through Protection by Renewal) passed in 2005, the 2010 European Cultural Capital Law approved in 2007,[18] and the pending law on Urban

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15 See, Çağlar Keyder and Ayşe Öncü, *Istanbul and the Concept of the World Cities* (İstanbul: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1993), for a detailed analysis of the administrative, financial, and spatial changes in late-1980s İstanbul, also see, Ayşe Öncü, "The Politics of Urban Land Market in Turkey: 1950-1980," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 12, no. 1 (1988). For the discussion of controversial urban renewal projects in the late 1980s see, Ayfer Bartu, "Who Owns the Old Quarters? Rewriting Histories in a Global Era," in *Istanbul: Between the Local and the Global*, ed. Çağlar Keyder (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

16 Achille Mbembe, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (2004).

17 "5216 Sayılı Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kanunu," TBMM (2004), http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanun-lar/k5216.html; "5393 Sayılı Belediye Kanunu," TBMM (2005), http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanun-lar/k5393.html.

18 In 2006, İstanbul, along with the cities Pécs (Hungary) and Essen (Germany), was selected by the European Union as the 2010 European Cultural Capital.

Transformation. All of these laws grant the municipalities the power to undertake major urban projects, overriding the existing checks, controls, and regulations in the legal system.

This changing legal framework is wrapped within a new language, a language that Bourdieu and Wacquant call "neoliberal newspeak,"[19] which is characterized by the abundant usage of terms such as vision, mission, transparency, efficiency, accountability, and participation. This language is not exclusive to the laws, but reproduced through various campaigns and projects of the current greater municipality and the district municipalities, in their attempts to engage with their projects *with* and *for* the people of İstanbul. This language is most apparent, for example, in the glossy annual activities booklets and the interactive website of the greater municipality. Through billboards and banners located throughout the city, İstanbulites are informed about the activities of the municipality. The "White Desk" toll-free line is at work 24 hours a day for any questions, comments, complaints and feedback about the activities of the municipality. One can send text or e-mail messages to the companies affiliated with the municipality with any complaint and/or suggestion about their activities. As highlighted in almost all of the publications of the municipality, all of this is done in the name of "transparency," "efficiency," "accountability," and "public participation."

The planning and implementation of a series of mega-projects called "urban transformation projects," a term first coined in the early 2000s, has also come in this period, suggesting a more rigorous pattern of urban restructuring. Some of the urban transformation projects of the mid-2000s involve inviting world-renowned architects like Zaha Hadid and Ken Yeang to design projects for entire districts. Zaha Hadid's project for Kartal, an industrial district on the Asian side, involves relocating industries to the outskirts of the city and designing office buildings that will accommodate service industries, five-star hotels targeted towards international visitors, and a marina catering to cruise tourism. Put differently, the project imagines a futuristic plan completely disregarding the existing urban fabric of Kartal. The project of the internationally known Malaysian architect Ken Yeang was selected for the transformation of the southern part of the Küçükçekmece district on the European side, where the Küçükçekmece Lake merges with the Marmara Sea, into a touristic and recreational area. It includes the construction of a seven-star hotel, an aquapark, and a marina. Similarly, Ken Yeang's project seems to assume an empty land for building spaces for wealthy users. The Galataport and Haydarpaşa projects are two

19 Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, "Neoliberal Newspeak: Notes on the New Planetary Vulgate," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 105 (2006).

other highly publicized and controversial mega-projects in the making. The former refers to the construction of a cruise ship marina surrounded by shopping centers, hotels and recreational spaces on an area of 100,000 square meters along the Marmara Sea coast on the European side. The Haydarpaşa project involves the transformation of 1,000,000 square meters, including the major historical train station on the Asian side, into a seven-star hotel surrounded by a marina, a yacht club, a cruise ship port, office buildings, and shopping centers. These projects are highly controversial in that they foresee the destruction of the historic fabric of the city in order to specifically cater to the interests of high-income groups, severely limiting public access to these areas. Moreover, both projects have provoked serious legal disputes.

Some of the other urban transformation projects, referred to as "*Gecekondu* Transformation Projects," include the demolition of *gecekondu* neighborhoods and the dis/replacement of the residents to public housing projects. Bezirganbahçe, to which we will turn later, is the product of such a project. There has also been a series of demolitions and evictions in what is referred to as "historical" neighborhoods, for the "renewal," "rehabilitation," and "preservation" of the "historical and cultural heritage" of the city, enabled by Law no. 5366 mentioned earlier. The highly controversial Sulukule and Tarlabaşı projects are examples of these and concern an area of 100,000 square meters, whose main inhabitants are low-income groups of Gypsies and Kurds, respectively. A set of demolitions is also underway for the purposes of strengthening the housing stock for the anticipated big earthquake in İstanbul.

All of these urban transformation projects described above take on different names, foci, and emphases—such as "*Gecekondu* Transformation Projects," "Prestige Projects," "History and Culture Projects," and "Natural Disaster Projects." Despite the fact that they are packaged differently, and regardless of the-case specific implications, one needs to emphasize that all of them have similar repercussions in terms of the increase in the value of urban land, the dis/replacement of significant numbers of people, the relocation of poverty, and dramatic changes in the urban and social landscape of the city. The repercussions and implications of these transformation projects for İstanbul are yet to be seen.[20]

It is also essential to draw attention to another process that has been central in the neoliberalization of İstanbul: the dramatic shift in the type of

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20 See, Erik Swyngedouw, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodriguez, "Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): for a detailed discussion of the implications of large-scale urban development projects, such as socioeconomic polarization and social exclusion, which are already underway in major European cities.

investments and actors in the real-estate market. There has been a spectacular increase in the number of hotels, shopping malls and office buildings in the city since the 1980s. A fleeting gaze at the number of five-star hotels, shopping malls and office buildings will give us a sense of this increase. The bedroom capacity of the five-star hotels was 2,000 in the 1980s. In the 1990s, this capacity was expanded to 6,786, and another 50-per-cent increase in the 2000s has carried the number of luxurious hotel beds in the city to 10,199.[21] Shopping malls in İstanbul began to be opened in the early 1990s, and throughout that decade the city had only ten of them. Between 2000 and 2008, an additional 47 shopping malls were constructed, 28 of which were built in the last four years. As of the summer of 2008, there are 57 shopping malls in the city, with a floor space approaching two million square meters.[22] It is predicted that by the end of 2010, there will be a total of 122 shopping malls with a floor space of nearly four million square meters.[23] The office floor space in İstanbul has increased from 267,858 square meters in 1997 to 1,676,268 square meters in 2005—more than a six-fold increase in eight years.[24] These developments are embedded in the larger process of the increasing dominance of the finance and service sectors in İstanbul's economy, accompanied by the skewed income distribution; the transformations in İstanbul's urban space produce and reproduce this trend.[25]

There has also been a change in the actors of the real-estate market, which has had an enormous impact on urban restructuring especially since the 2000s. In 1996, the first real-estate investment trust (*Gayri Menkul Yatırım Ortaklığı*, GYO) was established, enabled by a law passed in 1992, which facilitated the investment of finance capital in large-scale real-estate projects. The Mass Housing Administration, hereafter MHA (*Toplu Konut İdaresi*, TOKİ), tied to the Prime Ministry, emerges as another significant actor central to the urban restructuring process in İstanbul. First established in 1984 with the aim of dealing with the housing problem of

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21 We generated these figures through telephone calls to the hotels listed by TUROB (The Association of the Tourist Hotelkeepers and Hotel Managers, http://www.turob.org/) and on www.travelguide.gen.tr.

22 We collated these figures based on the numbers in Colliers International "Market Research, Real Estate Market Review 2007."

23 Dr. Can Fuat Gürlesel, "Real Estate Research Report-6. Prognoses for Retail Market and Shopping Centers in Turkey 2015" (İstanbul: GYODER. The Association of Real Estate Investment Companies, 2008).

