

STORIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT:  
POLITICS OF BELONGING  
AND SUBJECTIVITY IN GÜLSUYU NEIGHBORHOOD

SEDA KARSLIOĞLU

BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY

2009

STORIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT:  
POLITICS OF BELONGING AND  
SUBJECTIVITY IN GÜLSUYU NEIGHBORHOOD

Thesis submitted to the  
Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
Sociology

by  
Seda Karşlıođlu

Bođaziçi University

2009

Stories of the Past and Present:  
Politics of Belonging and Subjectivity in Gülsuyu Neighborhood

The thesis of Seda Karşlıođlu  
has been approved by:

Assist. Prof. Nazan Üstündađ  
(Thesis Advisor)

---

Assoc. Prof. Meltem Ahıska

---

Assist. Prof. Zeynep ađlayan Gambetti

---

October 2009

## Thesis Abstract

Seda Karslıođlu, “ Stories of the Past and Present: Politics of Belonging and Subjectivity  
in Gülsuyu Neighborhood”

Based on narrative analysis of the interviews I have conducted during the fieldwork, this study aims to analyze the experience of living in the Gülsuyu neighborhood. To this end, first of all through narratives of establishment and narratives of the 12 September 1980 military coup, it is aimed to understand how belonging to this locality is articulated by inhabitants. At the end of this section, it is argued that the difficulty of everyday life that characterizes the narratives of establishment is overcome by social solidarity within the community. Following narratives of establishment, narratives of 12 September 1980 coup are read as characterizing the process that robbed people from the tools that rendered them successful in their struggle at the everyday level and alienated them from the “home” that is made collectively.

Secondly, this study examines the resisting subjectivities emerging in the face of urban transformation in Gülsuyu neighborhood today. Focusing on the narratives on urban transformation experience, it is claimed that the narratives and practices of the new emerging subjectivities are mainly shaped through the distrust toward the state and the ambiguities inherent in urban transformation process.

## Tez Özeti

Seda Karşlıođlu, “Geçmişin ve Bugünün Hikâyeleri: Gülsuyu Mahallesi’nde Aidiyet ve

### Öznellik Politikaları”

Saha çalışması sırasında yapılan mülakatların anlatı analizine dayanan bu çalışma, Gülsuyu Mahallesi’nde yaşama deneyimini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, ilk olarak mahallenin kuruluşuna ve 12 Eylül 1980 askeri darbesine ait anlatılara odaklanarak mahallede yaşayanların mahalle ile kurduğu aidiyet ilişkisi analiz edilmektedir. Bu bölümün sonunda, mahallelinin o dönemde gündelik hayatı tanımlayan zorlukların üstesinden, mahalledeki sosyal dayanışma aracılığı ile geldiđi tartışılmaktadır. Kuruluş anlatılarını takip eden 12 Eylül askeri darbesine ait anlatılar üzerinden ise darbenin, mahallede yaşayanları, gündelik hayatın zorluklarının üstesinden gelmelerini sağlayan araçlardan mahrum bırakan ve onları, kolektif olarak kurdukları “eve” yabancılaştıran bir süreci başlattığı savunulmaktadır.

İkinci olarak, bu tez, Gülsuyu Mahallesi’nde kentsel dönüşüm karşısında ortaya çıkan mücadelecilik öznellik biçimlerini incelemektedir. Kentsel dönüşüm anlatılarına odaklanılan bu bölümde, ortaya çıkan yeni öznelliklerin mücadele anlatı ve pratiklerinin devlete olan güvensizlik ve kentsel dönüşüm planlarındaki belirsizlik ile şekillendiđini tartışılmaktadır.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank all of my informants in Gülsuyu, without whom I would not be able to do my research and write this thesis.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to Assist. Prof. Nazan Üstündağ for accepting to be my thesis advisor and for her support and guidance throughout my education in sociology department. I am also grateful to Assoc. Prof. Meltem Ahıska and Assist. Prof. Zeynep Çağlayan Gambetti, for accepting to be in my thesis committee and for their insightful comments.

I have to express my thankfulness to 78'liler Vakfı for helping me to conduct my research as well.

Lastly, my special thanks goes to my family and my friends for their support throughout this process.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
The Story of This Study.....	1
CHAPTER II: STORIES OF THE PAST.....	20
A Brief History of Gecekondu Neighborhoods.....	21
The Story of Gülsuyu Neighborhood.....	23
Coming to Neighborhood.....	27
Stories of Establishment.....	28
A Brief Account of the September 12, 1980 Coup d’etat.....	37
Stories of the Coup.....	38
Yearning for the Past.....	41
Conclusion.....	52
CHAPTER III: STORIES OF THE PRESENT.....	53
A Brief Account of Urban Transformation in Istanbul.....	53
Theories of Subjectivity.....	58
New Subjectivities Emerging in the Face of Urban Transformation.....	64
Conclusion.....	83
CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION.....	84
REFERENCES.....	90

## FIGURES

- 1.The view of Gülsuyu-Gülensu Neighborhood from the bridge over E-5 highway... 87
- 2.“Beautiful panorama” of Gülsuyu Neighborhood..... 88
- 3.A photo of Gülsuyu-Gülensu Neighborhood taken by the “gaze” from space..... 89



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to understand the experience of living in Gülsuyu neighborhood. To this end, it focuses on the stories related to the past and present of neighborhood, told by inhabitants of this locality.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I will focus on the stories of the past that are consist of narratives about the establishment of the neighborhood and the 12 September 1980 military coup. Related to these narratives I will analyze how belonging to this locality is articulated by my informants in relation to these two different periods.

In the third chapter of this thesis, I will focus on the stories of the present that are narratives related to experiences of urban transformation process. In this chapter discussing briefly urban transformation process in Istanbul related to neo-liberalism, I would focus on experience of Gülsuyu Neighborhood in this process. Following Foucault' and Butler' theories of subjectivity, I will try to understand the new emerging subjectivities in Gülsuyu Neighborhood in the face of urban transformation.

But first of all, I want to start by discussing about the experience of conducting research in this specific locality.

#### The Story of This Study

In this section, I will outline the context of this research, by trying to construct the sense of the locality through referring to my experiences and impressions in the field.

However, before I start, I want to focus briefly on some approaches to both ethnography and the ethnographer.

Bruner (1986) suggests handling ethnography as a discourse, that is, as a genre of storytelling. He argues that ethnographies are guided by an implicit narrative structure; by a story we tell about the people we study. Following Bruner, this study can be considered as a story I am telling about the people in the Gülsuyu Neighborhood. However, we should also consider Geertz's assertion that "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they (...) up to. Such constructions are "fictions", not in the sense of being untruths, but in the sense of having been fashioned or made" (Geertz quoted in Sturge, 2007, pp.7). Thus, in this thesis, the story I am telling is one about the stories told to me by my informants. It is true that this story could be told differently by someone else, since, as Rosaldo (1989) argues, everyone inhabits a different position, determined by age, gender, and, more importantly, by the particular kinds of "insight" her/his life experience enable or inhibit. Thus, this study is the product of my particular vision, which is, in turn, determined by my particular story.

Conducting research in Gülsuyu was not easy for me and brought some difficulties with it. When I tried to give meaning to these difficulties, which characterized the course of my research, I noticed that they could be read as the outcome of a certain ambiguity I felt in Gülsuyu, which, from my point of view, also illustrates the vulnerability of everyday life in this specific locality. In the rest of this chapter, I will try to show how everyday life is rendered ambiguous and vulnerable for my informants. The Oxford English Dictionary defines vulnerable as "liable to be damaged, not protected against attack" (1988). Thus, when I speak of the vulnerability that

characterizes my informant's lives, I mean that their lives are subject to intervention and to random possibilities of change.

In order to develop my argument, first of all I will elaborate how everyday life is characterized by the presence and the intervention of the state in the neighborhood. In relation to this, I will argue that this affected my research through distrust towards me, and also by determining the stories told to me, some of which my informants requested that I not record. Secondly, I will focus on how the circumstantial changes that determine my informants' socio-economic lives sometimes disrupted my research, such as their forgetting to call me back many times, shops and cafes in the neighborhood changing owners frequently, the telephone numbers of informants which "could not be reached at the moment" and the highly flexible and ambiguous working schedules/plans of my informants. In other words, I will relate the events that required me to continuously seek alternative networks to enable myself to re-enter the field, over and over again.

### The Endocolonization<sup>1</sup> of the Gülsuyu Neighborhood

The first time I ever went to Gülsuyu was in 2007 to conduct research to understand how 12 September, 1980 Coup d'etat was experienced in the neighborhood, because I was told that, since the neighborhood was established by leftist organizations in the 1970s, it experienced the coup collectively. That day, which was a typical summer evening in July, I went to neighborhood in order to conduct an interview with my informant, whom

---

<sup>1</sup> Borrowed from Allen Feldman, which he defines as "the occupation and infestation of insurgent and delinquent communities by systems of surveillance, spatial immobilization, and periodic subtraction of subjects from homes and communities." (1991, p. 85)

I was going to meet for the first time, at a meeting arranged by a third party. However, that night my informant had been invited to a dinner by his family friend, and I attended the night with my informant as well. Through the night, my informant and his host, who I was introduced that night, told me about their experiences of the 12 September 1980 coup, which they asked me not to record. This surprised me, since we were talking about an event, which took place almost thirty years ago. However, as the evening progressed, their caution made more sense to me.

Around 10.00 p.m., the phone of the house rang. The hostess went inside to answer the phone. After a while, she came back saying, “Don’t panic, but I must tell you something; some young people with masks started a fire in the park”.<sup>2</sup> Everyone on the balcony started to murmur, then the little boy of the family said “We can call Mustafa Abi to ask,”<sup>3</sup> but my informant answered that, “These kinds of things should not be asked on the phone”.<sup>4</sup> Thus they decided to go and see what was happening in the park. Also, they decided to take me to the *dolmuş* (small bus), since the last *dolmuş* from the neighborhood was going to leave soon.

The house we were leaving was located on a narrow street, which opened onto one of the main roads that intersect and form the public square of the neighborhood. The public square where 3 main roads intersect is called *Heykel* (statue) by the inhabitants since there is small bust of Atatürk in the middle. Most of the shops and associations are located around this public square as well. The square is also a central stop for motor vehicles, including the public bus and *dolmuş*. One of the main roads that form this

---

<sup>2</sup> “Sakin panik yapmayın, birşey söyleyeceğim. Parkta maskeli çocuklar ateş yakmışlar.”

<sup>3</sup> “Mustafa Abiye soralım!”

<sup>4</sup> “Böyle şeyler telefonda sorulmaz.”

square goes right through the neighborhood, another takes you to the top of neighborhood and the last one takes you down to the E-5 motorway, Istanbul's main traffic artery. The words "top" and "down" are used by inhabitants to refer to arriving or leaving the neighborhood since Gülsuyu is located on 3 hills across central Maltepe, from which it is separated by the E-5, that also leads to Ankara.

As we were arriving in the central square, my informant asked us if everybody had his or her identity cards with them. The family's 10 year-old boy asked, "We live here - what will they do? This is our neighborhood".<sup>5</sup> After we passed the police cars that were waiting in the entrance of the street, we encountered two police buses filled with forty-fifty police wearing their protective equipment, along with a tank and another military vehicle, which I learned that night is called an *akrep* (military vehicle). Almost all of the roads entering the neighborhood or joining the main road to Maltepe were closed by barriers. There were people running around and small fires were scattered all over the place. I got on the *dolmuş* that was waiting on the other side of the barriers and left the neighborhood wondering what was happening in this locality which is only 20 minutes away from the place I live. It was then that I decided to write my thesis about the Gülsuyu neighborhood.

Witnessing the atmosphere I recounted above surprised me quite a bit. However, as my informants' accounts during my research showed me, similar events were not perceived as extra-ordinary by the inhabitants. That same evening, when we were on my informants' friend' balcony, the hostess had pointed out a tank that was slowly passing in front of the window, exclaiming: "Oh, here it is again! If it doesn't come here every

---

<sup>5</sup> "Biz burda oturuyoruz, Ne olacak? Burası bizim mahallemiz."

night, we miss it!”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the intensive police intervention had been taking place since the neighborhood festival organized a couple of weeks before the evening I was there. The festival, which took place in the neighborhood park, was said to be very crowded; almost 7000 people from the locality attended the festival according to my informants. I was told that during the night, without any apparent reason, the police intervened using tear gas, dispersing the crowd. Listening to stories such as these, it was not difficult to conclude that the inhabitants of this locality had normalized the everyday presence of state forces and vehicles. Even when the police are not present 24 hours a day, their intervention is always expected at certain times; for instance, the regular demonstrations organized by radical leftist groups in the neighborhood. When such events take place, they are invariably targeted by the police since they lack official permission and are thus declared illegal. At such times, the tank again starts to tour around the neighborhood with the police forces and the local buses, which are the only public transport other than the *dolmuş*, leave their passengers by the E-5 and do not venture to climb the neighborhood hills.

Considering these events, it would not be wrong to claim that state forces are present in the neighborhood in order to monitor and intervene in specific circumstances in a routinized way. When it is “necessary”, they can block the roads of neighborhood, ask for identity cards, and, infrequently though not un-expectedly, organize house raids.

In his discussion of how interrogation and arrest are employed by counterinsurgency against the IRA, Feldman (1991) argues that, in the context of Northern Ireland, these mechanisms should not be understood through their customary definitions as “procedures in the disclosure and rehabilitative punishment of the

---

<sup>6</sup> “Oh geldi yine. Hergün gelmese, özlüyoruz kendisini.”

individual offender” (p. 85). According to him, these mechanisms facilitate the endocolonization of society by the state; that is: “the occupation and infestation of insurgent and delinquent communities by systems of surveillance, spatial immobilization, and periodic subtraction of subjects from homes and communities” (ibid).

If we think about the military equipment that was present in Heykel on the evening I was in the neighborhood: 2 armored police buses, each carrying almost 25 policemen; a tank<sup>7</sup>; and another armored military vehicle called an *akrep*<sup>8</sup>, we can easily claim these vehicles are intended to do more than “enforcing law and ensuring social and public compliance”.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, I would argue that the characteristics of the military vehicles themselves can be read as a performance through which the state declares its occupation and infestation of the locality; in other words, the way in which it exhibits its control over the locality. One way to understand this performance is if we consider the difference in effect between a police car or a military tank passing in front of our house. In my view, the difference between them can be read through the features exhibited by the body of military tank; its impressiveness (because of its huge width and height), its obscurity (because we cannot see who commands it) and its invulnerability (because it has armour and a visible gun).

---

<sup>7</sup> “A tank is a tracked, armored fighting vehicle designed for front-line combat which combines operational mobility and tactical offensive and defensive capabilities. Firepower is normally provided by a large-caliber main gun in a rotating turret and secondary machine guns, while heavy armor and all-terrain mobility provide protection for the tank and its crew, allowing it to perform all the primary tasks of armored troops on the battlefield.”: <http://www.wikipedia.org>

<sup>8</sup> This is an armored vehicle with offensive and defensive capabilities, smaller and displaying better manoeuvrability than a tank.

<sup>9</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police>

Today, Gülsuyu is being kept under surveillance by the state through a system that is more “economic” and that displays more “continuity,” compared to the performance described above.<sup>10</sup> With reference to Feldman’s conceptualization, I suggest calling it “upgraded endocolonization”. I noticed this new equipment, consisting of cameras located on poles in the neighborhood, in the winter of 2009 on one of my occasional visits to the neighborhood. My informants told me that the cameras are referred to as MOBESE cameras (Mobile Electronic Systems Integration) and were placed in the neighborhood in January of 2009 without any notification to the *muhtar* (governor of the neighborhood).

Indeed, MOBESE is a citywide information and security system implemented by the cooperation of the Governorship of Istanbul and the Istanbul Police Department. The declared aim of the project is to improve public services, to ease governance, to organize *muhtars*’ tasks and to decrease crime rates by keeping watch over potential incident spots around Istanbul.<sup>11</sup> The system is comprised of 12 components, including; command and control, vehicle tracing, license plate recognition, automation of district services and regional surveillance capability.<sup>12</sup> The main characteristic through which the system is marketed to the public is its surveillance capacity, which promises security

---

<sup>10</sup> I use the words “economic” and “continuity” following Foucault, who refers to the criteria of “the disciplines,” that is, the techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities... “The peculiarity of the disciplines is that they try to define in relation to multiplicities a tactics of power that fulfills three criteria: first to obtain the exercise of power at the lowest possible cost (economically, by the low expenditures it involves; politically, by its discretions, its low exteriorization, its relative invisibility, the little resistance it arouses); second, to bring the effects of this social power to their maximum intensity and to extend them as far as possible, without either failure or interval; third, to link this “economic” growth of power with the output of the apparatuses (educational, military, industrial or medical) within which it is exercised; in short to increase both the docility and the utility of all elements in the system.” (1982; p.207)

<sup>11</sup> <http://mobese.iem.gov.tr/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://newsroom.cisco.com/dlls/2006/prod\\_051006b.html](http://newsroom.cisco.com/dlls/2006/prod_051006b.html)



to İstanbulities. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that the government aims to render Istanbul one of the safest cities in the world through this system.<sup>13</sup> It is hoped that the system will enable quick intervention by police departments to “unexpected events” (such as illegal demonstrations), and crimes. So this surveillance system, which is implemented in 952 neighborhoods in Istanbul, is legitimated by the claim of security.<sup>14</sup>

The Gülsuyu Neighborhood is one of the places where MOBESE surveillance cameras are installed in relation to this discourse of security. However, the residents I have talked to indicated that people are very uncomfortable with the cameras. One of the cameras is located in the public square of the neighborhood; the other is located in the public park of the neighborhood. Since houses surround the park, the people living in these houses hesitate to use their balconies for the feeling of being watched and that their private lives are under surveillance. Also in the park, there is an open-air cafeteria and sporting equipment installed by municipality, making this one of the main place people socialize, especially in summer time.

