ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA

Civilizing the Kurdish Population of Ayazma:[1] Ayazma/Tepeüstü Urban Transformation Project-Küçükçekmece, Istanbul[2]

Ayazma'nın Kürt Nüfusunun Medenileştirilmesi: Ayazma/Tepeüstü Kentsel Dönüşüm Projesi-Küçükçekmece, İstanbul

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ABSTRACT

Ayazma/Tepeüstü urban transformation project[3] in Küçükçekmece (2004-2007) happens to be the first and the largest urban transformation project implemented in Istanbul so far. It is also the first project targetting a homogenous population.[4] It impacted the lives of 1440 familes, a populaton of about 7800 persons, mainly from Ayazma. Ayazma and Tepeüstü neighbourhoods were "cleansed" for regeneration and opened up to developers for prestigious projects while the inhabitants composed mainly of the urban poor were subjected to forced evictions and displacement from their decades old settlements, encountering serious economic deprivations, violations of social and cultural rights and psychological traumas engendered by the relocation. The study is based on a research conducted in the relocation site betweeen October 2008-February 2009, almost 2 years after the relocation. In depth interviews were carried out with 75 persons, comprising mainly relocated residents in Bezirganbahçe Mass Housing Administration (TOKI) blocks. Some NGO representatives, civil servants and officials from the municipality were also interviewed. The study focuses on the social, cultural and psychological aspects of the project which disregarded the distinctive culture, tradition and custom of the Kurdish community and the social engineering mechanisms imposed through "civilization" projects named "How to live in an apartment-building". Hostilities between ethnic groups and polarization in the relocation site were other findings of the study. The study also discloses the criminalization of the urban poor (and minorities) as a legitimization tool to intervene into urban space.

ÖZET

Küçükçekmece Ayazma - Tepeüstü kentsel dönüşümü (2004-2007), İstanbul'un ilk geniş kapsamlı kentsel dönüşüm projesi olduğu gibi aynı zamanda homojen büyük bir nüfusun toplu olarak yeniden iskân edildiği ilk projedir. Çoğunluğu Ayazma'dan, 1440 aileden oluşan 7800 kişilik bir nüfusu etkilemiştir. Kentsel dönüşüm projesi, Ayazmalıların sadece yaşam alanlarını değil, büyük kentte tutunabilmek için kurdukları düzenlerini ve yaşamlarını da darmadağın eder. Bezirgânbahçe'deki ekonomik koşullar ve site yaşamının dayattığı şartlardan dolayı aralarındaki dayanışma ve sosyal ilişki ağları çözülür; dahası, site düzeninin kısıtlı kamusal alanlarında ve baskıcı ortamında, topluca gerçekleştirdikleri kültürel pratiklere de olanak yoktur; elverişsiz koşullar altında atomize bireyler olurlar. Bu çalışmada, gecekondu nüfuslarının yaşam pratiklerine uymayan ve söz konusu Kürt bir nüfus olduğundan sosyal ve kültürel birçok pratiği de imkânsız kılan; dolayısıyla, mağduriyet ve ihlallere sebebiyet veren TOKİ konutlarındaki yaşam pratikleri, Ayazmalılar örneğinde mercek altına alınacaktır. Yerel yönetimce önce damgalanan, yerlerinden edilen ve birbirlerinden kopartılan Ayazmalılara, yeniden iskân ertesinde 'medenileştirme' projesi olarak dayatılan apartman yaşamı diktesi ve sonuçları incelenecek ve yerel yönetimin gerçek amacı masaya yatırılacaktır.

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[3] Urban transformation projects as they are named in the Turkish context are regeneration projects in which inhabitants of informal neighbourhoods are subjected to forced evictions or forced relocation (if recognized as beneficiaries) in public mass housing sites mostly at the periphery of the cities while their neighbourhoods which have become profitable areas of the ever growing city are turned into the hands of developers or public private partnerships for luxurious projects.

[4] It was not a coincidence that after the Kurdish minority in Ayazma, the Roma minority of Sulukule followed. Urban renewal in Turkey built its legitimacy by targetting minorities at first. These neighbourhoods also happen to be the weakest links where not much resistance is expected.

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[1] Inspired from Gray and Mooney's article: Glasgow's new urban frontier ' Civilising' the population of 'Glasgow East'.

[2] The article is based on a paper presented at the 6th International Cultural Studies Conference on 8-12 th September 2011 at Kadir Has University. The paper is developed from the authour's Master's thesis submitted to Istanbul Bilgi University Institute of Social Sciences, Human Rights Law Department 2010.

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Introduction

Since the last decade, in line with neoliberal urban policies, the aspirations of the local and central authorities to turn Istanbul into a world class city and an international tourism destination have brought about major changes in the urban landscape and the population make up of the city. The most critical outcomes of this process are the pressures on urban land and its concurrent commodification leading to housing rights violations and socio-spatial segregation (Bartu Candan-Kolluoğlu 2008; Gundoğdu-Gough 2008; Kuyucu 2011), engendering an urban apartheid[5] resting on economic cleavages if not on ethnic lines.[6] Various gentrification /renewal/ regeneration projects clustered under *"transformation"* are implemented, redesigning each and every parcel, vacant land, historical site of the ages old city to cater to the needs of upper income groups, wealthy tourists and CEO's of global corporations. National and global capital by themselves or in partnerships with state actors intervene into urban space through flagship projects; speculation and urban rent take precedence over human rights and environmental concerns. The logo of TOKI (The Mass Housing Administration) has become the most conspicious urban decoration, placed almost on every construction site; even a first comer to the city can not miss it. The process is antidemocratic, untransparent and implemented without any participation of affected populations. The legal infrastructure, laws, by-laws and zoning and planning reglations are amended so as to enable the smooth and easy intervention of capital to urban space. Public good has been reduced to an interpretation of that which benefits capital and corporations rather than people. Settled neighbourhoods are demolished, their inhabitants evicted and the razed land is turned into the hands of developers for luxurious residential, commercial or touristic projects of no common good. Those recognized as beneficiaries (in most cases, the renter populations are not taken into account and left to streets) are relocated to mass housing blocks of TOKI, miles away from the center, facing a myriad of economic, social and cultural violations (Bartu Candan-Kolluoğlu 2008; Erman 2009; Kuyucu 2009; Baysal 2010; Kuyucu and Unsal 2010; Kuyucu 2011; Demirli 2013; Türkün-Bektaş 2013).

This study will focus on the first and the largest urban transformation project implemented in Istanbul, namely Ayazma/Tepeustu Urban Transformation Project.[7] It is based on a research conducted in the relocation site betweeen October 2008-Februaray 2009, almost 2 years after the relocation. In depth interviews were carried out with 75 persons, mainly with relocated residents in Bezirganbahçe Mass Housing Administration (TOKI) blocks; NGO representatives, state officials and authorities from the municipality were also interviewed.[8]

Ayazma neighbourhood of Küçükçekmece district was taken under urban transformation in 2004. Targeting the Kurdish community of Ayazma and the small community from the Black Sea region at Tepeüstü, the urban transformation project (UTP) impacted the lives of 1440 familes, a populaton of about 7800 persons, mainly from Ayazma. Both populations were evicted and their neighbourhoods *"cleansed"* to be turned into the hands of developers for star projects[9] of the world class city. Those recognized as beneficiaries by the authorities were relocated to Bezirganbahce TOKI site by February 2007, encountering not only serious economic deprivations but also violations of social and cultural rights and psychological traumas.