24 *Ibid.*

25 See, "Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Slum Areas of Large Cities in Turkey," ed. Fikret Adaman and Çağlar Keyder (Brussels: European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG, 2006), for a discussion of the skewed income distribution in Turkey despite high growth rates and a substantial increase in per capita income in the 2000s.

middle and lower-middle income groups, MHA was given vast powers through a series of legal changes in the last five years. These powers include forming partnerships with private construction companies and involvement in the construction and selling of houses for profit; being able to take over state urban land at no cost with the approval of the prime ministry and the president's office; expropriation of urban land to construct housing projects; and developing and implementing *gecekondu* transformation projects.[26] The MHA's share in housing construction jumped from 0.6 per cent between 1984 and 2002, to 24.7 per cent in 2004, and decreased to 12.1 per cent in 2005.[27] In İstanbul alone, the MHA has constructed 50,183 housing units.[28]

So far, we have discussed neoliberal urbanism in İstanbul as embodied in a restructuring of local governance, a set of legal changes that bypasses former checks, controls, and balances, large-scale urban development projects, and changes in real-estate investments. To this one must add the emergence of what we call a discourse of urgency, articulated around several imminent "natural disasters." In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 1999, an intense public debate has taken place regarding the imminent massive earthquake and the extent of the city's preparedness to deal with it. In the last five years, an interesting shift has occurred in the public discourse in the articulation of this problem. Measures that need to be taken in relation to the pending earthquake, such as strengthening the housing stock and examining the infrastructure, are discussed in relation to many other "disasters" that are "awaiting" İstanbulites, such as crime, migration, chaos in the transportation system, and overpopulation. In other words, the earthquake is discussed in relation to other "naturalized disasters," creating a sense of urgency. The only way to handle these imminent "disasters" supposedly is through the massive urban transformation projects in the city. The hype about "crime," what Caldeira calls "talk of crime,"[29] is translated into a naturalized category in terms of the urban spaces and groups to which it refers and, in return, justifies the urban transformation projects. The urban spaces that these groups— especially migrants, "particular" youth, and Gypsies—occupy are described as in need of rehabilitation. The "risks" they carry are described enhancing the sense of urgency to intervene. This sense of urgency

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26 These changes were enabled through the changes in the Mass Housing Law (Law No. 2985), the *Gecekondu* Law (Law No. 775), and the Law for the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Real Estate Through Protection by Renewal (Law No. 5366).

27 YEMAR, "Türk Yapı Sektörü Raporu," (İstanbul: Yapı-Endüstri Merkezi, 2006), 33.

28 T. C. Başbakanlık Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı, http://www.toki.gov.tr/.

29 Caldeira, *City of Walls*.

becomes prevalent in the mainstream media and easily translates into a "stigmatizing topographic lexicon," as exemplified in the following newspaper commentary:

> In big cities, while the public housing projects that are constructed through urban transformation projects end irregular urbanization, they also destroy the spaces that provide shelter for criminal and terrorist organizations […] TOKİ [MHA] and the municipalities realize numerous projects of mass housing in order to bring about a regular city look and to meet the demand for housing. Ali Nihat Özcan, an expert on terror, draws attention to the fact that people coming from the same city and origin live in the same squatter settlements, and suggests: "But those living in the public housing projects with different backgrounds can influence each other. Hence there aren't any radical ideas and behavior. They get rid of their prejudices. They become more tolerant. They get more opportunities to recognize their common denominators." The illegal organizations composed by the members of the terrorist organizations, such as PKK and DHKP-C, provoke people against the urban transformation projects by means of posters and booklets.[30]

As is evident in this depiction, urban transformation and the public housing projects accompanying this transformation are portrayed as the solution to "irregular urbanization" in İstanbul. Although it is well-established that "irregular urbanization" in the city is hardly a matter concerning the urban poor and the spaces they occupy, and that many middle and upper-class residences and production and consumption spaces have been part of that process,[31] it is very common to represent the urban spaces occupied by the poor as examples of "irregular urbanization." As manifested in the above commentary, urban transformation projects are instantly linked to urban spaces that breed "criminal and terrorist" activities. Public housing projects are offered as a remedy to such activities. Moreover, as proposed by the "expert on terror," these projects are even promoted as social policy measures enabling people to empathize with one another. Given this description, the "natural" outcome is that resistance to these projects can become "terrorist" acts. Erdoğan Bayraktar, the head of the MHA, frequently mentions *gecekondus* as the main urban problem and

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30 "Kentsel Dönüşüm Projeleri, Suç Örgütlerinin Sığınaklarını Yok Ediyor," *Zaman*, 18 May 2008.

31 Ayşe Buğra, "The Immoral Economy of Housing in Turkey," *The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22, no. 2 (1998), Sema Erder, *İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996).

associates any form of resistance to urban transformation projects with criminal activities. He states:

> Terrorist groups and people who are involved in drug and women trafficking try to obstruct urban transformation projects, by manipulating innocent people who live in *gecekondu* settlements. Irregular urbanization breeds terrorism.[32]

A normalized equation appears here: earthquake, migration, overpopulation, and crime create a sense of urgency, urban fear, and the need to intervene. Urban transformation projects emerge as the only possible solution/remedy for these "naturalized" urban problems; hence, they are justified and normalized.

In the remaining part of this paper we will focus on two urban spaces which have come into existence as part and parcel of the processes of neoliberal urbanism: a public housing project, and a gated town. Bezirganbahçe is an example of one of the public housing projects constructed as part of the *gecekondu* transformation projects, whose population has become the target of the emerging discourse of urgency and urban fear. Göktürk, a gated town, is an example of an emerging space of urban wealth, the inhabitants of which justify it by reference to urban fear.

An urban captivity: Bezirganbahçe

In 2007, the MHA completed a public housing project of 55 11-story buildings with a total of 2,640 apartments in Küçükçekmece. The Bezirganbahçe housing project became home to approximately 5,000 people displaced from two *gecekondu* settlements, demolished in 2007 as part of urban transformation projects, Ayazma and Tepeüstü,[33] both located in the Küçükçekmece municipality.

Located in the İstasyon neighborhood, Bezirganbahçe is a ten-minute minibus ride from the penultimate station of the Sirkeci-Halkalı train line, or a fifteen-minute walking distance from the last station. It is like an island of tall buildings that have mushroomed in the midst of two other low-income areas, Yenidoğan and Taştepe. The residents of Bezirganbahçe, especially the

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32 "Kentsel Dönüşüm Gecekonducuulara Takıldı," *Zaman*, 28 November 2007.

33 Ayazma and Tepeüstü are *gecekondu* settlements that were established in the late 1980s and late 1970s, respectively. Ayazma is located across the Olympic stadium constructed in the early 2000s. Tepeüstü is located on a small hill overlooking the İkitelli organized industrial zone. These two settlements are about 2.5 kilometers apart, yet their population make-up is rather different from one another. Tepeüstü's population consists of migrants from the Black Sea region and Kurds who have migrated from eastern and southeastern Turkey. Ayazma is predominantly populated by Kurds who settled there in the late 1980s.

women, prefer to use the minibus instead of walking the road to the neighborhood because it has no sidewalks and is always lined with trucks, since a customs zone is located nearby. Passing by the trucks, one reaches Bezirganbahçe's entrance with its bereft gate standing alone in the absence of any walls or fences, and a security cabin with no security personnel. It has barely been a year since the first residents have moved in, yet Bezirganbahçe is already derelict, with the fallen plasters of the buildings, fading paint, and shabby construction work. Neglected playgrounds, plots allocated for landscaping with a few dead plants, and half-finished pavements and streets add to the dilapidated look of this housing project.

This description of Bezirganbahçe is at odds with the Küçükçekmece Municipality's and the MHA's discourse promoting the project as a remedy for the housing problem of low-income groups in the city, by providing affordable housing and better living conditions, and alleviating poverty. In contrast to these claims, we argue that Bezirganbahçe can be interpreted as a captive urban geography where emerging forms of poverty and social exclusion are carved into urban space. In other words, through the Bezirganbahçe case, we intend to illustrate the emergence of a new space of urban poverty within the context of the neoliberal restructuring in İstanbul.

The Küçükçekmece municipality has been an ardent proponent of urban transformation projects. Being well-versed in the neoliberal language, the mayor of Küçükçekmece, Aziz Yeniay, describes his "vision" on the municipality's website as follows: "To be a home for happy people and the center of attraction for the world, having completed its urban transformation projects, to host the Olympics, with its lake, sea, forest and all sorts of social utilities."[34] Küçükçekmece's promixity to the airport, its natural assets, and its capacity to host potential future international events such as the Olympic Games are all highlighted to prepare the city for the "world" and to justify various urban transformation projects. In line with this vision, two high-profile urban transformation projects are publicized. One of them is the pending project of the Malaysian architect Ken Yeang mentioned above; the other is the already completed project of "cleaning up" the area around the Olympic stadium, which brought about the demolition of Ayazma and Tepeüstü.

In the past, similar "cleaning up" projects were carried out during high-profile international events hosted in the city, such as the HABITAT II conference in 1996, Champions League football games, and the Formula 1 races in 2005, as well as during the various failed bids to host the 2000,

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34 "Misyon & Vizyon," Küçükçekmece Belediyesi, http://www.kucukcekmece.bel.tr/icerik_de-tay.asp?tur=20&id=7.