The first time I saw the cameras I also felt uncomfortable, and asked my informant about them:

Me: So they are operating right now?

Informant: They are operating right now.... Also, the one in the park is especially bad. It is very close to people's houses. Also, our children come to play there, and families do sports. There is sports equipment here. For this reason, there is serious discomfort with the cameras being here. Also, the cameras can see 2 km away. They are oval in shape and can see in every direction. You can see the camera from here. When you open the window, you can see it.

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/06/18/gnd111.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://mobese.iem.gov.tr/>

Me: (Pointing out the closed window) you mean here?

Informant: That's why I put curtains over that window; so that the camera cannot see in here.<sup>15</sup>

The space where police appear in case of “emergency”, through the performance illustrated above, is thus transformed into space that is being monitored 24 hours a day. However, the MOBESE system incorporates an ambiguity within itself because, as Koskela (2002) states, “people under surveillance are to be seen but never know when or by whom; under control but without physical intervention” (p.293). Indeed, as I was chatting with my informant, I could not avoid asking myself how he knew (or how anyone can know) when the cameras are actually operating. As far as I could see, there was no indication on the cameras themselves which would make it possible to check if they are working or not (which last is foreseeable).<sup>16</sup> There is no way to understand whether a MOBESE camera is turned on or turned off. Thus, it is simply the sight of the camera, which makes my informant assume that it is operating. This is, I think, how the cameras are intended to operate; not literally by being turned on or off, but through their simple presence on the poles. Thus, the neighborhood is today kept under control by the mere presence of the cameras, which are given the privilege of watching the neighborhood just by being placed there. As Foucault puts it:

Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its

---

<sup>15</sup> “-Şu an çalışıyorlar mı?

- Çalışıyorlar şu an, çalışıyorlar. Özellikle parktaki daha da kötü. İnsanların evlernini dibinde.Burda çocuklarımız geliyor oynuyor, aileler burda spor yapıyorlar. Spor aletleri var. Kameradan kaynaklı ciddi rahatsızlıklar var. Sonra kamera 2 km öteyi görebilecek şekilde bir kamera. Oval bir kamera her tarafı tarıyabiliyor. Şu anda kamerayı burdan görebilirsiniz yani camı açtığımız zaman görünüyor

-Şurdan mı görünüyor diyorsunuz?

-Onun için oraya perde koydum ki o kamera burayı görmesin diye.”

<sup>16</sup> For example, on handy cams there is a small red light which appears when the camera operator starts to record. The subject that is being recorded sees the light and, in the knowledge of being recorded, starts his “performance,” finishing it when this light is turned off.

weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A Superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost. (Foucault, quoted in Koskela, 2002, p. 292).

Following Foucault, we can also claim that the residents of the neighborhood are also incorporated as subjects into this upgraded version of the endocolonization of their own neighborhood, since each individual is given the responsibility of disciplining, controlling, and interrogating his own actions through the presence of an “eye” located in the center of the neighborhood:

There is no need to put the camera. Why not? Because there aren't banks around here, no big companies, no goldsmiths earning big money, and no stores selling valuable things like jewelry. All of the stores here are small ones. They haven't ever been burgled anything like that. If such things don't happen, why do they put this [camera] here? It's a way to discipline people or keep them under surveillance. That's the reason, nothing else. The camera, the oval one, even views close up, zooms in and zooms out. It is the most serious way to follow and keep people under surveillance. We also have a cafeteria here, it's there. Well, here again we have a camera above us.<sup>17</sup>

So, on the behalf of subject, there is the knowledge that she is being watched, zoomed-in on moreover, by the gaze of the other. Koskela (2002), asserts that “surveillance as an emotional experience evokes a variety of feelings: the objects watched can feel guilty without a reason, embarrassed or uneasy, shameful, irritated, fearful; also secured and safe” (p. 300). So despite the absence of thefts or criminal activities, the system as a

---

<sup>17</sup> “Kamerayı dikmek için bir sebep de yok. Neden yok? Bizim burda banka yok, çok büyük iş yerleri yok, çok büyük para kazanan ne bileyim kuyumcular yok, ne bileyim ziynet eşyası gibi değerli yerler yok. Hepsi küçük küçük dükkanlar, bu dükkanların da hiç birisi ne şimdiye kadar ne soyulmuştur ne böyle bir şeylen karşılaşmıştır. Böyle birşey olmadığı halde neden dikilir bu? Bu bir nevi insanları zapturat altında, gözaltında tutmanın bir yöntemi bu. Başka birşey değil. İnsanları hatta bazı o oval kamera dediğimiz yaklaşıyor, büyütüyor, küçültüyor insanları çok rahatlıkla takip etme, gözaltında tutmanın en büyük yöntemi. Bir de bizim burda çayocağımız var şurası çay ocağı. Ee tam tepemizde yine kamera var.”

whole renders certain subjects potential “criminals,” by placing a gaze over them, which also imposes certain emotions on them as a burden.

The physical presence of the state, or its “gaze” over the neighborhood, renders everyday life subject to intervention in this specific locality, and this was reflected in my study as distrust toward me. I will now try to explain this in relation to my experiences related to using a voice recorder.

The presence of tape recorder has always been a “problem” during my interviews. The informants either did not want their speech to be recorded and preferred that I took notes, or they let me record our interviews, but expressed their discomfort through their body language. During the interviews, I often observed that they never forgot about the recorder. Either they were talking at times looking directly at the recorder, or playing with it or touching it in a way that illustrated their discomfort.

According to Portelli, the presence and working of a tape recorder demonstrates respect to the narrator, while turning it off means you are not interested in what your informants are saying (2009). However, when I turned off the recorder after interviews, I always sensed the relaxation on behalf of my informants. Thus I do not hesitate to conclude that most of my informants preferred the absence of the recorder. Additionally, some of my informants explicitly told me that the presence of the recorder determines in advance what I could be told or not:

Me: Is it ok if I record our interview? Taking notes make it very difficult.

Informant: Sure.

Me: In any case, when you want not to be recorded, we can turn it off.

Informant: I would not tell you anything which could not be recorded.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> “-Görüşmeyi kaydedebilir miyim? Not alırken çok zor oluyor

-Tabi

-Yine de istediğiniz zaman kapatabiliriz

So, it can be inferred that there were things that could be recorded and there were things that could not be recorded; things that could be shared with me and things that couldn't be. Due to this, this thesis is written about the stories that could be recorded, or, in other words, the stories that could be shared with me. Understanding this at the beginning of my research, I decided to avoid placing questions about "certain issues,"<sup>19</sup> as it would place pressure on my informants. As a result, I decided to employ a technique that would not put pressure on the informants, and let them tell me whatever they wished to tell me.

As Portelli (1998) argues:

Oral sources are not found, but co-created by the historian. They would not exist in this form without the presence, and stimulation, the active role of the historian in the field interview. Oral sources are generated in a dialogic exchange – an interview – literally a looking at each other, an exchange of gazes. In this exchange questions and answers do not necessarily go in one direction only. The historian's agenda must meet the agenda of the narrator; what the historian wishes to know may not necessarily coincide with what the narrator wishes to tell. As a consequence, the whole agenda of the research may be radically revised. (p.26)

For this reason, I decided to conduct life-story interviews with my informants, which I thought would allow them to tell whatever they preferred to tell. However, this attempt also meant that I had no control over my data. Some people I met told me directly that they didn't want to share their life-story with a stranger. Another group of people, those who became my informants, summarized their life-story in the first couple of minutes, and then switched to the story of the neighborhood. At that point, I designed questions that would highlight the stories of the neighborhood told by my informants.

---

-Zaten kaydedilmeyecek birşey anlatmam?"

<sup>19</sup> That is actually questions that aim to detail and personalize their stories

In reference to Mauss's sentence; "Ethnology is like fishing; all you need is a net to swing, and you can be sure that you will catch something" Ferguson (1999) points to the open-ended possibilities that anthropological research carries within it (p.8). However, he also explains that this sometimes brings with it the feeling of an absence of control over the research. My own research was characterized by this very lack of control: first of all, I had no control over whom I conducted interviews with; secondly, as I explained above, I had no control over what stories were told to me, despite being a part of their formation. Hence, the research was conducted and this thesis has been written from both the possibilities and impossibilities caught in my research net.

Not only did the vulnerability imposed on the inhabitants by the state which produced the distrust towards me, the researcher, I hold that the ambiguity embedded in everyday lives of my informants, characterized by socio-economic changes, also illustrates the vulnerability which made it necessary for me to re-enter the field over and over again, since my networks usually led me to "dead ends". Now, I will briefly relate the story of my failed attempts at research, between 2008-2009, in relation to this ambiguity.

One of the things that made it difficult to get in contact with people was the ambiguity that characterized the lives of my informants, many of whom were working in irregular jobs. Some informant's working hours or workplaces were determined by the job opportunities that matched their monetary needs. Many times during my research, my pre-arranged meetings or "potential" meetings were cancelled as a result of job opportunities that suddenly popped up for my informants.

One of my informants was working as a maid in three different houses. Her days of work were not certain and were organized according to the needs of the house

owners. This informant, who had told me she could arrange interviews for me in her house, found a 4-month temporary job that required her to stay in her employer's house during the week. She could come back to the neighborhood only on weekends. I did not want to interrupt her weekends since she needed to take care of her own house and family as well.<sup>20</sup> When we would talk on the phone, she always said how sorry she was that she could not help me with my research. Indeed, I postponed asking her for help for the next 4 months. However, after those 4 months, I learned that she would continue her work as a boarding maid for an uncertain period because she needed the money. It was only months later, when her husband needed an urgent operation, that she quit her job.

Another informant was working as a construction worker. He also told me he would both talk to me and introduce me to other inhabitants. However, when I called him couple of weeks later, I could not reach him with the phone number he had given me. After a couple of months, I met another informant who knew him very well, and I learned that he had gone to Cyprus for a construction job. I came across him again when he returned a year later; he had come back because the construction work in Cyprus had slowed down due to the economic crisis. This time, we arranged a meeting one week in advance, but unfortunately we had to cancel this meeting as well, since he found a construction job in Istanbul that required him to work even on Sundays.

When I lost contact with this "prospective" key informant for the first time, I went to the cafeteria in the park of the neighborhood to find the person who introduced me to him, whom I had met randomly. However, the cafeteria was closed. Later, I learned through another informant that the cafeteria manager, who introduced me to the "potential" informant, had quit the cafe business and opened a vcd/dvd shop. Indeed, the

---

<sup>20</sup> She was married, and had a son at high school and a daughter who worked in a beauty salon.

change over of space (characterized not by changes of physical features, but by the disappearance some people and appearance of others) is another factor, which rendered reaching “potential” informants difficult. It can be better to put like this: the relationships of my informants to certain places, such as shops, were changing quite rapidly, as the event above illustrates. If we did not exchange phone numbers, it was very difficult to reach to some of them. In another such case, I “lost” two informants who were eager to be interviewed.<sup>21</sup> I was introduced to them by another informant, and I met these two men in an empty shop where there were only couches and chairs and a little cooker with a teapot on it. When we agreed to conduct an interview, they said it was not necessary to exchange phone numbers since I could find them “there” whenever I wanted to. However, in the following days (almost 2 weeks later), I found that the place was empty and locked up. A couple of months later it was transformed in to a shop.

It was also difficult to arrange interviews with people who had regular jobs. Some of the people I met were working six days a week and were arriving home around seven at night. Usually, people working in regular jobs would forget to call me. Whenever I called them, they were always apologizing to me since they had not called as promised. While understanding that this was because of their busy lives, perhaps another reason in relation to it is people’s choosing to introduce me to other informants. After listening to my story, most people I met did not want to be an informant directly, but wanted to help me by introducing “potential” informants. They usually did not say this explicitly, however, and, ignoring themselves as prospective informants, told me

---

<sup>21</sup> At the first meeting with informants, I usually told them about myself and my research. If they were interested, I would try to arrange a meeting before leaving.



they would direct me to people who would be better for my research.

So I was introduced to many people, sometimes through networks, all of whom, one way or another, directed me to some “other,” to conduct a life-story interview. People usually thought they knew what I wanted, but preferred to direct me to the best storyteller. Interestingly, two such cases resulted as meeting with two of the oldest people in the neighborhood, with whom I could not conduct an interview, but chatted.

However, waiting to be directed to a “potential” informant by another informant requires time and quite often results in a “disappointment”. Because, since these people need to arrange a meeting for me with the prospective informants, they need to talk and arrange a time that is good for themselves, the informant and me. Actually, I had the opportunity of traveling to Gülsuyu by car, so the local bus finishing by 10 pm or traveling to neighborhood at night were not a problem for me. However, after a conversation with an older resident, I gave up going to the neighborhood by car. This informant, on learning that I was studying sociology, suggested that I stop using my private vehicle and get on the bus and watch the pain and suffering in the faces of the people. I interpret this suggestion as an illustration of how my informant read my position very clearly. It was no secret that, for some of my informants, I was just a middle class young woman doing her research, who could never understand their life experience by just sitting there and listening to them. At times I felt out of place and as if I was actually placing a burden on my informants with my research objectives, and that it might be better, both for my informants and for me, not to continue the research. As the end of my fieldwork was approaching, I had a conversation with an informant which illustrated that my concern was not misplaced. One day, as I arrived to the neighborhood to meet with an informant for the first time, I found him chatting with a group of people

who were trying to make an oral history study in the neighborhood through talking with older residents. When we started our interview alone, my informant told me that it was really busy at that time, with so many people interested in the neighborhood. I replied to this by saying “how nice!”. At that point, my informant started to complain about the situation by saying that he didn’t think that it was that nice because, during all these projects carried out about the neighborhood, people come, collect what they want and leave the neighborhood. He complained that none of the studies made of the neighborhood had left anything for the neighborhood itself in the end. My informant uttered my own concern about the research.

Nevertheless, I had many field-entries. I can group my attempts to meet informants into three categories: attempts to randomly meet with people in social spaces, such as the park or at the neighborhood association; incidental relationships<sup>22</sup>; and my last attempt – the most successful – which was, through the references of people from 78’liler Vakfi.<sup>23</sup> Three of the people who allowed me to record our interview were people whom I met through 78’liler Vakfi. So it is not difficult to conclude from my last field-entry the best way to conduct research in Gülsuyu was through 78’liler Vakfi; that is, attempting field entry through references.

At the end of my research, although I had met and chatted with almost 20-25 people, I could only conduct interviews with seven people. The interviews usually lasted one hour. Only four people out of the seven let me record the interviews; I carried out the other three interviews by taking notes. All of my seven informants were older

---

<sup>22</sup> I met one of my informants as a result of coincidence. He was working in the bookstore where I was going quite often, and, after a short conversation, he learned that I was conducting research about his neighborhood. He did not want to conduct an interview with me, but directed me to many other people.

<sup>23</sup> 78’liler Vakfi is a foundation that was established by the leftist ‘78 generation

residents of the neighborhood, meaning that they had moved to area before 1980 and took part in the establishment of the neighborhood, which I will focus in the next chapter. Three of my informants were retired workers, two of them were working in regular jobs in the production sector, and two of them were working in irregular jobs. Also, 3 of my informants were actively involved in the activities of the neighborhood association.

During my research I could conduct interviews only with men. I had two women informants who did not want to conduct interview with me but directed me to other “potential” informants.

The structure of my thesis follows the structure of my interviews. So in the next chapter, I will start by focusing on stories of the past that are stories of establishment of Gülsuyu neighborhood and stories related to the 12 September 1980 coup. Following that, I will continue with the stories of the present that are stories related to urban transformation process against which residents of Gülsuyu neighborhood is struggling today.

## CHAPTER II

### STORIES OF THE PAST

In this chapter, I aim to undertake a narrative analysis of the interviews I have conducted. I prefer to refer to my narratives as stories. Bruner (1986) says that “Stories themselves are interpretive devices which give meaning to the present in terms of location in an ordered syntagmatic sequence” (p.144). However, stories also give meaning to the past. De Certeau (1984) asserts that “Story does not express a practice, it does not limit itself to telling about a movement. It makes it” (p.81). In this chapter I will try to grasp what these stories make.

The chapter consists of two different sections. In the first section I will focus on the stories that narrate the establishment of Gülsuyu neighborhood and in the latter I will focus on the stories of 12 September 1980 coup. In this, I follow the structure that characterizes many of my interviews. Thus I do not think that this sequence is random but that it forms a meaningful story by which my informants make claims over the neighborhood.

In the first section I will argue that the stories told in relation to the establishment of the neighborhood illustrate how belonging to this locality is articulated. The main themes in these stories are the difficulty of everyday life and social solidarity. At the end, despite all difficulty and suffering, the period is narrated to have concluded with “success” since the area is transformed into a developed place through struggles at the everyday level and despite the deprivations that characterized life in the neighborhood at the time.

In the second section, I will focus on the stories of the coup as stories of interruption in the process of belonging. The effects of the coup are designated to be the dissolution of social control and loss of certain moral values. So, in the stories on the coup, the neighborhood, which was initially characterized by social solidarity and altruism, is depicted to inhabit degenerate and self-caring individuals.

In order to contextualize my arguments I will start this chapter with a discussion of the history of gecekondu in Turkey.