The community was also subjected to social engineering mechanisms which were unashamedly made public and proudly announced by the Municipality as training projects on *"How to Live in an Apartment Building"* (Baysal 2010; 2011). Recalling Neil Smith (1996), the gentrifier (TOKI and local municipality in this case) seems to have taken up the role of the White Man civilizing the savage Indian (Kurdish community of Ayazma) while conquering the hitherto untouched wild lands (of the gecekondu neighbourhood) through a regeneration project.

1. The Background

November 2000-February 2001 period marks an era when Turkey experienced its most serious economic crisis. The Turkish economy shrank by 10% and the currency lost its value 51% vis-a-vis major currencies. The immediate impact of the crisis showed itself in the economic sphere where policies to be incorporated into the global neoliberal system were enacted one after the other -and with much more resolution than before- by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) while the protectionist and welfarist policies of the state were dismantled in favour of a market economy in which all domains of social and economic life were to be commodified (Kuyucu 2009).

These developments engendered critical repercussions in the urban sphere. Thanks to the Ottoman legacy, the state has always been the major land owner in Turkey. During the industrialization period in late 50's and 60's, rural workers migrating to major cities to become the workforce occupied state lands and erected their dwellings, gecekondus[10] near factories. Gecekondu neighbourhods were later provided with all

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[5] Even though the term "apartheid"means racial segregation embedded into a specific context, that of South Africa, the term "urban apartheid" has been utilized widely in recent years to delineate a global phenomenon, the severe spatial segragation of cities on socio-economic lines. As observed in Latin America where the tense polarization between the rich and the poor has become a major issue, urban apartheid, is becoming a common issue across the world due to neoliberal economic polices. In the words of Miloon Kothari, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Housing, "…you see it now all over the world…" :http://www.hic-net.org/articles.php?pid=1643

[6] You can refer to the comprehensive report of UN-Habitat AGFE İstanbul Mission 2009 on the issue: http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/10008_1_593995.pdf.

[7] The Project encompasses two different communities who have been living in neighbouring sites for a long time yet without much contact. Ayazma population is a Kurdish population from East and South-East whereas Tepeustu consists of Turkish Alevi Muslims from Tokat and the Black Sea region.

[8] Quotations that are not given any reference are taken from interviews in the thesis of the authour.

[9] Interestingly enough, both developers are from pro-AKP (The governing party; Justice and Development Party) circles. Ali Agaoglu's luxurious housing project My World Europe is constructed in Ayazma: http://www.myworld-europe.com/en/. Torunlar Construction Company builds Mall of Istanbul in Tepeüstü; a mixed use project, including residential, retail, office and hotel components: http://www.torunlargyo.com.tr/en/moi.html.

the necessary infrastructure and amenities by populist central and local governments who needed their votes. Amnesties for these informal neighbourhoods were also frequent political tools of populism. The provision of social housing was viewed by authorities more costly than letting the migrators solve their own housing problems by occupying the more than abundant state lands. This was a time when all parties in the game won; not only the state and rural migrators but also the capital profited from this latent agreement; for, the pressures of rents /credits of tenure on wages were thus avoided (Aslan 2007; 2008; Şenyapılı 2004; Şengül 2009).

Starting from the mid-80's, there was a new wave of migration from rural areas, mainly stemming from security reasons. In the aftermath of the coup d'eta of 1980, induced inter alia, by factors such as pressures from the state and/or from PKK-the Kurdish guerillas, ill treatment /torture of state/ military/ police officials and /or burnt down villages by the military, large Kurdish populations from the East and Southeast of the country were forced to migrate unpreparedly (Erder 2006; 2007). The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) mounted with each new wave of migration and it is no wonder that the number of gecekondu settlements in major cities underwent a considerable jump in this period. For those migrating to Istanbul, the time of their arrival was the time when the industry was getting decentralized and the city was thus losing its characteristics of an industrial and commercial center. So, they were able to find jobs only in the informal sector with low wages, long hours of work yet without any social security (Buğra and Keyder 2003; Erdoğan 2007). They also worked as street vendors or construction workers.

Like their predecessors, these populations solved their needs for shelter in the big city through gecekondu building or renting at low rates. Living side by side with neighbours from the same hometown/village made their lives easier to hang on to the big city. As is evident from the legislations and amnesties of these eras, till 2000s, the stance of governments had been one of tolerance and inclusion (especially during the 60s and 70s) for the gecekondu (Aslan 2008; 2009) up until the great crisis of 2000-2001. The neoliberal turn of the state in all spheres of activities including the urban meant a shift from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1973) which entailed urban policies implemented in favor of global capital, serving developer interests at the expense of inhabitants with priority attached to growth and investment at the expense of all other values and human rights (Harvey 2008; Hasan 2009). In this context, the aspirations to turn the 8000 years old city of Istanbul into a world class city by opening its lands for global investors, developers and property markets exerted dramatic pressures on land, leading to the

commodification of each and every valuable piece and parcel in the city. This development showed itself most severely in gecekondu neighbourhoods and historical neihgbourhoods of dilapidated areas inhabited by low income populations and the urban poor.[11] Once in the periphery, now in the central parts of the enlarged cities, gecekondu settlements became eyesores as their lands were needed by developers and investors for prestigious regeneration projects.

As examplified by and reflected in the speeches of Erdoğan Bayraktar (the current Minister of Environment and Urban Affairs), the president of TOKI at the time, the discourse of authorities reveals this entrepreneurial shift in policies explicitly when rents and profits rather than human rights and democratic management of cities talk: *"We have lots of valuable lands at our disposal. They have some problems. We will polish them, display them on the counter and thus sell them"* (Bayraktar 2008); *"We have created urban areas of rent at Küçükçekmece"* (Bayraktar 2009). Against the general picture outlined above, it was not coincidental that those lands to be polished and then marketed turned out to be gecekondu neighbourhoods which would be regenerated with luxurious urban projects. A similar reasoning can be discerned in the press statement given by Kadir Topbaş, the Mayor of Istanbul, when he expressed that they *"(We) will beautify Istanbul by demolishing it"* Beautification in this context meant state-led gentrification hence demolishments of the "ugly and crooked" parts of the city, namely gecekondu neighbourhoods.

The decentralization of the industry from the city brought about a shift in the function of the city from an industrial towards a service city and primarily to a global tourism destination, pushing the mass labour into redundancy. Gecekondu, tolerated up until a time when the city turned its wheels of economy via production industry was now convicted as a criminal activity. It was at this very point in the history of the country, in 2004, that gecekondu building was taken under the Criminal Code (Kuyucu 2009), generating a radical transformation not only in the traditional landscape of the city but in its population make-up as well.

