

standards. The transition to ‘modern, decent and legal dwellings’ is furthermore expected to integrate squatters into society, lower crime rates, and improve health conditions.³²

Whether the outcomes of projects comply with these social policy premises is questioned in the fifth chapter. The following chapter will outline the process of implementing the projects.

³² These justifications are referenced to the Turkish constitution, which includes the clause 57 regarding the responsibilities of the ‘welfare state’ with respect to housing: “The state is obliged to take the measures to meet the demand for housing within a plan that does take into consideration environmental conditions and characteristics of different cities. The state also supports mass housing enterprises” (TOKI, 2007, p. 9).

CLEARANCE PROJECTS- PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Role of the Housing Administration and the Municipalities

In the last decade, the Housing Administration emerged as the chief actor in developing and implementing clearance projects. Founded in 1984 initially as an institution with the aim of dealing with the housing problems of lower-middle and middle income groups, the Administration's power and authority have expanded profoundly in the last decade.³³ Its authority to develop and implement clearance projects has been consolidated through a plethora of legal codes.³⁴ Between January 2003 and March 2009, the Housing Administration constructed 353,144 dwellings in Turkey, 37,806 of which were targeted at rehousing squatters after the demolition of their homes (TOKI, 2009).

Regarding the clearance projects, the Housing Administration is invested with powers to decide on *gecekondu* neighbourhoods for clearance, to undertake construction and financial arrangements in these neighbourhoods, to determine the value of real estate entitled to 'right holders', to ascertain the price of dwellings constructed for resettling squatters below its cost of production, to make zoning plans of any scale and kind, to take over state urban land at no cost with the approval of the prime minister and the president, and lastly to expropriate the land where clearance project is undertaken.

³³ Amongst its powers are 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; making of zoning plans of every scale and category; expropriation of urban land to construct housing projects; and developing and implementing *gecekondu* transformation projects (Bayraktar, 2007, pp. 20-21).

³⁴ These powers were granted through the laws No.4966 (TBMM, 2003) and No.5162 (TBMM, 2004), which made amendments to the Mass Housing Law, No.2985 (TBMM, 1984b), through the Law for the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Real Estate Through the Protection by Renewal, No.5366 (TBMM, 2005a), through the Law No.5609 (TBMM, 2007) and lastly through Law No.5793, which brought changes to the Law No.5366 (TBMM, 2008).

Despite the Administration's wide range of executive powers, it implements clearance projects in cooperation with the metropolitan and district municipalities. Municipalities are authorized to partake in the projects with the Municipality Law issued in 2005, in which their role is to ascertain the tenure situation of squatters, to work with the Administration in determining the value of the to-be-demolished buildings, to provide municipal services to the settlement after redevelopment, to take part in the demolition of dwellings and most importantly to negotiate with the squatters (TBMM, 2005b).

Regarding the selection of neighbourhoods for clearance, the administration is the authority to finalize these decisions; municipalities mainly act as facilitators and supporters in the process of implementing the projects. However, mutual agreement and consensus between the administration and municipalities is generally the norm:

“The selection [of the neighbourhood] generally comes to us via the channels of municipalities. They suggest the neighbourhoods within their district borders that should be subject to clearance. *Then we take these decisions in a dialogue with the local administrators.*” (Interviewee at the Administration, Konyalioglu)

The *preference* of the Administration in cooperating with the municipalities is further asserted by Demistas in an interview:

“The Housing Administration has the authority to develop these projects [by itself]. *The administration ‘can lay eyes on’ a good area, conclude that clearance to be carried out there is rational and then may want to transform that area by itself. However, because municipalities are the decision-makers and implementers in the process as well, the administration would also want collaboration with them.* Thus, we, the administration, would prefer to work with local actors.”

In other words, the Housing Administration, upon taking the decision to implement the project in a specific neighbourhood generally collaborates with municipalities since they are responsible *legally* for publicizing the clearance decision. They also possess authority for local-level urban planning, and adjuvant to the successful implementation of the project through negotiating with the dwellers. As has been outlined, both at the level of the

Administration and the municipality, no participation of the squatters is sought in the decision making process.

Location of Resettlement

Clearance projects mainly aim to demolish squatter settlements on public land³⁵ and resettle dwellers to mass housing complexes built by the Housing Administration. The location of these complexes, or resettlement, can either be in the squatter neighbourhood itself after the settlements are cleared, or in another part of the city. The rationale, which prevails in the choice of the location of resettlement, is revealed by Deliktas in an interview:

“Some squatter settlements are anyways located in hazardous environments. When these types of settlements are cleared, we resettle the dwellers in another location. Or alternatively, if the neighbourhood is located in a very central area or at the intersection of transportation networks or the area has a tremendous capacity to attract investment, the area becomes a central business zone. It could attract tourism investment, hotel investment, any other kind of investment other than residence. In these cases, the administration takes advantage of the opportunities.”

The hazardous environment, which renders the land unsuitable for resettlement, is posited as one of the reasons behind resettling dwellers in another neighbourhood –albeit always one with a lower potential ground rent-. In addition, the ‘strategic location’ of the neighbourhood and its capacity to attract investment also necessitate the displacement of the squatter population; both factors refer to the potential ground rent of the settlement. As such, the choice about the location of resettlement is much related to the logic of rent as it is in determining which neighbourhoods are to be cleared.

Projects, therefore, not only operate as a mechanism for the creation of urban rent through investment and redevelopment -as mentioned in the previous chapter- but also for its

³⁵ Preferably, the projects are targeted at those neighbourhoods where the numbers of dwellers with title deeds to land are low. Many elite interviewees contended that projects were implemented relatively without difficulty if dwellers were the “invaders of public land.”

redistribution through the transfer of ownership of land. They function as a mechanism of rent redistribution because in cases where the squatters are resettled to a different neighbourhood than their own, the ‘cleared’ area is redeveloped into private residences, or business zones, through luxurious dwellings and plazas, which in turn are purchased by third parties other than the indigenous squatter population.³⁶ As such, per Clark’s definition of gentrification, displacement and a change in the population of land-users to a higher socio-economic group become one outcome of redevelopment.

Compensation and Resettlement Schemes

In the projects, squatters are differentiated according to their ownership status in land and dwellings. That is, they are classified into three groups: [1] those who have a title deed to land and own the dwelling on it –title deeds to land could be granted through the clientelistic politics or in some cases, purchased through a legal transaction-; [2] those who do not have a title deed but own the dwelling; and [3] tenants who neither have a title deed to land, nor own the dwelling they reside in. Projects treat the exclusive ownership of property as the sole criterion of deciding whether dwellers are ‘right holders’. Being a ‘right holder’ ensures that a dweller will be compensated with a certain sum of money and provided the choice of either taking this compensation as cash, or accepting to be resettled in a mass housing complex. In the latter case, the compensation is treated as a down-payment for new flats.

Owners of land and dwellings are paid the market value of their properties. Owners of a building without title deeds to land are given “a wreckage payment” (Bayraktar, 2006, p. 243) –the compensation-, which depends on the age, type, size and construction style of the

³⁶ It is important to note that certain squatter neighbourhoods are kept as public spaces or redeveloped into public facilities, although these cases are more prevalent outside of Istanbul, in globally less integrated cities of the country.

building in question (Bayraktar, 2007, p. 48). The amount of wreckage payment is determined by an ‘appraisal committee’ that uses fixed figures specified by the ministry of public works. However, some dwellers within this group possess a document entitled “title deed allocation paper” that were initially issued by local municipalities after the Amnesty Law (TBMM, 1984a) in 1984. The document guaranteed that its holders would be given their title deeds once the municipality completed zoning plans for the neighbourhood. Such neighbourhoods lacked zoning plans (Keles, 2006, p. 617) since land was illegally occupied by squatters. To obtain this document, the dwellers were required to pay a fee for the application process and for the price of land they occupied. The paper represented the first stage of granting ownership rights to squatters by the state. In clearance projects, dwellers with “title deed allocation papers” are furnished with more cash compensation than the ones who do not.³⁷ On the other hand, as they do not own any assets, tenants are not compensated and are in principle excluded from the resettlement scheme.³⁸

Nonetheless, the resettlement scheme does not guarantee each ‘right holder’ a free flat in return for their squatter dwelling; on the contrary, the mass housing complexes are *sold* to the squatters and the debt to be incurred by each dweller is calculated on the basis of the value of their available assets. In cases where the value of assets –especially for the owners of land and dwelling- exceeds the value of a single flat in mass housing complexes, they are either given the surplus amount as cash or offered a second flat with any shortfall creating a new debt obligation to be paid by the dweller.

³⁷ “Title deed allocation papers” have led many squatters to assume that the papers were indeed title deeds. This was mostly due to the low education level amongst dwellers and possibly because these papers represented the first stage in the process of obtaining title deeds.

³⁸ In what follows, the case of Ayazma will demonstrate how in certain situations, authorities divert from this principle and comply with other standards for political and pragmatic reasons.

The criterion to determine the beneficiary households in the projects is a purely political question (Duran-Lasserve & Royston, 2002, p. 252) that in turn determines who will be included in the compensation and resettlement schemes, the amount of compensation offered and how much debt dwellers will incur. This ownership-based criterion results in diverse outcomes amongst dwellers, and consequently, arbitrates who are to lose and who are to gain, at least relatively, from the projects.

The compensation scheme of clearance projects, predicated on the “ownership model” (Blomley, 2004, p. 2; Singer, 2000), defines only “two classes of ownership” –private or state- (Geisler, 2000, p. 65) and differentiates squatters on either pole of this axis. By this, it reinforces the demarcation between private and public ownership, which in reality do not constitute clearly bounded fixtures (Alchian & Demsetz, 1973, p. 18; Geisler, 2000; Lund, 2008, p. 19; Moore, 2000, p. 1; C. M. Rose, 1994), and it delegitimizes other relations of property and claims over land. It naturalises private property, overlooking its historically constituted character. Furthermore, it reproduces the private-public dichotomy where public - or state- property is defined by a failure in the constitution of the private. In the next chapter, the projects will be discussed in the context of the two case studies, Ayazma and Basibuyuk.