2004, 2008, and 2012 Olympics. The ongoing urban transformation projects are yet another wave of "cleaning up" the city, and squatter settlements seem to be the primary targets. In his discussion of various "beautification" projects in the Third World, Davis suggests:

> In the urban Third World, poor people dread high-profile international events—conferences, dignitary visits, sporting events, beauty contests, and international festivals—that prompt authorities to launch crusades to clean up the city: slum-dwellers know that they are the "dirt" or "blight" that their governments prefer the world not to see.[35]

This has exactly been the case in Ayazma and Tepeüstü. Although the current municipality law gives the municipalities the authority to designate areas that are *physically* dilapidated for urban transformation, brochures prepared by the Küçükçekmece municipality explicitly describe Ayazma and Tepeüstü as areas of "*social* and physical decay" (emphasis ours), hence not only commenting on the physical conditions, but also stigmatizing the residents of these areas. Ayazma and Tepeüstü were designated as "urban clearance" areas, meaning that these urban spaces were considered to be in need of "complete demolition and to be replaced with new ones and the users of these spaces should be displaced and replaced."[36] In the light of these depictions, these areas were demolished in 2007, and the residents were relocated to the Bezirganbahçe public housing project.

Since Ayazma and Tepeüstü are *gecekondu* areas with complicated ownership status, there have been different procedures for groups with and without title deeds in the relocation process.[37] There has been a series of

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35   Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 104.

36   Sırma Turgut and Eda Çaçtaş Ceylan, eds., *Küçükçekmece Mekansal Stratejik Planı* (İstanbul: Küçükçekmece Belediye Başkanlığı Kentsel Dönüşüm ve Ar-Ge Şefliği, 2006), 47. Two other categories are used in designating urban transformation areas: "urban regeneration" and "urban renewal." "Regeneration" refers to the creation of a new urban fabric in spaces that are destroyed, damaged and ruined, and the integration of improvable/recoverable spaces into the new fabric by way of betterment. "Renewal" refers to the protection and preservation of certain parts of the urban fabric or a structure by using appropriate techniques, and the improvement of public spaces and infrastructure.

37   *Gecekondus* have been built predominantly on publicly owned land in the cities, and ownership in these settlements has always been a complicated matter. Ownership in the *gecekondu* might mean several things. It could mean (1) having the "use right" of a house through a *gecekondu* amnesty law; (2) having a title deed of the land but not the house on it; or (3) not having any title deed or the "use right" of either the land or the house. See, Buğra, "The Immoral Economy of Housing.", Çağlar Keyder, "Liberalization from Above and the Future of the Informal Sector: Land, Shelter, and Informality in the Periphery," in *Informalization: Process and Structure*, ed. Faruk Tabak and Michaeline Crichlow (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), İlhan Tekeli, "Gecekondu," in *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1993).

negotiations, the content of which is not revealed either by the local municipality or the MHA, conducted with the residents with title deeds regarding where they will move, and the conditions of payment. For those without title deeds, who constitute the majority of the residents, the real-estate value of the house was calculated, and this amount then considered as down-payment for their new houses in Bezirganbahçe. Official agreements were signed between the residents and the MHA, specifying the conditions of payment.

We argue that the new life and the daily experiences of former Ayazma and Tepeüstü residents in Bezirganbahçe can be conceptualized as an urban captivity. In what follows, we will discuss this urban captivity, characterized by the emergence of new forms of poverty, social exclusion, immobility in space, and ethnic tension.

It is not their declining income that creates the conditions of the further impoverishment of the Bezirganbahçe residents. The conditions that had contributed to their increasing poverty since the 1980s, which came on the heels of the liberalization processes, have not changed with their move. Nevertheless, Bezirganbahçe introduced new rules to the game. One of these is the formalization of land use and ownership rights, through a formal agreement between the residents and the MHA. If residents are unable to meet two consecutive payments, their houses are confiscated. The residents have also become formal users of basic services such as water, natural gas, and electricity, rather than getting them through their negotiations with the local municipality or through informal means.[38] Now, they have to pay regular bills in order to sustain these services. Among the displaced population, those who are employed predominantly work in the industrial or garment production sectors. But most of them have precarious jobs, irregular income, rely on the sporadic financial support they get from their children, or depend on the aid they get from the local government and/or NGOs in terms of clothing, food, and school supplies. The monthly household income ranges from approximately 400 to 1,000 YTL.[39] Of this income, 220 to 250 YTL is paid monthly to the

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38 In Ayazma and Tepeüstü, as in many other *gecekondu* areas, the majority of the residents used electricity through illegal and informal means, and there was no provision of piped water and natural gas. The municipality delivered water with tankers for free. In other words, they did not get any formal bills, especially for water and natural gas.

39 The minimum wage in Turkey is net 503.26 YTL per month (USD 425). The food poverty line that contains only food expenditures for a household of four is 231 YTL. The complete poverty line that contains both food and non-food expenditures for a household of four is 598 YTL; see Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, www.tuik.gov.tr. Adaman and Keyder argue that although the ratio of people living below the food poverty line is around 2 percent, the "risk of poverty," defined as 60 percent of the median of equivalized net income of all households, is 26 percent based on 2003 figures. They also

MHA. The monthly maintenance fee required by the administration of the housing project is 35 YTL. In addition, there are electricity, water, and natural gas bills. Overall, approximately a minimum of 350 YTL is required to cover their basic monthly expenses, a significant financial burden for a population which already has a precarious and limited income.

Secondly, some of the mechanisms that enabled the residents to survive in Ayazma and Tepeüstü have ceased to exist in Bezirganbahçe. For example, the gardens that used to provide produce for their survival are now declared as part of the landscaping, which, as we mentioned earlier, are actually in rather dismal condition. "We had our gardens there [Tepeüstü]," says a 55-year-old woman, "we would grow our own produce, we had our fruit trees in the garden. We would not starve there. Here we are stuck in our apartments." "If we can, we go out for grocery shopping once a week," her husband adds, "otherwise we just keep on drinking tea." This Turkish couple relies heavily on the financial support they get from their two sons who have irregular jobs with no social security. A related mechanism has to do with the use of credit, *veresiye*,[40] which used to be crucial for their survival, but is extremely limited in Bezirganbahçe. In the housing complex itself, there is a chain supermarket that does not allow such transactions, and few of them have managed to find a small grocery store in neighboring Yenidoğan where they continue to practice *veresiye*. Since the *veresiye* system relies on trust, familiarity and ongoing negotiations, this option has been especially limited for Kurds, due to the ethnic tension in the area, that will be discussed below.

Thirdly, due to financial constraints, the residents' mobility in the city is rather limited, or their movements are restricted to utilitarian purposes. Those who have jobs go to work, and the mobility of others, and especially women, is shaped by several tasks: searching for means of delaying the monthly payment in the central office of the housing administration in Başakşehir,[41] going to the AKP headquarters in Sefaköy for networking, going to the *kaymakam*'s (district governor) office to get second-hand clothing for their children, and going to the local municipality's office in

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suggest that the incidence of the "working poor" in Turkey is very high: the risk of poverty among the employed is around 23 percent. See Adaman and Keyder, "Poverty and Social Exclusion."

40 *Veresiye* refers to a form of economic transaction where the payment is deferred, with the expectation that the debt will be periodically paid, depending on the income of the customer. Credit does not aptly capture the nature of *veresiye*. It is based primarily on trust and negotiation. There may be different forms where payment dates are negotiated between the buyer and the seller. This has been a common economic practice in many neighborhoods and is based on personal and informal networks and relations.

41 All of these place names mentioned in this section are neighborhoods within a 5 to 15 km range from Bezirganbahçe (except for Çatalca, which is 35 km away). This points to an extremely limited urban geography within which the interviewees circulate.

Küçükçekmece, to the "White Desk," for various needs, most of which are not met. But usually their mobility is extremely limited. A 36-year-old woman commented that the only places she has been to in İstanbul are Bağcılar, where some of her relatives live, and Çatalca, where she went for a picnic with her family. A young man, the father of three, resented the fact that he was not able to take his family for a walk along the sea shore in Küçükçekmece last year, a ten-minute minibus ride away, because he could not save two liras for such a trip. He works in a plastic bag production workshop in Davutpaşa, works six days a week in shifts, and makes the minimum wage of 503 YTL per month. For illiterate people, living in the new and unfamiliar environment of the public housing project becomes even more limiting. For example, a 55-year-old woman who moved from Tepeüstü states: "I am illiterate and scared of leaving the apartment, thinking that I might get lost. What if I cannot find my way back? When we were there [Tepeüstü], I would go out to the garden, I would wander around the house." A 42-year-old man who works as an electrician aptly describes the close relationship between poverty and the kind of immobility described by many of the residents in Bezirganbahçe: "When you have low income, you become more like a robot. You have limited income, your expenses are predetermined. What you can do is also predetermined."