Another consequence of the process is observed in the integration of gecekondu inhabitants into the formal market system. As the settled labour populations of gecekondu neighbourhoods are evicted, displaced and relocated to the TOKI high rises in the periphery, the hitherto informal gecekondu system is taken within the formal market system. From the stance of the government, the process is several birds with just one stone since through the replacement of the gecekondu system with a state regulated system of low-income housing market, AKP is now able to *"(i) stop the construction of new gecekondus, (ii) demolish all existing gecekondus in urban areas, (iii) integrate gecekondu inhabitants into the formal public housing market and (iv) open up the cleared gecekondu areas into capitalist investments"* (Kuyucu 2009).

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[10] Gecekondu literally means "put at night",referring to the emergency of its construction to avoid intervention from state forces. It is built eitheir solely by its owner or with the help of other neighbours as fast as possible. Different from a slum or shanty, it is a 1 or 2 storey building in the outskirts of the city, usually with a garden The owners improve their dwellings as they become more settled, thus gecekondu becomes a permanent residence for low income groups through time. Up to 2000's amnesties of gecekondus have been quite regular, a populist mechanism employed by almost all governments, leading both to further gecekondu building and to the establishment of current ones.

[11] For a detailed account of these developments, refer to Istanbul Report (2009) of the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions to UN-Habitat : http://www.un-habitat.org/downloads/docs/10008_1_593995.pdf.

2. Ayazma Urban Transformation Project

Thanks to its affordable housing conditions and employment oppurtunities in nearby factories plus its spacious open spaces and natural landscape just like the villages left behind, Ayazma had been preferred by IDPs from the East and the Southeast, starting from 1980's, causing the formation of an homogenous population in the area. Once in the very periphery but with the enlargement of the big city currently in the center, situated on main transportation axes and destination points such as the Transit European Motorway (TEM) and Basın Express Highway and also in the North of Halkalı mass housing site and satellite cities like Başakşehir and Altınşehir, quite near Istanbul Atatürk Airport, Ikitelli Industrial Zone and also Küçükçekmece Lake, Ayazma could not escape the attention of developers. The locality gained further value after the construction of the 120 million dollar Olympic Stadium nearby in 2002 (Fig. 1).

The area was taken under urban transformation by TOKI, local municipality and big city municipality of Istanbul in 2004 to be regenerated for prestigious projects. It was evacuated completely by February 2007. The rightful beneficiaries[12] were relocated to Halkalı TOKI site, under unaffordable conditions[13] and the luxurious housing project My World Europe by Ali Agaoğlu was erected on the site.

2.1 Misinformation, Criminalization and Stigmatization

According to Mike Davis (2006), since the '70's, third- world governments have upheld slum clearance as one of the efficient means of fighting against crime; and, the stigmatization and criminalization of slum areas and informal neighbourhoods have become tools for constructing legitimacy for demolishions and evictions. Starting from 2005 when renewal and transformation laws were first enacted, Turkey has witnessed the criminalization of the urban poor and especially gecekondu populations by the authorities.

According to the Prime Minister R.Tayyip Erdogan (PM), *"..gecekondus have surrounded our cities like a tumor…[14]"* and the government is fulfilling the ideal of demolishing and getting rid of them. Similarly, Erdoğan Bayraktar, the president of TOKI at the time (currently the Minister of Environment and Urban Affairs) stated that *"Irregular urbanization breeds terrorism"* (2007) and *"According to our point of view, there is gecekondu behind terrorism. The main problems of our country are first terrorism, after terrorism, the budget deficit and then irregular urbanization. We will do our best to solve these interrelated issues[15]".* Police officials also join the chorous: *"While the public housing projects constructed through urban transformation end irregular urbanization, they also destroy the spaces that provide shelter for criminal and terorist organizations"* (Bartu Candan-Kolluoğlu 2008). Struggle against criminal activities

Figure 1. 1-2 storey houses and wide open spaces of Ayazma and the Olympic Stadium behind. Photo: Jean Francois Perouse.

and terorism in gecekondu neighborhoods -if there are any- is thus reduced to a simple change of location. TOKI housing blocks hold the magic keys whereby each and every criminal act and terorist activity in the city will be eradicated once transferred into the apartment blocks of TOKI.

Quite in line, right before the demolishions in Ayazma, the local municipality of Küçükçekmece (the Municipality henceforth) employed similar strategies. First, it organized an international urban regeneration symposium and a workshop in 2004 and then exploited the international event to get the affirmation of the public, academia and mass media for its regeneration project to be implemented shortly afterwards.[16] Quoting from the symposium book:

"... It is (Ayazma) an area illegally developed upon treasury property (squatter houses), consisting mainly of single-storied houses devoid of any technical and social infrastructure, causing the area to be regarded as a slum area in both social and economic terms. The neighbourhood is disintegrated from and located at the outskirts of the city with a population profile which may be considered as 'the others', who try to hang on to the city, indeed to life under extremely primitive conditions of living at a sub-area likely to be the most prestigious one in the Istanbul Metropolitan Area" (Özdemir, Özden, and Turgut 2005).

According to the organizers of the event, one of the main reasons for convening the symposium was the threat of the expected earthquake (Özdemir, Özden, and Turgut 2005). However, as inferred from the above quotation (and see the picture above), a settlement *"consisting mainly of single-storied houses"* among large open spaces can not pose much of a threat. What is more, according to the subsequent publications of the Municipality on the geological characteristics of

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[12] 1108 families from Ayazma and 366 from Tepeüstü, a total of 1474 families.

[13] According to the surveys of the Municipality conducted in Nov. 2008, nearly 2 years after the relocation, 43% wanted to sell with debts and move out, leaving aside those who had already sold and those who had never moved in and transferred their rights to 3rd parties.

[14] From his speech at the First Housing Assembly organized by the MHA in 2006.

[15] From www.erdoganbayraktar.com, the unofficial webpage of Bayraktar where he publicly criminalizes gecekondu inhabitants.

[16] As expressed by the three academician organizers, Özdemir, Özden and Turgut, the aim of the event was " to achieve a shared understanding, with the slogan of ' From local to Universal' by learning from experiences of foreign regeneration strategies and creating new domestic equivalents by taking into account our local, regional and national dynamics". On the other hand, "the domestic equivalents" in all neighbourhoods analyzed, starting with Ayazma in 2004, have proven to be prestigious projects for upper income groups, leading to forced evictions and demolishions in the neighbourhoods studied by the aforementioned academicians.

Ayazma, the territory where the neighbourhood is located was scientifically documented as safe (Küçükçekmece Municipality 2008). The studies of the Municipality refute their own claim about the threat of earthquake. Furthermore, when the surveys of the Municipality are analyzed, in contrast to the allegations, it becomes evident that not all residents are illegal occupiers, a considerable proportion, 32%, consist of private property owners (Özdemir, Özden, and Turgut 2005). The last sentence in the above quotation: *"...at a sub-area likely to be the most prestigious one in the Istanbul Metropolitan Area"* is a clear negation of the previous one which states that Ayazma is "located at the outskirts of the city". Misinformation thus becomes an adequate tool for furnishing justifications for the project, diverting the attention of the public from forced evictions, demolitions and violations of housing rights.