THE TWO CASE STUDIES: AYAZMA AND BASIBUYUK

The Case Study of Ayazma

Ayazma is a *gecekondu* settlement in the district Kucukcekmece and was established in the late 1980s, mainly by Kurdish migrants from the eastern and south-eastern parts of Turkey. Kurds comprise approximately half of the population (Bayraktar, 2006, p. 126). 47 percent of the buildings in the neighbourhood were built between 1993 and 1998 (ibid, p.127), which signifies that squatters are overall economically more disadvantaged than the earlier migrants.³⁹ According to the survey conducted by the local municipality (Kucukcekmece municipality) in March 2005, 23 percent of the population were employed as workers in the private sector; students and housewives each comprised 21 percent of the population. The unemployment rate in the neighbourhood was 12 percent, and 63 percent of the population was not entitled to any kind of social security (ibid, p.127-8).

Table 1: The population and number of buildings in Ayazma

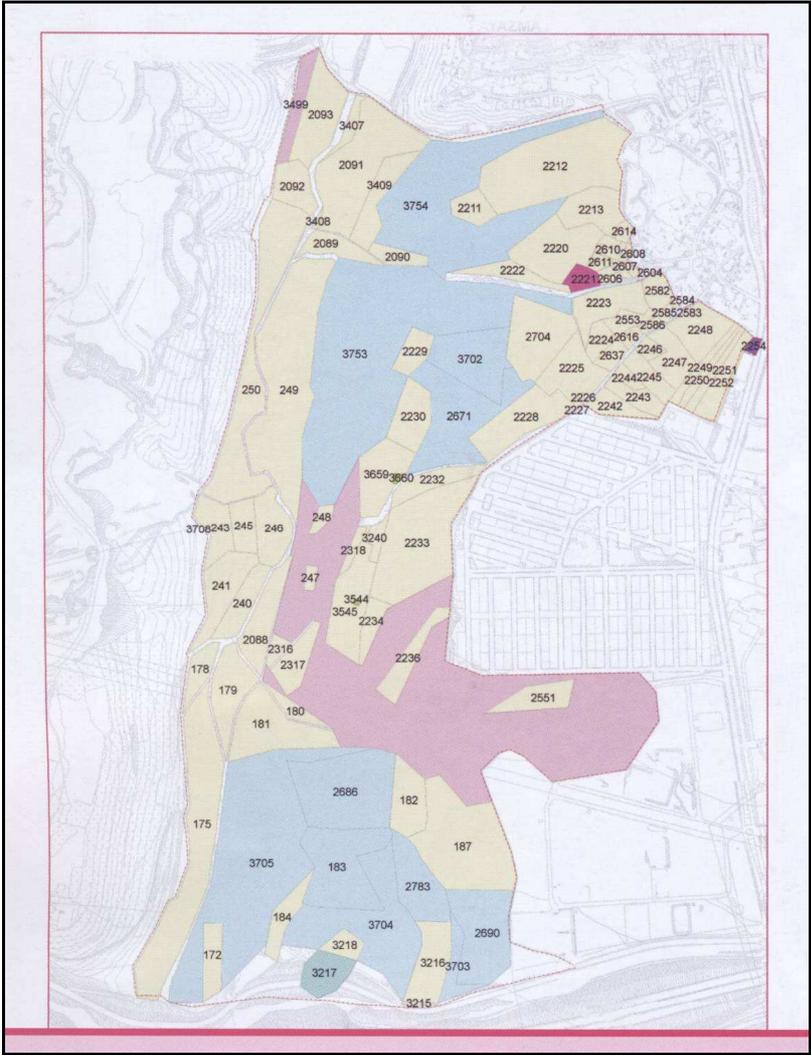
Number of buildings	Number of independent units	Population	Parcel Area (hectares)
1,245	1,755	8,775	120

Source: (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2008, p. 17)

³⁹ Being a late migrant signifies that this group was unable to reap the benefits of the increase in urban land prices, thereof of rising rents during the 1980s. In that sense, their chance of being a squatter landlord in the commercialized informal land market is comparably low. Unless they squat, they become tenants in the settlements of squatter landlords (Keyder, 2005a, p. 132).

Of the 1,245 buildings, single-storey buildings comprise 71.3 percent. This indicates the recent establishment of the neighbourhood and its relatively low degree of commercialisation, reflecting that the squatting is primarily for shelter.

Figure 3: Ownership status in Ayazma



Key:	
	Private property
	State property
	No legal owner

Source: Kucukcekmece Municipality, 2008

According to the municipality survey, 50 percent of the land in Ayazma is private property; the majority of the rest is state land, specifically ‘treasury land’ (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2008, p. 34). The number of people with a title deed to land is 1,065 (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2009a, p. 51). Nevertheless this figure includes all land under private property, including private land without buildings (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2008, p. 45). The number of buildings on the same land is 658, which could roughly indicate the number of owner families.

Table 2: Distribution of area of parcel, buildings and households in Ayazma

Property	Area of parcel (m ²)	Number of shareholders	Number of buildings	Number of households
Treasury	558,728	-	582	618
Housing Administration	250	-	0	0
Outside of registration	5,357	-	2	1
Waqf	2,740	-	-	-
Special Provincial Administration	760	-	2	2
TEDAS	169	-	-	-
Cooperative	-	-	-	-
Individual	603,457	1,071	658	1,269
Total	1,171,461	1,071	1,244	1,890

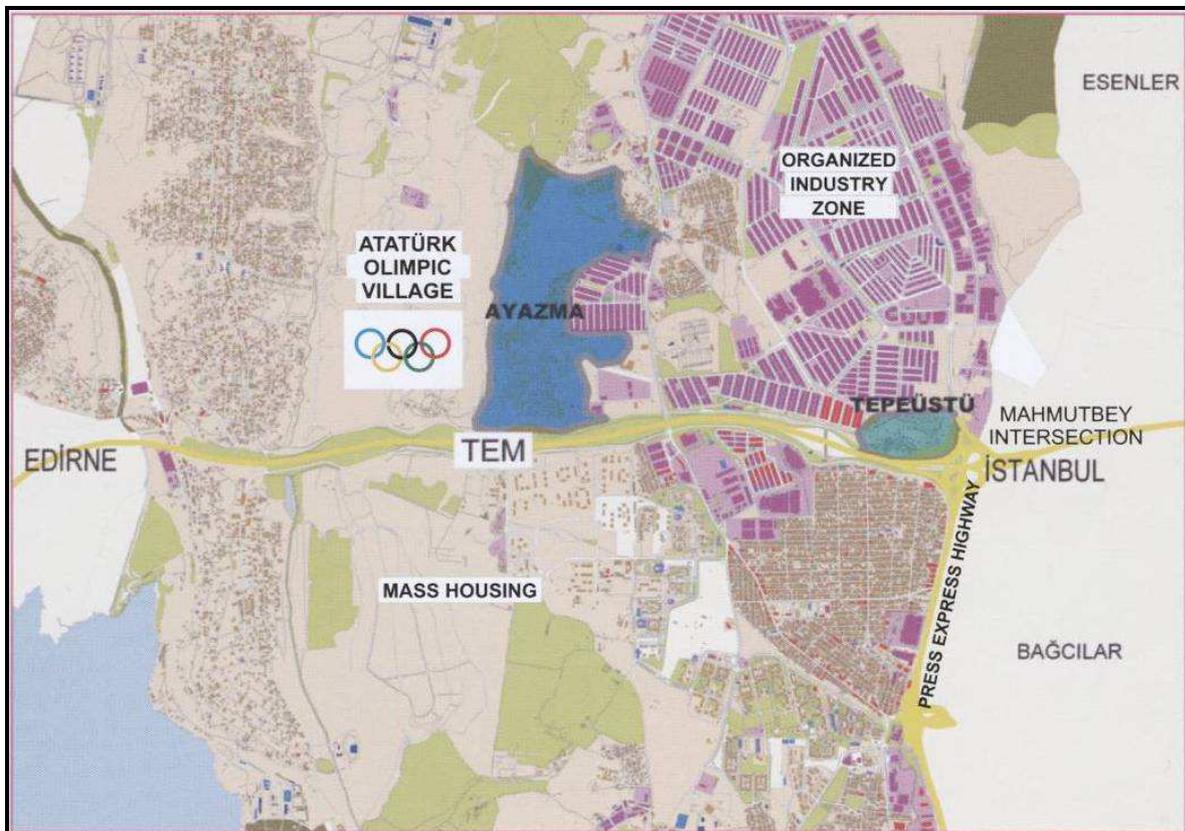
Source: (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2008)

The number of home owners on state land could also be approximately inferred from the number of buildings (582), while the number of households (618) would reflect overcrowding rather than tenancy as would be expected for the dwellers with a title deed. Out of this group, only 4 dwellers have applied for ‘title deed allocation papers’, yet they have not paid for the land they have occupied (interview, Castas, Kucukcekmece municipality). According to the municipality figures referenced by Bayraktar (2006, p. 127), the ratio of tenants to the whole

population is 25 percent, which contradicts the figure (120) found by an activist tenant in the neighbourhood (interview, anonymous M).

Ayazma is located across from the Olympic stadium, constructed in 2002, and Turkey's largest organised industrial zone. It is close to the Ataturk airport, and the main road links including the transit European motorway and the E5 highway to its south. According to the Kucukcekmece municipality, the proximity of the stadium and the industrial zone to Ayazma “constitute the most important dynamics for the ‘urban regeneration project to be implemented in the region” (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2008, p. 17). In other words, Ayazma's location, given its surroundings, points to its high potential ground rent, and it is this potential rent which the ‘urban regeneration project’ aims to materialize.

Figure 4: Map of Ayazma



Source: Kucukcekmece Municipality, 2008

Figure 5: Ayazma (after demolition with the Olympic stadium at the back)



Source: Imece, 2009

Recent studies on civic boosterism, and particularly its role in commodifying and selling a place, highlight history, youth culture, diversity and entrepreneurship as the strategies elites employ to attract capital and people to the region (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Jessop & Sum, 2000). Most importantly, the hosting of world events such as the Olympic games has largely been identified as a strategy for promoting a place in the world market and establishing it as a global city (Hiller, 2000; Owen, 2002; Short, 1999; Whitelegg, 2000). Short (1999, p. 44) mentions that “[the] Olympic games are not just an opportunity to be the site of a global spectacle, and hence international name recognition, [but] they also provide an opportunity for business, real estate deals; they act as a giant urban development opportunity.” It is this urban development opportunity, which the Kucukcekmece municipality aspires to realise through its entrepreneurial place-making strategies.