Fourthly, regulations regarding the use of public space in Bezirganbahçe are very limiting. A private firm, Boğaziçi A.Ş., is in charge of the administration of the housing complex.[42] This firm is responsible for collecting the monthly maintenance fees, providing social facilities such as parks and playgrounds, and overseeing the maintenance of the housing complex. The regulation of the use of space in the settlement also enhances the sense of captivity described by the residents. There is an overemphasis on the implementation of a new life style, as exemplified by the elaborate signs posted at the entrance of each apartment building, describing "ways of living in an apartment building," including information on how to use the balconies and toilets. There are rules against stepping on the lawn which is actually just bare earth demarcated by fences. The residents are forbidden to sit and gather in front of the buildings. This especially affects women, since they had to give up their common practice of gathering in front of the houses and in their gardens in *gecekondu* areas. Any social

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42 As we have discussed above, two recent municipal laws in 2004 and 2005 have enabled the greater municipalities to establish and form partnerships and to collaborate with private companies. Boğaziçi A.Ş. is an example of such a partnership. This firm has a partnership with KİPTAŞ, another private partner firm of the municipality. Boğaziçi A.Ş. took over the administration of the Bezirganbahçe housing project through the bidding process of the municipality.

gathering in the gardens of the apartment buildings is monitored and regulated, so that these activities do not damage the landscaping scheme proposed by the administration. These regulations in their totality not only assume that the new residents of Bezirganbahçe are alien to the rules and norms of modern urban life, but also exhibit an unabashedly condescending attitude. The project administration assumes absolute command over the knowledge of what is modern and urban and is imparting this knowledge. All this, inevitably, connotes the civilizing project.

Added to the limitations described above, Bezirganbahçe is a place where potential and actual violence is evident and rampant. The public housing project is located in a neighborhood whose residents are known to be supporters of an ultra-nationalist political party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP). Their political affiliation is visible through the graffiti and symbols inscribed on the walls of the houses in Yenidoğan. Given the ethnic make-up of the current population in Bezirganbahçe, the tension between the Kurdish and Turkish population is noticeable. A recurrent story we heard from many is that a group of young men from Yenidoğan attacked the housing project in a car covered with a Turkish flag during the campaigns for the general elections of 2007. A young man was seriously wounded, and similar tensions have been ongoing since then. Internal tensions between the residents of the housing project are also evident. There has been an increasing sense of resentment towards the Kurdish population, expressed very explicitly by those who identify themselves as Turkish. A 56-year-old man, originally from the Black Sea coast, who moved to Bezirganbahçe from Tepeüstü suggests:

> The ones who come from Ayazma are wild, untamed. They are from the East. They lived across the Olympic stadium, in the middle of an open space, there was nothing else around. They have been left too much on their own, without any control or authority. We in Tepeüstü had the police station across our houses. We, at least, had some contact with the police, state officials, whereas, the ones from Ayazma haven't seen anything.

Another woman, also from Tepeüstü, shares similar sentiments:

> We are also squatters, we also come from a squatter settlement. One needs to learn something in a new environment. I hope that they [the ones from Ayazma] leave. They want to live by their own rules here. Our hope is that their houses will be confiscated and they will have to

leave. These are people who came out of caves. If they leave, we will be more than happy and live here comfortably. If they stay, we would have to live with that.

It is evident that living in Bezirganbahçe has overturned the balance of the ethnic relations that were established in Ayazma and Tepeüstü. In contrast to the former organically formed spatial boundaries and social relations, in Bezirganbahçe Turks and Kurds find themselves in an artificially formed physical environment that they are forced to share. They become neighbors in apartment buildings and use the same public facilities, such as the gardens and playgrounds. In this new spatial proximity, ethnic relations are redefined, currently in rather tense and sometimes violent terms. The Kurds we interviewed have divergent views on this tension. Some of them express resentment about the hostile feelings expressed by the Turks, but some of the Kurds see the spatial proximity in Bezirganbahçe as a "learning experience," as an opportunity for assimilating to mainstream Turkish culture.

Given the formalization of their relationship with the municipality and the state, the changes in the subsistence mechanisms, the limited mobility in the city, and the ethnic tensions, a new form of poverty, and various forms of social exclusion emerge in Bezirganbahçe. Those who used to own a house in the *gecekondu* area potentially run the risk of losing their homes in Bezirganbahçe, unless they are able to meet the monthly payments. Since many of the households either have extremely limited or irregular income, it is very likely that a significant number of people will have to leave Bezirganbahçe. Although it is difficult to obtain official numbers, our respondents mentioned that already some of the families' apartments were either confiscated or that they had to sell them and move, mostly to Çerkezköy, a growing industrial town in the Thrace region, to build another *gecekondu*.[43] In other words, we have so far observed a potential process of expropriation of *gecekondu* residents and displacement of poverty in urban space, rather than the alleviation of poverty or ownership of homes in modern buildings. Those who stay in Bezirganbahçe are subjected to multiple layers of social exclusion—social, economic, spatial, and

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43   In the agreement made between the residents and the MHA, there are restrictions regarding the conditions for selling these apartments, but the residents use informal means to sell their apartments for around 50,000 YTL, along with the remaining payment installments of approximately 40,000 YTL (a total of approximately USD 75,000). Since they bought these homes for about USD 45,000 (the real-estate value of their previous residence is counted as the down payment, approximately USD 10,000, and they need to pay the remaining USD 35,000 in installments), they do not lose money when they sell, but they give up their chance of owning an apartment.

cultural—as described by Adaman and Keyder in their study of the slum areas of six metropolitan cities in Turkey.[44]

Compared to similar dis/relocation and "urban clearance" projects,[45] however, what is novel and remarkable in Bezirganbahçe and other ongoing urban transformation projects in İstanbul is the overemphasis on "social inclusion." This is rather ironic, given the processes of social exclusion we have described above. This theme of "social inclusion" runs through the various campaigns of the greater and local municipalities. As suggested by Aziz Yeniay, the mayor of the Küçükçekmece Municipality, "urban transformation does not mean destruction, our aim as the municipality is to eradicate *gecekondus* through specific plans without harming our citizens and to provide them with better and healthy living conditions."[46] In Bezirganbahçe, there are always officials or staff from the Küçükçekmece municipality conducting questionnaire surveys regarding the needs of the residents. A "Career Center" located within the housing complex was established by the local municipality, funded through a European Union project called "Alleviation of Poverty and Social Inclusion Project," with the aim of training the residents for available jobs in the market.

This pretension of social inclusion is pertinent to what Miraftab describes as the complex and paradoxical nature of neoliberal governance.[47] In her discussion of city improvement districts and community-based waste collection strategies in Capetown, Miraftab draws attention to the ways in which the local municipality, through various discursive and spatial practices, simultaneously creates symbolic inclusion and material exclusion.[48] She suggests: "The complexity of neoliberalism's mode of governing lies precisely in such simultaneously launched spaces of inclusion and exclusion."[49] Bezirganbahçe seems to be a good example of the simultaneous processes of symbolic inclusion and material exclusion. On the one hand, a range of "social inclusion" projects are enacted and surveys conducted; on the other hand, residents are stripped off of their material means of survival. As a result, such a relocation project ends up being a project of relocation of poverty and its

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44 "Poverty and Social Exclusion."
45 For a discussion of similar urban dis/relocation projects see, Farha Ghannam, *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), Davis, *Planet of Slums*.
46 "Yeniay: Kentsel Dönüşüm Kimseyi Mağdur Etmeyecek," *Zaman*, 9 August 2005.
47 Faranak Miraftab, "Making Neoliberal Governance: The Disempowering Work of Empowerment," *International Planning Studies* 4, no. 9 (2004), Faranak Miraftab, "Governing Post-apartheid Spatiality: Implementing City Improvement Districts in Cape Town," *Antipode* 39, no. 4 (2007).
48 Miraftab, "Making Neoliberal Governance."
49 Miraftab, "Governing Post-apartheid Spatiality," 619.

reproduction in new forms. Indeed, the residents are very skeptical about this pretension of social inclusion. There is a sense of distrust among the residents that none of the information collected through the questionnaires is being used for anything other than creating an *effect* of participation, accountability, and transparency. As a 20-year-old Turkish woman from Tepeüstü puts it:

> I wish they had asked these questions, our needs, before they made us move here. They loaded our things on trucks, demolished our houses, took pictures, then moved us here and gave us the keys to these new houses. This is not urban transformation, this is a means to push us back to our villages. We have nothing to rely on, no security. Those who will be able to pay the monthly bills will stay. But there will be people who will fall behind, and they will have to leave. And then the municipality or the MHA will sell their apartments. What these questionnaires do is that they enable them [the municipality] on paper to say that they ask the residents what they want and need. It is not that they use this information. We know that they throw away these papers.