The above quotation is word by word from the translation in the Symposium book and a very important detail needs to pointed out here in terms of translations of certain words in the book. The word *"outskirts"* is used for "*varoş*" yet this is an inadequate translation if not a deliberate twist. Varoş, from Hungarian origin, indicates quite a different meaning. In the Turkish context the word has threatening connotations, being associated with suburban gangs, vandalism, and criminal activities. So the use of that particular term can not be viewed as innocent. Another translation slip occurs in identifying the neighbourhood as *"a slum area in both social and economic terms"*. The original Turkish version is *"a social and economic blight area"* which is paraphrased in leaflets and brochures as *"areas of social and physical decay"*. In their studies, Perouse (2007) and Bartu Candan and Kolluoglu (2008) refer to the stigmatization of Ayazma-Tepeüstü populations by the Municipality through manipulation of words where "social" is used next to the word *"physical"* right before *"decay"*. Thus, by carefully chosen words, not only the physical conditions of the buildings and the environment are targeted but also the social fabric of these neighbourhoods, the inhabitants are labeled as decaying. Perouse notes that the implication goes so far as to encompass a *"moral decay"*, laying the ground for justifying evictions and displacement. Similarly, Gray and Mooney (2011) discuss the use of the term blight for areas targeted for regeneration, underscoring that the term is metaphorically associated with plant pathology and medicine, conflating areas/ people with death/decay. Thus, connoting a site as a site of blight, *"...is defining a neighbourhood that can not effectively fight back, but which is either an eyesore or is well located for some construction project that important interests wish to build"* (Gray and Mooney 2011). The valuable location of Ayazma attracted the attention of public (TOKI) and private developers. Its Kurdish population labeled as "the others" by the Municipality was an eyesore. Due to its traumatic past experiences with the state, it was not possible for the community to mobilize easily and build any resistance. In short, Ayazma matched the portrait drawn by Gray and Mooney more than perfectly.

"The other" in this case happened to be the Kurdish migrant criminalized as socially and morally decaying, the uncivilized

and the corrupted, who did not deserve to live *"...at a sub-area likely to be the most prestigious one in the Istanbul Metropolitan Area"*. Above all, the visibility of such a population in a potentially prestigious area became the sole anxiety and distress of the Mayor:

"Its living standards are quite below the standards of Istanbul. Here, we confront a living standard so low that we can not catch a sight like this even in Anatolia. What is more, it is next to the internationally prestigious Olympic Stadium and at a location where it can easily be seen from TEM autoroute" (Özkan 2008).

The speech based on the dichotomies of urban (İstanbul) and rural (Anatolia) placing the emphasis on *"even in Anatolia"* is a modernist metaphor on the primitive rural vis-a-vis the modern urban. Here, Ayazma's living standards are evaluated as being even lower than those of Anatolia, consequently normalizing expected demolishments and evictions through devalorisation. However, the important point which should not be missed here is the reasoning behind the uneasiness and distress of the Mayor. Forgetting his responsibilities as the local authority, he does not seem to be affected at all by the dismal standards of a settlement within the boundaries of his authority and jurisdiction. His uneasiness does not stem from realizing the poor standards of Ayazma or his responsibilities and promises as a Mayor not fulfilled but from the fact that *"...it is (Ayazma) next to the internationally prestigious Olympic stadium and at a location where it can easily be seen from TEM autoroute"*.

The significance attached to the visual is alarming because the solution to the problem will automatically be found in demolishing and expelling the ugly, the unhealthy, the dirty, the crooked... especially if these bear the potential of becoming visible to the international community. Mike Davis (2006) refers to a similar phenomenon when he underlines that the urban poor are frightened of international mega events. Knowing that they are viewed by authorities as the *"dirt"* or *"malady"* of their cities not to be shown to the global audience, they expect evictions and displacement.

The Olympic Stadium close by causes Ayazma to be under spotlights during times of international events; consequently, it is quite unnerving for the authorities that the dire standard of living which can not be any part of Istanbul *(living standards are quite below the standards of Istanbul)* will be discernible to international visitors. The inhabitants of Ayazma were more than accustomed to the warnings issued by the Municipality in times of international events, ordering them to stay inside and not to be seen during day time and turn off their electricity when the events took place at night. In case they did not comply with these regulations, the Municipality took the illegitimate regulation into its own hands and cut off the electricity. And, before one of the international spectacles in the Stadium, the walls of their gecekondus facing the stadium were all painted white by the Municipality, *"a favour denied to the other walls"*, as the joke goes round the neighborhood! It was the period when Istanbul was being showcased for the European Capital of Culture (ECC) 2010, on the way to

becoming a brand city. So, rather than implementing social and economic policies to eradicate the poverty in the area and mitigate its conditions, solving the problem was found in making the community invisible through forced evictions, simple, easy and profitable. When the developer Agaoglu's luxurious housing project *My World Europe* was erected on the site, the issue would all together be resolved! Turning to Davis (2006) again, *"Apart from the legal aspect, massive demolitions and evictions are justified by improvement and beautification of the city, removal of centres of crime and health hazards, and more intensive and lucrative use of land in strategic locations."*

Gray and Mooney, in their study on Glasgow East, warn about *"...narratives which focus on the failures, limitations and inadequacies of the local population"*, claiming that *"It is a short step from understanding problems in an area to presenting them as problems of an area or its population"* (2011). This kind of reasoning, through shifting the ground of discussion, leads to a critical misjudgement; one is apt to blame the sufferer for her/his own sufferings rather than the unjust system which is the actual perpetrator of sufferings and violations. Accordingly, when Ayazma inhabitants are held responsible for their *"low standards"* and *"extremely primitive conditions of living"*, the solution to the problem is found in bulldozing the neighbourhood and displacing the community to modern TOKI houses to be civilized rather than questioning the social and economic policies of the central and local governments.

Referring once more to Gray and Mooney (2011), they underline how recently constructed representations of Glasgow reflect a market-driven view that formulates the problems of the area in such a way as to *"produce and reproduce territorial stigmatisation"*, creating the notion of *"a problem place with a problem population"*. The problem population in our context comprises Kurdish inhabitants of Ayazma labelled as *"the others"* in the international symposium book of the Municipality. Devalorisation of Kurdish citizens of gecekondus through allusions to PKK has been a commonly used tactic by the authorities and mass media. When the president of TOKI alleges that they are *"destroying the lairs of terror"* (2008) via gecekondu demolishments and that *"gecekondu breeds illegal organizations"* (2012), the concepts of illegality and terror are immediately associated with PKK guerrilas by the public. Thus by establishing a link between Kurdish inhabitants and PKK guerrilas in the public mind, the stage is set for possible interventions into minority neighbourhoods. Quoting from a booklet of the Municipality, Ayazma, where "the others" reside happens to be one of the *"...places of unsolvable issues where there is no security of life; places which have sometimes created their own criminal regions, regions of social blight… unhappy, unsafe living environments that are outsiders to their environs"* (2008). Carefully chosen words of *"unhappy"*, *"unsafe"*, *"outsider"* that imply anti-social behaviour, a term used frequently to rationalize forced evictions, are used side by side with an openly declared devalorisation, *"criminal regions"*, consequently constructing legitimacy for all kinds of state/capital interventions into the neighbourhood.