The municipality declares its 'vision' as making Kucukcekmece "the home for happy people and a centre of attraction for the world, having completed its urban transformation projects" and able "to host the Olympics, with its lake, sea, forest and all sorts of social utilities" (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2009b). In determination to realise this 'vision', the future of Ayazma as a neighbourhood, located next to the Olympic stadium, has been settled, as is described in the municipality brochure:

"Ayazma is a region, which will be transformed via '*cleaning*' and afterwards it will be *developed as a residential area in a modern quarter concept, to the east of the Olympic stadium, changing its users* and taking into consideration its environmental functions" (Turgut, Ceylan, & Akin, 2008, p. 35).

Ayazma's clearance project and *changing of its users*, which overtly means the displacement of its original population, is justified by the discourses on Kucukcekmece's advantageous location in Istanbul and how the district will assist Istanbul prepare to be a world city. In supporting this, Ayazma is to be cleared and its population is to be displaced as the city is aestheticized and commodified for tourist consumption. The point one of the Kurdish squatters (anonymous M) raised is interesting in this sense:

"The Olympic stadium was the reason for what Ayazma went through. During that time, Ayazma was hosting foreign games and matches. Whenever their fans were here, Ayazma's electricity would be cut off so that the foreign people wouldn't see Ayazma."

The head of the urban transformation division, Babaoglu at the Kucukcekmece Municipality notes that the project started in 2004 and was implemented in stages, where the building owners on public land were firstly targeted and negotiation and persuasion tactics brought to bear. The owners of land were dealt with in the later stages of the project since they possessed a legal right to defend 'their property' and could therefore pursue legal proceedings to thwart the project.

The squatters without a title deed to land were offered a wreckage payment of 10,000 Turkish liras –TL- (4,050 GBP) for their dwellings and in return, they were resettled in mass housing complexes, each home being 90.48 m² in size (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2008, p. 60), in a neighbourhood called Bezirganbahce. Bezirganbahce is a public housing project of 55 11-storey buildings with a total of 2,640 apartments in the Kucukcekmece district. Currently, all dwelling-owner squatters without deeds to land have been resettled in Bezirganbahce.

The price for a single flat in the Bezirganbahce buildings is 51,405 TL (20,817 GBP).⁴⁰ Given the 10,000 TL wreckage payment, dwellers of Ayazma without a title deed to land have to incur a sizeable debt of 41,500 TL (16, 806 GBP) and are obliged to repay back this amount over 180 months.⁴¹ The owners of buildings with a deed to land were provided with three options. While they could realise the value of their land and buildings as cash, they could also choose to be resettled either in Bezirganbahce or in more luxurious buildings constructed for them in a neighbourhood named Cakmak (part of Ayazma).⁴² Currently, out of 1,065 land owners, 676 have signed contracts with the municipality (Kucukcekmece-Municipality, 2009a, p. 51); of this group 294 dwellers decided to be resettled in Ayazma and 200 of them in Bezirganbahce (interview, Babaoglu). The rest took the market value of their assets in cash. Many of those who have not signed contracts still reside in Ayazma.

The tenants, who were not even considered in the compensation scheme in the early stages of the project, are currently awaiting resettlement in low quality, inexpensive mass housing

⁴⁰ An interviewee at the Chamber of Urban Planners posits this figure to be well above the cost of production, especially given the fact that the Housing Administration expropriates the land with no cost and uses ‘tunnel formwork’ for construction; two major factors that reduce the costs.

⁴¹ This result was the outcome of a long process of negotiation between dwellers and authorities. Initially the dwellers were also required to pay an advance payment, 10 percent of the price of new flats. Later on, this payment was annulled. Babaoglu attributes this outcome to the ‘good participation of dwellers’ in the project. At the same time, it conceals the fact that the dwellers would not be able to pay this advance payment if it was not annulled anyways.

⁴² The buildings in Cakmak are 11-storey dwellings, where each flat is 138 m² and costs approximately 225,000 TL (91,116 GBP) (interview, anonymous P).

complexes in a neighbourhood called Kayabasi in Kucukcekmece. They are expected to pay for the flats over 180 months without an advance payment. This outcome was partly influenced by media publicity surrounding 18 tenant families that were the most disadvantaged and poorest tenant group in the neighbourhood. Following their eviction and the demolition of their homes in 2007, these families were unable to afford rent another flat elsewhere and had no other option than to live in tents in Ayazma (Burultay, 19 November 2008; Celen, 18 February 2008; Dastan, 23 January 2009; Lodos & Zeytin, 13 November 2007; Yarkadas, 22 February 2008; Yildiral, 1 January 2008).⁴³

Figure 6: A tenant from the 18 families living in tents



Source: Imece, 2009

⁴³ Their tents have been torn down three times between February 2007 and November 2008 by the local municipality. Most of these families have small children who are not at a working age. They have mentioned how the tenant families who could leave Ayazma after demolition had working children, who could contribute to the household income. A middle aged woman (anonymous O) noted how her husband who was previously employed lost his job after they started living in the tent. Every time there was a threat of demolition of their tent, she would call her husband to leave his workplace and come home. The children of all these families had problems with progress at school. A 34 year old woman (anonymous N) explained how her 11- year old daughter was successful at school before they were thrown out of their house. A 6- year old girl had bronchitis because of the cold in tent, which caused a permanent damage to her lungs. Two women, both middle aged, also had serious health problems with their lungs after experiencing tent life. A woman, mother of 4 children and who gave birth to a child in their tent, described how all her hair had turned to grey because of the despair and difficulties they have encountered. Many of the children of these families had psychological trauma due the fear they encountered when 1,500 policemen came for demolition in November 2007. One of them even started crying and shouting out “police! police!”, thinking that the author was from the police.

After the eviction of all the squatters, the region will be developed into a ‘residential area in a modern quarter concept.’ Squatter settlements are to be replaced with expensive, luxurious upper middle class dwellings. Redevelopment and upgrading of the area for high income groups are further confirmed by Karaoglu in an interview:

“We developed a new plan for the evacuated area, we’ll build houses there. We build them as part of a revenue generation project⁴⁴, having considered the environmental potentials. There is an organised industrial zone next to the evacuated area. There are 30,000 workplaces, every day the owners of these 30,000 workplaces commute between certain locations in Istanbul. We undertake a luxurious housing project there, thinking that we have to devise such a concept, such a design, such a project that it will be attractive for the owners of these workplaces.”

In the last few years, Ayazma continued to be a ‘dilapidated’, low investment squatter neighbourhood while its surroundings flourished and attracted investment. Upon clearance, new investment will lead to an increase in the capitalised ground rent and result in gentrification. Ayazma’s poor dwellers would be replaced by middle and upper-middle income groups. As the story of Ayazma’s clearance project conforms to the rent gap and gentrification theories, the outcomes of the project are urban segregation, social polarization and exclusion (Andersen, 2003; Caldeira, 2000; Fainstein, Gordon, & Harloe, 1992; Massey & Denton, 1993). The urban poor is marginalised to the outskirts of the city and made invisible. Bezirganbahce, which is analysed subsequently, adumbrates these already.

Bezirganbahce: A happy home for squatters?

Far from being ‘the home of happy people in modern decent houses’ as propagated by the Kucukcekmece municipality and the Housing Administration, Bezirganbahce represents “an urban captivity” (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008, p. 19), where poverty wanders about the already

⁴⁴ It is significant to note here that the Housing Administration does not get any sources from the central budget. The administration is designed to fund itself through creating its own resources in order to be able to undertake its projects. One of the mechanisms through which it funds itself is the revenue generation projects. By this, we mean that the administration undertakes housing projects directed at middle, upper middle income groups and makes a profit out of them.

derelict 11-storey buildings⁴⁵ with fallen plaster, fading paint, shabby construction work, neglected gardens and playgrounds.

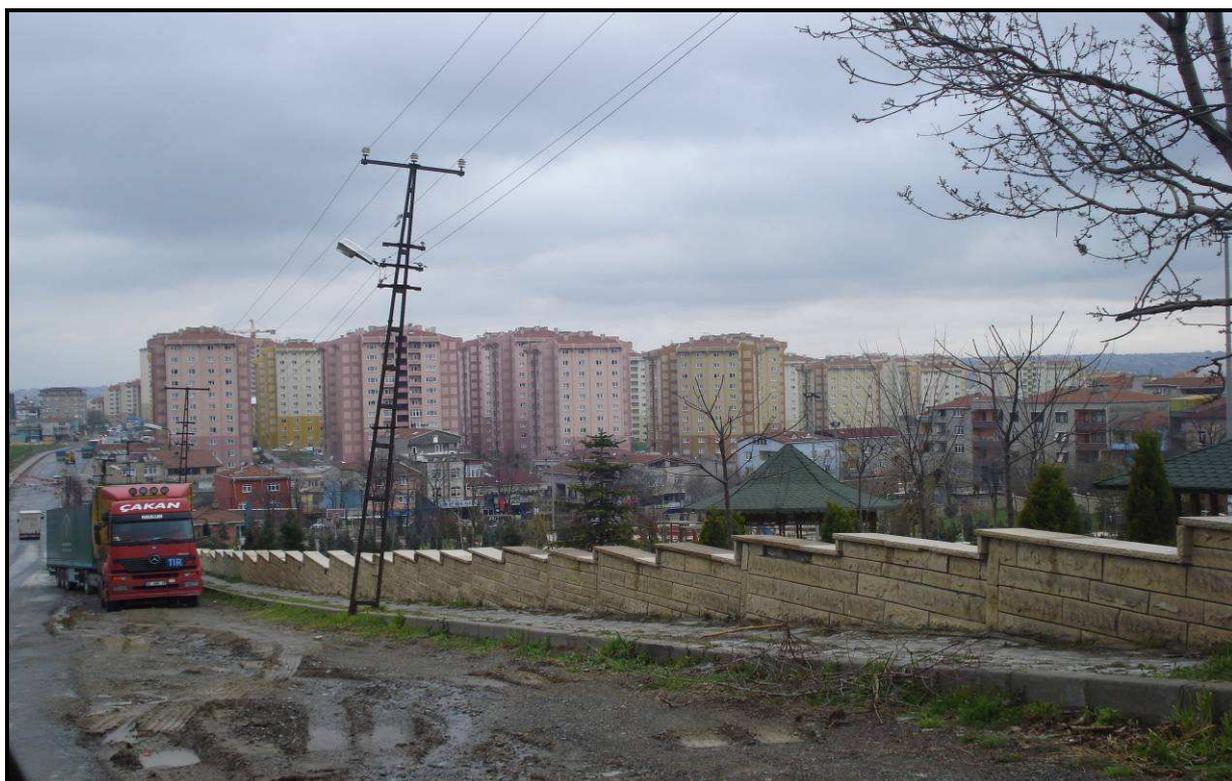
Figure 7: 3 year old dilapidated apartments in Bezirganbahce



Source: Imece, 2009

⁴⁵ The construction of the buildings was completed in 2006; as such they are only 3 year-old buildings.