### A Brief History of Gecekondu Neighborhoods

The first internal migration wave in Turkey dates back to the years between 1950-1960. The reason for this large scale migration movement is usually depicted to be the mechanization of agriculture which caused the displacement of agricultural labor, the change in land ownership patterns and the construction of large road networks that linked cities to hinterlands (Şenyapılı, 1981; Tekeli&Erder, 1981; İçduygu& Sirkeci , 1999). The three industrialized cities of Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir received large proportions of migrants. However becoming the center of large-scale production in the next decade<sup>24</sup>, Istanbul became the main center of attraction for the unemployed small farmers and the villagers between the years 1960-70 (Özbay, 1999, p.277-279). The population of Istanbul rose from one million in the 50s to three million in the 70s which also led to a change of population composition (Keyder, 1999, p.23; Özbay, 1999, p.277).

---

<sup>24</sup> Keyder states this as percentage of 44 percent of all private manufacturing enterprises in Turkey, that had more than ten employees .

Arriving to the city without the necessary resources to afford formal accommodation, the new residents of the city, built *gecekondus* (built over-night) on empty treasury lands that were located in the outskirts of the city. These places also hosted the manufacturing industry where the migrants hoped to find work. Like many similar forms found in different parts of the world , *gecekondus* settlements constituted a form of illegal, or at least irregular, type of low-income housing (Buğra, 1998). However, conceiving these squatters as a source of cheap labor and as a source of votes that could easily be manipulated during elections, *gecekondus* settlements were tolerated by policy-makers at the time (Tuğal, 2008, p.67 ; Şenyapılı, 1981, p.46). Due to the absence of any formal approach to the problem of low-income housing, *gecekondus* settlements expanded and were soon transformed into large neighborhoods. (Buğra, 1998). What characterized these buildings during those years was the fact that they were built outside of the formal housing market. Settling on treasury land through the networks available in the city, *gecekondus* dwellers were neither paying for land nor for labor. Thus until the 80s *gecekondus* remained largely noncommercial and solely served as a solution to the shelter need of rural migrants (Erder, 1996).

However in the following periods, this specific character of *gecekondus* started to change. First of all, through the amnesty laws enacted in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'etat, most of the *gecekondus* areas were legalized. Once legalized, *gecekondus* entered the formal economy and gained market value. Accordingly, *gecekondus* also became sources of investment, and in a brief period of time many of them, which were one, or at most two-storey buildings turned into multi-story apartments (Buğra, 1998; Işık&Pınarcıoğlu, 2005). Once built in order to meet shelter needs of new migrants, they soon became a means of generating revenue through being sold or rented. By late 1980s

apartmentalized *gecekondu*s had already taken their place in the formal housing scene (Bozkulak, 2005).

### The Story of Gülsuyu Neighborhood

Gülsuyu is a neighborhood that was established parallel to the processes I discussed above. According to Serpil Bozkulak's (2005) research, the first residents of Gülsuyu came from Bayburt in 1953. According to the report of DA<sup>25</sup> (2004) the attraction of this area resided in the existence of *KİTs*<sup>26</sup> (State owned enterprise) and private industrial enterprises in the district of Kartal easily accessible from Gülsuyu.<sup>27</sup> But nevertheless, the bulk of migration to the area occurred in 1970s. It is also during the 70s that the neighborhood started to be recognized as a left-winged stronghold. In this period, the occupation and distribution of the land was realized through leftist organizations and the involvement of revolutionary groups.

Following the shift from the developmentalist policies to policies enhancing export oriented growth in Turkey after the 12 September 1980 coup, amnesty laws for *gecekondu*s were enacted. Like other neighborhoods, Gülsuyu also took its place in the market mechanisms; higher buildings replaced *gecekondu*s. Renting houses became a common practice and thus the neighborhood welcomed new residents as tenants.

---

<sup>25</sup> Dayanışmacı Atölye that is established and attended mostly by city-region planners related to Mimar Sinan University, defines itself as a group who is against marginalization of migrants from city through state imposed urban transformation plans that target *gecekondu* neighborhoods which are present in Istanbul, since 1950s.

<sup>26</sup> Kamu İktisadi Teşebbüsü

<sup>27</sup> Today Gülsuyu Neighborhood is within borders of Maltepe which was separated from Kartal and became a district in 1992.

In 1990s a new migration wave caused by forced migration from villages in the east provinces of Turkey- arrived to the neighborhood. Many of the new migrants settled in neighborhood as tenants. Some built their own *gecekondus* in the areas available. Due to its expansion the neighborhood was divided in two neighborhoods --that of Gülsuyu and Gülsu-- in 1980s. For a person like me who is foreign to the area it is not easy to understand where Gülsuyu finishes and Gülsu starts. It can be said that while Gülsuyu spreads over the outskirts of the three hills where these neighborhoods are located, Gülsu is located on the tops. In this study I will refer to both of them as Gülsuyu. Because, even though the houses of some of my informants are located within the borders of today's Gülsu, when my informants settled in the area, it was called Gülsuyu. Moreover my informants even discussing the events related to present, ignore the official separation by referring to both of the neighborhoods as Gülsuyu.

The hills where the neighborhood is located are separated from center of Maltepe District through the E-5 highway which is one of the two main roads that lead to the capital Ankara. There are 2 public transportations accessible to the residents. One is the public bus that takes off from Kadıköy and arrives at the neighborhood by following E-5, and the *dolmuş* that take off from central Maltepe that is located on the opposite side of E-5.

All of my informants migrated to the neighborhood during the 1970s, thus acquired a house in the period when the area was occupied by revolutionary groups. As I stated before, I had the intention of conducting life-story interviews with my informants at the beginning of my research. Linde (1993) states that life stories- that consist of "stories, associated discourse units (e.g. explanations) and the connections between them"- are primarily about the speaker, not about the world in general (p.21). All of the



life-story interviews I collected at some point turned into stories of the neighborhood. Hence they were more about the environment where people spent their lives rather than themselves. Portelli says that the specific characteristic of oral history is that it exhibits a search for a connection between biography and history, between individual experience on the one hand and transformation of society on the other. Thus at the core of oral history narratives, he argues, “we find motifs and themes that insist on the relationship of the individual and the public” (1998,p.25). The relationship between biography and history was established quite explicitly in the narratives I collected. Prior to the interviews, I informed the people I talked to that I aimed to conduct life-story interviews with them. In the first 5-10 minutes of the interview they summarized their life starting with their birth and ending with their arrival in the neighborhood. Following this, almost in all narratives, personal histories nearly became absent and were replaced by collective histories of the neighborhood. At the beginning of my research, I tried to make them switch from histories of neighborhood to personal stories by asking questions. Noticing that such efforts on my were actually disrupting the flow of the interview and repressing the narrator, I decided to only ask questions that would lead them to detail the events that my interviewees wanted to tell.

My persistent questions on their personal stories were avoided or, handled by my informants by either pointing out that they did not have an extra-ordinary life worth to be recounted in detail, or that their personal stories are too full of details and would take forever to tell. But both approaches at the end, responded to my effort of getting life-stories by insistently sticking on long-stories about the neighborhood and about certain events that took place in that locality. Rosenwald and Ochberg states that “how individuals recount their stories, all shape what individuals can claim of their lives”

(1992,p.1). So, I assert that my informants identified their own stories with the history of the neighborhood. Their claims are over the history of the neighborhood itself. They define their position in life by their relation to the neighborhood.

John Agnew outlines 3 fundamental aspects of place as a meaningful location which are (1)location –that is where it is, (2)locale –the material setting and (3)the sense of place which he defines as the relationship of place to humans (Quoted in Cresswell, 2004, p.7). So far in my chapter, I have briefly sketched out the location and the present locale of the neighborhood. The rest of the chapter will deal with “the sense of place”, thus the relation of Gülsuyu to my informants (ibid). However, in order to describe this relation, I will primarily concentrate on the stories of past. I argue that it is by these stories that my informants articulate their belonging to Gülsuyu. Through the term belonging,

...Questions of attachment to people, things and places, the language within which these are articulated and felt (narrativity and performativity), and the ways in which all of these constitute experience and subjectivity (political, gendered, moral, ethnic, classed and so on) could be brought to the forefront. (Üstündağ, 2005: 79)

In other words, I will try to understand how my informants attach themselves to Gülsuyu by analyzing their stories of migration and settlement. Fortier(1999) asserts that attachment to a place is one of the entailments of imaging a community, while the other is creating a common history, experience or culture of a group. So, my analysis will also shed light on how community is imagined in this locality.

My informants divided their stories of the past in two parts. In my analysis I will follow this structure. In the first part they narrated how the neighborhood was established and the characteristics that made Gülsuyu a special locality. This period is important in their lives since this is when the rules of attachment and belonging and the

fundamental principle of living here were set. The second part consists of stories on the 12 September 1980 coup. This period is when the military intervention interrupted the lives of my informants and created in them suffering and disillusionment which made their belonging fragile. This chapter will show that belonging has no fixed meaning. One way in which belonging and attachment to place are articulated and contested is by telling stories.

### Coming to the Neighborhood

All of my informants had migrated to Istanbul, from villages located in the Central Anatolia region of Turkey. My informants told me that they were children between the ages of ten-fourteen when they arrived to Istanbul. All of them without any exception stated that they had to drop out of the school after completing elementary or secondary school in order to work as apprentices in different sectors, either because their family was in need, or because their fathers had died. Thus in terms of social and economic conditions, many people I talked to, began their interview by telling me a story of initial poverty followed by a life of struggle.

Gülsuyu is not the first place these people settled after they arrived in Istanbul. However, it is the place where they first owned a house. Before coming to Gülsuyu, they either lived as family or as individuals in rented houses or rooms in different squatter neighborhoods of Istanbul's districts such as Bakırköy or Kartal. Then throughout 1970s, they started to move to this neighborhood.

All my informants stated that they had networks based on kinship before coming to the neighborhood. However, to my question of how they decided to come to this neighborhood, they usually answered by stating that they had no other choice due to

their poverty. Indeed, I came upon similar explanations among some “newer” migrants I chatted during my fieldwork, who settled in the neighborhood in the last decade. One of such person was a shopkeeper, who moved to the neighborhood in the year of 2000. When I asked one such person why he moved to Gülsuyu, he told me that he used to live in Erzincan, and his-work went bankrupt. Moving to Istanbul for a new beginning and, opening a shop was only possible in this neighborhood. Thus the choice of this neighborhood as a home place is not narrated as something that people had control over but as something that had to be done for no better option. In other words, their responses indicate that initially there was actually no reason to differentiate Gülsuyu from other gecekondü settlements. It was just a random place that people who needed home could have access to.

However, as stories develop, a narrative about how this locality was “made” by struggles at the everyday level starts to appear. “Making the neighborhood” does not just refer to the material setting of the neighborhood but also indicates building a community that was characterized by certain values. So, next I will focus on the stories of “making” Gülsuyu.

### Stories of Establishment

The land on which Gülsuyu neighborhood is located was occupied in the second half of 1970s. People say that while during this period land mafias tried to seize the land, it was revolutionary organizations fighting against them that took control of the area. The leaders of the organizations formed a committee in order to organize the distribution of land for building gecekondü's. The aim of the committee was stated to be solving the housing problem of people who were in need. The occupied land was divided into 225

m<sup>2</sup> slots, which was enough to build a single-storey gecekonu with a little garden and equal measurement distributed to individual families of single persons.

One of the conditions for demanding land was that one did not own a house anywhere else. Thus before granting it the committee would conduct research on people who demanded land. If it were found out that a person who acquired land from the committee actually owned a house elsewhere, the land granted was taken back to be given to another person in need. If the person had already built the house, then the cost of the materials used (e.g. sand, brick) was paid to the owner. The labor cost was regarded to be the punishment the person received for lying to the committee. Based on the narratives of my informants, it can be concluded that throughout 70s the area was under the local authority of revolutionary organizations.<sup>28</sup> People who wanted to build a house in the locality were required to obey the rules and regulations of this authority.

Most of my informants state that they were not politically “active” before coming to the neighborhood, but in the aftermath of their arrival, they became engaged in the activities of committee and also acquired their houses- except one person-, through this organization. But although people were given land, building a gecekonu on that land still involved a lot of difficulty and work. My informants explained that on the one hand, they had to work during day hours to earn money to meet the daily needs and on the other hand, they had to work on their house on a daily basis. However, they stated that the solidarity of the people in the locality, most of whom were experiencing similar conditions, made it a bit easier to bear this process since people were helping one

---

<sup>28</sup> By revolutionary groups I refer to people affiliated with leftist politics in the neighborhood. Before 1980, like Gülsuyu some neighborhoods were established by revolutionary groups activities that is distribution of treasury lands to migrants in a systematic way. These settlements also served as main offices of certain revolutionary groups.

another in building *gecekondus*. During the interviews some of my informants pointed each other or cited some people's name, and said things like: "this bro built my house" or "this bro helped me building my house, do you remember how we accumulated the bricks here?" pointing a place close to the area where we were sitting during the interview. So, the process of building *gecekondus* was narrated as a communal activity in the neighborhood where people who were experiencing the same conditions helped one another.

Besides building houses, another story of solidarity was evoked in relation to the resistance against the demolition of *gecekondus* by state agencies. Actually, in this area a large-scale demolition did never occur. However, people I interviewed explain this by recalling the violent *gecekondus* demolition in *1 Mayıs* ( 1st of May ) neighborhood<sup>29</sup>, which is a neighborhood similar to Gülsuyu in being established by the leadership of revolutionary organizations. On the day of September 2, 1977, in *1 Mayıs* neighborhood, a violent conflict occurred between the settlers and state agencies. According to official records the conflict resulted in 5 people being shot and many people being taken in custody (Aslan, 2004, p.135). According to my informants once the state realized the resistance they would encounter, it could not take the chance of causing another violent conflict and did not attempt to demolish the *gecekondus* in Gülsuyu. The events in *1 Mayıs* neighborhood made it clear that people would not give up their houses easily.

Nevertheless, some small-scale interventions did take place in Gülsuyu. At different times, some of my informants' houses were partially demolished by state

---

<sup>29</sup> 1 Mayıs refers to Labor day that is 1<sup>st</sup> of May. The name of the neighborhood was changed to Mustafa Kemal neighborhood in the aftermath of the 12 September 1980 coup.

authorities. As I mentioned before, the telling of these events are actually the second occasion around which the theme of social solidarity is developed. According to the narratives when state authorities came to the neighborhood for a demolition, the neighbors would resist collectively. Also, if house owners were at work when state agencies arrived to the neighborhood, it was their neighbors, friends, relatives who struggled in order to prevent demolition.

In the end of 1979, the establishment of the neighborhood was almost complete however, there was no infrastructure in the area. The old neighborhood founded in 50s which is located on the outskirts of the hill acquired electricity and water in 1970s. The area my thesis focuses on, the area established during 70s, acquired electricity and water from local governments only after the military coup in 1980. Until then, illegal use of electricity was widespread in the neighborhood:

We used to steal electricity. We used to steal it by climbing the substation of the neighborhood, which is now Gülsuyu. They used to come and cut us off, but we used to connect the cables again. It kept going over and over again.<sup>30</sup>

The lack of infrastructure was indeed one of the most important difficulties that the residents of Gülsuyu had to deal with before 1980 and narrating the experience of living in a place that lack infrastructure by the theme of misery is very common among my informants. Water had to be carried from the wells or from the outskirts of the neighborhood. The roads of the neighborhood constructed by the revolutionary youth and the settlers together were often muddy and difficult to walk on. An 80 year old women I chatted --who was one of the first residents of the neighborhood-- told me that

---

<sup>30</sup> “Kaçak elektrik kullanıyorduk.Şu an Gülsuyu olan kısmın trololarına tırmanıp ordan kaçak elektrik kullanıyorduk. Gelip kesiyorlardı biz de yine kabloları bağlıyorduk. Bir onlar bir biz öyle devam ediyordu.”

she was carrying and selling water with her donkey during this period. While depicting those days she repeated the sentence “Ah dear, it was such suffering, such suffering...” over and over again.

When people arrived the area for the first time, they encountered an area covered by forest:

It was a place of a hunting ground, which was not appropriate to live under the conditions of that time. It was full of trees. There were some pictures of people conveying water by using diggers and shovels from the heights. If I had found them, I would give them to you.<sup>31</sup>

There weren't buildings here at that time. There were buildings starting far below the Mustafa Bakkal –as we call. There were jackals etc.<sup>32</sup>

As the excerpts above show by recalling that Glsuyu was once a hunting ground populated by wild animals, people were often trying to convince me that this was not a land that people could easily inhabit. For a long time people were finding solutions to their problems by their own means. It was only after the military coup in 1980 that the local governments started to provide services to this area:

Electricity was given to the lower part after the years of 76-77. It was given to the upper part Glsuyu after 80. We had been stealing electricity until that time. After 80, they cabled the electricity pylons. So it became legal<sup>33</sup>

They started construction and building roads after 1980. Before that time our roads were terrible.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> “O zaman ki Őartlar altında, burası yaŐanmayacak av merasi olan bir yerdi. AŐaŐlık, ormanlıktı. Bazı resimler vardı bulsaydım verecektim size, sular getirirken, yukardan kazma krekle.”

<sup>32</sup>“ O zaman buralarda bina felan yoktu taa aŐaŐı Mustafa Bakkal diyorduk onun altlarından itibaren evler vardı. Oradan bu tarafa hiŐ ev yoktu.-Őakallar felan vardı.”

<sup>33</sup> “Elektrik aŐaŐıya 76 77 yıllarından sonra geldi. Bu yukarı Glensu'ya 80'den sonra geldi. O zamana kadar aradan kaŐak ceryan kullanıyorduk. 80'den sonra direklere elektrik çekildi. Yasal duruma dŐt yle oldu.”