But even attempts at symbolic inclusion can easily be dismissed, rendered irrelevant in the face of other urgencies awaiting İstanbul, as is evident in the following news coverage:

> The Küçükçekmece municipality moves those living in squatter settlements to public housing projects and conducts education programs to help them learn "urban culture." Aziz Yeniay, the Küçükçekmece mayor, emphasizes: "With this method we can finish the urban transformation in slightly less than 500 years […] The state should immediately take the urban transformation project in İstanbul within the scope of 'national security.' The highest priority of Turkey should be the buildings of İstanbul. If the anticipated İstanbul earthquake occurs, this country will collapse and even be divided not because of terror, but because of the earthquake. A war must be declared immediately […] first we will try to convince people. If we can't, the transformation will be realized by force of law."[50]

Here the discourse of urgency is mobilized, especially through the pending earthquake, to justify urban transformation projects. As pointed out by the

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50 Funda Özkan, "Vatandaş Omuz Vermezse Kentsel Dönüşüme 500 Yıl da Yetmez," *Radikal*, 10 January 2008.

Küçükçekmece mayor, educational programs and attempts to convince the people can be suspended, and a "war" should be declared to pursue these transformation projects, in which the law will be employed as a weapon.

From this urban captivity we will turn to a qualitatively different urban margin, the gated town of Göktürk, which emerges as a new space of urban wealth and a new urban order in the context of neoliberalizing İstanbul.

A gated town: Göktürk

Göktürk, a relatively insignificant village at the beginning of the 1990s, located in the northwestern periphery of İstanbul, became a gated town of 16,000 in the latter half of the 2000s. The village's fate changed with the building of roads that connected it with Maslak, the new commercial and financial center of İstanbul, also built in the 1990s.[51] In 1993, Göktürk's administrative status was upgraded from a village to a *belde* municipality. The latter category, a relatively autonomous local administrative structure, opened the area for land development and enabled unbridled and fast growth.[52] The fast growth can unmistakably be traced through population figures. Göktürk's population rose from 3,068 in 1990, to 8,693 in 2000, only to double by 2008.[53]

It is not the rapid population growth that renders this place particularly significant, but the structure and characteristics of the population and the space. Göktürk is populated by people whose minimum income is at least 20 times higher than the official minimum wage, whose family structures closely resemble one another, who shop in the same places and eat in the same restaurants, send their children to the same schools, see movies in the same theaters, and spend their weekends engaged in similar activities. Göktürk inhabitants share yet another set of characteristics which actually both render them a distinct sociological group and make their distinctiveness visible. The majority

51 For an analysis of the planning, building, and the impact of the Maslak axis see, Binnur Öktem, "Küresel Kent Söyleminin Kentsel Mekânı Dönüştürmedeki Rolü: Büyükdere-Maslak Hattı," in *İstanbul'da Kentsel Ayrışma: Mekansal Dönüşümde Farklı Boyutlar*, ed. Hatice Kurtuluş (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2005).

52 For a further discussion of the administrative flexibilities provided by the status of *belde* municipality, see, Danış and Pérouse, "Zenginliğin Mekânda Yeni Yansımaları." We need to note that Göktürk's administrative status has recently been changed again as part of the restructuring of the municipal administrative structure of İstanbul in early 2008. It has been demoted from a *belde* municipality to a *mahalle* of the Eyüp Municipality, a smaller local administrative unit. Although the consequences of the newly drawn local administrative map of the city, which, among other changes, eliminated the majority of the *belde* municipalities and consolidated them under the already existing or newly created district municipalities, are yet to unravel, we can say that the relative autonomy and administrative flexibility of Göktürk will diminish to a large extent.

53 Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/.

of the inhabitants of Göktürk live in houses with gardens, maintained with the assistance of domestics, gardeners and drivers. These spacious and luxuriously furnished houses are located in housing compounds whose borders are clearly identifiable through physical markers, usually walls. What strengthens the physical markers of separation is the strict surveillance through controls at the gates and security personnel inside the compounds, backed by high-tech surveillance devices. These physical and spatial attributes are assembled in a particular manner that strictly regulate and limit the relation of these compounds with the outside. They are inward-looking spaces that have decidedly cut themselves off from the outside, or as Caldeira writes about the fortified enclaves of Sao Paulo, "the enclaves are private universes turned inward with designs and organizations making no gestures toward the street."[54]

The old village of Göktürk in the Göktürk *mahallesi*, which covers an area of 25 square kilometers, now resembles an island surrounded by these segregated residential compounds. The overall housing stock is 4,803 units in 34 compounds. The first compound—the earliest and leading example of gated communities in İstanbul or the ur-gated community—Kemer Country, was built in 1989. It was only a decade later that the rush to Göktürk actually took off. The next compound was built in 1997, followed by two others in 1999. The rest, in fact, came into existence in the 2000s. The increasing pace of development in Göktürk is no exception to the rapid growth of gated towns in other parts of İstanbul.

As one approaches Göktürk on the highway, one is taken aback by the sudden appearance of these residential compounds whose effect of artificiality is amplified in their togetherness. The architectural styles of the compounds vary greatly, from the mimicking of Ottoman architecture to minimalist buildings, creating a kitsch look. There are currently five schools (three of which are private), four hospitals (three of which are private), four shopping malls, six supermarkets and 25 restaurants and cafes in the area. Hence, Göktürk cannot be pinned down by concepts such as gated community or fortified enclave. Rather, this is a *gated town*, despite the absence of actual walls enclosing the development in its entirety.

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54 "Privatized, enclosed, and monitored spaces" are also the characteristics that Teresa Caldeira includes in her definition of what she calls fortified residential enclaves in Sao Paulo. Her characterization helps us come to grips with what we see in Göktürk and with what others have observed for widely differing cities around the world. See, P. R. Teresa Caldeira, "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation," in *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, ed. Setha M. Low (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 93.

In reference to Ridley Scott's movie *Blade Runner*, Mike Davis aptly calls these gated towns "off worlds," spaces of disembedded urban lives.[55] The residents of these "off worlds" not only share similar spatial arrangements, but also exhibit similar patterns in their daily practices, in their familial arrangements, and in their urban practices. These include a spatially and socially shrinking city, a bloating of the private sphere, the increasing centrality of family and children in their lives, a deepening isolation from the rest of the city and society for that matter, and the privatization of urban governance. Now we will turn to a discussion of these patterns as they emerged in our interviews with the residents of various segregated residential compounds in Göktürk.

The most striking and salient pattern is that, while İstanbul has expanded geographically and demographically, the "İstanbuls" used, experienced, and lived in by different social groups and classes are actually shrinking. What we mean by *shrinking İstanbuls* is that different socio-economic groups in İstanbul are increasingly caged to an ever-smaller city, roaming around in very limited spaces with little or no contact with one another. All our respondents said that they go to the city less frequently since they began to live in Göktürk. The most common reasons cited to frequent the city was to see their doctors or do their shopping. The latter activity is taking place in designated and predictable places. They shop mostly in Akmerkez and Kanyon, both high-end shopping malls. The former is located in Etiler, one of the elite neighborhoods of İstanbul, and the latter was built recently at the tail end of the Maslak axis, the new financial district mentioned earlier. Göktürk residents also go to Nişantaşı for their shopping, an old upper-class neighborhood. Almost exclusively they frequent the movie theaters in Kanyon, and eating out usually means the restaurants in Kanyon, the kebap houses in Levent and Nişantaşı, or fish restaurants on the Bosphorous. We should note that our respondents said that they went to the city for eating out less often than before. Increasingly, they patronize the restaurants in Göktürk or the social club in Kemer Country. This is how a 43-year-old self-employed respondent explained the way her city was getting smaller and her unfamiliarity with most of its parts was increasing: "Our life is limited to very specific neighborhoods like Etiler, Nişantaşı, Kemerburgaz, that is, around here. Nowadays because of my new job I have been going to parts of İstanbul that I had never seen in my life. I do not even know the names of these places. There is a prison, what is it called?"[56]