Figure 8: Bezirganbahce



Source: Fieldwork

Bezirganbahce amalgamates and consolidates the material and spatial dimensions of poverty. The worsening of income distribution and increasing poverty in Turkey in the post-1980 period, due to the neoliberal policies and IMF-led structural adjustment programs have been documented extensively (Boratav, 1990; Kose, Boratav, & Yeldan, 2001; Onis, 1998; Yeldan, 1995, 2005). Having witnessed this era, poverty and social exclusion are not new to the squatters of Ayazma. What is new is that Bezirganbahce has worsened this situation and aggravated the disparities and inequalities between them.

Figure 9: Part of Bezirganbahce (buildings were newly painted because of the coming local elections in March 2009)



Source: Fieldwork

Bezirganbahce reflects the formalisation of land use and ownership rights between the state and squatters, in other words, the formalisation of property relations. This formalisation, proclaimed as a policy of “enabling the poor to own a home” necessitates that dwellers make monthly payments to the Housing Administration. Upon completion of the full repayment of their debt, they are to own a flat in Bezirganbahce and, in principle, to receive a title deed confirming their ownership. Whilst the Administration claims that the monthly payments it seeks are affordable, analogous to paying rent, its treatment of those experiencing repayment difficulties is unambiguous. Residents who are unable to meet two consecutive payments have their houses confiscated.

Additionally, the provision of municipal services such as natural gas, electricity and water is also formalised, which results in residents having to make regular monthly payments. In Ayazma, dwellers were able to obtain these services “through their negotiations with the local municipality or through informal means” (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008, p. 22). This implies that many dwellers did not receive regular bills for any such municipal services or, infrequently for those that did. By contrast, the new residents of Bezirganbahce are obliged to meet monthly payments of these commodified services alongside repaying the debt incurred on future homes.

In this framework, Bezirganbahce represents a process of market making, where essential needs and land use have been formalised and commodified. This process of marketisation ‘privatises’ access to them, through the establishment of the means of access on ‘the principle of market exchange’ (Polanyi, 1957). Dwellers become wholly incorporated into the domain of markets. As a result, it necessarily creates new lines of demarcation between squatters who can pay for such services and those who cannot.

This demarcation is easily discernable in Bezirganbahce since many residents have great difficulty in meeting these regularized expenses. The average monthly payment for the apartments is 220-250 TL (89- 101 GBP) and the monthly maintenance fee required by the administration of the housing project is 40 TL (16 GBP). Coupled with the municipal services bills, a minimum of approximately 350 TL (142 GBP) is required to meet basic monthly expenses, while the monthly household income of residents of Bezirganbahce ranges from 400 [162 GBP] to 1000 TL [405 GBP]” (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008, p. 22).⁴⁶ Under these circumstances, residents who previously owned their *gecekondu*s in Ayazma, run the risk of

⁴⁶ According to a study conducted by the Confederation of Public Servants Trade Unions, the food poverty line for a family of four as of April 2009 is 837 TL (339 GBP). The complete poverty line that includes both food and non-food expenses for a household of four is 2,325 TL (942 GBP) (Memur-Sen, 2009).

losing their new homes as is evident by the fact that many have already been compelled to sell their apartments, leave Bezirganbahce and transfer the accumulated debt to subsequent owner. Those families, who still reside in Bezirganbahce, are able to do so owing to the presence of at least one employed member in the family. Otherwise, receiving intermittent financial support from relatives, or friends, to meet the total monthly expenses is a very prevalent coping strategy. Regarding the differentiation between the squatters of Ayazma in meeting these payments, an interviewee (anonymous R) contends the following:

“Most of the people have already left. Regarding those who stayed behind... It is because they either own a car or a minibus. They carry textile products to earn their living, and their 2-3 sons work as well. That is how they maintain their lives. Some of the people I knew went to Tekirdag [another city] or somewhere around Caglayan [a district in Istanbul].”

A middle-aged Kurdish man (anonymous U) confirms this point:

“They have ‘screwed up’ people. Most of the people who came from Ayazma sold their apartments and went away. Why? The man is ‘alone’ [working] whereas he is indebted to 10 different places. What can he do? He has the monthly maintenance fee, which he cannot pay. He has monthly payments of the house, amounting to 220-240 TL [89-97 GBP]. There are also utilities like electricity, natural gas, etc. Plus, there are no jobs. They end up obliged to sell the house. They either go to Cerkezkoy [a district in another city] or to their hometowns in the eastern part [of Turkey].”

Regarding those who went to Tekirdag and Cerkezkoy, a middle-aged woman (anonymous S) notes that they will become squatters again in that city.

The regularisation of expenses is further exacerbated by the unemployment or irregular employment of the Bezirganbahce residents, the consequences of which are modest sporadic income flows to the households, perpetuating their insecurity (Castells & Portes, 1989; Ozdemir & Yücesan-Özdemir, 2004). Most of the residents have precarious jobs and frequently rely on financial support from their children, local government or NGOs (Candan

& Kolluoglu, 2008, p. 22). Those who are regularly employed are predominantly industrial workers, having to accede to the minimum wage.⁴⁷

Yet, apart from the irregular and informal nature of their employment, resettlement in Bezirganbahce aggravated the residents' *chances* of employment, because of their loss of proximity to the organised industrial zone that was located next to Ayazma, and therefore to many workplaces where many residents were previously employed. A 36 year old man (anonymous M) notes:

"Ayazma was close to the industry, to work. It was in the center of Istanbul. There was a garment industry; you would go there in 10 minutes. There was Masko [furniture industry], you would reach there in 10 minutes. Now, the employers want to hire people who live close by, since they do not provide transportation service. Now, it is far away... people ended up unemployed. People work for the minimum wage there, you cannot transport from here, solely the cost of going there is 100-150 TL [41-61 GBP] every month" (Kasım abi)

The residents' reduced chance of employment is engendered by the location of Bezirganbahce, which, compared to Ayazma, is situated at the outskirts of the city, in a relatively remote neighbourhood. Limited employment prospects are further compounded by the lack of transportation options in Bezirganbahce. For example, it is an arduous task to find a bus or minibus to travel to the inner-city. An older Kurdish woman (anonymous T) explains:

"There are no vehicles here. There are only the Kucukcekmece minibus, Sefakoy municipality vehicle and buses to Sirinevler. You wait an hour for the bus to go to Bakirkoy [a very central place in Istanbul]."

In other words, poverty of the residents, combined with their economic and social exclusion, is further exacerbated by this spatial exclusion (Adaman & Keyder, 2006).

Uneven outcomes of the Ayazma project amongst squatters

The Ayazma project delineates that the ownership status of squatters is pivotal in creating and aggrandizing the disparities between them since it defines who is a right holder is and

⁴⁷ For the year 2009, the minimum wage in Turkey is net 527.13 TL [213.47 GBP] per month ("Asgari ücret yüzde 4.3 arttı, brut 666 YTL oldu," 26 December 2008).

therefore is to receive compensation. It engenders differentiation between squatters on the basis of their 'accumulated' assets and results in uneven outcomes amongst them.

Tenants end up as the most disadvantaged group in the projects as they are not defined as a right holder. The outcomes for tenants are bleaker and may result in homelessness or having to seek tenancy in another neighbourhood, usually at greatest cost and only if they can afford it.

Dwelling-owner squatters without a title deed to land are also differentiated amongst themselves. Those who are capable of meeting the monthly expenses remain in Bezirganbahce, while the others revert to squatting in another city, or a different part of Istanbul, or end up becoming tenants. This outcome is consistent with the literature, which forecasts that tenure legalisation would result in absentee land-lordism and the continuing occupation of new public and private land (Amis, 1984; Angel, 1983b; Carroll, 1980; Connolly, 1982; Gilbert & Healey, 1985). Those that continue to remain in Bezirganbahce are also worse-off. They are indebted, risk losing their apartments and have to meet their monthly expenses. This places a tremendous burden upon families with meagre and irregular incomes.

Dwellers with a title deed to land secure large compensation due to their assets and bargaining power. They bargain with the municipality in order to be able to sell their assets for a higher price; therefore the conflict between them and the municipality is in reality a negotiation. The confrontation is not about the project itself but its terms. A land owning dweller who still resides in Ayazma because of the continuing negotiations with the municipality (anonymous P) mentions:

"Now, we are waiting. We just want our right to be restored reasonably. This is my place. I will not get out of here. I have waited until now, hopefully the result will be 'delicious'".

Figure 10: A household with a title deed to land in Ayazma



Source: Fieldwork

The Ayazma project displays the outcome of clearance projects in all its different facets. Instead of ‘providing the poor with a decent life in modern houses’ –as is most evident in the very low quality of Bezirganbahce apartment buildings- and ‘saving them from the squatter life’, the projects seem to exacerbate, concentrate and displace the poverty of squatters to enclosed spaces like Bezirganbahce, and recreate urban marginality (Wacquant, 1999). As many residents of Bezirganbahce are incapable of meeting their monthly payments, they are displaced from this ‘urban captivity’ as well. As such, for some squatters their experience of the project concludes in their having been doubly displaced; from their original homes and then from the new apartment buildings. The displacement of dwellers from Ayazma and the

new luxurious housing project to be developed in the region, nevertheless, tell a story of gentrification, albeit one undertaken and directed by the state.