Summing up, these criminal anti-social regions and lairs of terror that are threat to the city and its civilized residents, need to be conquered while their savage inhabitants - *"the demonized others against us"* - be civilized in order to guarantee the safety and well-being of the city (allusion to the country as well). No patriotic Turkish citizen would object to it. Building on the Western Frontier concept of Frederick Turner which is defined as *"the meeting point between savagery and civilization"*, Neil Smith points out to the *"rationalization and legitimization of a process of conquest"* where he denominates urban renewal as the conquest of the time (Smith 2011) After its rationalization and legitimization thus accomplished, the conquest of Ayazma turned out to be smooth as there was no resistance or opposition from the public against the renewal project and Ayazma population was too disorganized to be able to mobilize and resist. Now came the turn of the conquered (Ayazma population) to be civilized through a social project[17] of the Municipality which was publicized as a civilization project but which in fact aimed to transform the community into compliant citizens of modern TOKI blocks. When the necessity of such a project was questioned in our interview with one of the officials, she defended it on grounds of criminal activities, leaving the *"criminal"* part unanswered: *"...I mean we looked at the criminal condition. Ayazma is a focal point in this context"*.

On the other hand, the reality, as expressed in the words of an inhabitant unveiled a completely different picture: *"There isn't any village left behind. My village was so beautiful… We came to this city to be able to live a beter life. We fled from cruely yet they called us PKK here"* (Yıldıral 2008).

3. Life At Bezirganbahçe

"It's easy to make a new city but hard to relocate persons, you lose nature, your job, familiar surroundings and neighbours you are used to. My soul has died here. So has my child's".

Ayazma was demolished in parts starting from 2006. Beginning from February 2007, those accepted as beneficiaries[18] were relocated to Bezirganbahçe Mass Housing Blocks built by TOKI. Bezirganbahçe TOKI site consists of 55 blocks, 11 storeys with 49 apartments each. We visited the site, nearly two years after the relocation in 2008 Fall. The dilapidated appearance of the buildings and the low quality of the materials made us wonder what was wrong in Ayazma. Bathrooms were dripping to the lower storeys; walls were cracked; elevators did not work efficiently; tile decorations of the entrances were falling down; the kitchen sinks caused trouble and above all the buildings were not safe.[19] Unfortunately,

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[17] This is the project funded by EU and aiming to transform Ayazma population into citizens in compliance with "apartment-life civilization". It is a surprise that such a controversial project which undermines international human rights norms can be funded by EU.

[18] Tenants were not accepted as beneficiaries at first; but made beneficiaries after a 2 year resistance, later in February 2009.

[19] In one of our visits in 2008, after a hard rain in Istanbul, the residents told us how some of the basements where janitors lived were under flood and they had to break windows to get belongings and people out. In 2012, Canik TOKI site in Trabzon was flooded, 6 persons, 2 of whom were children, got killed, not being able to get out of basements: http://en.dunyatimes.com/article/Critics-question-govt-role-in-Samsun-flood-tragedy.html.

Ayazma population did not have the economic means to re-pair their homes, because almost all had been living on the brink of poverty due to monthly installments of bank credits and extra expenditures. If Ayazma was any *"blight area"*, it seemed that TOKI and municipalites had constructed anoth-er potential blight area, ironically transferring and exacerbat-ing all the problems of Ayazma including the low standard of living and poverty to the relocation site.

Another issue proved itself in the social and cultural spheres. The inadequate public spaces and structure of the TOKI site prevented the community from practicing its culture. Simple house chores and practices such as drying large carpets out-side, sitting on the lawn with neighbourhoods for tea, dancing the *'halay'* in the open public spaces were prohibited while ages old traditions such as open air weddings and mass fu-neral ceremonies became spatially impossible.

3.1 Living in a Site of Exacerbated Poverty and Confined Spaces: Dissolution of Social Networks and Preclusion of Cultural Practices

Exacerbated poverty generated by economic hardships that could not be mitigated easily was the most visible outcome of the relocation process. On the other hand, solidarity bonds and neighbourly relations which are vital mechanisms for the survival of the urban poor in big cities were dissolved after the relocation (Bartu Candan-Kolluoğlu 2008; Kuyucu 2009; Baysal 2010). This less visible social outcome however was no less critical. Along with economic hardships, inadequate spatial arrangements of the relocation site designed without any consideration of the everyday life, social relations and cul-tural practices of the relocated population contributed to the dissolution, accelerating the disintegration of social networks and solidarity bonds. Another adverse impact of inadequate spatial arrangements showed itself on the cultural practices and everyday life of the community, making them impossible. The community was turned into atomized individuals, each focusing solely on her/his own problems. Actually, this may be the desired outcome for the authorities who have viewed the Kurdish community as *"the others"* who *"possess certain habits from their previous surroundings"*. Now, these habits could be easily dealt with as all collective gatherings and solidarity net-works of the community were made unviable.

According to the credit schedule, the beneficiaries were requested to pay monthly installments of 220-320 TL (100-150 €) for 15 years to eventually own the title deeds of their apartments. The installments may look fairly reasonable at first; however, when one takes into account that an average Ayazma resident earned 600-900 TL (275-410 €) monthly and had to pay extra expenses such as monthly mainte-nance fee (15 €), natural gas[20] (50-75€ in Winter/10-20€ in Summer) and higher prices for electricity and city wa-ter (each 20-30 €), the miserable financial conditions of the population can well be understood;[21] vital needs such as food, health, education, transportation are excluded from the calulation. According to the survey of the Municipality conducted almost 2 years after the relocation in 2008, 43% wanted to sell their rights because of economic hardships.

Figure 2. Borcuyla satılık: Sold with debt.
Photo: Cihan Uzunçarşılı Baysal.

The relocated population lived under the imminent threat of foreclosures (Bartu Candan-Kolluoğlu 2008; Kuyucu 2009; Baysal 2010). Up to now, more than 50% have sold with debts and moved out, more impoverished and deprived than before (Fig. 2).

Dire economic conditions also impacted social networks and solidarity bonds. The bread which used to be cooked in the tandirs[22] of Ayazma and shared generously even with outsid-ers had to be bought from the TOKI market now. It became a symbol of shattered networks as noone would share anything that is bought : *"If the man got jobless or became hungry, there would always be somebody to help him in Ayazma. I mean, the order is shattered as a result of moving here. When we baked bread at Ayazma,[23] we used to give 2 loaves to others. Here we got the bread with money and noone can easily share the bread that is paid. Even if hell breaks loose here, you can not bring two persons together anymore".*

Neighbours who visited each other, shared tea times and meals at every opportunity and/or were able to leave their children next door in times of need and/or rushed next door for help in emergency and/or were able to borrow from and lend one another... lost contact with each other as social re-lations disintegrated or at best became quite seldom due to economic hardships. "The order was shattered"; as the to-matoe, cucumber, red/green pepper, in short the vegetable and fruit from the garden, eggs and poultry from the coop to be served to guests had to be bought from the TOKI Super Market. Having guests became a luxurious practice : *"We used to be like a family; but here, I can not see my old neighbour at all*

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[20] In Ayazma they had access to cheap heating facilities, such as coal distributed by municipality or wood and timber from around.