<sup>34</sup> “Yapı ynne yol ynne 1980'den sonra baŐlandı. Ondan evvel yollarımız berbattı”



We often used to be without water in 70s... We often used to be without water in 70s. There were a few fountains. We didn't have a river. There were water tanks in Maltepe, but we were out of water up here. We subsisted on a few fountains and a few wells. We subsisted on these for years. We had great pain because of it. We had pain, but as it was a new settlement area, so we do not blame anybody for this.<sup>35</sup>

The wives of my male informants who were present during interviews interfered these dialogues reminding their husbands of the difficulty of doing washing and cleaning with limited access to water as well. In other words, the suffering that people endured while establishing the neighborhood was, although gendered, collective.

To summarize, the period between 1970 and 1980 is narrated by the difficulties of building a gecekondu in a land that was deprived of any kind of infrastructure.<sup>36</sup>

Finding a land or building a gecekondu on it was not the end of struggle and suffering.

The absence of basic needs such as electricity and water characterized the daily lives of the settlers for years.

Nevertheless, the narratives of suffering are concluded by stories of success or better put by stories of having "survived" without state's services. In the end, people did acquire houses and they produced - using Agnew's concepts- a locale, a neighborhood with self-built material setting.

---

<sup>35</sup> "70'lerde çok susuz kaldık... 70'lerde çok susuz kaldık. Bir kaç tane çeşme vardı. Akarsuyumuz yoktu. Depolar vardı Maltepe'ye aşağıya Maltepe'ye iniyorduk biz burda yukarda susuz kalıyorduk. Bir kaç çeşmeylen, bir kaç kuyuyulan idare ettik. Bunu yıllar boyu idare ettik.. Biz o konuyu çok acı yaşadık. O konuyu acı yaşadık ama bu artık yeni yerleşim bölgesi olduğu için kimseye kar ettiğimiz yok."

<sup>36</sup> "Actually, today still a small part of the neighborhood is deprived of state services such as electricity and water. This area is located on one of the three hills of the neighborhood. It is populated by Kurdish people who arrived to the neighborhood and built their houses between the years of 90-93. Actually while my informants were talking about the urban transformation process, which I will focus on in the next chapter, told me that this area which is called Telsiz, is shown as an "empty land" in the official maps of the area. This means that the residents can not have any official claim over it."

Of course there were mistakes but the majority was the people who are in need. We had a really successful process. A lot of people owned their own houses thanks to leftist organizations.<sup>37</sup>

For example, when soldiers came here after September 12, they noticed that it was a different neighborhood; at least they asked questions about how the neighborhood was built to learn why it was so neat. All in all, it wasn't a place in the formal planning process.<sup>38</sup>

I'm not an engineer or an architect or a cartographer. We constructed Gülsuyu roads, which you took when you were coming; we constructed them by drawing them on cardboards. They have been the same since then.<sup>39</sup>

Thus lacking any support or service from local government and deprived of any professional knowledge, the transformation of an empty forest land into a neighborhood with roads, houses and –despite being illegal- electricity and water is told as a story of success as well as a story of misery. People who experienced all this take proud in the fact that they carved out from a forest, a neighborhood that was even appreciated by military forces that intervened in the area in the aftermath of the coup.

None of my informants showed the fact that the neighborhood was governed by leftist organizations as a reason for moving there. It was only after moving to Gülsuyu that some of them became associated with leftist politics. Nevertheless, when talking about the communal nature and the culture of solidarity, many of them recounted the struggles against the attacks of fascist groups, prior to the coup. Characterized as a

---

<sup>37</sup> “Tabi yanlışlıklar oluyordu ama ağırlık olarak da ihtiyaç sahibi insnalara yer veriliyordu burda. Baya başarılı bir süreç yaşadık. Sol örgütler sayesinde bir çok insane ev sahibi oldu.”

<sup>38</sup> “Mesela 12 eylülünden sonra işte askerler buraya gelip baktıklarında bu mahallenin farklı bir yer olduğunu... en azından yapılışı ile ilgili sormuşlar bu mahalle niye bu kadar düzgün diye. Yani normal planlama süreci içerisinde olan bir yer değil sonuçta.”

<sup>39</sup> “Geldiğiniz Gülsuyu yollarını, ben bir mühendis, bir mimar değilim, haritacı da değilim; o günkü şartlara göre kartona çizerek kurmuş olduğumuz yollar, o günden bu güne kadar aynı devam etmektedir.”

leftist stronghold, the neighborhood was exposed to fascist attacks on a daily basis. The people in the neighborhood would come together and resist these attacks collectively.

People I talked to also mentioned that they tried to avoid “going down” since outside the neighborhood they were becoming easy targets of fascists. “Going down” is a popular phrase used to refer to leaving the neighborhood. As I mentioned above this neighborhood is actually located on hills. Thus there is the effect of climbing and going down when people arrive in and leave the neighborhood respectively. So, “going down” literally means reaching the edge of E-5 highway.

However, I would also argue that “going down” means leaving the secure and safe home and being exposed to the possibility of danger that would stem from the encounter with “others”. One of my informants talks about those days in the following way:

For example, we couldn't go down to Maltepe from Gülsuyu. Even if we did, we didn't say where we were coming from, because if you are coming from Gülsuyu, you were potentially leftist. So, you were subjected to violence. Such things happened a lot.<sup>40</sup>

Apparently people refrained from exhibiting their identity—in other words, where they belonged—in order to avoid being identified as a potential leftist. As such the fact of sharing a “mark” attributed by the outside world, a “secret” that needs to be kept from “others” also contributed to the feeling of collectivity in the neighborhood.

In this section, I tried to illustrate that the history of the establishment of the neighborhood is usually narrated as a story of struggle, which was overcome by social solidarity and cooperation within the community. As a result of this process, many

---

<sup>40</sup> “Örneğin biz Gülsuyu'ndan Maltepe'ye inemezdik. İnsek bile hani nerden geldiğimizi söylemezdik. Çünkü Gülsuyu'ndan inerseniz potansiyel solcusunuz. Dolayısıyla şiddete maruz kalıyordunuz. Yani bu tür şeyler yaşandı sıklıkla.”

people acquired houses in an area which was painstakingly transformed into a neighborhood through collective action. I argued that my informants' stories of suffering turned into stories of success as their narratives moved while expressing the transition from an empty state owned area to a place of community. Protecting the neighborhood from outside processes such as state agencies and fascists played a further role in creating a sense of collective identification and belonging. In other words collective labor and collective identity in relation to "others" were the basis for making Gülsuyu into a place.

As I mentioned before, my informants told me that the establishment of the neighborhood was almost complete at the end of 1979. Thus not surprisingly, when my informants finished their stories of the establishment period, the sequential structure of their narratives continued with stories of 12 September 1980 coup. Next I will analyze the narratives of 12 September 1980 coup in order to answer the question of what does the coup signify within the narrated history of the neighborhood so that it is unexceptionally depicted as a break point? How do the pre-coup and post-coup periods constructed in relation to each other and what does this mean for the present identities and actions of Gülsuyu?

When people shifted to stories of the coup, they frequently juxtaposed the post coup period with the period before 1980 in order to recount what was good about living here and what was lost after the coup.

I will illustrate that it is the presence or lack of certain values that are compared and contrasted when these two periods are juxtaposed. While the most significant value of the pre-coup period is social solidarity, the post-coup period is defined through its dissolution and its loss. Moreover, the dissolution of these moral values --which

regulated social relations at the everyday level-- is claimed to have brought along the dissolution of social control in the neighborhood. Thus the post-coup period is characterized by moral degradation which supposedly predominantly affected the youth who are depicted to be both the victims and the perpetrators of this process. The second impact of the coup that is widely narrated is the transformation and reshaping of the relationship between revolutionary groups and ordinary residents of Gülsuyu at the everyday level.

#### A Brief Account of the September 12, 1980 Coup d'etat

On 12 September 1980, the commander-in- chief of the Turkish Armed Forces, Kenan Evren, and his colleagues declared martial law in the whole country, dissolved the elected government and appointed themselves as the guardians of the republic. This coup was the third military intervention in the history of the Republic and, became the most repressive one.

The military justified its intervention by pointing out the rising violence between political factions. It claimed to be the sole force in the country to reestablish law, order and justice and accused the elected government for incompetency. (Demirel, 2005). Between the years 1971 and 1980, there had been no fewer than nine coalition governments, and ongoing civil violence hence, some citizens welcomed the coup (Satana, 2002).

Other causes of the coup that are accounted are, the polarization embodied in other social sectors such as organized labor, teaching professions and civil bureaucracy, massive outbreaks of communal conflicts in different cities of Turkey that marked inter-

sect and -inter-ethnic cleavages, and the economic crisis that was characterized by rampant inflation (Heper&Tachau, 1983).

The repression of the coup is manifested in numbers. The official number of deaths due to torture is 171 although the actual number is believed to be much higher. 650, 000 people were taken into custody and many political activists had to leave Turkey (Demirel, 2005). Trade unions and voluntary organizations were banned from political activities until a constitutional amendment in 1995 (Satana, 2007).

However, the wider impact of the coup occurred in the social and economic life of Turkey. It is frequently argued that the coup paved the way for integrating Turkey to free market economy since it neutralized all the groups that blocked or opposed by eliminating political parties and leftist organization, repressing working classes and banning unions all (Ferouz, 1984). As many forms of politics became illegalized, and market economy consolidated, culture became increasingly consumer oriented. Today many journalists, academicians, activists and citizens came to regard the 1980 coup a turning point in Turkish history with lasting effects most important of them being depolitization and an individual oriented capitalist culture that celebrates consumerism and authority.

### Stories of the Coup

My informants told me, that in the aftermath of the coup a brutal period started in the neighborhood. They explained that both the people known to be affiliated with leftist organizations and the “ordinary people” in the neighborhood experienced and witnessed the effects of the military coup at an everyday level. Following the coup, many local

people from the neighborhood were taken in custody by military forces. Many people escaped the place in order not to be imprisoned. Two of my informants were taken into custody and interrogated in the months following the coup. Another informant was arrested one year after the coup, imprisoned for four years after which he was immediately recruited to army to serve his military duty. Hence, he could return to Gülsuyu almost after six years, in 1987. The brother of another informant escaped to Germany immediately after the coup and did not come back since then. I was also told that similar to my informants and their relatives, many people in Gülsuyu were either arrested or escaped in the aftermath of the coup, My informants also remembered how public hospitals and schools located near Kartal were transformed into garrisons in order to collect the people who were taken into custody since the existing police stations did not have the capacity to hold such a crowd.

Actually I was told that people had anticipated that repression would follow the military coup and that it would strongly effect Gülsuyu since the neighborhood was located on an illegally occupied treasury land and governed by revolutionary groups. What they could not anticipate was the fact that the army's presence would last even after the transition to normality. While some people escaped from the neighborhood in the aftermath of the coup, two of my informants for example, stayed in the neighborhood to wait and see what would happen. Due to the everlasting threat of arrest and detention they endured much difficulty and stress. One of them expresses the stress he had to bear in the period in the following manner:

September 12 was over and we were in October. We were very sensitive to sound of cars. Whenever we heard a sound of a car, we got tense thinking that they were coming to get one of us. When the door was

knocked, you said “okay, this time they came to get me”.<sup>41</sup>

The permanent presence of the army in the area created a sense of repression, fear and discomfort for all the residents:

People didn't even get out of their houses in that period. I never forget that they didn't let me carry my own coal in front of my house. There was coal in front of the house, but they didn't let it to be carried in. It was forbidden to carry things or to go out when it gets dark in the evening. We had such a time. They were tough days.<sup>42</sup>

When I asked my informants how the coup was experienced in the neighborhood, the common answer given was that it had been a very traumatic, brutal process both for the revolutionaries and the “ordinary people” due to their exposition to state violence:

Most of the revolutionists became disabled or escaped abroad. Ordinary people and citizens were also tormented. Was that possible for them not to have a trauma? Ordinary people were not conscious of how to stand against that oppressing power and torment.<sup>43</sup>

Of course there were ones that were arrested and killed. Also ones who went abroad. Some of them stayed in prison under arrest for years. That was a period of complete brutality. I mean the attack of the government was extreme.<sup>44</sup>

The distinction between revolutionaries and “ordinary people” is present in many of the interviews I conducted. Being prepared to and hence having the capacity to endure violence is what distinguished the revolutionaries from the ordinary people. Although

---

<sup>41</sup> “12 Eylül bitmiş işte ekim ayında felanız araba seslerine çok hassassın her araba sesi duyduğunda çok geriliyorsun beni mi almaya geliyorlar diye. Kapı çalıyor tamam diyorsun bu sefer beni almaya geldiler.”

<sup>42</sup> “İnsanlar o dönem evlerinden dahi dışarı çıkamıyordu. Benim kendi kapımın önündeki kömürü taşıtmamışlardı bana hiç unutmuyorum. Evin önünde kömür var, kömürü içeri taşıtmıyordu. Akşam karanlık olunca taşımak yasak, dışarı çıkmak yasak. Öyle bir süreç yaşadık. Çok zor günlerdi.”

<sup>43</sup> “Devrimciler çoğu sakat kaldı, yurt dışına kaçtı. Sıradan halk da vatandaş da çok zulüm gördü. Travma geçirmemesi mümkün mü! Bu ezici güce zulme nasıl dayanabileceğinin bilince değildi ki sıradan vatandaş.”

<sup>44</sup> “Tabi ondan sonra tutuklananlar oldu, öldürülenler oldu. İşte yurt dışına gidenler oldu. Kimileri cezaevinde yıllarca tutuklu kaldı. O süreç gerçekten tam anlamıyla bir vahşet dönemi idi. Yani devletin saldırısı had safhadaydı.”



the residents of the neighborhood anticipated the event, the experience of violence at an everyday level was unbearable for them. Such a distinction is specifically prominent in narratives that describe the revolutionaries as those mainly responsible for the organizational structure and moral values that existed in the neighborhood before the coup. Indeed, revolutionaries of 1970s are represented by many of my informants as a respected authority that had the consent of the whole neighborhood. When talking about the pre coup period many of my informants included themselves into the revolutionary category by referring to revolutionaries as “we.” However, when narrating the post-coup period, revolutionaries were referred as “those” who left the neighborhood in the aftermath of the coup. I do not have an intention to prove or disprove that these categories actually exist or not or that my informants fit either in the category of revolutionaries or that of “ordinary citizens”. My aim is to show how these categories are constructed differently while narrating pre and post-coup periods. How these categories are constructed and given meaning is one way of understanding how people’s imaginings of community and belonging changed over time and how this was informed by the transformation of their relationship with the revolutionaries. In the next section, while trying to illustrate how the pre-coup and post-coup was being constructed in relation to each other, I will also try to explain how the relationship between revolutionary groups and ordinary citizens was re-shaped in time.

### Yearning for the Past

In the narratives, the pre-coup and the post-coup periods are compared by the presence or lack of certain moral values. The most significant of these moral values is solidarity. Solidarity is often connected to a sense of security at the everyday level. In the

narratives of pre-coup period, sentences like “we used to leave our doors open like in the village” or “we were altogether, helping to each other, or to whoever was in need” are abundant. One such example is:

I mean, there really wasn't any burglary in the neighborhood. Drugs and such other serious events; they were quite rare. As it is told in villages that they can leave their doors open, we had a life like that. I mean people in our neighborhood experienced solidarity. When their neighbors were hungry or so, they shared things. There was togetherness and consciousness of being neighbors. Before September 12<sup>th</sup> there was something in the neighborhood, let's call it a serious authority.<sup>45</sup>

As can be seen in this narrative, the themes of security and social solidarity are usually told in relation to an authority prevalent in the neighborhood at the time. This unofficial authority or social control is the product of the presence and activities of revolutionary groups in the area.

As I illustrated in the previous section, the revolutionary groups were regulating the area by structures such as the *gecekondu* committee. For example, people who wanted to build a *gecekondu* in the occupied area, had to resort to the committee, and take approval. In other words, according to the narratives I collected, revolutionary groups exercised local authority in the neighborhood. However, as the excerpts below shows the actions of these groups not only were effective in shaping the landscape of the area but also became a source of value with great impact on the collective culture:

---

<sup>45</sup> “Yani gerçekten mahallede hırsızlık olayları olmazdı. Uyuşturucu, benzeri benzer bir takım olayları ciddi , yani bunlar yok gibi birşeydi. Yani insanlar hani o köylerde anlatır ya hani o kapımızı açık bıraktık bırakıp gideriz gibi bir hal vardı. Yani insanlar daha böyle birbiriyle paylaşan kenetlenen işte komşusunu gerçekten aç olduğunda şu olduğunda, dayanışma hali yaratan işte mahallesinin korunmasına, mahalleli bilinci anlamında dediğim gibi birşey var birliktelik var. Ya 12 Eylül öncesinde işte mahallede şey vardı yani ciddi bir otorite diyelim.”

When I came here in 1975, I didn't have home; I stayed in someone's place, in a single room. I used to stay there as a single person. I was so young then, I didn't experience a warm family atmosphere. But life has always been a struggle, a struggle. In spite of this, youth at that period, warmth of the people at that time and people's honesty at that time cannot be seen now. To be honest if you stand alone in a place like Istanbul... Istanbul swallows you. You can easily get used to every kind of dirt or bad habits. But on the other hand our leftist organizations really helped us, they had an issue to gain people against everything bad and direct these people to the good. Of course, September 12<sup>th</sup> had a bad and serious impact on revolutionary organizations.<sup>46</sup>

This is not a random narrative but in fact many of my informants pointed out that the revolutionary organizations oriented "ordinary people" towards proper moral values. In the account above, the city is narrated as a place of corruption. My informant says that the migrant is always at risk of being overwhelmed by the city and became corrupted or ruined altogether. Revolutionary groups on the other hand, are a substitute for "family", and provide the networks that migrants are deprived from upon arriving to the city. For the informant above, revolutionary groups take care of migrants, orient and protect them. Notwithstanding that almost all my informants constructed the migrant or the ordinary citizen in similar ways, the pedagogic approach here is worth noticing where migrants are depicted to be naïve subjects in need of the guidance of revolutionaries. Thus, I think it would not be an exaggeration to argue that in Gülsuyu belonging is largely constituted in relation to the material presence of revolutionaries.