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55 Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 118.
56 Kemerburgaz is a village near Göktürk, after which the ur-gated community was named. Some of the residents of Göktürk and specifically those who live in Kemer Country use Kemerburgaz rather than Göktürk to name their neighborhood. Here, she refers to the prison in Bayrampaşa, a lower-middle-

Working people have flexible working hours that enable them to evade rush hours, and their offices are located either in Nişantaşı or Levent. Hence, they can glide through the Maslak axis to their work places only to directly return to their homes. This is similar to what Dennis Rodgers describes for Managua, Nicaragua, where the elites not so much insularly withdrew from the city, but managed to disembed themselves from the city, "through the constitution of a fortified network that extends across the face of the metropolis."[57] The Asian side—that is, the part of İstanbul east of the Bosphorus—is visited almost exclusively for family visits. More importantly, the residents of Göktürk's segregated residential compounds seem to be clueless about parts of İstanbul other than the few middle- or upper-middle-class neighborhoods. They can hardly name neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city. A 43-year-old woman, an architect, says: "There are those who live in İstanbul, yet never have been to Taksim Square. These people live somewhere, but I do not even know the names of those neighborhoods."[58]

While the residents of Göktürk live and circulate in a maze of fortified networks in an increasingly smaller İstanbul, the dominant characteristics of most of the spaces they use, including their residential compounds, are their anonymity, artificiality and indistinct character. Göktürk's residential compounds—like the shopping malls, chain restaurants, chain cafes or the chain hair-dressers and other places that their residents use—can be described as non-places; that is, places that lack history, do not have distinguishable markers of identity, and perhaps most importantly are places that can be replicated endlessly in different spaces. In other words, if Göktürk, or similar gated towns like Göktürk, were to be moved to a different location, they would not lose any of their defining characteristics. This, we argue, renders them non-places.[59] The artificiality, anonymity and

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class district with over 200,000 residents. This district expanded in the 1950s, mainly as a result of Muslim immigration from former Yugoslavia. The Bayrampaşa Sağmalcılar prison, infamous for its political prisoners, was in recent years vacated and declared as a site of "urban transformation," along with its vicinity.

57 Dennis Rodgers, "'Disembedding' the City: Crime, Insecurity and Spatial Organization in Managua, Nicaragua," *Environment and Urbanization* 16, no. 2 (2004): 123. Mike Davis also cites Dennis Rodgers and argues that these fortified networks make the disembedding of affluence viable. The highway, Davis writes "has been the *sine qua non* for the suburbanization of affluence." Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 118.

58 Taksim Square is the most central place of the city, which in a way defines it, like the Times Square of New York, the Piccadilly Circus of London, or the Potsdamer Platz of Berlin.

59 One of the best-known conceptualizations of non-places is provided by Marc Augé, *Non-places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995). In contrast to a place that is identifiable through relations, history and identity, a non-place is "a space which cannot be defined as relational, historical or concerned with identity" (p. 78). Augé also talks about the anonymity and similitude of non-places. George Ritzer defines non-places as generic, interchangeable, and space-less and time-less places. See, George Ritzer, *The Globalization of Nothing* (Thousand Oaks: Pine

generic nature of Göktürk is readily acknowledged by the respondents. One of them described Kemer Country in particular and Göktürk in general as a "simulation, a lego city." Another respondent was arguing that her compound carried no clues of being in İstanbul. As she put it, "it might as well have been in Konya [a central Anatolian city]."

As the residents of Göktürk use an increasingly smaller part of the city and as the parts that they frequent and live in have fewer identifiers and markers of particularity, their idea of the city is epitomized by certain areas such as Beyoğlu and Cihangir,[60] where they do not go at all. Living in such places presents itself as a daring act. Here is how the architect quoted earlier put it:

> I think that those people who want to live in a rooted environment prefer old neighborhoods… I think Beyoğlu is such a place and I respect those who choose to live in Beyoğlu. They make a very conscious choice… and they cope with many challenges because of their choices. I would have liked to be able to do that but I do not have that kind of courage. I respect those who have it.

One could argue that on the one hand a city that is chaotic, heterogeneous, old, rooted, and infused with signs of particularity is increasingly relegated to a state of fantasy; on the other hand, the possibility of actually experiencing it is rendered more and more unthinkable. As the *idea* of the city and urbanity is embodied in places where one can feel anonymous, rather than in anonymous spaces, the idea itself becomes an object of desire that is potentially fearful.[61]

Forge Press, 2004), 39-54. For a further discussion of place and non-place see also E. C. Relph, *Place and Placelessnes* (London: Pion, 1977).

60 Beyoğlu is the neighborhood around İstiklal Street which leads to Taksim Square. Since the nineteenth century, Beyoğlu has been the heart of urban sociability and entertainment with its movie theaters, restaurants and cafés. In the past two decades, this neighborhood whose nineteenth-century architecture remains largely intact has exhibited more extravagance both in its day- and night-life and attracted ever-larger crowds to its exponentially increasing shops, movie theaters, exhibition centers, bars, cafés, *meyhanes* (taverns), restaurants and night clubs. It is a neighborhood that never sleeps and attracts people from all walks of life, and might as well be counted among the most crowded in the world. Cihangir is also an old neighborhood located between Beyoğlu and the Bosphorus and has undergone gentrification in the 1990s. While between the 1960s and 1990s it used be rather dilapidated, it now is one of the most favored places of residence for artists, intellectuals and expats, among others. Its late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century apartments have been rapidly renovated, and cafés, bars and restaurants have mushroomed in its narrow and intricate streets over the past two decades.

61 For an interesting discussion of the beginning of night-life in cities in the nineteenth century, the emergence of desires and fantasies about the unknowns of urban life, and the threats and dangers in which these unknowns are wrapped, see, Joachim Schlör, *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London 1840-1930* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998). Peter Stallybrass and Allon White also offer a discussion of the coupling of fear and desire through the mediation of the urban context. Regarding

This spatial shrinking translates into increasing social distances between different groups and classes. As Bauman argues, nearness and farness in social space "record the degree of taming, domestication and familiarity of various fragments of the surrounding world. Near is where one feels at home and far away invites trouble and is potentially harmful and dangerous."[62] This is how Göktürk residents approach the working classes. They have little if any contact with other social groups. The only contact they have with the working classes is through the services they receive from waiters, delivery boys, porters, security personnel and caddies, and most intimately from nannies, domestics, drivers and gardeners. Their indifference towards the people who are working in their domestic settings and intimate spaces is telling. They may not know how a domestic who has worked for them for years commutes, or where a live-in-servant of two years is from.[63] The knowledge and information about the rest of the lower classes are filtered through the media and draped in fear and anxiety. For instance, a 45-year-old dietician says, "I had no personal experience of assault or attack. But we constantly read these kinds of things in the papers and watch them on the television. One must be afraid." The city presents itself as a space that is contaminated by unknown groups, as we have discussed above.

The same respondent relates her urban experience as follows:

> When I go to the city I look forward to the moment that I come back home, and I try to return as quickly as possible. Perhaps I have forgotten how to walk on the streets but it feels like everybody is coming onto me. All people seem like potentially threatening when I am in the city, particularly when I am not that familiar with the neighborhood. It does not feel like this in Nişantaşı or Etiler but in other places, especially when dusk sets in everybody becomes dangerous.

In our interviews we asked if our respondents had any actual experiences of attack or violence in the city. While none of them were subjected to any

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nineteenth-century European urbanity, they write about the rat's emergence as "the conscience of the demonized Other from the city's underground" and becoming an object of fear and loathing as well as a source of fascination. See, Peter Stallybrass, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 145.

62 Zygmunt Bauman, "Urban Space Wars: On Destructive Order and Creative Chaos," *Citizenship Studies* 2, no. 3 (1998): 174.

63 Hatice Kurtuluş discusses a similar kind of indifference towards domestic workers in the Beykoz Konakları, another gated community on the Asian side of İstanbul. See, Hatice Kurtuluş, "İstanbul'da Kapalı Yerleşmeler: Beykoz Konakları Örneği," in *İstanbul'da Kentsel Ayrışma: Mekansal Dönüşümde Farklı Boyutlar*, ed. Hatice Kurtuluş (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2005).

assault, a few had stories of perceived threats that were formulated as actual acts. Here is one of those stories, told by a 36-year-old housewife who mentioned a few times during the interview that one of her hobbies was driving race cars:

> Once I was in the car driving up Hacı Hüsrev towards Dolapdere.[64] There was traffic. I sensed that this young boy, who looked as if he was high from sniffing glue, was walking towards my car. I felt that he was not going to pass me by. As he was closing in, I immediately checked the rear mirror and saw that his friend was approaching from the back. All this takes place in a matter of seconds. Neither of course will be able to break my rear window or windshield. But still they will be able to upset me and get on my nerves.[65] I drove away so fast and you know I am a good driver and can control the car very well. Of course there was the possibility of driving over the foot of the boy standing nearby, but still, knowing that possibility I pushed hard on the gas pedal. I did not care a jot if I were to run over his foot because at that moment I was thinking only about myself. It was not important at all if the boy was to be run over.