The Case Study of Basibuyuk

Basibuyuk is a *gecekondu* settlement in the district Maltepe on the Asian side of Istanbul. It has a different development trajectory than many other squatter neighbourhoods. Initially it was a village located outside of Istanbul. It developed into a squatter neighbourhood as immigrants squatted on public lands surrounding the village. There are no surveys conducted by the Maltepe municipality and so accurate data concerning the neighbourhood's population, the number of buildings and property structure is nonexistent. According to the head of the Basibuyuk neighbourhood association, Kaya, there are 6,800 buildings in the area and the population is approximately 26,000 (Interview).

The paucity of official data (existing data, as it exists, is unreliable due to a plethora of forged documents) is underlined by conflicting views on the tenure structure in Basibuyuk. The lawyer of the neighbourhood, Celik provides his own estimates: those who own a title deed to land constitute approximately 5 percent of the dwellers; those who do not have a deed to land –including those who have ‘title deed allocation papers’- are in a majority. Yet, the local headman, Karpuz who represents the state in the neighbourhood, and is elected regularly, contends the percentage of dwellers with a deed to land to be approximately 40 percent with the remainder categorised as squatters on state land. All the buildings in the neighbourhood are alleged to violate the planning and zoning regulations. In addition to these figures, Kaya reports the number of tenants to be around 800.

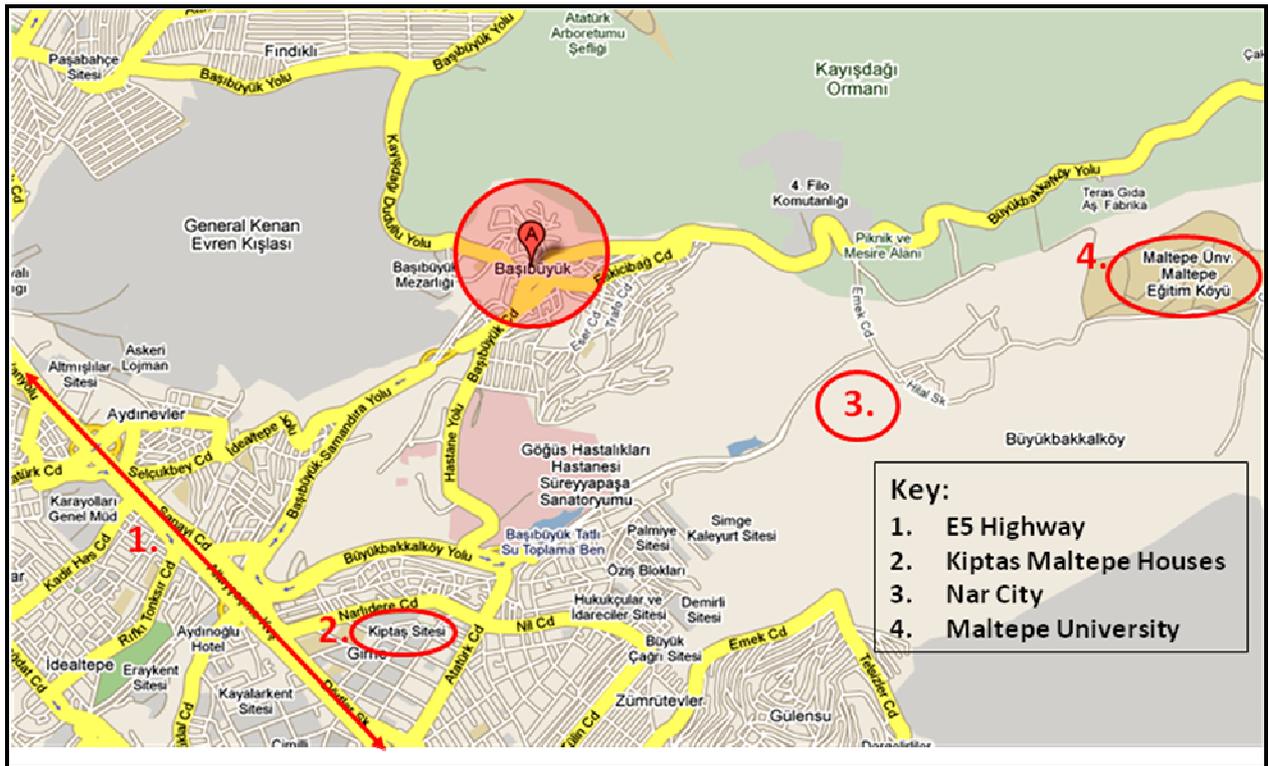
Figure 11: Basibuyuk (with its beautiful panorama)



Source: Imece, 2009

Basibuyuk is located on a hill with a beautiful panorama and surrounded by forests. It has a stable geological foundation, and so, in light of the earthquake threat, is a desirable location in Istanbul. To its south lies the E5 highway, a crucial transportation route, which connects the European and Asian sides of Istanbul. Nearby the neighbourhood, there are two luxurious, upper-middle income housing projects, Kiptas Maltepe Houses and Nar City; and 5 kilometres to its north there is the newly-built private Maltepe University (Kuyucu & Atayurt, 2008, p. 23). Given its surroundings, comparable to Ayazma, Basibuyuk represents a potential area for redevelopment because its potential ground rent transcends its capitalised rent considerably.

Figure 12: Map of Basibuyuk



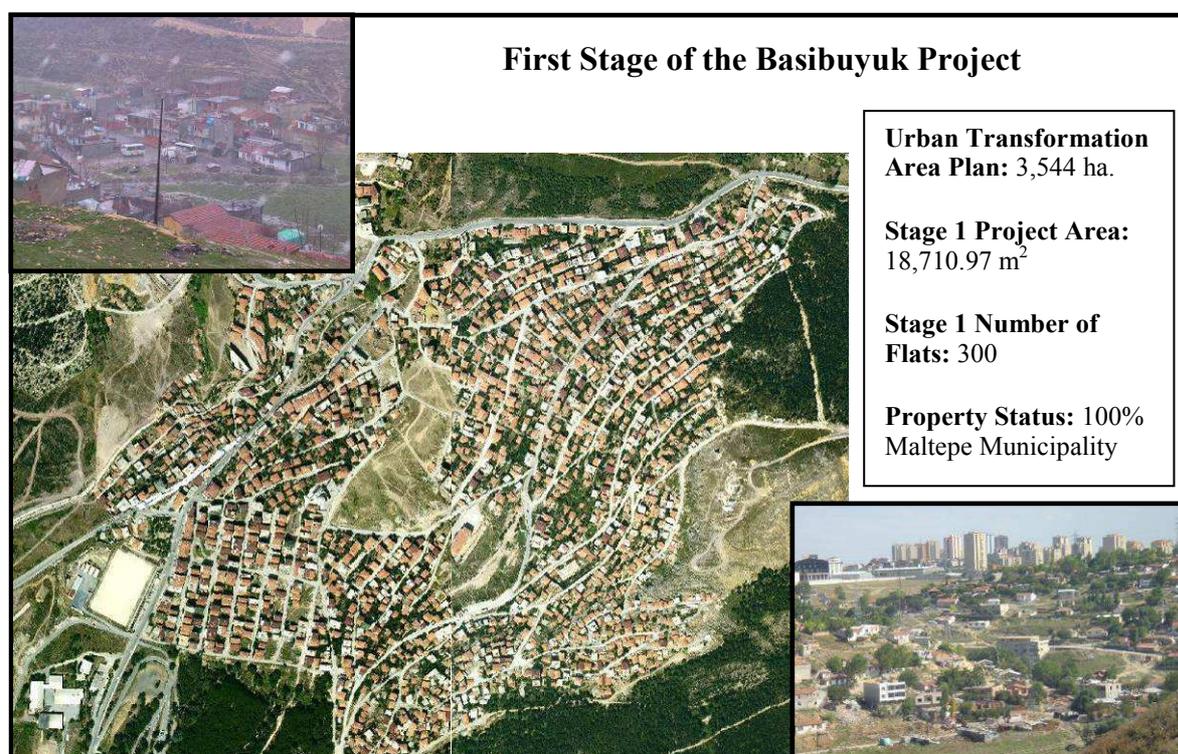
Source: Google Earth

The clearance project for Basibuyuk was given approval in 2006. Its aim was popularized as “enabling the people of Basibuyuk to live in a modern, planned, and healthy environment with high urban utilities standards” (Maltepe-Municipality, 2006, p. 13). Accompanying this social policy goal, the project was further advocated by the ‘necessity [and urgency] of implementing urban transformation projects in Istanbul’, whereby Istanbul “prepares for *the new competitive environment*, adapting to the economic, political, social and cultural changes in the world” (ibid, p.2). The entrepreneurial goal of making Istanbul a world city is clear.

Analogous to the Ayazma project, the Basibuyuk project would also be implemented in stages. The first stage would consist of negotiations with squatters without a deed to land who

are settled on an area of 400 decares.⁴⁸ Negotiations with dwellers with a deed would commence subsequently. Tenants of Basibuyuk, on the other hand, would not be considered right holders, and therefore they would be excluded from the resettlement and compensation schemes. Being “the poor of the poor” (Mitlin, 1997; UNCHS, 1993), this would exacerbate their vulnerability.

Figure 13: The First Stage of the Basibuyuk Project, Details of the Resettlement Area in Basibuyuk



Source: Maltepe Municipality, 2006

The initial goal was to resettle squatters in a near-by neighbourhood called Keçi Yatagi in Maltepe (Istanbul-Metropolitan-Municipality, Maltepe-Municipality, & Administration, 2006, p. 1); however the plan failed as the location chosen for mass housing complexes had “the status of military zone and greenbelt”, making it illegal for settlement (Chamber-of-Urban-

⁴⁸ The first stage of the project, an area of 400 decares, consisted of 1,142 buildings, 53.3 percent of which was single-storey (Maltepe-Municipality, 2006, p. 10).