---

<sup>46</sup> "75'de geldiğimde tek bir odada birisinin evinde duruyordum evim yoktu benim. Bekar olarak kalıyordum ben. O zamanlar çok gençtim daha, biz öyle sıcak ale ortamı yaşamadık. Ama hayat mücadeleylen yani yaşam mücadeleylen geçti. Ama ona rağmen o zaman ki gençlik, o zaman ki halkın sıcaklığı, o zaman ki insanların dürüstlüğü artık pek görülüyor. Açık söyleyeyim, İstanbul gibi bir yerde tek başına durup da... İstanbul insanı yutar. Her türlü pislik, kötü alışkanlıklara anında kapılabilirsin. Ama bizim o zamanki sol örgütlerin ciddi bir yararı vardı bize, her tür kötü şeye karşı insanları kazanıp onları doğru şeye yönlendirme gibi bir derdi vardı. Tabii 12 Eylül'den sonra devrimci örgütler ciddi yaralar aldı."

After the coup, there was every kind of, ummm, prostitution, drugs, criminal organizations... We hadn't known such things before. We hadn't experienced them. There were only fascist attacks and we fought against them together.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to the post coup period, the time before 80s is almost always described in positive terms. The only negativity mentioned in these narratives is the fascist attack, which the neighborhood was collectively fighting back. When the post-coup period is talked about, people frequently refer to prostitution, drugs and thievery as examples for moral dissolution in Gülsuyu. In the accounts I have collected it is easy to connect this moral dissolution with the physical annihilation of the revolutionaries be it through arrest, killings or, escape, during the coup. In other words, the demise of the authority of revolutionary organizations accompanied moral decay and the penetrations of things associated with the dangerous city life.<sup>48</sup>

In this part of narratives, the neighborhood is described by lack, loss and longing. Once again the beginning of immoral conducts that replaced moral values that made Gülsuyu a special place are traced back to the period of the coup. Thus we can claim that the coup is narrated as an event that interrupts belonging to neighborhood by destroying the features through which belonging is articulated so far. The sense of security is replaced by rumors of corruption, the altruistic member of community gives way to the self-interested individual.

---

<sup>47</sup> “Darbe sonrasında her tür ee işte fuhuş olsun, uyuşturucu olsun, çeteleşme olsun... O zaman biz böyle şeyleri tanımıyorduk yani. Yaşamamıştık böyle şeyleri. Sadece faşist saldırılar vardı o saldırılara karşı da hep beraber bir göğüs germe vardı.”

<sup>48</sup> Today, still there are some organizations affiliated with radical leftist politics in the neighborhood. These organizations are usually attended by young people in the neighborhood. However according to many of my informants these groups which identify themselves with leftist politics are far from doing leftist politics as in the past. These organizations are especially criticized since they are in conflict with each other despite sharing similar views. Leftist organizations often organize demonstrations in the neighborhood, which are usually intervened by the police as I illustrated in the previous chapter.

Before September 12, especially the solidarity of the people was really good. First of all this spirit of the solidarity of the people was destroyed. Individual interests became dominant, individual salvation became dominant. When everybody's house was, let's say 225 m<sup>2</sup>, after September 12<sup>th</sup>, one violated other's border, one took from other, and one stole from other. Lands were in a mess then. But everyone had 225 m<sup>2</sup> before. As individual interests became dominant, the spirit of revolutionary solidarity was destroyed. As it was destroyed, some started to follow their individual salvation. Our doors were wide open in the past, nothing used to open. Then every kind of dirt started to happen.<sup>49</sup>

As the quote above expressed in the aftermath of the coup the social authority which protected and ensured the continuity of a certain morality disappeared. Problems regarding previously settled matters- such as the distribution of land- turned into issues of conflict between people. The exact sentence used in the excerpt is: “ self-interest became important, solidarity, revolutionary solidarity collapsed altogether”. In other words, he attributes the cause of conflict to self-interest which is a produced by the collapse of revolutionary solidarity that protected the neighborhood from outside forces as much as from the influence of these on people's character.

As I mentioned earlier, in the aftermath of the 80s most of the people in *gecekondu* areas, including the people in Gülsuyu, got title deeds as a result of amnesty laws. Moreover, after legalization infrastructure, water and electricity were provided and, roads were paved with asphalt by the local municipality. Remember also that people talked about the period of establishment in terms of struggle and difficulty. At the first sight, we could conclude that actually the coup and what happened after the coup

---

<sup>49</sup> “12 eyllden nce, zellikle halkın birbiriyle dayanışma gerekten ok gzeldi. Bir defa o halkın birbiriyle dayanışma ruhu kırıldı. Bireysel ıkarlar n plana geti, iřte bireysel kurtuluřlar n plana ıktı. Bizim burda mesela herkesin evi diyelim 225 m2 iken 12 eyll ile birlikte o onun sınırına girdi, o ondan aldı o br brnden aldı. Arsalar birbirne girdi. Oysa herkesin burda 225 m2 ydi. Bir defa bu kiřisel ıkarlar n plana ıkmasıyla birlikte o devrimci dayanışma o ruhu tamamen yıkıldı. Yıkılınca insanlar kimisi kurtuluř peřinde kořmaya bařladı. Eskiden mahallemizde biz kapımız tamamen aıktı, hi birřey olmazdı. Sonra her trl piřlik ktlk bařladı.”

largely solved the problems that people in Gülsuyu encountered at the everyday level. However, none of my informants referred to these changes. I believe that this can be a point of departure to think about how belonging to this locality is imagined. Castles and Davidson, (2000), - using “home” as a metaphor for wider social space- defines home as a place where one feels a sense of belonging and where one can decide on acceptable values and forms of behavior (p.130). Looked from this perspective, the aftermath of the coup can be depicted as a period that reflects disruption of belonging through loss of the feeling of security and also the loss of values that characterized community. Following this, we can even argue that Gülsuyu ceased to be a home for many people despite the fact they continued to live there:

Everybody started to endeavor to protect things they have. Or they started to act in the thought that they could save themselves by protecting their individual interests. That is, social opposition started to be built totally on individual interests. To me these are today’s most important ruins of period of September 12. Well, after the total destruction of the spirit of solidarity, degeneration and corruption started and developed. New generation, new generation that grew up in the period of September 12 coup, grew up with a culture imposed by them.<sup>50</sup>

In sum, although the coup provided services for the neighborhood it also alienated people from their home and robbed them from the tools that rendered them successful in their struggles at the everyday level. It is also significant that in this account youth is the main subject around which the trope of degeneration is narrated. According to the narratives I collected, the gangs -that are associated mostly with drugs and thievery - replaced revolutionary solidarity in the neighborhood. Despite being deprived of means

---

<sup>50</sup> “Herkes birşeylerini korumann peşine düşmeye başladı. Veyahutta kişisel ee çıkarlar kendini kuratarabileceği mantığıylan hareket etmeye başladı. Yani toplumsal muhalafet tamamen kişisel çıkar üzerine kurulmaya başladı. Bunlar tabi ki bugün kü 12 eylül döneminin en büyük yıkıntıları bana göre. Eee sora o dayanışma ruhunun tamamen yıkılmasıile birlikte insanlar tamamen yozlaşma çürüme dediğimiz olay burda gelişti filizlendi.Yeni yetişen gençlik tamamen 12 eylül darbesiyle birlikte gelişen yeni yetişen gençlik tamamen onların dayattığı kültürle yetişti.”

and resources, the youth wanted not only a house to settle in but to acquire many other things. This desire for accessing consumption forced the youth to resort to immoral activities:

System and capital's groups created a consumption society. Penniless people wanted to have many things. We noticed that some gangs emerged in the neighborhood. Because, a period of easy money, oppressing others, taking from others by force started. All of them are the events happened after September 12. So, for example the best gunmen were from our neighborhood. The majority of the gunmen of mafia, that are so popular, were from our neighborhood. Why? Because, these people were potentially there. Because they were the children of the people that you stood together in some social events and you were in the same activity together once. I know some of them very well, they were really the children of our neighborhood. We know their fathers and uncles who were our comrades. And now, they can easily be gunmen.<sup>51</sup>

Many of my informants share the interpretation that penetration of immoral values into the neighborhood is related to the penetration of consumption culture into the neighborhood. Youth is depicted as victim because they were born and raised in this culture but, they are also accused of being perpetrators since they resort which make Gülsuyu an insecure place.

The argument that the post- coup period in Turkey ---and economic liberalization that followed it-- has given rise to consumption-oriented lifestyles and corruption is widespread in Turkey. So is the association of this occurrence with the youth (Neyzi

---

<sup>51</sup> “ Sistem sermeye grupları muazzam bir tüketim toplumu yarattı. İşte elinde avucunda olmayan insanlar bir çok şeye sahip olmak istediler. Bir baktık çeteler türedi mahallelerimizde. Çünkü kolay yoldan para kazanmak, diğerini ezme, diğerinden ee zorla alma üzerine bi süreç başladı. Bunların hepsi 12 eylülde sonra yaşanan süreçlerdir. Dolayısıyla yani şöyle örnek vereyim en iyi tetikçiler bizim mahallemizden çıktı. Mafya dediğimiz, çok popüler,yani kamuoyuna yansımış mafyanın tetikçilerini büyük bir bölümü bizim mahallemizden çıktı. Çünkü niye potansiyel olarka bu insanlar vardı niye bu insanların önemli bir bölümüne baktığınızda köylerden . Yani bir dönem baktığınızda faaliyet yürüttüğünüz, çeşitli toplumsal olaylara birlikte yanyana durduğunuz insanların çocuklarıydı. Bir kaç tanesini yakinen tanıyorum gerçekten bizim çevremizin çocuklarıydı.Babaları, amcalarını biliyoruz, bizle beraber yol yürümüş insanlar. Ve şimdi bu insanlar tetikçilik çok rahat yapabiliyorlar.”

2004). However, in Gülsuyu when people talk about the consumerism and corruption of the youth they don't explain this only by referring to the general political and economic situation in Turkey, but also by pointing out the transformation of the relation of people to leftist activities in the neighborhood that became to signify the state violence after the coup. It is a very widespread statement among my informants that people, who engaged in political activities in pre-coup period, tried to prevent their children from taking place in political organizations in the post- coup period due to "dangers" it became to signify. My informants claim this attitude of parents resulted in isolation of youth from certain moral values embedded in political culture of neighborhood .

Next I will illustrate how these "dangers" were perceived by the people at the time. Following this, I can also start to discuss how the relationship between the "ordinary citizen" and the revolutionaries in the aftermath of the coup is told to be transformed since it is also elaborated through the theme of "danger".

My informants when depicting the 1980 coup, pointed out that one of its effects was that activities identified with the left were started to be perceived as "bad and dangerous" :

How about the devastations September 12<sup>th</sup> created. I mean, there were arrestments, custodies, and there were... books and magazines on desks. All of them were mixed. The weapon as the means of crime, next to the book; the book was also a means of crime, just like the gun. Well, the society also considered the book a bit of harm. It was next to the weapon. For instance associations were closed, trade unions were closed. The illusion that they were closed because they were bad was created. If they had been good, they wouldn't have been closed. As a result, the society was seriously isolated from... I don't know, if people had books in their home they had been in custody; if you went to the association you could be arrested or be in custody. Then, the young people that we call as next generation were isolated from such things especially by their families.



I mean, the people that have been very active in associations a period of time ago did not let their own children to go these associations.<sup>52</sup>

In that period many of our youngsters, our people were jailed, were shot, were dispersed from one place to the other and some went abroad. Of course, people began to be afraid of losing their life. They were afraid of losing their life reluctantly, because you might disappear when you were in custody, or somebody might shoot you from behind and you might be killed. You might be pushed down from the window in the police office. Today we need to unite in democratic organizations of masses, but it is not easy. When you organize an activity today still the people have the fear of police, who may raid, or come and hit me, or take me in custody.<sup>53</sup>

The first excerpt expresses that in the aftermath of the coup anything related to organized activity was regarded to risk state violence. The second excerpt on the other hand, delineates how witnessing state violence operated as a mechanism of fear that prevented people from participating in any organized activity within the neighborhood.

In her ethnographic book Fear as a way of Life, Green (1999) observes:

Fear destabilizes social relations by driving a wedge of distrust between family members, neighborhoods and friends. Fear divides communities by creating suspicion and apprehension not only of strangers but of each other (p.55).

---

<sup>52</sup> “Ya 12 eylülün yarattığı tahribatlar neydi. Bunlar işte ben şeyi buluyorum yani yakalanmalar oluyordu, gözaltılar oluyordu bakıyorsunuz masaların üzerine şeyler dizilirdi. Kitaplar, dergiler işte. Hepsi içeçeydi. Kitabın yanında silah işte suç aleti diye, aynı zamanda kitap da suç aletiydi, tabanca da suç aletiydi . E şimdi toplum da şey dedi yani kitap zarar biraz. Silahla yanyana duruyor. Örneğin dernekler kapatıldı sendikalar kapatıldı. Bunlar kötü olduğu için kapatıldı mantığı yaratıldı. Çünkü niye iyi olsaydı kapatılmazdı. Dolayısıyla toplum ciddi anlamda bir çok şeyden uzaklaşma ne biliyim yani evinde kitap bulunursa gözaltına alınırdı, derneğe gidersen, tutuklanabilir, gözaltına alınabilirdin. Dolayısıyla hani, gelen kuşak dediğimiz yeni genç insanlar özellikle aileleri tarafından bu tip şeylere uzaklaştırılmaya çalışıldı. Yani işte bir dönem önce derneklerde çok yoğun aktiviteler yapılırken bu insanlar oluyordu aslında ama sonra çocuklarını örneğin göndermiyorlardı.”

<sup>53</sup> “O dönemde bir sürü gençlerimiz, insanlarımız, hapsedildi, vuruldu, her biri bir tarafa savruldu, kimisi yurt dışına gitti. Tabi insanlar canından da korkar hale geldi. İster istemez korkuyordu da çünkü gözaltında kayboluyordunuz veya hiç ummadığımız yerde birisi sizi arkadan vurabiliyordu öldürebiliyordunuz. Karakolda camdan aşağıya atılabiliyordunuz. Bugün yine demokratik kitle örgütleriyle bütünleşmeliyiz. Amaa bu bütünlüğü sağlamak için de ee tabi ki çok basit değil hala bir etkinlik yaptığımız zaman halkta hala şu korku var ya işte polis gelir basarsa, y veya ben işte gelir beni döverse, veya içeri atılırsam.”

The same holds true in Gülsuyu. The fear of being exposed to state violence keeps the individual away from organizational or political activities in the neighborhood. Thus in the aftermath of the coup, relations of people which were characterized by solidarity, are shaped by fear. Not only organized activities but people associated with leftist organizations are perceived as subjects that people should keep away in the neighborhood. For example, one of my informants responded to my question of how the coup affected the neighborhood as follows: “ After September 12, people stopped greeting the revolutionaries...”.<sup>54</sup> Another informant told me a little story, which illustrates the transformed relationship between the people and the revolutionaries:

We were visiting houses to ask money for association. There was a boy named Ali, and we visited his home. Two days later a woman came to me, says please don't take Ali in the horganization, don't take We Ali in the horganization. I said what horganization aunt, there isn't any horganization. She couldn't even say organisation, but she said horganisation.<sup>55</sup>

Feldman's concept of “redlight” which he developed in reference to IRA militants is useful in understanding the revolutionary bodies in the neighborhood after the coup.

Feldman (1991) defines redlight as:

The surveilled and harassed subject.... The continued harassment of the redlight is called being tortured, being characterization that documents the colonization of social life and private space by logic of interrogation cell. In the former space the red light's social life is turned inside out, in the latter space the red light's body is unfolded and exposed. This tortured subject is the walking panoptic presence of the state in a community that wishes to evade all panopticism. Made visible as a source of pollution, a danger to himself and to those who are linked to him, the targeted subject is isolated from his community and from other

---

<sup>54</sup> “12 Eylül'den sonar devrimcilere selam vermez oldular.”

<sup>55</sup> “Derneğe para topluyoruz işte evlere gidip, Ali diye bir çocuk vardı onun evine gitmiştik. Ondan iki gün sonra bir kadın geldi kapıma nolur Ali'yi almayın yörgüte Ali'yi almayın yörgüte. Dedim ne yörgütü, yörgüt mörgüt yok teyze. Örgüt bile diyemiyor, yörgüt diyor.”

associations. He is incorporated by repeated arrest, not the acceptable levels of attrition and fear (p.109).

Then, we can conclude that the narratives depict a revolutionary people stay away from because he signifies the very state violence he himself experienced. Thus the fear of the “ordinary citizen” is produced by the bodies of the revolutionary that are now marked by the state. For example, the last story is recounted by someone who was arrested and tortured in the aftermath of the coup, whose brother --who was a leader in the revolutionary organization-- left the neighborhood in order to escape the police, and whose son because of being engaged in political activities had to migrate to Germany 10 years ago when he was seventeen years old. He has indeed a panoptic presence in the neighborhood and is regarded to be a sign of danger.

So revolutionaries of 1970s that are represented by many of my informants as a respected authority that had the consent of the whole neighborhood and people affiliated with them became the bodies people must keep away from because of the state violence it signifies. I previously point that when talking about the pre coup period many of my informants included themselves into the revolutionary category by referring to revolutionaries as “we.” While narrating the post-coup period, revolutionaries were referred as “those” who “left the neighborhood in the aftermath of the coup. Remembering the discussion above, we can argue that this shift illustrates the attachment of the “we” to locality that is articulated through “the leaving of those”.