[21] 2008 figures from our survey, confirmed by the surveys of the Municipal-ity as well in its publication: Sırma Turgut-Eda C. Ceylan, Bir Yerel Yönetim Deneyiminin Ardından, Küçükçekmece Belediye Başkanlığı, İstanbul, 2010.

[22] It is an oven made in a hole in the earth. There used to be common tandirs all over Ayazma where the inhabitants cooked their weekly bread for their large families, providing bread quite cheaply.

[23] The reference is to tandir.

Figure 3. TOKİ yaşamlar: Life among TOKI blocks.
Photo: Tuna Kuyucu.

even though she lives just one floor above. Everyone is struggling with his/her own hardships."

Ayazma families were generally large families with 3-5 kids. There were also extended families living together with their married children. In contrast to the flexible gecekondu which can be enlargened horizantally by the construction of new rooms or vertically by adding another flat as the family gets larger, Bezirganbahçe apartments were quite small, 72 square-meters each, constructed not for the needs of the crowded relocated population but for the nuclear middle-class family.

The atmosphere was described through feelings of imprisonment and confinement as reflected in the interviews: *"This place is no better than prison"* / *"They say that TOKI gave us a house; TOKI did not give me a house but a dungeon, it gave me a dungeon."* In contrast to Ayazma, where a step outside welcomed the inhabitants with a green, spacious world, living in high rises and among blocks aggravated feelings of imprisonment. For women, most of whom did not speak Turkish, going out became a big issue; for, they were afraid of getting lost among the blocks: *"It's been 6 months my feet have not touched soil"*. Those courageous enough to go shopping or wandering around had to face hostilities for speaking Kurdish: *"I took Newroz (the child) outside to the playground and had a call from home (Batman-South East). So, I started talking Kurdish. A 'gaudy' lady approached telling me 'there is no other Istanbul!"*. In contrast to Ayazma, access to the outside became a problem for women in Bezirganbahçe. The children who were used to playing freely in the safe public spaces of Ayazma were also locked up in the apartments together with their mothers. And just like their mothers, they underwent psychological traumas.

The spatial arrangements of the TOKI site based on rigid rules and regulations about the use of space created obstacles, contributing further to the disintegration of solidarity bonds and neighbourly relations. Meeting friends outside the buildings was not easy as there were no public spaces enabling gatherings. It was forbidden to make picnics outside or sprawl on the lawns as they used to do back in Ayazma. The green spots in front of the blocks of Bezirganbahçe were forbidden for public use. In the first days of their arrival, when women sat

on the lawn to chat and had their tea together as was the custom in Ayazma, they were harshly warned by the authorities to act *'civilized'*. The youth who used to dance to the *'halay'* in the green plots of Ayazma were also admonished to behave properly. As access to the outside world became difficult, and as the frequency of neighbourly relations decreased, seeing one another, listening to each other's problems, attending one another's needs got rare; all solidarity mechanisms collapsed. The relocated population was condemned to living in 72 square meter spaces, undergoing a traumatic experience in a confined atmosphere of desolateness (Fig. 3).

The Kurdish community needs wide public spaces for its distinct cultural practices such as open air weddings or condolence tents which enable relatives from hometowns to come and attend these events; theirs is a culture practiced with large crowds. TOKI sites on the other hand are not viable for cultural practices of gecekondu communities especially of Romani or Kurdish communities. These sites are not adequate for everyday practices either. In this context, washing and drying rugs have an important place in the everyday lives of gecekondu populations since life at gecekondu means life on the floor where the family eats, sits, studies, watches TV and sleeps. This is a practical solution for crowded families enabling the maxium use of space; thus, it is very important that the rugs be kept clean (Erman 2009). At Ayazma, the women used to wash their rugs outside the houses on green plots and to leave them or hang them on nearby walls or fences to dry. In contrast, one of the items in the list of *"not to do"*'s at Bezirganbahçe was washing rugs outside or hanging them on the balcony railings to dry. At the entrance of each building, there was a list of regulations on the use of space. The aforementioned prohibitions were complimented with warnings to be quiet, to use the elevators with care, not to leave shoes at the entrance of apartment doors...:

"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" (Bartu Candan- Kolluoğlu 2008).

Though not written on the list, large gatherings of youth were not permitted either:

"We had a soccer field at Ayazman, we used to go there in the evenings, get food and drink. We'd talk, build a fire, dance the 'halay. We were happy there. There is nothing as good as gecekondu. We don't like it here. Whenever we come together with friends,the police appears and scatters us. There is nothing here, not even an internet cafe. When you sit in the corner of a building here, to have a talk with friends, they immediately call the police. Eveybody knew each other at Ayazman, you could visit anyone you want to, have tea there or eat and drink together".

The spatial arrangements of the site seemed to be designed to hinder meetings, gatherings and crowds. A suspicion of

collective life was at work in Bezirganbahçe TOKI Houses and it is no wonder that at the entrance, the welcoming sign noted that *"The site is being watched by 62 mobese cameras"*. At times when these and other spatial obstacles failed, police was always there to intervene,[24] as also reflected in the quote above. *"Envisaged is clearly an environment where life takes place indoors, in the realm of the nuclear family, emitting as minimal signs as possible to the public outside. People are to live together without much friction - noise is to be avoided, children to be kept indoors, their toys to be removed from the corridors - which in effect entails the vision of mutually isolated nuclear living units"* Schafers (2011). Bezirganbahçe thus turned out to be an open prison for the community.

3.2 Civilizing the Population of Ayazma

"Those, whose houses were transformed,[25] needs to be trans-formed"
Aziz Yeniay, the Mayor of Küçükçekmece

Right after the relocation of Ayazma population to Bezirgan-bahçe, the mass media acclaimed the urban transformation project with headlines *"They jumped to a higher class"* (Kent Yaşam, 03.03.2007) / *"They became owners of luxurious houses thanks to urban transformation"* (Zaman, 26.02.2006). In the fliers, leaflets and advertising materials of the Municipality, the project was introduced with colorful photos depicting happy faces, hygienic surroundings, neat and tidy places accompanied by slogans:

"A Küçükçekmece where generations who view the future with confidence, happiness and health are being raised" / "Look at Life From a New Window" / "Ayazma /Tepeüstü Urban Transformation Projects: Your dreams are being fulfilled".

Among all this advertisement and publicity, it is rather unexpected that there isn't any reference to urban transformation in the web page of the Municipality and interestingly enough, the name of the page is not Küçükçekmece Municipality but *This is Small Istanbul*: www.kucukistanbul.org.[26] On the other hand, one of the headers in the page is *"Civilization"* and when it is clicked, a notice welcomes us: *"The Rebirth of Civilization: Urban Transformation Leap"*. The text continues describing *"A city of gardens, green fields, well-cared streets… a planned city. An examplary city with mass housing blocks, newly opened roads, parking lots, infrastructure facilities…"*, proclaiming that *"With its urban transformation leap, This is small Istanbul"*. Consequently, urban transformation /regeneration is conflated with civilization and also with Istanbul. We learn that through its regeneration projects, that is, through *"the leap"* to civilization, Küçükçekmece is on the way of becoming small Istanbul: *"Here is small Istanbul. Istanbul's best values are revived here".*

The reference to Istanbul is indeed significant given that the city was nominated as the European Capital of Culture (ECC) for the year 2010 at the time. In all of its advertising materials, booklets and fliers, the Municipality uses ECC 2010 logos, writing its name next to them as *"The District of Culture of the European Capital"* (Baysal 2010). So, *"Almost all of Küçükçek-mece, which is getting prepared to become 2010 District of Culture, is under the scope of urban transformation"* (Lodos 2009).