Planners, 2009, p. 3). This necessitated that the squatter population be resettled in their own neighbourhood. Consequently, the Housing Administration undertook the construction of six 15-storey apartment buildings –a total of 300 flats- on land situated in Basibuyuk that was the property of the Maltepe municipality. Squatters without a title deed to land whose dwellings would be demolished, as part of the first stage of the project, would be resettled in these 15-storey apartment buildings.

Figure 14: Six 15-storey apartment buildings in Basibuyuk



Source: Fieldwork

Squatters assert that the geological foundations under these six buildings are not suitable for settlement, particularly multi-storey apartment buildings. If true, this would contradict one of

the main reasons argued for the construction of such buildings –namely fears for the safety of the squatters, as their self-constructed dwellings were more susceptible to damage from earthquakes. A construction worker in Basibuyuk (anonymous F) notes:

“This is ‘loose ground’, ground is not good. They will ‘bury’ the first two floors of these buildings [six 15-storey apartment buildings]. If they do not, they won’t be able to get authorization.”

A middle-aged man fortifies (anonymous C) this argument:

“Allah forbid! I hope the ground along with these buildings slump. Beneath it, water flows as if there is a stream. And they built these buildings there! Did they do an investigation of ground conditions? You will put us there, upper part of the neighbourhood has hard ground. You will give that part to the rich!”

Figure 15: Buildings constructed on loose ground in Basibuyuk (three of the six are shown below)



Source: Fieldwork

Each flat in these buildings is 65 m² in size and costs 52,000 TL (21,058 GBP). Dwellers reiterate that the flats of this size do not conform to the needs of their extended families. An activist squatter (anonymous A) underlines:

“Those houses are 65 m², here families have at least of 6-7 members; there is no household with less than 5 people. They put us in those 65 m² places. How will that happen?”

The head of an extended household (anonymous H) appends:

“I have given a flat to each one of my children [i.e. in an apartment building with a few floors]. Now, all of them have different flats. We cannot live in there all together.”

As with the Ayazma project, should the squatters be unable to meet consecutive monthly payments, in this case three months, their apartments would be confiscated (Maltepe-Municipality, 2008, p. 8). Despite the existence of documents from the Maltepe municipality that appears to overstate the compensation to be paid to squatters,⁴⁹ Kaya asserts that the wreckage payments on average range between 10,000 and 12,000 TL (4,050- 4,869 GBP), with dwellers who have ‘title deed allocation papers’ receiving a little more. This means that squatters take occupation of their flat with a debt of 40,000-42,000 TL (16,198- 17,008 GBP), to be paid in monthly instalments over 10 years. In respect of dwellers with a deed to land, because the Housing Administration and the Maltepe municipality had left negotiations with them to a later stage of the project, the options to be offered to this group has not been publicized.

Notwithstanding the absence of exact figures on the income level of Basibuyuk’s squatters, poverty is a prominent reality of everyday life. This is apparent in the conversations with the

⁴⁹ For copies of these documents, see Appendix B. These documents include two figures: “total sum” and “difference amount.” The documents propound that the squatters are granted the amount of “total sum.” However, according to legal codes, squatters are only eligible to receive the wreckage payment, in other words, the difference between “total sum” and “difference amount.” Many interviewees including the professionals have posited that these documents were prepared by the Maltepe municipality in order to convince people to partake in the project despite the fact that they were legally invalid. The existent legal codes seem to confirm this assertion.

squatters interviewed. There is a sporadic lack of basic dietary goods such as sugar, cheese and milk. The unemployment rate is high, and those employed are frequently in irregular, low paid jobs. Given their income levels, most of the dwellers would be unable to meet the monthly payments if the project could be implemented. A middle-aged woman (anonymous K) articulates the difficulty squatters would face if the project had been ‘successful’:

“Now you come and demolish my house. Then you put me under debt. With what money would I be able to pay that? If you can’t pay for three [consecutive] months, then you’re thrown out. How would I meet the expenses of natural gas, monthly maintenance fee and monthly instalments of the house? In the worst case, now, at least I have a home, I have no debt. My husband is ill, there are no jobs. My son has come from the military service, he cannot work, no jobs. How would I pay all that?”

A retired man (anonymous B) also notes:

“I cannot pay the amount of debt even in 60 years with my pension worth of 600 TL [243 GBP]. If you cannot pay, your house is gone, you’re gone!”

Celik, being acquainted with the Basibuyuk residents, confirms these accounts:

“There will be the monthly maintenance fee and expense of natural gas. There is no chance for people to pay that money with their current incomes. Even though the man stayed there for 40 years, he still wouldn’t be able to pay that money. He is forced to steal, there is no other way! How many of the children there have protein based diets? How many people are employed? There is real, serious poverty there, really serious! No one asks about these issues. The level of education is very low. You say to these people that you will own a house with monthly instalments worth of 300-400 TL [122-162 GBP]. This is not realistic! This is an economic discrimination. A deportation.”

The symbolic deportation, the squatters of Basibuyuk would endure, is comparable to the displacement that some of the residents of Bezirganbahce are currently undergoing as their houses are confiscated. Both exemplify the outcome of the legalisation of tenure in land, which induces an increase in the cost of living and services (Balamir & Payne, 2001; R. Burgess, 1982; Krueckeberg & Paulsen, 2002, pp. 235-236; Yonder, 1998).

The project that would be developed in Basibuyuk by the Administration, if the clearance project could be implemented, is still unknown. Given its surroundings, squatters anticipate that a luxurious upper-middle income housing project similar to Kiptas Maltepe Houses or Nar City would replace their settlements.

Unlike the Ayazma project, the authorities could not execute the Basibuyuk clearance project because of the resistance of the squatters. At the end of March 2009, the candidate mayor of the JDP who had been in power since 2004, lost the district municipality election to his opponent from the Republican People's Party (RPP).⁵⁰ This party is known for its more egalitarian stance and favourable disposition towards squatters. Under these new circumstances, whether the RPP will oppose the Housing Administration, and if it does, how it will affect the outcome of the project is yet to be seen.

Following on from the detailed analysis of the two case studies, the next chapter investigates the dynamics of contention, the mechanisms of persuasion, and the different ways of claim making over land.

⁵⁰ For the municipality of Maltepe, the RPP got 51.4 percent of the votes in Maltepe while the JDP only got 37.9 percent (Radikal, 2009). For the previous local elections, these figures were 43 percent for the JDP and 33.9 percent for the RPP. (Radikal, 2004).

DIFFERENT LOCAL OUTCOMES: CONTENTION AND PERSUASION

Clearance Projects: constitution of a new property regime

So far, the outcomes of clearance projects have largely been discussed in relation to the displacement of squatters and gentrification. Yet, clearance projects are at the same time a mechanism, whereby “property rights in land”⁵¹ replace differing ‘property-based social relations’. In this respect, they constitute a new property regime in land by enforcing the rules of the property rights system through the eviction of squatters and the allocation of property titles to them. Nevertheless, titles deeds are not granted to the existing squatter settlements of households but to their new flats in mass housing complexes. This process results in the provision of freehold titles, albeit *de facto* to those who can meet the monthly instalments.

The distribution of title deeds to squatter settlements has generally been discussed in the literature with regard to the security of tenure for the urban poor. One approach has been market centric that emphasizes the provision of property titles as a way to combat the poverty of urban poor, enhance their integration into society, stimulate investment in housing consolidation (M. Cohen & Sheema, 1992; de-Soto, 1989, 2000, p. 44; Dowall & Giles, 1991; Durand-Lasserve & Royston, 2002, p. 13; Linn, 1983; WorldBank, 1991) and ensure their access to credit through increases in land and housing values (Dowall & Clarke, 1996; Dowall & Leaf, 1991; Friedman, Jimenez, & Mayo, 1988; Jimenez, 1983, 1984; Struyk & Lynn, 1983). Tenure legalisation, as such, has constituted the major policy in the World Bank’s (1993) strategy of “enabling markets to work” (Jones & Ward, 1994).

⁵¹ Property is “a social relation that defines the property holder with respect to something of value... against all others” (Bromley, 1991, p. 2). “Property right”, on the other hand, is “a relationship that is enforceable (or at least supposed to be enforced) by the state” (Razzaz, 1993, p. 341). Razzaz (ibid) distinguishes between the two, property and property right, indicating that the latter is just one form of property.

Another approach largely reverses this argument, criticizing the monodic way of treating private property as the path to the alleviation of poverty, and stimulation of investment into settlements. It highlights that tenure legalisation is not a prerequisite for the security of tenure, and investments in housing are undertaken if there is *de facto* security of tenure (Angel, 1983a; Azuela & Duhau, 1998a, p. 163; Fourie, 2000; Martin, 1983; Payne, 1997, 1999; Razzaz, 1993; Varley, 1987, 2002).

The above paradigm, including its adherents as well as its opponents, encapsulates the discussion within the vernacular of social policy. This discourse disregards the fact that tenure legalisation, achieved through the allocation of title deeds, establishes private property in land, resulting in its commodification and the creation of new lines of demarcation and inequality between settlers.

Razzaz (1993, p. 342) mentions that the land illegally occupied by squatters is generally “the subject of competing or even conflicting claims”. In this respect, tenure legalisation serves to resolve the conflict –at best the disparity- between the property rights system in land, defined by legal centralism,⁵² and property claims based on “different forms of legitimation” (Azuela, 1987) as this disparity has been addressed frequently in the literature (Azuela, 1987; Azuela & Duhau, 1998b; Durand-Lasserve, 1998; Fernandes & Varley, 1998; Leaf, 1994; Lund, 2008; Manji, 2006; Razzaz, 1994, 1998; Santos, 1977). It totalizes the plurality of these competing claims over land under the property rights system enforced by the state, the consequences of

⁵² Legal centralism is based on the idea that state law is all-encompassing of social behaviour and that other normative orderings are, and should be, subordinate to the state. The current orthodoxy assumes that as societies develop modern capitalist economies, non-state legal orders give way neatly to state law and that, in relation to property rights, informal tenure arrangements are superseded by formalisation (Manji, 2006, p. 151). Within such a framework, property relations would reflect (or at least tend to reflect) legal property rights; similarly, changes in property relations would be reflected in changes in property rights and vice versa (O.M Razzaz, 1993, pp.341-342).

which serve to delegitimize the claims to land held by squatters and bar them from any legal recourse in order to defend these claims.