In this section, I tried to illustrate that the coup is narrated as a break point for the neighborhood which has a before and after constructed in relation to each other. While the pre-coup period is described by the moral value of social solidarity, post-coup period is characterized by loss. This loss is linked to the dissolution of social control which

resulted from the disintegration of revolutionary groups. The degenerate values of the outside world penetrated the neighborhood and created self-caring individuals. The main subject around which the trope of degeneration is developed is the youth who are depicted both as victims and perpetrators.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, by focusing on stories related to past of the neighborhood, I tried to examine how belonging to this specific locality is articulated by my informants. I tried to do this first of all by focusing on establishment stories which illustrate making a “home” through social solidarity and collectivity. Following this, I focused on the stories related to September 12, 1980 coup. While pre coup is characterized by social solidarity, the post coup period is defined through its dissolution and loss. Moreover dissolution of these moral values is claimed to have brought along the dissolution of social control in the neighborhood. Thus I claimed post coup period can be read as the process that characterize the dissolution of the secure “home” that is built through struggles at everyday level.

## CHAPTER III

### STORIES OF THE PRESENT

In this chapter I will focus on the stories of urban transformation told by my informants. I was not particularly interested in the urban transformation process when I started the research, though by the end I had noticed that stories related to it constituted a large part of the content of my interviews, regardless of my interest. When thought in relation to the “stories of the past” which I focused on in the previous chapter, these stories of urban transformation can be thought as “stories of the present”.

I will start with a brief discussion of neoliberalism, and how the urban transformation process in Turkey can be read in relation to it. Following this, I will analyze how the inhabitants of the Gülsuyu Neighborhood have dealt with the transformation process since the day they encountered it. In this analysis, my main aim will be to understand the subjectivities emerging in the struggle against urban transformation project in this specific locality.

#### A Brief Account of Urban Transformation in Istanbul

According to neoliberal discourse, state intervention in the free market economy renders this so-called “self-regulating” system less efficient, and should thus be prevented.

However, in an article about the Tobacco Law passed in 2002, Huricihan İslamoğlu (2002) illustrates clearly that the formation and development of a self-regulating market cannot be thought of as independent of the politics that is represented through the laws

and administrative decisions of the state. Hence, the state does not retreat, but actually takes place in the formation of a free market through its de-regulating regulations.

İslamoğlu argues that one way of tracing the role of the state in the formation of the free market economy in Turkey is focusing on the administrative techniques and enacted laws which have re-determined free market actors since the 1980s. While, on the one hand, this process re-determines and defines new actors in the market, such as private sector businesses and TNC's, on the other it excludes local actors such as farmers and workers from the political arena. İslamoğlu reads this process as a shrinking of politics, characterized by the resignation of central government from its role of mediating between different actors' interests. Thus, by this process, while laws or administrative rule serves as a space of politics for certain groups for mediating and pursuing their interests, certain other groups are deprived of the tools of politics.

Urban transformation projects that are implemented in many parts of Turkey can be read as another example of this process. Istanbul has been going through an urban transformation process since the 1980s, which is the period of Turkey's initial integration into the liberal economy. Of course, this process is not peculiar to Turkey, but has taken and is taking place in many parts of the world, from New York City to New Delhi.

In relation to Istanbul, the issue is discussed around certain themes. Firstly, it is argued that in the aftermath of the 12 September 1980 coup, the change that took place in the economic base of the city, through the rise of a new service sector, was reflected in the use of city space as well (Uzun, 2001). Indeed, this period is characterized by the decline of formal manufacturing and the rise of the construction and service industries as Istanbul's most dynamic sectors (Tuğal, 2008). These new industries are concentrated

in certain areas in the city, reflecting the use of the city to create business centers, such as Levent, Maslak, etc.

Another point discussed in relation to changes in urban landscape in the aftermath of the 80s is the emergence of a new lifestyle that is related to a change in the urban consumption patterns of Istanbulites, especially of the middle class. Öncü (1997) argues that Istanbulites “were initiated into the global myth of the ideal home as the embodiment of a middle class way of life through the landscape” in this period (p.60). As a result of this, the “fortified enclaves,” characterized by a homogenous lifestyle that is cleansed of urban clutter, started to mushroom in many areas of the city to meet the “dream-life” of the middle class; a dream-life that is shaped mostly in relation to the “mythical constructs” of TV images (Caldeira, 2000; Öncü, 1987, p.61). Hence, beside emerging new sectors, the middle strata of Istanbul also became social agents in “shaping the course of historical events which altered the physiognomy of Istanbul” through their transformed consumption patterns (Öncü, 1987, p.69)

The processes pointed to above took place within a context in which massive renewal projects were already being designed and put in progress by Bedrettin Dalan, the post-coup mayor of Istanbul, with the claim of transforming Istanbul into a global city (Bartu & Kolluoğlu, 2008; Tuğal, 2008). Today, the urban transformation process is still being discussed and presented within the same framework. Thus, while, on the one side, the declared aim is to transform Istanbul into a world city that will be integrated into the developed world, on the other side, multi-storey sky-scrapers either as business centers or dream houses, have begun to dominate the panorama of Istanbul’s districts.

However, according to public discourse, there is an “obstacle” that prevents Istanbul becoming a world city: the *gecekondu* settlements. In post-coup era of urban

transformation, the *gecekondu* settlements that were built pre-coup started to be presented as the main obstacles preventing transformation of Istanbul into a modern global city, since these shaky dwellings were seen to “occupy” the high-value land which could be utilized for business centers or luxury residential areas.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, discourses on both the public and administrative levels which identify the *gecekondu*s as the main target of the urban transformation process have become prevalent. The discourses that point out the urgency of transforming the *gecekondu* settlements usually either employ the trope of deviancy, representing these places as a source of terror, drugs, underdevelopment, or cite the earthquake, identifying the *gecekondu* dwellings as the primary victims of any potential earthquake:

In fact, urban transformation is one of the toughest tasks in the world, perhaps the toughest. It is one of the few most important tasks facing Turkey nowadays. But Turkey can't begin to discuss development without solving the *gecekondu* problem. It is known that *gecekondu* areas, the problematic places, are the bases of terror, drugs, a deviant attitude against state, psychological disorders, a lack of education and health problems. In this sense, Turkey, which wants to unite with the modern world and enter the EU, has to get rid of the problems of illegal housing and housing that will not stand up to an earthquake. Every actor, NGO, press and politician in this sector has to consider this transformation in a scientific and civilized way.<sup>57</sup>

The above statement belongs to Erdoğan Bayraktar who is the head of TOKİ

---

<sup>56</sup> For a current example of this attitude, see the speech by Ali Ağaoğlu, owner of one of the biggest private building companies in Turkey:  
[http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2009/05/23/agaoglu\\_Insanlarimiz\\_canli\\_tabutta\\_yasiyor](http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2009/05/23/agaoglu_Insanlarimiz_canli_tabutta_yasiyor)

<sup>57</sup> “Gerçekten kentsel dönüşüm dünyanın en zor işlerinden biridir, hatta en zor işidir. Bugün Türkiye'nin içinde bulunduğu en önemli 2-3 tane sorundan biridir. Ama Türkiye, *gecekondu* problemini çözmeden kalkınmadan bahsedemez. Terörün, uyuşturucunun, devlete çarpık bakmanın, psikolojik olumsuzlukların, eğitimsizliğin ve sağlık problemlerinin temelini *gecekondu* bölgeleri, çarpık alanlar olduğu bilinmektedir. Bu bakımdan çağdaş dünya ile bütünleşmek, AB'ye girmek isteyen Türkiye, kaçak yapılaşmadan, depreme dayanıksız yapılardan mutlaka kurtulmalıdır. Sektör içinde bulunan tüm aktörlerin, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının, basın, siyasetin bu dönüşüme çok bilimsel ve medeni bakmaları gerek”: [http://www.emlakkulisi.com/1665\\_istanbul\\_a\\_kentsel\\_donusum\\_sart?TOP=210](http://www.emlakkulisi.com/1665_istanbul_a_kentsel_donusum_sart?TOP=210)



(The Mass Housing Administration), one of the main actors that exercises its “right to the city” through privileges granted by the urban transformation laws which have been enacted in the last couple of years (Harvey, 2008, p.28).<sup>58</sup> TOKİ was established in 1984 in order to solve the housing problems of lower income groups. However, over the years, and especially in the last decade, this institution has been equipped by enacted laws with new powers and privileges, such as:

Forming partnerships with private construction companies and involvement in the construction and selling of housing for profit; being able to take over state urban land at no cost with the approval of the prime minister and president’s office; expropriation of urban land to construct housing projects, and developing and implementing gecekondü transformation projects (Bartu & Kolluoğlu, 2008, p.7).

Thus the institution that was established in order to solve the housing problem of low-income groups by government, has transformed into an institution that commands the whole urban process. Besides TOKİ, the other arbitrator of the process is the Greater Istanbul Municipality. Bartu and Kolluoğlu (2008) summarize the new privileges of the Municipality, granted via the laws enacted in the last couple of years as :

Broadening the physical space under its control and jurisdiction, increasing power and authority in development control and coordination of district municipalities, making it easier for greater municipalities to establish and or create partnerships and collaborate with private companies, outlining the first legal framework for “urban transformation” by giving the municipality the authority to designate, plan and implement “urban transformation” areas and projects (p.15)

As a result, gecekondü settlements in Istanbul have become targets of urban transformation projects that are realized by the protocols signed between TOKİ, the Greater Municipality and the district municipalities. While the protocols are signed between these state actors, it is private building companies which undertake the projects.

---

<sup>58</sup>Harvey defines the “right to the city” as the “the right to command the whole urban process.”

However, some *gecekondu* neighborhoods which are targeted by these projects resist the process by resorting to different strategies. The Gülsuyu neighborhood became the target of just such an urban transformation plan by the Greater municipality, and is one of the *gecekondu* settlements that is resisting this process. Since the day the neighborhood was confronted with urban transformation, the inhabitants have been struggling against the state imposed plans by recourse to legal procedures through local mobilization. Comaroff and Comaroff (2006) interpret the escalating tendency toward recourse to legal procedures by different actors in the last decades, as the migration of politics to the courts:

People drawn together by social or material predicament, culture, race, sexual preference, residential proximity, faith, and habits of consumption become legal persons as their common complaints turn them into plaintiffs with communal identities against antagonists who, allegedly, have acted illegally against them. (p. 26-27).

At the end of this chapter, by focusing on the case of another neighborhood which is also struggling against urban transformation plans, I will argue that a resistance that is based on following legal procedures appears as the only legitimate method of struggle in this process. However, my initial aim will be to analyze the new resistant subjectivities that are emerging in the face of urban transformation process in the Gülsuyu Neighborhood. Before I examine my field material, however, I want to discuss Foucault and Butler's theories of subjectivity. I think both of these approaches to theorizing the resisting subject can be useful in reading the struggle of the Gülsuyu Neighborhood against urban transformation.

### Theories of Subjectivity

Foucault identifies the aim of his study as creating a history of the different modes by which in our culture, human beings are made subjects (Rabinow, 1984). Thus the concept of subjectivity forms the general theme of his research. Foucault (1984), renames the process of making subjects as the “objectivizing of subjects” and defines its three different modes: the first is objectivizing the subject through dividing practices; the second is objectivizing the subject through scientific classifications; and the last is the mode through which a human being turns herself into a subject (p. 209).

In a series of lectures he gave in 1980 in United States, Foucault (1993) points out that his conceptualization of the objectification of the subject through dividing practices and scientific classification are informed basically by one of the “techniques of human beings” elaborated by Habermas; that is, the techniques of domination that “permit one to determine the conduct of individuals to impose certain wills on them to certain ends or objectives” (p. 203). Referring to his previous studies, Foucault criticizes himself by indicating that in his studies on prison he insisted too much on the techniques of domination. He adds the third “technique of human beings” to Habermas’ list: the “techniques of the self” which is a conceptualization that informs the mode by which one transform oneself into subject (p. 203). He defines the techniques of the self as the effect of individuals, by their own means, on their own bodies, own souls, own thoughts and conduct; in other words, the ability of the self to transform or modify oneself, for certain ends (1990). This self-formation approach renders a self who is active, in opposition to the passive and constrained subject positions of former two conceptualizations of objectivizing the subject (Rabinow, 1984).

Foucault’s (1982) understanding of the term “subject” indicates two meaning that are interrelated: being “subject to someone else by control and dependence” and

being “tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 212). In this way, Foucault (1993) suggests that, in order to analyze the genealogy of the subject of western civilization:

One has to take into account the interaction between these two types of techniques – techniques of domination and techniques of the self. One has to take into account the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself. And conversely, one has to take into account the points where the techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination. (p. 203)

So here we come across a definition of the subject that is not totally independent of, but also not totally determined by, a dominant power. If we look more closely at the Foucauldian conception of power, we can understand better how techniques of domination and techniques of self operate in relation to each other in order to produce a subject position. For Foucault (1990), power is not simply a relationship between partners, individuals or collectives, or “a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure subservience of the citizens in a given state, or a domination system exerted over a group” (p. 94). It is a way in which certain actions modify others; it is action upon action, and through its exercise it becomes power (Foucault, 1982). So, in the Foucauldian sense, power is not something acquired, seized or shared; it is exercised from innumerable points, within the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations (Foucault, 1990). Such approach to power can be understood better by focusing on Foucault’s discussion of freedom. According to Foucault, power can only be exercised over free subjects. By this, Foucault (1982) means that, within power relations; “individual or collective subjects are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and comportments, may be realized” (p. 221). Thus

it is not possible to talk about a power relationship when determining factors saturate all of the actions of subject, as in the case of slavery (Foucault, 1982). Foucault also says that power relations always contain resistance. If we remember the self-formation of subjects and the freedom inherent in the definition of the Foucauldian conception of power, we can understand how resistance on the part of subjects becomes possible in Foucauldian theory. The individual can resist existing techniques of subjectification because freedom renders individuals who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions, can be realized (1982, p. 221). Thus when subjects become active agents in their own formation, it is also possible to talk about the struggle of subjects against submission to certain forms of subjection (ibid).

Butler discusses how individuals identify (or not) with the subject positions offered to them more in detail through incorporating the concept of performativity into her analysis (Hall, 1996). According to Butler (1995), the subject comes into being by being interpellated. The concept of interpellation, borrowed from Althusser, is paraphrased by Butler (1993) as a “discursive condition of social recognition” or a discursive constitution of the subject (226). However, the very discursive constitution of the subject points to “the impossibility of a full recognition, that is, of ever fully inhabiting the name by which one’s social identity is inaugurated and mobilized” (ibid). Thus, interpellation itself implies the instability and incompleteness of subject-formation. For complete subject formation, people who are interpellated into subject positions need to recognize and accept those subject positions. How do people call or recognize or reply back to this interpellation? First of all, on the part of the subject itself, there is a certain readiness to be compelled by the authoritative interpellation (Lloyd, 1999). Thus subject positions are produced by people assuming the subject positions that

are created by discursive practices, by the interpellated subject. By “assuming”, Butler means citation of conventions or ideologies of social worlds or the discursive constitution of subjects (1988); in other words, the citation of conventions realized by assuming subject positions through acting (citing); or, in other words again, through performativity. There is no subject that is outside of the power relations or the interpellation that evaluates this calling. In the words of Butler (1993); “There is no doer prior to subject positions, the doer-subject becomes formed through performativity” (p. 99). The essence of performativity is reiteration; that is, it is through repetition that the subject cites conventions and realizes a repetition (Butler, 1993). So the subject, while it on the one hand assumes subject positions, on the other hand maintains the continuum of historical rules that are active in the interpellation process; the discursive constitution. However, it is also performativity that provides the means to exercise agency on the part of the subject, in finding some activities desirable and others not (Alshop & Fitzsimons & Lennon, 2002). Since those rules are historical, and rely on their continual citation or enactment by subjects, they can also be challenged and changed through “alternative” performative acts (or alternative citations). So the process of becoming a subject conveys a duality in Butler’s term, signifying both the interpellation in the process and also how the subject puts claims on this interpellation (similar to the interaction between techniques of the self and techniques of domination in Foucault). This “answering back,” while it can go on to reproduce the historical conventions, can also bring about a change in them and thus a shift in the production of the subject as well. While discussing “critical thought” in relation to Foucault in an interview, Butler explains this in simpler terms:

Thus, if we are formed as obedient subjects, if the state or some other

regulated form of power imposes itself on us and we accept it, we become obedient subjects. But in the moment we begin to ask ourselves

about the legitimacy of this power we become critical, we adopt a point of view that is not completely shaped by the state and we question ourselves about the limits of the demands that can be placed on us. When someone says "no" to power, they are saying "no" to a particular way of being formed by power... the subject forms him or herself through the practice of criticism. (Birules, 2009).

Thus performativity, that is, becoming a subject through acting or doing, enables agency in Butler's sense, and provides the possibility of resistance to certain forms of subjection and the norms that constitute them. Again, we cannot talk about a subject that remains outside of power relations, though we can see the formation of a subject that is becoming through criticizing the subject position offered to her.

In the next section, I will try to illustrate that we can read the resistance of Gülsuyu as a resistance to submission to a certain subject position offered or imposed upon them through an urban transformation process. Remembering the discussion of İslamoğlu on neoliberalism, I argue that the people in Gülsuyu do not accept being excluded from the urban transformation process as passive subjects. In their struggle against urban transformation, they form another subject position for themselves. In the end, the people of Gülsuyu do not actually resist the urban transformation process in the literal sense; that is, they are not against improving the physical structure of their neighborhood. However, they are resisting submission to certain subject positions, which, according to them, illustrate that urban transformation, in this context, is not about improving their living conditions.