Since Europe signifies civilization and modernism, it follows that urban transformation in the District of Culture 2010 is a civilization project turning Küçükçekmece into a modern European district. This civilization leap encompasses to transform not only spaces and physical surrroundings but some inhabitants (*"the others"*) as well. Repeating the words of the Mayor, *"Those, whose houses were transformed, need to be transformed"* because those populations *"possess certain habits from their previous surroundings. These habits and the new locations they moved in are not the same… We will use the funds[27] to integrate people into urban life"* (Newspapers 11.17.2006).

Similarly, in our interview, the coordinator of the project justified this *"civilization"* project on the grounds that:

"Our Link[28] is the social stage of the urban transformation project. Citizens from here (Ayazma) were relocated to Bezirganbahçe and moved out from their living spaces to apartments, to quite a different culture. First of all, they started facing problems of adaptation to their new surroundings. In fact, if you analyze the results of our survey, you can understand the profile quite seriously, I mean their levels of education, of culture..."

Mainstream mass media was very interested in the project, applauding it as *"Apartment life training to gecekondu dwellers"*.

In the papers of the time, one can come across eulogising comments frequently:

"Citizens whose gecekondu lives ended with the urban transformation project are moving out to their newly built houses in Halkalı; and, alongside their houses, they, themselves are also being taken under the transformation process. To make gecekondu dwellers, who transferred from gecekondu life to city life and apartment life, adapt to the city and apartment life, Küçükçekmece Municipality, through funds from European Union Social Projects Fund aims to undertake training works in cooperation with NGOs" (Sabah 03.07.2007).

"Through EU funds, 10.000 persons will be given courses on how to live in apartment complexes."[29]

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[24] Because of ethnic tensions and hostilities between Ayazma population and other residents in the site and nearby neighbourhood inhabited by Turkish nationalists, police forces were located in apartment blocks between Ayazma population and the other residents.

[25] From a press statement of the Mayor in 2006.

[26] Just before Istanbul 2010, European Capital of Culture event, the Municipality registered this domain under its ownership on 03.23.2009. The page was terminated in 2011.The present page is Küçükçekmece Belediyesi.

[27] The aim of the EU funded project was to teach the relocated population how to live in apartments; refer to footnote 15.

[28] The name of the project is "Bizim Halk'a" in Turkish and bears 2 meanings concurrently. "Halk", meaning public, so "Halk'a"means " to the public "while "Halka" means "the link" with the implication of linking the population to something/somewhere, the allusion is to civilization and the civilized world.

[29] The headlines is "Apartment Education to Gecekondu Inhabitants": http://www.webhatti.com/wh-haber-bulteni/26430-gecekonducuya-apartman-egitimi.html.

The representatives of several institutions and NGOs in Bezirganbahçe hailed the process, overlooking the social engineering mechanisms of assimilation behind the bright picture. On the other hand, there were also those outwardly espousing assimilation as can be followed in the words of the headmaster of the elementary school in Bezirganbahçe. He criticized that it was a mistake to relocate Ayazma population all together which made it impossible to dissolve them within *"apartment-culture"* (Baysal 2010):

"They shouldn't have been relocated all together here. If there are many people, you can not coalesce them; you can not dissolve sugar in a glass half-filled. In the urban transformation blocks, 'normal' people reside as well. Transformation of the people, of those who are subjects of urban transformation, domestication of the child... these are the responsibilities on our shoulders".

These responsibilities were also shared by an NGO representative administering the social project of the Municipality: *"When we had first visited the place, it was very good. In three months time, they had broken the handrails and broken down the elevators. They need to be educated"* (Baysal 2010). Because the relocated population happened to be *"Completely a different population with a different way of life, they are different in every way[30]"*, they could not be viewed as *"normal"*. This reasoning leads to the final judgement that the Kurdish community had to be educated to adapt to apartment life considered to be civilization, if there was any such civilization indeed! Each one of the adjectives employed to describe the culture of Ayazma community shelters discrimination and othering, ending with a warning on the necessity of taming this uncivilized group. Those who deserve to get to the level of the urbanite will be those who are tamed through apartment-life style trainings; that is those who did their homework well and learned the apartment-style of living, leaving behind their cultural practices and habits.

Surprisingly enough, this reasoning was also held by the other groups at Bezirganbahçe who voiced their expectations for the assimilation of the Kurdish community of Ayazma. Starting from the very first day of their arrival at Bezirganbahçe, Ayazma population was confronted with modernist codes of judgement from other groups that accused them of being uncivilized because of their distinct culture and customs. While some -such as Tepeüstü population- could adapt to life in apartment blocks (they also faced the same economic hardships), it was not easy for the Kurdish community to give up its customs and tradition. This in turn instigated exclusion and discrimination: *"They do not know anything, they had broken the banisters, damaged the elevators. They must be taught how to behave…"*. Like barbarians who could not get along with civilization, these *"people with bestial characteristics (who) would better leave…"* or *"... be cleansed of their ways of life…"* in order to stay:

"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"[31] (Bartu Candan-Kolluoglu 2008).

According to Michel Foucault, obedience is easily attained when certain activities are defined as normal and acceptable while others are demonized and declared abnormal. The culture of Kurdish community was demonized within the boundaries of Bezirganbahçe, both by the authorities and also by the other residents. To be acceptable and normal, they were expected to be assimilated into the culture of the middle class nuclear family by leaving their ages oldcustoms and traditions: *"There are a lot of issues here; there is assimilation right here. My dear friends of Kurdish origin do not want to talk to me. ...He is under the influence of other groups; he does not want to walk with me because of all those remarks telling him that he may get harmed because I am Kurdish and from DTP"* (The Kurdish political party).

In this context, the culture of the city is reduced to a single-dimension, to that of apartment-living and it is at this very point that the true meaning of the city becomes shattered; pluralism and democratic values are completely out of the picture of the transformed city. The apartment which caters to the needs of the middle-class nuclear family happens to be only one of the many living styles and dictating this particular life style to different cultures becomes a serious violation of cultural rights and also the right to adequate housing as pronounced in international human rights law[32] (Baysal 2010). In such a setting, Ayazma community was not only deprived of spatial arrangements conducive to their cultural practices and traditions but was also forced to live under threat of assimilation, expected to get dissolved in the mainstream culture.