Likewise, clearance projects are a form of tenure legalisation, a mechanism by which the property rights system is enforced by the state. The projects epitomize the resolution of the conflict between the property rights system and differing property-based social relations, delegitimizing the latter. This point has also been affirmed by Deliktas at the Administration:

“This is in fact the resolution of the problem of property. The user of the building, the owner of the building and the owner of land are all different people. It is because the property problem is not resolved that private developers cannot function.”

In this sense, the projects signify a transition from a moral economy to “the moral neutrality of market exchange which takes place between formally equal trading partners” (Bugra, 1998, p. 303). The era dominated by the politics of clientelism and continuous negotiation between the state and squatters, which provided the latter with the opportunity to squat and obtain municipal services, is defined by Bugra (ibid) as a moral economy of urban land use. Similar to Thompson’s (1991, p. 188) depiction of “the moral economy of the poor”, this moral economy was grounded upon “a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties in the community.” Accordingly, it shielded squatters from the ‘objective, non-discriminatory’ rules of the market economy.

Clearance projects of the new era, in contrast, constitute the market as the arbitrator of urban land use. The projects formalize the land use and ownership rights and enabling the commodification and marketisation of public land -which had used to be held by the public authority and kept *extra commercium* (Keyder, 2005a, p. 130). This brings to an end the secret consensus between the state and the users of its urban land (Erder, 2007, p. 273). In this

respect, projects designate a shift from “traditional paternalism” to “liberal moral philosophy” (Coats, 1972; Fox-Genovese, 1973).

The new property regime organized around the property rights system, which is enforced by the state, is an ‘a-moral’ one. Only those with ownership claims have access to land use. As the epitome of this new regime, clearance projects, convert the right of possession into an ownership right, albeit to be granted only to those who can repay their debt in full. It is the ‘a-morality’ of this new regime, which has engendered grievance, anger and resistance amongst squatters.

Differing Local Outcomes: Basibuyuk and Ayazma

Table 3: Comparison between Basibuyuk and Ayazma

	Basibuyuk	Ayazma
Presence of neighbourhood association	Yes	No
Order of precedence of neighbourhood (the 2000s)	about 5 th in Istanbul	1 st in Istanbul
Awareness of other neighbourhood clearance experiences	Yes	No

Basibuyuk

Property relations, rather than being fixed, are an ongoing contest. What follows will be a narrative of this contentious politics⁵³ in Basibuyuk. It seeks to demonstrate the difficulty of “transform[ing] the social relations that are property into the space that is property” (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008, p. 45).

⁵³ I adopt the definition of contentious politics as it is defined by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001, p. 5), meaning “episodic, public, collective interaction amongst makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and b) the claims would, if realised, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.”

Basibuyuk has been the paragon of contention and has successfully thwarted its clearance. As yet, only very few -3 or 4- dwellers have signed contracts with the former JDP municipality; the rest of the community perseveres to resist the project. The neighbourhood was the scene of violent protests for the last two years; only recently it attained some tranquillity, mainly due to the March, 2009 local elections.

With the elections in March, 2009, the Basibuyuk community displaced its former local headman, Kapruz, who was accused of colluding with the Maltepe municipality in supporting the clearance project. The elections also revealed the decline of support for the JDP (Ogunc, 17 May 2008; Yarkadas, 19 September 2008) whose electoral fortunes had come to be viewed as inextricably bound the development and launching of the project.⁵⁴

“The repertoires of contention” (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 15) in Basibuyuk is based on alternative claims over land. It is grounded on different understandings and systems of property, and challenges the state’s property rights system. The community asserts their right over the land based on a model of property, which “vests title in those who labour upon the land” (Bromley, 1991, p. 62) and provides “a perfect justification for squatters” (Corr, 1999, p. 58). An elderly woman (anonymous I), who has been living in Basibuyuk for 36 years, supports this claim:

“I’ve been here since 1973. *I dug a well; I gave water to everyone from that well for 6 years.* No one has been through what I’ve been through. *This house was not built easily on top of this hill.* I won’t give my place to anyone.”

Similarly, an elderly man (anonymous A) claims Basibuyuk to be their own:

“All these people you see, they were young men when they came to here, now look at what they have become. *Three generations have lived here, we are the third generation.* I’ve come here when I was twelve, now I have

⁵⁴ As Basibuyuk is a neighbourhood in Maltepe rather than being a district itself, there are no statistics on Basibuyuk regarding the elections. However, interviews with the squatters and newspaper articles affirm the decline of support for the JDP.

grandchildren. *Before, nobody was interested in Basibuyuk. It was all mud, there were wolves. Now that it has become beautiful, they try to take it away from us.*"

Claims legitimized on the basis of labour are accompanied by significant sacrifices squatters have made in the process of settling and building their homes. Persistent health problems and the low education attainment of children are listed prominently by the Basibuyuk community:

"First of all, all our women in the neighbourhood have back problems. Why? They have carried its brick, its water, its soil, its cement on their backs. They have carried them all. One part of our bodies doesn't function. Now they come and tell us 'go away'! Let the rich tycoons come and live in villas here." (Anonymous B)

A daughter of one of the squatters (anonymous J) who could not go to school narrates:

"We have laboured all this much. We'll be put in those tiny apartments built on loose ground while this place will be 'made a present' to others. My mum has raised 5 children, she didn't, she couldn't send them to school in order to hold on to here. Its expenses, its costs..."

The relationship between state law and property-led social relations is not an independent one. Razzaz (1994) defines this relationship as one of legal plurality, a mutual interaction, where a plurality of 'property claims' defined by different institutions interact and influence one another. Santos (1977) treats this relationship as an unequal one, where state law remains the dominant legal system. In contrast to Razzaz and Santos, Azuela (1987) departs from a conception of legal plurality and "argues that illegal settlement processes are conditioned by state law" (Goluksuz, 2002, p. 2). While different 'forms of legitimation' may contravene and substitute for state law, they can never be independent from it and, indeed, they derive part of their legitimacy from it. This yields a fruitful framework to analyse how the Basibuyuk community complies with state law in order to gain and reinforce the legitimacy of their claims over the land.

For example, a strategy that the squatters have employed is to pay real-estate taxes for the land for which they have no official title deeds. Similarly, dwellers have also paid their local government fees and municipal services expenses, which they obtained through political

patronage. Despite the apparent idiosyncrasy of such practices, they constitute the basis of the squatters' property claims. They are upheld by the community as a showcase of their obedience to state law and henceforth, as a symbol of the legitimacy of their buildings (Yonder, 1987, p. 6), as explained by a squatter (anonymous A):

“The local municipality says ‘this place is not your right. It is our right’. We say ‘no, it is not yours.’ *We have paid our taxes since 1971 and the tax penalties. We have given money to the municipality when we were building our houses [meaning bribes].*”⁵⁵

Given the potential threat to losing their homes, ‘the mobilizing structure’ that has enabled the community -or in McAdam et.al’s (2001, p. 12) words ‘subjects’⁵⁶- to organize activism in Basibuyuk is the neighbourhood association. The association was founded at the end of 2006, after the dwellers learned that a clearance project would be undertaken. Many dwellers have underlined the importance of the association in informing them about the project and mobilizing their community against eviction. Kaya, who is himself a squatter without a deed to land, posits the enlightenment of people as the main goal of the association. This was confirmed by the interviewees who regarded the association as “the principal agent of raising awareness in the neighbourhood.”

Even though the neighbourhood association was the major mobilizing force amongst the community, “challengers”⁵⁷ (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 12) such as the Chamber of Architects, the Chamber of Urban Planners and other NGOs have also contributed to, and reinforced the resistance by informing the community about the implications of the proposed project and their legal rights:

⁵⁵ These practices, which pertain to the paradigm of state law, were also employed under the era of the moral economy of housing in Turkey. They were part of the negotiation process between squatters and the state, which generally resulted in amnesty laws and whereby the former legitimized its claims. Under the new property regime, the Basibuyuk community can no longer expect to get amnesty for their houses. Yet, these practices still constitute the basis of claim-making over the land for the community.

⁵⁶ The chapter adopts the definition by McAdam et al (2001, p. 12), defining subjects as “persons or groups not currently organised into constituted political actors.”

⁵⁷ Challengers are defined as “constituted political actors lacking routine access to government agents and resources” (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 12).

“On the one hand, we have seen the victimhood. On the other hand, we started speaking to people and NGOs that were against the clearance projects. Who are these? The Chamber of Architects, the Chamber of Urban Planners, Contemporary Lawyers’ Association etc. We’ve seen that these projects are all over Turkey” (Kaya)

Figure 16: A protest in Basibuyuk



Source: (sendika.org, 16 April 2008)

The association has 1,350 members, the majority of whom are squatters living in the 400 decares area, and whom would be evicted within the first stage of the project. According to the figures Kaya provides, 95 percent of the population that is included in the first stage of the project support and take part in the acts of the association. This implies that the ‘actors’ of contentious politics are mainly home owners without title deeds to land. Since land owners are not initially included in the project, Kaya underlines the support from this group to be meagre. Members of the association contend that the level of support they receive from the tenants is strong. An activist woman⁵⁸ (anonymous L) states the following:

“In general, there is a high level of support from tenants. They [authorities] have said that they won’t provide tenants with the chance to own a flat in these 6 buildings. Fikri Kose [the ex-mayor] said it. What did the tenants

⁵⁸ Women have been very influential in Basibuyuk in the mobilization of resistance as well in its sustainment.

do after that? They said ‘aren’t we humans as being tenants? We also support the movement.’ They came with us to demonstrations, marches. They didn’t leave us alone.”

Figure 17: Activist women of Basibuyuk



Source: (Ogunc, 17 May 2008)

Notwithstanding the mobilizing agents, the prominent influencing factor, in the Basibuyuk activism, appears to be derived from their knowledge of other neighbourhood clearance projects. The experiences of these other communities have been discovered. As Kaya elaborated:

“We started our investigation. Just close-by, there was another project in Cambazbayırı, Pendik. We went there, we talked to people there, and we saw that they were deeply grieved. Then we heard about Ayazma, we went there, did some investigation. They couldn’t establish a neighbourhood association, because there was no collective resistance. Citizens say that they have debts worth of 42,000 TL [17,008 GBP]. Then we decided to found our association.”