The interviewees use the city less and less, and frequent only certain neighborhoods and leisure and shopping places; put differently, they lead disembedded urban lives in the maze of their fortified networks. Nevertheless, they do not feel completely secure either in the shopping malls or even in Göktürk outside their homes and compounds. In almost all of the interviews, our respondents told us stories of assault, stories whose sources were rather vague and ambivalent, around the supermarkets and other shopping places in Göktürk. Most of them pointed at the Göktürk village as a potential source of crime and danger, underlining the poverty and ethnic background of the people living there. Poverty is readily and unproblematically criminalized. As we have discussed earlier, signs of poverty in and of themselves are perceived as dangerous and threatening.[66] Here is another illustration of this in the words of a 51-year-old housewife:

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64 Dolapdere, a neighborhood around Beyoğlu which predominantly houses migrants and specifically Kurdish migrants, is reputedly one of the most dangerous places in the city.

65 She had explained earlier in the interview that her car windows were covered with a protective layer that fortified her car against attacks, including bullets.

66 For a discussion of the relationship between the criminalization of poverty and neoliberalization, specifically wage instability and social insecurity induced by this process, see, Brenner and Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies," Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002), Loïc Wacquant, "Labour Market Insecurity and the Criminalization of Poverty," in *Youth and Work in The Post-Industrial City of North America and Europe*, ed. Laurance Roulleau-Berger (Netherlands: Brill, 2003).

Although it is rather poignant to say this, there are people who never had a chance to see anything in their lives and who think that being in Akmerkez is a major event or accomplishment of their lives. These are people who come from places deep in Anatolia and have pretentions to be modern. They lack norms and values, in a way they are worthless people. He lives in a *gecekondu* and wears a fake Rolex watch that he bought for one lira. This boy is capable of doing everything to my daughter.

In a world where the outside is defined in terms of the unknowns, crowds, ugliness, fear, and anxieties, there emerges an ever-clearer trend pointing towards a return to the pleasures and securities of family life as an end in itself. Not only did all of our respondents have children (in most cases more than one), but daily life was almost exclusively structured around the children, their needs, school and activities. In all the interviews, the decision to move to Göktürk was enveloped within a story of providing children with a secure environment where they could play outdoors safely. For instance, a 40-year-old housewife said, "I do not know if I would have come here if I did not have a child. That is I came here because of my child." The 45-year-old dietician mentioned earlier explained to us that they shopped around for a school for her five-year-old son and let him choose the one he liked. The son ended up choosing one of the schools in Göktürk. She added, "we came here for the sake of my dearest son, so that he would not have to travel long distances to go to his school."

In these compounds, daily life, activities and sociability are anchored around the children. "My husband and I spend Saturdays in their entirety driving our two kids around. We have to take them to their different activities, birthdays, etc.," said a 41-year-old therapist. Another woman, 43 years old and self-employed in the service sector, observed that "sociability and social relations here usually develop around children. When you take them to their activities you are almost certain to meet other parents." The 36-year-old housewife we quoted above confirmed, "here, one's social circle forms around one's children."

Lives structured around family and children lead to an ever-deepening isolation and insularity. Not only are their ties with the city weakening, but so are their social relations with their friends and neighbors. More importantly, this isolation is sought, desired and cherished. A very significant implication of these increasingly family-oriented, child-centric and isolated lives that have retreated from the city is the promises that the children growing up there hold for the future society. The 36-year-old housewife told us: "This is a very funny story. These friends of mine

moved to England with their five-year-old daughter and she started school there. In the first days they were asking kids where they were from, and my friends' daughter replied 'I am from Kemer Country'." In a context where sense of identity and belonging is vested in an anonymous non-place where uniformity, order, and homogeneity are the ruling principles, urban contexts become an abominable aberration. Here is another respondent mentioned above, the 51-year-old housewife, telling us how her younger daughter reacts to the city: "[Here] it is the same cars, same houses, same streets. And it is a very isolated life, out of touch with Turkey. I feel sad for my younger daughter. She was very young when she came here. I sense that for instance when I take her to the Grand Bazaar she does not enjoy it at all. She wants to go home immediately; she cannot stand that ugliness and mess." Yet another respondent, a 40-year-old psychoanalyst, related the experiences of her daughter as follows: "When we go to the city, my children, perhaps because they are more naïve than others, are stunned. Once in Levent, for instance, my daughter said to me that Levent was flooded with people and she was amazed by the crowdedness."

The retrenchment of this group from the city has another dimension. Not only do they have very feeble ties to İstanbul and with the different groups in the city, but they have also pulled back inwards in terms of local governance. Put differently, there is a deepening pattern of the privatization of local governance. The expanding privatization of urban governance in Göktürk parallels the trend towards privatization and gating in the city at large. What we mean by privatization is twofold: privatization of the provision of public services, and limitation of access to public resources. In each of Göktürk's gated compounds, a management company is hired to organize the necessary services for the residents, such as maintenance and security. From the perspective of the local municipality, the development of private communities has the advantage of providing the infrastructure of construction and maintenance costs. As the mayor of Göktürk put it:

> We do not have the funds to provide everything. Why wouldn't I try to lure the real-estate developers to this region? They [the real-estate developers] provide the infrastructure, build modern, aesthetically pleasing compounds, and take care of all of their problems, and on top of that provide a model for good urban governance—how things should be run in an ideal settlement. With this system everyone wins.

The relationship of Göktürk's residents to the Göktürk *belde* municipality is very frail, if it exists at all. In response to a question about the major

problems of İstanbul, one respondent (the 51-year-old housewife) replied: "To tell you the truth I do not suffer any of the problems of İstanbul. If electricity is off I have a generator. If water is off I have my own water supplies. I do not go into the traffic unless I absolutely need to." When asked about the nature and content of her relationship with the municipality, one respondent (43 years old, self-employed) said: "I do not have any relationship, none at all. I do not recall any occasion in which I had to get into direct contact with the municipality." Another interviewee (housewife, 36 years old) explained, "Our management is separate. Our technical services are provided privately. We have all these private arrangements here. We have an ambulance on call for 24 hours, we have our very own electric generator, so when the electricity is off we are taken care of. Even when it snows heavily, our roads are cleaned immediately or, better yet, they are salted before it snows."

As the mayor states above, the local municipality acts as a facilitator for meeting the private demands of the residents of these segregated compounds. But it is also important to draw attention to the costs of this trend towards the privatization of urban land and governance—that is, the privatization of public land, the impoverishment of the public realm, limited access to public resources, and, increasingly, the privatization of public services. In her analysis of similar trends in the North American context, Setha Low concludes with a rather bleak vision of urban future and suggests that "policing and surveillance ensures that the mall, shopping center, or gated community will only allow a certain 'public' to use its privatized public facilities,"[67] and "public space becomes privatized, walled, and/or restricted for those who are 'members' rather 'citizens.'"[68]

These patterns, as we have argued above, indicate a decided turn towards an ever-expanding private. While the eminence of domesticity and the family is disproportionately growing and swallowing different forms of sociabilities and relations, the private is also expanding its sphere

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67   Setha Low, "How Private Interests Take Over Public Space: Zoning, Taxes, and Incorporation of Gated Communities," in *The Politics of Public Space*, ed. Setha Low and Neil Smith (New York: Routledge, 2006), 83.