It is quite ironic to note that AKP which arrived at the political arena as a political party against all the modernist codes of the Republican era and Kemalist elites, has turned into a modernizing agent itself vis-a-vis gecekondu populations through policies and projects to transform them into civilized apartment residents. According to the modernist viewpoint acknowledged by AKP governments and TOKI, being urban and thus civilized is determined by the quality of lived space. A gecekondu neighbourhood may well be in the center of the city while an apartment complex may be located kilometres away yet this is considered irrelevant. Even though both housing types happen to be within the boundaries of the city and thus can be identified as parts of the urban, solely, the apartment building, in contrast to the gecekondu, deserves to be a component of the urban while the latter is set aside as underdeveloped, primitive and even sick whose malady needs to be prevented from contaminating the other parts of the city like a cancer (here the implication is on morals

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[30] The manager of the TOKI site.

[31] A former Tepeüstü resident.
[32] See UN-OHCHR The right to Adequate Housing 1991, CESCR- General Comment 4 on Cultural Adequacy: http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/469f4d91a9378221c12563ed0053547e.

as well). Recalling the PM: *"Our biggest ideal was to eradicate the gecekondus that have surrounded our cities like a tumor".* Accordingly, when gecekondu neighbourhoods are cleansed and their inhabitants are relocated to *'modern'* TOKI blocks, owing solely to a change of space, the city will not only be cleansed of crooked, unhealthy and dirty settlements but will be be saved from threatening populations as well since these populations will be tamed/ civilized in their new modern locationa. Here, concepts like hygiene, cleanness and order are values attributed to the apartment as a modern housing unit. From this point on, it can easily be deduced that cleansing gecekondus and relocating the populations to hygienic, clean and orderly TOKI sites mean transforming these populations concurrently into compliant and civilized citizens who abide by the law. The sickness /threat in the city is thus ameliorated / eradicated.

Returning once again to Gray and Mooney (2011), they argue that the attemps of authorities to "civilise" the Glasgow East population can be seen as "...regulation and where required disciplining of those deemed to be recalcitrant or incivil." Since "the other" in our case happens to be the Kurdish, it is very important to acknowledge that the transformation of the recalcitrant becomes all the more important.

3.3 Discrimination, Exclusion and Polarization

Ayazma/Tepeustu Urban Transformation Project was the first one in Istanbul that relocated the homogenous population of a neighbourhood all together. In Bezirganbahçe, Ayazma population shares the site with populations from other transformation areas of Tepeustu and Zeytinburnu and also with low-income families and middle classes (such as retired teachers, stewardesses, hairdressers) who bought from Bezirganbahçe TOKI. Relocation of populations from completely different cultures on the same site, who have had very little contact, inevitably created intergroup problems. In such an environment, even the type dressing, because it unveils one's cultural background can bring about discriminations and hostility.

The relocation of Ayazma population in 2007 coincided with the time of general elections in Turkey. The political atmosphere was one of accelerating Turkish nationalism. On the day of their arrival, meters-long Turkish flags were hung from the blocks, making Ayazma population wonder, *"As citizens of Turkey, we also respect the same flag. So, against whom are they hung, if not against us?".* Hostilities continued mounting during the election campaigna. While candidates from all other political parties were welcomed to Bezirganbahçe, no candidate from the Kurdish political party was permitted to enter the site. The adverse influences from Yenidogan neighbourhood, whose residents are Turkish nationalists, at a walking distance from Bezirganbahce, needs also be mentioning. The walls outside Yenidogan neighbourhood welcomes pedestrians with grafittis of 3 crescents (symbol of extreme nationalists) next to *"Nationalists hand in hand in Yenidogan / Yenidogan is the sole castle".* Turkish nationalists from Yenidogan not only influenced the atmosphere in Bezirganbahçe but also actively participated in harassments and armed clashes against the Kurdish community: *"They broke in Bezirganbahçe*

2-3 times. They came at 11 pm; at midnight, shouting 'the bastards of Apo can not intimidate us'. Once or twice we retaliated, there was a clash".* After an armed clash between the groups, the solution was found in replacing police officials with their families in the blocks between those inhabited by Ayazma population and other groups, insulating the Kurdish community much more.

Hostilities continued under discrimination at every event, even during commonly shared religious practices: *"We went to the mosque. They accused us with allegations that those coming from the East had stolen their shoes".* On the first days of their arrival, the Kurdish community was not accepted to the coffe-house either: *"Just put on a dress of that region, immediately they turn away from you"* Vertical pressures from local authorites through the civilization project were thus coupled with ethnic hostilites and horizantal discrimination. The mechanisms of *"regulation and where required disciplining of those deemed to be recalcitrant or incivil"* (Gray-Mooney 2011) made life at Bezirganbahçe unbearable for the population of Ayazma: *"Even the Roma did not want to come here. They foresaw that they would undergo something like this. Both the Turkish and the Alevi groups cause this. If there is any malady, it harms everyone."* This virus, this malady was on the critical verge of turning into an epidemic when polarization got hold of children as well: *"We had our Turkish neighbours at Ayazma as well. We had no such things between us. I am really anxious about the future. Yesterday, my child beat up a class mate. I asked him why, and he told me that the kid was from Sinop (Black Sea region). 'Daddy', he said, 'those kids had beaten up a boy from Batman (South East region). So to get even, we beat the Sinop kid".* The grave issue was observed by volunteers working with children in social projects: *"We had some observations while we had been doing our project here last year. There is a serious Turkish/Kurdish polarization here, and more importantly older children are aware of this. We found out serious traces of this in the activities we did. In the 'I' letters we told them to write, they had overtly explained their tendencies to violence, and we were not much surprised to find that out".*

However, more critical was the fact that while volunteers were able to note the issue, the Municipality did not even consider it. When asked how they viewed this important problem, the answer given by one of the officials exposes the real motive: "Indeed, all these mass housing blocks, these places will all become ghettos in 15-20 years time, but we have to work on remigration, these people should go back".

Conclusion

Remigration was viewed positively by the authorities (Baysal 2010). Upon our question of how the Municipality evaluated economic harships encountered by the relocated populations, the Mayor confided that *"They can never see that much money throughout their lives. So what! They can sell and go back to their hometowns; 60.000 TL is a great amount of money in those regions[33]".* Similarly, the official responsible for UTPs in the district municipality indicated that he could not reverse

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[33] In a personal meeting in 2009.

the process: *"Do you know where most of them go? Either to their hometowns or to Tekirdag and environs of Thracia. They have 50-60 thousand TL with them. They go and buy 3-5 acres of land, put a gecekondu inside, enclose it and start animal husbandry, returning back to their previous lives. I can not prevent this indeed..."*

Not only those confronting severe economic conditions but also those who could not adapt to life in apartment buildings were expected to leave as was reflected by the manager of the site: *"A differing kind of population; their way of living, it is different in all aspects. They are used to separate homes with gardens... they arrived without changing their point of views. Those who could not accept left. 10% at the very beginning could not accept it, for me the reason is not economic; they were not able to adapt to life at apartment-buildings".*

The real motive behind the project showed its unabashed face at every occassion: *"They sell and go, we have returned to normalcy[34]".* As more and more sold and moved out, normalcy was reclaimed in the relocation site with its compliant citizens of TOKI civilization! Recalcitrance if not domesticated was expulsed through indirect means. The frontier was once more drawn as populations from all directions of the city moved out from TOKI silos to squat in the periphery deprived and impoverished where they could stay till the White Man, in need of urban rent and thus land, launched the next attack to wilderness.

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