Figure 18: Protest in Basibuyuk with symbolic graves for Karpuz and the Maltepe ex-mayor from the JDP



Source: (Atilim, 22 March 2008)

Some of the current residents of Bezirganbahce also describe how they have recounted their experiences of eviction and resettlement to the Basibuyuk community and assisted them with their mobilization efforts. An activist Kurdish tenant (anonymous M) explains:

“We went to Basibuyuk. There were around 100 people. I have told them my experiences. We had many meetings. Other neighbourhoods had a better chance [to resist] unlike Ayazma. Ayazma was the first, Ayazma turned out to be an example to them.”

Another middle-aged Kurdish man (anonymous Z), who was the head of the ‘Committee against the Demolition of Ayazma’, buttresses this account:

“My only aim is to enable other neighbourhoods not to be cheated. We had meetings in Basibuyuk, we had meetings in Bayramtepe [another squatter neighbourhood in Istanbul]. For example, people of Bayramtepe made barricades; they didn’t let them demolish their neighbourhood. We were always with them.”

It should be noted that the resistance in Basibuyuk was not one led by intellectuals or “outside political actors”. Even though various political party representatives visited the neighbourhood to reiterate their support, they were not a mobilizing force. The RPP, the main

opposition party, as an example, managed to canalize the resistance into votes in the local municipal elections after mobilization had already taken place. As such, the leadership of the movement as well as its actualization through its unique “repertoires of contention” was born of the enagement that the community itself felt. This is evident in the community’s narratives of violence it endured and the numerous confrontations it had with the police.⁵⁹ These narratives in turn feed the contentious politics and are fed by it.

Ayazma

The success of the Basibuyuk resistance suggests some of the reasons behind the failure of mobilization in Ayazma. Firstly, the Ayazma community has never been able to establish a neighbourhood association of its own; hence it lacked a major mobilizing agent, which was cardinal for Basibuyuk, and which increased the awareness of the community.⁶⁰ Secondly, the Ayazma project was amongst the pioneers of clearance projects undertaken in Turkey and was the first in Istanbul during the 2000s. Therefore, its dwellers were unable to draw upon the experiences and the knowledge of other neighbourhood clearance projects, especially to gain an understanding of the outcomes for those dwellers. This knowledge gained by the community of Ayazma was subsequently shared, with the people of Basibuyuk to the benefit of their own resistance.

⁵⁹ All the dwellers in Basibuyuk resort to a symbolic common language, mythologizing their confrontation with the police and local municipality officials. They draw a similarity between their own confrontation and the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which was on the agenda when fieldwork was conducted. By comparing the authorities with Israel, they reinforce their solidarity and most importantly assert the injustice they have been subjected to. Stories about dwellers’ being beaten, gassed and insulted by the police are told very frequently. As an example, an older man (anonymous E), who was serving tea in the election bureau of the RPP, documented their resistance and its adverse outcomes: “67 people have been arrested. One person became permanently disabled. One got paralysed, one got shot in his head, got into a coma and had an operation worth of 16,000 TL [6,479 GBP]. I got shot in my leg. The policemen threw a gas bomb into the mosque. This place is Palestine, they are Israel. 5,000 policemen came here.” Because of their resistance, the Basibuyuk community has also been accused of being ‘terrorists’, ‘provocateurs’, ‘drug dealers’ and engaging with ‘women trafficking’. The most striking example of it is the commentary by Bayraktar: “Those who are engaged in ‘dirty business’ like hashish smuggling and women trafficking, and also the terrorist groups try to prevent *gecekondu* transformation by using innocent people” (Sezen, 28 November 2007).

⁶⁰ A comprehensive investigation into the reasons behind the failure in establishing an association requires a more in-depth ethnographic study.

The Kucukcekmece municipality and the Housing Administration promote the Ayazma project as the paragon of community participation in its implementation. However, as squatters are not provided with the option of non-participation, and have no influence over where, and to what types of homes, they will be resettled, it is hard to conclude that the clearance projects provide any meaningful participation for communities. The process could rather be termed as one of persuasion that operates through clientelistic relations and exploits community ties, rather than one that seeks to build an informed community consensus.

Immigration in Turkey has generally been in the form of chain migration. Traditionally this resulted in the formation of migrant communities, based on the location of a home town or village (Karpat, 1976, pp. 118-119). These communities were generally 'guided' by the community leaders and are sustained through strong ties amongst the migrants. These ties are flexible and informal, nevertheless bearing loyalty and solidarity amongst the migrant community, and providing squatters a sense of belonging and identity (Erder, 1999, pp. 162-163). It is this structure of migrant communities that the local municipality exploited in order to persuade the squatters to sign contracts and acquiesce to the project.

The project has been implemented through clientelistic ties established between community leaders and the local municipality. These leaders, however, were not community leaders *per se*, who utilised their status and power as an instrument of persuasion, but those leaders who had close ties with the Kucukcekmece municipality and therefore, with the JDP. The reciprocal relationship was based on the community leaders' high status within their communities and the influence they exerted upon their groups. Such influence would be brought to bear in return for material gain granted by the municipality, which was in any event, to decide the amount of compensation to be offered to squatters in the form of flats in

Bezirganbahce.⁶¹ Many dwellers, who have been interviewed, underlined how certain ‘leaders’ became rich after the project was completed. A resident in Bezirganbahce (anonymous R) explains the process:

“They gave them flats. There is someone from Erzurum or Diyarbakir [cities in Turkey]. He knows a lot of people, maybe 50-100 households. They told him ‘we’ll give you 5-10 flats, you bring the people you know, make them sign the contracts.’ They [community leaders] hit the goldmine. When we came to Bezirganbahce, there were no flats for rent, these men had 10-20 spare flats. He came here with a *Sahin* [brand of an inexpensive car], now he has a *Megane*.”

Although there are many accounts of the same process from different dwellers, a Kurdish man (anonymous U) enunciates the bribery explicitly:

“They have tricked people like this. The *municipality itself bribed a few people, who in return signed the contracts*. Then others found no way out, they were forced to sign them.”

Along with targeting the community leaders, the Kucukcekmece municipality also tried to form proximate relationships with squatters. Many dwellers underlined how *mawlids* and *iftars* [dinners during the religious month of fasting] were organised by the municipality, to which the entire community was invited and which served to establish trust and familiarity between the authorities and the people. Babaoglu highlighted the extensive effort and time they devoted to establish personal relationships with each and every dweller:

“We gave so much of our time. There was no single wedding, circumcision feast or funeral we did not attend in the region.”

Nevertheless, efforts to persuade dwellers were not confined to such acts. An urban planner from the Administration’s Istanbul division, Tantan, pointed to another tool of persuasion, one that again works through clientelism and is justified by the word ‘aid’:

⁶¹ Though there is no data to make generalizations, it is anecdotal to mention that this patronage relationship got reversed for some dwellers that resisted the project or explicitly challenged the actions of the municipality. A squatter, who tried to mobilize the community and resisted the project all throughout, alleged that he had to pay 18,000 TL [7,289 GBP] more for the same flats. And, he was entitled to just one flat for his two squatter dwellings -they look more like rooms-, while he had to be entitled to two flats. Likewise, an activist Kurdish man, who is a supporter of the Kurdish party and who has overtly challenged the JDP municipality, claimed to be ‘given’ one flat in return for his two squatters.

“The local municipality’s relationship with people is very important. The Kucukcekmece municipality has been in constant dialogue with them. *For example, certain benefits in kind, from coal aids to...* They went to *iftars* to *persuade* people.”

Through ‘aid of coal and food supplies’, the municipality managed to exploit the nature of this relationship, which was “rooted in expectations of reciprocal rights and duties” (Lemarchand & Legg, 1972, p. 5). The expectation made of the squatters, in fulfilment of their reciprocal obligations, was to support the project.

Consequently, it was through the exploitation of these clientelistic relations, established with the squatter community and the community leaders that the local municipality succeeded in the implementation of the project, especially in the face of the lack of a collective resistance.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearance projects can be described as continuing the implementation of the entrepreneurial task to make Istanbul a world city. This task is closely aligned with the global and liberal reorientation of the Turkish economy, with regard to the post-1980 neoliberal world economy, where cities become prominent engines of economic growth and avenues of competition.

This dissertation repudiates the proposition of the world city hypothesis which anticipates the retrenchment of the state. Rather, the state, in Turkey, is seen to play a prominent role in the transition of Istanbul to a world city. Projects represent a form of capitalist urban redevelopment of squatter neighbourhoods. The two case studies chosen demonstrate that they comply with the rent gap theory regarding the selection of a squatter neighbourhood for clearance, and the theory of gentrification regarding the outcomes.

The projects aggravate the differences, and deepen the inequalities, between squatters as a result of the formalization of land use and ownership rights and the rules and relations of the new property regime. Despite the authorities' stated intentions to enable each squatter to live a decent life, in modern homes, those who cannot meet their monthly payments are deprived of their homes, in which they are expected to have an ownership right. This deprivation is compounded since squatters are already deprived of their self-built homes, their claims over which are delegitimized by the property rights system enforced by the state.

This new era of 'immoral economy of housing' embodies a shift in the state-squatter relations. The latter is no longer secured access to the use of state land and the use of clientelistic ties to secure title deeds becomes obsolete. The market progressively becomes the arbitrator in the allocation of land. Squatters are left to operate within the contours of the market economy.

Within this framework, the question of who has the right to the city becomes more crucial. As squatters are compulsorily enslaved to 'urban captivities' through clearance projects over which they have no say, they are subject to a symbolic deportation, are made invisible in the city space as well as in its new image and are progressively denied this right. Clearance projects, far from saving squatters from 'blight', aggravate their marginality. The defence of this right for the squatters at present is to be taken under this new property regime, and more importantly against its 'a-morality'. In this respect, the fight for the right to Istanbul constitutes the domain of conflicting claims over land, whereby the squatters and the state each claim the land to be their own. It is the politics of property in urban land that defines the avenue through which the squatters fight for their right as Istanbul continues to open its arms to the world. It remains to be seen, however, whether they will ever find a home in it.