I approach the urban transformation plans in relation to Shore and Wright's (1999) definition of "policy", which they define as "an intrinsically technical, rational,

action-oriented instrument that decision makers use to solve problems and affect change” (p. 5). Policies not only impose conditions from outside, but also influence people’s norms of conduct so that they themselves contribute, however consciously, to government models of social order. Thus policies actually impose or call people to certain subject positions (Ibid., p. 6). However, instead of analyzing the subject positions produced via urban transformation plans, I want to focus on my informants’ own analysis and criticisms of the subject positions offered to them by the urban transformation plan. While on the one hand I will trace how my informants read this process, on the other I will try to understand the self that is formed in relation to this reading.

#### New Subjectivities Emerging in the Face of Urban Transformation

The Gülsuyu neighborhood’s first encounter with the process of urban transformation dates back to 2004. In July of 2004, an official notice arrived to the *mukhtars*<sup>59</sup> (governor of a neighborhood), outlining a city master plan<sup>60</sup> called “The Northern E-5/Maltepe Area Master Plan,” which was already designed and officially endorsed. Through this official notice, the residents of the neighborhood started to talk about urban transformation, and phrases like “master plan,” “administrative court”, and “action for annulment” started to appear in their daily conversations.

---

<sup>59</sup> Muhktars of both Gülsuyu and Gülensu

<sup>60</sup> Nazım İmar Planı



After receiving the official notice, the *mukhtars* of the Gülsuyu-Gülensu neighborhoods, inform the neighborhood organization and some “older residents” of the neighborhood about the situation, and they organize a meeting.<sup>61</sup> After the meeting, the group decides to appeal to professionals who could “translate” to them the technical language of the official announcement, because, as one of informants stated; “Of course, neither the neighborhood association, nor the *muhtars*, nor the people knew anything about what master plan is, what it can provides us with or take away from us. We did not know.”

Through the “translation” of the professionals, the inhabitants of the district learned that the master plan designed for their neighborhood ignored substantial buildings (the residents’ homes) and placed new constructions over them. The professionals translating the plan suggested that the residents immediately object to the plan by saying “You would loose your houses with this plan”.<sup>62</sup> Thus the struggle of Gülsuyu against urban transformation started.

A friend of mine who I know through political relations in Kartal came here. He is a civil engineer. There was also a friend in Maltepe, a civil engineer. While we were discussing about the issue, we realized that they put various construction sites on the map of our neighborhood, as if there was no settlement area or no houses here. Like green area, park area, area of shops, housing area... But all of these construction sites were on our homes. We decided to object to this; we decided to serve petitions to the Greater Istanbul Municipality and Regional Planning Directorate. Following this, we decided to bring an annulment action to court. We do not want these plans because the construction sites are placed over our houses.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Mahallenin ileri gelenleri

<sup>62</sup> “Bu planla evlerinizi kaybedersiniz.”

<sup>63</sup> “Politik ilişkilerden kaynaklı arkadaş vardı Kartal’da; o geldi, inşaat mühendisi. Maltepe’de inşaat mühendisi arkadaş vardı. Onlarla nedir ne değildir diye tartışırken gördük ki bizim mahallemizde hiç yerleşim yokmuş gibi burda hiç ev yapılmamış gibi çeşitli donatı alanları koymuşlar mahalle haritasının üzerine. Yeşil alan, park alanı, ticari konut alanı, toplu konut alanı gibi... Ama bütün bu donatı alanları

Through a very fast mobilization, the plan was announced to the whole neighborhood, and petitions were collected. Later, petitions of objection to the plan, representing 7,000 families in the neighborhood, were handed over to the greater municipality by the residents themselves, who went to the municipality in six full buses.

In a short time, like 10 days, we made an announcement in the neighborhoods. As an association, we put up notices in tea houses and informed the families. We distributed petitions to every family. There were people who came to the association to serve the petition. We rented coaches to take us to the building of the metropolitan municipality of Istanbul. Then we started the judicial process through actions for annulment.<sup>64</sup>

At the same time, the group, again through the guidance of personal networks, got in contact with lawyers to learn which legal procedures they could follow in the face of the urban transformation plan. The lawyers suggested that they bring actions for annulment to the administrative court in as great a number possible.<sup>65</sup> In the end, residents brought thirty-six actions for annulment to court. The costs of the actions, each of which costs 1,500 YTL, were met by contribution by almost 1,130 different families from the neighborhood. As a result, the court decided to annul the plan and the greater municipality withdrew it.

---

bizim evlerimizin üzerine geliyordu. Bizde buna itiraz edelim dedik dilekçe verelim dedik. İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Şehir ve Bölge Planlama Müdürlüğüne. Arkasından da, plan iptal davası açalım hani biz bu planları istemiyoruz çünkü bu planlardaki donatı alanları bizim evlerimizin üzerine geliyor diye karar verdik”.

<sup>64</sup> “10 gün gibi kısa bir süre içinde biz mahallelere duyuru yaptık. Dernek olarak. Kahvelere ilanlar astık evleri haberdar etme çalışmaları başlattık. Her aileye dilekçesini dağıttık. Gelip dernekten dilekçe alanlar oldu. Araba tuttuk arabalar götürüp getirdi İstanbul Büyük Şehir Belediyesine. Sonra da iptal davalarıyla hukuksal süreci başlattık.”

<sup>65</sup> Through an action of annulment, an applicant seeks the annulment of a measure; in this case, the residents of Gülsuyu sought annulment of the urban transformation plan designed for their neighborhood.

In the meantime, the people from the neighborhood organization got acquainted with people from the Urban Planning Department of Mimar Sinan University, with whom they decided to produce an alternative plan:

We met people from the University of Mimar Sinan in 2006. We had a friend that is a student in Mimar Sinan University. He was working in the neighborhoods that are the victims of urban transformation. He brought his friends from Mimar Sinan. After academic members joined us too, we had a decision together. We objected to something, but the next step after objection was to present something you actually wanted. We talked about what we could do about that. The way to know what you want is through knowing what you need. We decided to do a survey.<sup>66</sup>

So through the participation of students, a survey was conducted within the neighborhood, in order to discover what inhabitants' expectations of urban transformation were. Also, a neighborhood committee was formed in order to follow and discuss the developments regarding the process, and street representatives were assigned to each street in order to ensure communication between residents and the committee. Finally, a survey that consulted all the residents of the neighborhood was accomplished.

In the meanwhile, after the annulment of the plan in 2007, the greater municipality and district municipality arranged a meeting with residents and the participants from the university. My informants stated that the meeting ended inconclusively.

After a while, an official announcement of another project reached the *muhtars*. This time, the municipality presented an urban renovation project and indicated that the

---

<sup>66</sup>“ 2006 yılında Mimar Sinan’la yollarımız kesişti. Bizim mimar Sinan’da öğrenci olan bir arkadaşımız vardı. Kentsel dönüşüm mağduru mahallelerde çalışıyordu. Mimar Sinan’dan arkadaşlarını da getirdi. Sonra ordan öğretim üyesi arkadaşlarda gelince beraber şöyle bi karar aldık. Biz itiraz ediyoruz ama itirazın bi diğer aşaması da ne istediğini ortaya koymaktır. Bununla ilgili ne yapabiliriz diye konuştuk. Ne istediğini bilmenin yolu da neye ihtiyaç olduğunu bilmeden geçiyordu. Bir anket çalışması yapalım dedik.”

details of the plan were going to be decided with the participation of NGOs and the institutions of the neighborhood. As my informants told me, urban renovation is a kind of project that does not rely heavily on demolition, but on the restoration of the existing buildings. This time, being already equipped with the technical language and the available networks, the neighborhood residents again brought an action for annulment to the administrative court against the renovation project. The court has not made any decision as yet regarding the renovation plan. However, since then, the urban transformation process seems to be on hold for the neighborhood. Also, the relationships established with professionals from the university have cooled off to a certain extent during this period.

The immediate answer given to the question of why people opposed the urban transformation project in their neighborhood, is their exclusion from the urban planning process as passive subjects who could not participate in the planning of a project that affects their lives radically:

Planners sit at their desks and prepare plans for us, but we don't want to remain passive. If some decisions are to be taken for us, we should decide where we will have green lands here. We should decide together where we will have shops, or which places are going to be public areas.<sup>67</sup>

However, as I have just indicated, the neighborhood also opposed the renovation project which stated that their participation would be incorporated. One informant explained people's opposition to the urban renovation plan by referring to the uncertainty on behalf of locals who could not make a clear decision about what they could really expect from

---

<sup>67</sup> "Plancılar yani bizim adımıza masa başında oturuyorlar bizler için planlar hazırlıyorlar ama hani biz öyle edilgen kalmak istemiyoruz. Madem bizim adımıza kararlar verilecek buranın nerenin yeşil alan olacağına biz karar verelim. Nerenin ticari konut olacağına nerenin işte kamusal alan olacağına birlikte karar verelim."

the plan. According to my informant, this resulted in conflicts between different groups involved in the process, such as professionals from the university and organizations in the neighborhood.

On the contrary, I claim that the most important factor shaping the perception of the inhabitants about the transformation plan is a distrust toward the state that is reinforced by the ambivalence inherent in the implementation of the project in the long term. I believe that the way my informants articulate their thoughts about the transformation project can be read to see how, through distrust, the self and the state are constructed as sides of this process, both in language and in practice.

First of all, my informants stated they were aware that in order to deal with the struggle, one should be equipped with a knowledge of technical languages of urban planning and law. Since the inhabitants of neighborhood were deprived of both at the beginning, they dealt with this process through cooperation with professionals:

We had meetings in the neighborhood from July to December, and even to January or February in 2004, about the problems of what urban transformation would bring us or what it would take from us, and how much of it we should accept or what we should object to. We tried to do all of these informative meetings with academic members and groups that struggle on issues related to the city as much as possible, because we all were ignorant about this subject.<sup>68</sup>

However, getting in touch with the professionals itself illustrates the fact that they were already “alert” to the tricks of the state. One of my informants, while comparing Gülsuyu to other neighborhoods in general, stated that:

They were trying to get this plan accepted by making it a fait accompli

---

<sup>68</sup>“ 2004 yılının temmuz ayından aralık hatta ocak şubat ayarına kadar mahallede kentsel dönüşüm nedir bize ne getirir bizden ne götürür kentsel dönüşüm ne kadar kabul etmeliyiz itiraz etmeliyiz diye toplantılar yaptık. Bütün bu bilgilendirme toplantılarında tabi biz hepimiz yani bu konuda cahil olduğumuz için mümkün olduğu kadar üniversite çevresinden akademisyenler ve kent üzerine mücadele eden diğer gruplarla birlikte yapmaya çalıştık.”

and by confusing people without explaining anything. But the muhtars replied by saying that they could not understand the case, so they would ask someone, and then they would write back. The engineers told them: “Don’t do that. Otherwise, you will lose your neighborhood.” We are a bit smarter. When I say “smart”, I mean our minds are open. When such things happen, even if they are not important, we see have common cause

with the universities, so we consult them to learn and understand the reality. Then we “learn the truth.” We are not architects or engineers; we don’t understand very well what this plan brings to us or takes from us. But we have friends that are architects, topographical engineers, related to this subject; we also have friends that are lawyers who give us explanatory information.<sup>69</sup>

In my opinion, expressions such as “being alert” or “learning the truth” which appear quite often in my interviews, signify the distrust towards state intuitions which, on the one hand constructs a state that is fraudulent and, on the other, a subject that is naïve and could be tricked by fraudulent states practices. However, my informants constructed themselves as alert and smart subjects of the process who refused to be fooled by the state’s fraudulent practices.

A good example of this can be given in relation to the stories related about the announcement of the project to neighborhood. The announcement of the urban transformation plan arrived to the *mukhtars* only ten days before the legal period for objection expired. However, as my informants persistently pointed out, the official period for objection should have been a month.<sup>70</sup> My informants interpret the “late”

---

<sup>69</sup>“ Yani aslında, insanların zihnini bulandırarak ne olduğunun açıklamasını dahi getirmeden bir nevi oldu bittiye getirip bu planı geçirmek istiyolardı. Ama muhtarların bunu ben anlamadım birilerine sorayım öyle yazayım cevap vermesi ile birlikte mühendisler dedi ki sakına böyle birşey yapmayın böyle birşey yaparsanız mahallenizi kaybetmiş olursunuz Biz uyanacağız biraz daha. “*Uyanacağız*” derken, fikrimiz “zihnimiz açık” bu tür şeylerde en ufak birşeyde hemen sorup aslını öğrenmek için, anlamak için hemen ee işte üniversitelerle birlikte ortak çalışmalarımız var, hemen onlara söylüyoruz, ordan “*gerçeğini öğreniyoruz*”. Çünkü biz ne mimarız ne mühendisiz. Veyahutta bu plan neyi getirir, neyi götürür fazla anlamayız. Ama mimarlar, bu konuyla ilgili harita mühendisleri arkadaşlarımız var hukukçular, onlar bunu daha açıklayıcı bilgiyi bize veriyor.”

<sup>70</sup> 30 days is also indicated in the urban transformation laws as the legal period for objection.

arrival of the announcement as a sign of the intention of the state institutions to prevent any opposition to the project. If the residents had not objected to the plan before the deadline, the plan would have been put into progress automatically. Thus their collection of 7,000 signatures for a petition in opposition to the plans through the rapid organization of residents is related by my informants with pride, as a struggle that was won against a state that intentionally placed obstacles in the process.

Indeed my informants perceive the transformation project not as a way of improving their lives, as it is described by state officials, but as a process of marginalization from life in the city in the long term. One of the “real” reasons behind this project, according to my informants, is the income that could be derived from the transformation of the neighborhood into an upper-class gated site or business center. Actually, the neighborhood enjoys a beautiful panorama of the Marmara sea and the Prince’s Islands, and my informants believe this is one of the reasons that the land would be of high value. One informant told me that it is only after this transformation project that they understood the value of the locality: “We did not come here for the panorama, but we understand its value now. Otherwise, nobody cared while coming here if the place had a beautiful view or not. Everybody was trying to solve their housing problem.”

Discontent with the state-imposed plan and distrust towards the state is articulated by referring to other issues as well. One of the concerns is the direct or indirect displacement of people which the project will necessitate in the long term:

As far as I could understand, and as the plans have been explained to us, in the first document of the plan they wanted to do the urban transformation like this: they wanted to send people away by buying their places, so people could use this as the advance money to get another house for twenty or thirty years of payment. If that plan had been used here, well, 70,000 people live here now, but according to the plan there would be 50,000 at the most. That is 20,000 people who would be sent

away. But these people, according to this plan of course, where would these people go?<sup>71</sup>

Indeed, the urban transformation project is opposed primarily because people see that the plan will necessitate their displacement in the long term. This displacement is thought to take two different forms: firstly, as the informant above says, according to the new plan a large number of people need to leave to neighborhood, since the capacity indicated in the plan and the actual population of the neighborhood does not match; secondly, if people want to stay in the neighborhood, they are forced to get in debt in order to buy a house from the project. This is because, according to the terms of the project, the demolished houses are not reciprocated by public houses. The public houses are valued higher than the residents' own houses. The difference between the cost of the old and new houses is supposed to be paid by residents in installments spread over twenty years.

My informants claim that a position of being "in debt" over an extended period of time is not commensurable with the ambiguity that characterizes their daily lives. In other words, they point out that they, with their irregular or limited income, could not meet the payment schedule offered by the public housing. Thus they think many people will be indirectly forced to leave the neighborhood in the long term.

Actually, the concerns of the residents are fed by the story of another gecekondu neighborhood that went through an urban transformation process. As part of a TOKİ public housing project in 2008, 5,000 people were displaced from Ayazma and resettled

---

<sup>71</sup> "Şimdi burada benim anladığım kadarıyla, planların da anlatıldığına göre, ordaki ilk gelen planda, yazıda bu kentsel dönüşümü şu şekilde uygulamak istiyordu. Burada vatandaşın yerlerini alarak bedellerini ödeyip , oradan isterse kalırsa peşinata sayıp geri kalanı taksitlendirip, 20-30 yıl gibi uzun vadeli şeylerde halkı burdan bir nevi çıkartmak, tasviye etmek gibi bir durum söz konusuydu. Yani o planda eğer burada uygulanacak olsaydı, bizim burada diyelim şu anda 70. 000 nüfus yaşıyorsa işte ona diyordu ki, burada en fazla 50.000 nüfus yaşar. Yani 25.000 insan burdan tasviye edilecek. Peki bu tasviye , bu plana göre tabii, peki bu tasviye edilecek insanlar nereye gidecek?"



in the completed eleven story buildings in Bezirganbahçe. In their article, Ayfer Bartu and Biray Kolluđlu interpret this process came with “the claim of a remedy for the housing problem of low-income groups” was in fact the re-placement of poverty. Besides pointing out the replacement of poverty, they illustrate how, through this housing project, the new residents of Bezirganbahçe were deprived of “some social mechanisms that had enabled them to survive” in their previous lives in Ayazma. On the other hand, taking part in this project imposed new financial obligations on residents, as discussed above. Since the TOKİ houses were valued higher than the demolished houses of people, people found themselves indebted for the difference in the cost of the houses, payable over twenty years. However, deprived of a stable income, so far hundred sixty families who moved from Ayazma to Bezirganbahçe have received official eviction notification since they have not been able to make the installment payments (Atayurt, 2008).