68   Ibid., 100. For the discussion of the privatization of urban governance and its implications for the restructuring of public space in cities see, Adalberto Aguirre Jr., Volker Eick, and Ellen Reese, "Introduction: Neoliberal Globalization, Urban Privatization, and Resistance," *Social Justice* 33, no. 3 (2006), Sarah Blandy and Rowland Atkinson, eds., *Gated Communities: International Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2006), Georg Glasze, Chris Webster, and Klaus Frantz, eds., *Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2006), Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), Andy Merrifield and Erik Swyngedouw, eds., *The Urbanization of Injustice* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996), Don Mitchell, "The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States," *Antipode* 29, no. 3 (1997).

to conquer the street, the square, the local government. This group's perception of the world and their place in it is best captured by what Sennett calls "an intimate vision of society." In this imagination, "the world outside, the impersonal world, seems to fail us, seems to be stale and empty."[69]

This, we argue, has serious repercussions for the future definitions of urbanity and the future of the city as such. Classical accounts and conceptualizations of the city and urbanity from Weber to Simmel and from Wirth to Redfield all emphasize, albeit with much variation, heterogeneity, impersonality and civility rooted in distances rather than in proximity or intimacy.[70] What comes to the fore in this imaginary of urbanity is a social existence that allows freedom through anonymity. As Wirth has famously argued, even if the contacts in the city may be face-to-face, they are impersonal, superficial, transitionary, and segmental. This feeds into an indifference and immunization against the personal claims and expectations of others, which emancipates and frees the individual.[71] Simmel has also argued that in the face of excess stimulation, the defense is not to react emotionally. This urban condition has created a civilized kind of urban freedom.[72] Weber has seen the source of creativity embedded in urban cosmopolitanism and isolation. Leaving aside the debate whether definitions of anonymous, heterogeneous, and impersonal urbanity capture everyday urban existence in specific socio-historical contexts, we can argue that these features associated with urbanity have shaped and structured the different ways in which people imagine and think about the city.

What we find striking about this new group who has secluded itself in its well-guarded social and spatial compartments is the new kind of "urban freedom" that they introduce and promote. This new urbanity and urban freedom is actually the reverse of anonymity, heterogeneity, invisibility,

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69 Sennett analyzes the emergence of this intimate vision within the context of an escalating imbalance between a bloated, ever-expanding and hence ever-impossible-to-fulfill private life and the emptying out of public life as a deepening process that has begun in the nineteenth century. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 5.

70 We should note that these notions of urbanity began to be challenged almost as soon as they were formulated, especially by ethnographic data that emerged from the rich literature on neighborhood and urban community studies. Some examples include: Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York: Free Press, 1962), Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Order of the Slum: Ethnicity and Territory in the Inner City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957).

71 Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *The American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (1938).

72 Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Sociological Perspectives: Selected Readings*, ed. Kenneth Thompson and Jeremy Thunstall (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971).

and the riches that cosmopolitan existences offer. Instead, freedom is searched and found in intimacies, familiarity and new forms of visibility that makes surveillance possible. One can observe the neighbor's life not only from the window, but also at the club house, at the gym, at one's children's basketball practice, in the shopping mall, or the restaurant. One is also rendered visible in all these venues. Daily practices and familial activities are performed under the gaze of the residents of one's segregated compound, transforming the compound into a home.[73] A 51-year-old housewife said this about her well-guarded residential compound: "What I like most about this place is that outside is also very familiar. This makes me feel free. On this very, very large territory I feel at home. It is as if it all belongs to me." The 40-year-old psychotherapist expressed her distaste towards the unpredictability and heterogeneity of the city in the following words: "The city is too crowded. It is as if you are always colliding with others... And what is more, it does not feel familiar... Here in Kemer I know what to do, where to go. There is a sense of familiarity, predictability here."

But the sense of familiarity and homogeneity sought by the residents of Göktürk is qualitatively different from the kind of homogeneity and familiarity that is described in many of the neighborhood studies in Turkey.[74] For the immigrant communities who prefer to reside in the same neighborhoods, the networks they form on the basis of familiarity are usually mobilized as a survival strategy to find work and housing, and to have access to healthcare. In Göktürk, however, the networks are rarely mobilized for similar purposes; rather, they become part of the status markers of the new urban wealth.

In this section, we have tried to show that the residents of the gated town of Göktürk lead increasingly inward-looking and isolated lives in a shrinking city. Circulating nearly exclusively in enclosed spaces of one kind or another, this group has very little familiarity with the larger İstanbul. Trying to secure themselves ever further in their non-places with visible physical markers or invisible surveillance technologies, the residents of

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73 For a similar discussion of practices of surveillance and the themes of familiarity and predictability in Bahçeşehir, an upper-class gated community in İstanbul, see, Aslı Didem Danış, "İstanbul'da Uydu Yerleşmelerin Yaygınlaşması: Bahçeşehir Örneği," in *21. Yüzyıl Karşısında Kent ve İnsan*, ed. Firdevs Gümüşoğlu (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2001).

74 Some examples of these studies include Maya Arıkanlı-Özdemir, "Kentsel Dönüşüm Sürecinde Eski Bir Gecekondu Mahallesi: Karanfilköy - Kentlere Vurulan "Neşter"ler," in *İstanbul'da Kentsel Ayrışma: Mekansal Dönüşümde Farklı Boyutlar*, ed. Hatice Kurtuluş (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2005), Şükrü Aslan, *1 Mayıs Mahallesi: 1980 Öncesi Toplumsal Mücadeleler ve Kent* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), Erder, *İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu*, Ayça Kurtoğlu, *Hemşerilik ve Şehirde Siyaset: Keçiören Örneği* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001).

Göktürk rejoice in the increasing social and spatial distances from different social groups and classes. Yet, perhaps precisely because of these distances, the city is relegated to a nightmare and fantasy of chaos and fear, but also desire. Security, although not possible in the city, is nonetheless sought and found in the family and the child-centric life that leads to an expanding, bloated private sphere suffocating different realms of urban public life. The foregoing discussion, we believe, describes new forms of wealth not only in Göktürk, but in other non-places the numbers of which are increasing in İstanbul.

Concluding remarks

The stories of Göktürk and Bezirganbahçe can best be interpreted and understood within the context of neoliberal urbanism that simultaneously produces urban spaces of exclusion, like Bezirganbahçe, and exclusionary spaces, like Göktürk. Within the context of neoliberalizing İstanbul—a process naturalized through a legal framework, a neoliberal language, and a discourse of urgency—new spaces of urban wealth and poverty are emerging. Bezirganbahçe represents an urban captivity banishing classes who have become economically impoverished, insecure and vulnerable, socially and spatially stigmatized, and politically weaker through consecutive waves of liberalization of the city over the past two decades. The local government is becoming an increasingly dominant actor in their lives, intervening and regulating their daily practices. Göktürk represents a qualitatively different but parallel form of urban captivity, containing groups who have emerged on the heels of the rising financial and service sectors, who have begun to command ever-larger economic resources, and who have increasingly tenuous ties to the rest of the society, including the local government whose role has diminished significantly. Within the context of these qualitatively different margins of İstanbul, parallel trends are emerging which we argue to be the harbingers of a new urbanity.

İstanbuls of both margins have shrunken. It is not only that the parts of the city that Bezirganbahçe and Göktürk residents are using are very limited, but also that the rest of the city is either totally alien, or made up of no-go and cannot-go areas. This spatial segregation feeds into and reproduces the social distances between different groups. The social groups occupying both margins are increasingly socially and spatially isolated and lead insular urban lives, Bezirganbahçe residents by sanction, Göktürk residents by choice.

The social distance between these groups is mediated by deepening anxieties and urban fear. On the one hand, one of the main factors enabling and justifying primarily *Gecekondu* Transformation Projects, Prestige

Projects, and History and Culture Projects is the discourse that marks the areas populated by the urban poor as dangerous, a breeding ground for illegal activities, and areas of social decay or social ill. On the other hand, new groups of wealth narrate their seclusion in their segregated residential compounds and their almost exclusive circulation within their fortified network through the discourse of urban fear and anxieties.

Gökhan Özgün, a newspaper columnist, calls the disembeddedness of the culture and practices of the insulated residents of these segregated residential compounds, or the "off worlds," an "expatriate culture." He writes, "the expatriate differentiates his/her own future from that of his/her country's. He/she carefully separates these two futures. His/her and his/her grandchildren's privilege rests on this principle of difference."[75] The mirror image of this expatriate culture consists of the new forms of poverty that are deepening in places like Bezirganbahçe. The residents of the latter are also cut off from the future and consumed in their increasingly precarious present. In a situation where one class opts out of the future and the other is exiled from it, the question "who will claim the future?" pushes itself onto the agenda with all its urgency.

Recently, in urban studies in particular and social analysis in general, what has become mundane and perhaps even uninspiring is yet another account of how processes of neoliberalism have re-structured and re-fashioned urban centers around the world. In a way, neoliberalism has become a fire-breathing monster that eats up and then spurts out similar technologies of power and governance, similar spaces, and similar forms of urban marginality at both extremes of wealth and poverty. Our account of the workings of neoliberalism is also infected with this ailment. Yet, we believe that it is not in vain to reflect adamantly on the particular socio-historical urban contexts at hand, if only to see whether we are to defend the public street and the square,[76] or whether we are to start drawing the contours of new forms of urbanity, urban sociability, and class relations in the urban context and, hence, to begin imagining new forms of politics.

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76   James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Cities and Citizenship," in *Cities and Citizenship*, ed. James Holston (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 16.

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