Stories regarding Ayazma are employed by my informants to point out the proven failure of a previous project, since it rendered some people homeless and forced other people to leave new houses in the long term. They also pointed to the poor quality of the new houses to illustrate the deceitfulness of the state. Another way of criticizing the project is through pointing out the unfairness it exposes:

Now they are trying to cover this urban transformation plan up with city planning. Of course, when they are doing this, they want to do it without paying the real cost of these buildings. I was single when I started to live in a gecekondü. Now I am married and I have four children and 6 grandchildren. They will give me a flat only when they build an apartment building here. But as for my four children, where will they live and how will they get married?<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> “Şimdiyse kentsel dönüşüm planı için şehirciliğe uydurmak istiyorlar. Tabi şehirciliğe uydurmak isterken de buraya yapılan binaların hakkını vermemek kaydıylan böyle bir işlem istiyorlar. Sebebine

The plan is thus criticized since it does not recognize familial ties and relations. In accordance with this criticism, it can be argued that the *gecekondu*s not only solved the immediate problem of housing for the new migrants, but provided people with the possibility of expanding their houses, depending on the growth of their family in the long term. The informant above worries about the project since, firstly, he has a large family who would not fit into the state constructed apartment and secondly, under the terms of the plan he would be deprived of the resources to pay for a new apartment of the right size. Finally, from the view point of the once migrant residents, the project renders the issue of housing a problem once more for the next generation of *gecekondu* people.

The discourse of earthquake readiness employed in both legal discourse and the public sphere to point out the urgent need for urban transformation is also perceived by my informants as a strategy which aims to persuade them of the benefits and necessity of the transformation proposals. In public discourse and urban transformation laws, urban transformation is presented as the solution to the earthquake which Istanbul expects in the coming days, months or years:

Governor Muammer Güler emphasized that some buildings must be destroyed and rebuilt in order to prepare them for the earthquake. Güler said that 10 of the districts of the city were at risk and that they started to work in Zeytinburnu first. Güler said: “The results of the analysis of Zeytinburnu require us to destroy and rebuild buildings in a large area of that district as the only solution. We have extended this to other districts that are at risk. When considered in 15-20 years of medium term or 30-35 years of long term, the best protection against the earthquake and to

---

gelince ben gecekonduya geldiğim zaman tek nüfustum. Şimdi evlendim 4 tane çocuğum 6 tane torunum var. Sadece buraya bir blok yapıldığı zaman bana bir daire verecekler. Peki 4 tane çocuğum, nikah mikah nasıl olacak, nerde oturacak.”

reduce risk is to destroy and rebuild buildings.”<sup>73</sup>  
One of my informants claims that the discourse of the earthquake is only a way to legitimize the demolishing of their houses, and that the expected earthquake does not constitute a danger specifically for their neighborhood. He tries to prove his argument through referring to the 1999-2000 Annual Work Report of the Maltepe Municipality itself:

These days, there is a plan of urban transformation. A recent soil analysis report says that this is a landslide zone and that there is soft soil. They do it to apply urban transformation here. Actually, it does not reflect the truth. The most important example for this was the '99 earthquake. As Gölcük in İzmit was ruined, Istanbul was shaken. 126 planned buildings with projects and land titles were collapsed when their engineers were there. 53 schools built by the state cannot be used. A moment please [he takes a piece of paper out of his pocket]. Now this is the 1999-2000 working report of the Maltepe Municipality. As a result of some evaluation work, 27 buildings were sealed as they were found dangerous, and damage assessment reports were prepared for 291 buildings. 22 buildings were investigated and evacuated but they did not attempt any reparation. Well, if there is so much damage in a district like Maltepe, which was built with plans and projects... It is clear that people built houses without plans, projects or control in Gülsuyu, but there was no damage or collapse here. What kind of a soft soil or landslide zone is this?<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup>“Vali Muammer Güler, İstanbul'un depreme hazırlanabilmesi için binaların bir kısmının yıkılması ve yeniden inşa edilmesi gerektiğine vurgu yaptı. Bu kapsamda şehirde 10 ilçenin risk teşkil ettiğini dile getiren Güler, ilk olarak Zeytinburnu ilçesinde bir çalışma başlatıldığını dile getirdi. Güler, "Şu an Zeytinburnu ilçesinde yapılan inceleme bize o bölgede bir büyük alanda yapıların yıkılıp yeniden yapılması gibi bir çözümü mecbur kılmıştır. Bunu risk taşıyan diğer ilçelere yaygınlaştırmamız gerekir. 15-20 yıllık bir orta vadede, 30-35 yıllık uzun vade olarak düşünüldüğünde, depreme karşı en iyi çözüm riskin azaltılması bakımından binaları yıkıp yeniden yapmaktır.” : [http://www.haberaktuel.com/news\\_detail.php?id=30693&uniq\\_id=1251841909](http://www.haberaktuel.com/news_detail.php?id=30693&uniq_id=1251841909)

<sup>74</sup> “Şimdi önümüzde bir kentsel dönüşüm planı vardır kentsel dönüşüm planının buraya uygulanması için geçen günler yapılan toprak analizinde, heyelan bölgesi ve yumuşak zemin diye adlandırılıyor. Aslında bu gerçekten bağdaşmayan birşey. Bunun en büyük örneği de 99 depreminde İzmit GÖlcük yerlen bir olurken İstanbul'da sarsıldı. Maltepe planlı , projeli tapulu yapılan yerlerde mühendisi başındayken 126 bina yıkıldı, 53 tane okul okunmayacak halde devletin yaptığı... Bir dakikasınızı rica ediyorum (cebinden bir kağıt çıkarıyor). Şimdi bu Maltepe Belediyesi çalışma raporu. 1999-2000. Değerlendirme çalışmaları sonucunda 27 bina tehlikeli bulunarak mühürlenmiş 291 bina içinde hasar tespit rapor tanzim edilmiştir. 53 okulun ön tespitleri yapılarak rapor hazırlanmıştır. 22 bina incelenmiştir ancak gerekli süre ce gerekse eleman kapasitesi göz önüne alınan tespitlerin tasviye ve \* ötesinde herhangi bir yatırım yapılmamıştır. E bu planlı projeli yapılan bir kentte Maltepe gibi bir kent, ilçe bu kadar hasır, hasar oluyorsa Gülsuyu'nda plansız, projersiz kişiler kendi görünen, kontrol olmadan binalar yapmışlar. Burda ne bir hasar var, ne bir

Besides the discourse of earthquake, the representation of the neighborhood as place of danger and terror is another way of legitimizing the urgency of urban transformation for gecekondu settlements.<sup>75</sup>

My informants construe such statements as another strategy to legitimize demolishing their neighborhood. They answer these statements by referring to the moral values and intimacy that characterize their neighborhood. In the previous chapter, I tried to illustrate how stories of solidarity are transformed into stories of degeneration when depicting post-coup period. However, in the stories about urban transformation, the attachment to place is articulated again through the values associated with the past. So the discourse of degeneration that characterizes the post coup period is ignored when informants talk about urban transformation which, according to them, is both the demolition of their neighborhood and also the social life particular to it. Thus the informants indicate that this project means the dissolution of their community; one that is characterized by moral values such as intimacy and security. Again, within this narrative, the locality is differentiated from the areas located “down”, which signify weak social relations:

To separate me from my neighbors and friends of 30 years... it's like dismantling a tree and planting it somewhere else or letting it die. Almost nobody in the neighborhood has been disturbed here; on the contrary, they live in peace and trust together. Also, the Anatolian culture is still dominant here, and social relations are powerful. For example, when we go down to the city, we reflect this culture. We cannot stay downtown for a long time. When we go there, we want to come back to the neighborhood immediately. The reason is that when I get off or even on the minibus, greetings start. I shake hands with maybe 100-150 people before I arrive home. I lived downtown for ten years. I didn't even know

---

yıkılma var. Nasıl yumuşak zemin, heyelan bölgesidir. İşte kentsel dönüşüm, toprağın zemin oluşundan bizlere bir hayat vermek ister arzusuyulan aslında zümret verme tarafını seçmişlerdir.”

<sup>75</sup> I previously gave an example of Erdoğan Bayraktar who is the headman of TOKİ.

my neighbors in the flats. I mean, social relations are almost over there. But we are not like that here; it is the opposite. As we are Anatolian

people, almost everyone knows one another here. Even the kids on the street can easily tell you who is whose daughter or son, or who is from where. If we have a funeral, we go to the cemetery all together. When we are faced with a disaster, all of us are there to help. Whenever there is a problem, even an unimportant one, we show our reaction together. I am very satisfied with this; moreover, we have to do our best to advance this situation.<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, the struggle against the urban transformation process is literally associated with the past struggles of the neighborhood: “In this era, it looks like we are going back to old days of struggle.” The “success” achieved so far through the annulment of plan by the rapid mobilization of the neighborhood is narrated with regard to the fighting character of the neighborhood, also associated with the past:

I mean, when we take a look, the neighborhood is trying to get its own dynamics back. At the point we have reached now, the neighborhood is better in the sense of love and quality, better than most of the other areas, and has a leading quality. That is what we have experienced during the process of urban transformation. Gülsuyu has managed what no other neighborhood has been able to do or accomplish. A lot of other neighborhoods have consulted us about this subject. I remember very well that we visited them, and they came to our neighborhood. We discussed about how we could manage. We had the associations of some of the neighborhoods founded. We told them to found their own association because they need them; they are mass organizations. The

---

<sup>76</sup> “Bir nevi ben 30 yıldır burdaki komşumdan, eşimden beni koparıp bir ağaç gibi başka bir yere dikmek gibi birşey veya kurutmak gibi birşey. Mahallemizin hemen hemen halkımızın hiç birisinin bundan bir rahatsızlığı olduğu değil, tam tersine biribiriyle huzur ve güven içinde yaşadığı, aynı zamanda Anadolu kültürünün hala burda hüküm sürdüğü, sosyal ilişkilerin burda ağır olduğu, ne bileyim aşağıya gittiğimiz zaman burdaki farklılığı biz hemen hemen gözetiriz. Biz aşağıda fazla kalamayız, gittiğimiz zaman hemen mahalleye geri gelmek istiyoruz. Çünkü neden burda ben minibüsten inip, hatta minibüse bindiğim andan itibaren merhabalaşma başlar, evime gidene kadar belki 100-150 kişiyle tokalaşarak giderim. Aşağıda ben 10 sene aşağıda yaşadım komşumu tanımıyordum dairelerde. Yani sosyal ilişki oralarda hemen hemen bitmiş durumda. Biz burda öyle değiliz, tam tersine Anadolu insanı olduğumuz için, burda hemen hemen birbirini tanımayan insane pek yoktur. Çocuklar bile şu filancanın oğlu, şu filancanın kızı hemen sokakta söylerler. İşte şu buralı şu şuralı. bir cenazemiz olsa hep birlikte gidiyoruz. Başımıza bir felaket gelse hepimiz koşuyoruz. Ne bileyim mahallede en ufak bir aksilik olsa hepimiz beraber tepki koyuyoruz. Bu konudan ben oldukça memnunum memnuniyet ötesinde ee daha da ileriye taşıyabilmek için elimizden geleni yapmamız gerekiyor.”

organizations must deal with the problems of the neighborhood. For example, we founded the Platform of Istanbul Neighborhood

Associations. An important base for this is Gülsuyu. It is one of the founders and the neighborhood that is the mobilizing power. Gülsuyu was the first neighborhood that went to Aydos and Canbazbey when there was destruction. The roots of this lie in the history of the neighborhood.<sup>77</sup>

So in order to give meaning to the “success” of struggle, the solidarity of dwellers and the rapid mobilization displayed in the process, informants highlight the past of the neighborhood, which was depicted earlier in the interview. However, what is missing in this re-evoked story is any reference to revolutionary groups. In fact, my informants think that, through the arena of politics, they cannot struggle to protect their houses. One way of making such an argument is by referring to the local elections which took place in March, 2009. In this election, the conservative AKP (Justice and Development Party) Municipality was replaced by the “social democrat” CHP (Republican People’s Party). It was the first time in the history of Maltepe that a “social democrat” political party had taken over the municipality. My informants read this historical change as a reaction by neighborhood inhabitants who “became aware of the reality that they would become victims of the urban transformation process started during the period of the AKP,” but my informants also argue that local governments cannot prevent urban transformation, even if it aims to:

---

<sup>77</sup> “Yani baktığımızda mahalle kendi dinamiklerini yine yakalamay çalışıyor. Şu an geldiğimiz noktada hani sevgi anlamında, nitelik anlamında baktığımızda bir çok yerden daha bir şeyi var yani önderlik etme vasfı var öyle bir özelliği. Kentsel dönüşümde biz bunu gördük. Hiç bir mahallenin yapamadığını beceremediğini Gülsuyu becerdi. Bir çok mahalle bu anlamda ee bize geldi. İyi biliyorum bir çok mahalleye biz gittik onlar geldi. Nasıl yaparız dedik tartıştık. Kimi mahallenini Derneklerini kurduktuk. Kurun dedik yni sonuçta dernekler size lazım, kitle örgütleridir. Mahallenin sorunlarıyla da ilgilenmesi gerekir. İşte örneğin İstanbul Mahalle Dernekleri Platformunu oluşturduk. Onun önemli bir ayağı Gülsuyu’dur, yani kurucularından diyelim motor gücünü oluşturan mahalledir Gülsuyu. İşte Aydos’ta Canbazbey’de yıkım olduğunda ilk giden mahalledir Gülsuyu. Öyle bir özelliği vardır. Karşıda Ayazma’da işte çadır kentteki insanlara ilk gidenlerden de Gülsuyu. Baktığımızda bunun tarihi aslında kökleri mahallenin geçmişine dayanır.”

After this election, the balance has changed. Well, some of the mayors are against this [urban transformation]. For example, the Mayor of the

Maltepe Municipality has expressed his opposition to urban transformation. He already had this in his working program before the elections. After he won the elections, I talked frankly to him and the other two mayors; both the mayor from the AK Party and the mayor from the CHP. We told them in the public meetings that, here in our neighborhood, the election would absolutely be over and somebody would become mayor. We told them: “if you become the mayor and if you turn your back on our people, we know how to remove you from that position in the way we lead you there.” He started to ask whether it was threat and we answered that it was not, but that was the way they perceived it. It was not a threat, but, on the other hand, it also depended on how they perceived it. But these people forced them because we are distressed, as nobody wants to lose their homes. Now the CHP has won. The mayor from the CHP again said that he was absolutely against the urban transformation. After he was elected I went there and we talked. He told us to come together, the people in the neighborhood and muhtars, and that they would act on what we decided. He said: “we are absolutely against the urban transformation, that is, the current law of urban transformation.” Whereas we don’t think that urban transformation is only about municipalities or mayors. There is urban transformation because international capitalists insist on it. There is urban transformation because all capitalists insist on the necessity of Istanbul becoming a metropolis and a finance center. And if they impose this, there will be things that will go beyond the duty of the municipalities. Then, everything will be all about the people. It all depends on people’s resistance and objection.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> “Bu seçimler sürecinden sonra dengeler biraz değişti. Eee bazı belediye başkanları buna karşı geliyor. Mesela bizim şu an ki Maltepe Belediye Başkanı da bu kentsel dönüşüme karşı olduğunu ifade etti. Zaten çalışma programında o da vardı seçimlerden önce. Şimdi kazandıktan sonra da ben aynen şunu ifade ettim kendisine , her 2 elediye başkanına da , Ak partili belediye başkanına da, CHP’li Belediye Başkanına da biz halk toplantılarında şunu dillendirdik.Dedik burda bizim mahallemizde her hal...halikarda bu seçim mutlaka bitecek birisi başkan olacak. Eğer başkan olursanız, bizim halkımıza sırtınızı dönerseniz biz dedik sizi oraya nasıl götürdüysek ordan indirmesini de biliriz açıkça. Hatta bize yani işte tehdit mi filan felan demeye başladı bunu hayır siz nasıl bir dille anlıyorsanız öyle, bu tehdit değil ama sizing algılamınıza da bağlı biraz da. Ama bu halk üzerinize gitti bu konuda.Çünkü rahatsız kimse evinden, barkından olmak istemez. Ve şimdi CHP kazandı işte, CHP’li belediye başkanı bunu ee kesinlikle buna karşı olduğunu söyledi tekrar yeniden seçildikten sonra da gittim ben görüştük dedi siz dedi mahalledeki halk dedi dernekler muhtarlar yanyana gelin, siz ne dersiniz dedi biz o yönde hareket edecez. Kesinlikle kentsel dönüşüme yani mevcut kentsel dönüşüm yasına biz de karşıyız dedi.Ama bu kentsel dönüşüm sadece belediyelerle veya belediye başkanlarıyla ilintili birşey olduğunu düşünmüyoruz biz. Çünkü kentsel dönüşüm uluslararası sermayedarın darat...dayatmasıyla ve İstanbul’un metropol bir kent olmasına, finans merkezi olması gerektiğini bütün sermayaderler bunu dayattığı için bu kentsel dönüşüm var. Ama orası dayatırsa belki belediyeleri de açacak konular olabilir. O zaman işte ee asıl şey halka düşüyor iş burda, halkın direnmesine bağlı, karşı koymasına bağlı.”

So politics is perceived as useless as a means to fight against urban transformation when it is read as interlinked with neo-liberal processes. Another example many people gave in order to illustrate that the arena of politics does not work anymore was the very different urban transformation experience of Başbüyük. Başbüyük which is another *gecekondu* neighborhood that was established on treasury land prior to coup, is also included in the Maltepe Northern E-5 Master Plan, along with Gülsuyu-Gülensu and four other neighborhoods. It is located very close to the Gülsuyu Neighborhood. Başbüyük received the same official announcement of urban transformation process as Gülsuyu, but no comparable mobilization took place. Neither did inhabitants apply to the administrative court for the annulment of the plan. In the days following the expiration of the legal period for objection, residents learned that the local municipality, İBB (Greater Municipality of Istanbul) and TOKİ had signed a protocol to start an urban transformation process in the area in cooperation with a private a building company. The neighborhood then started to struggle against the urban transformation process, though comparatively late in the day. Thus the struggle of Başbüyük took place in a different setting than that in Gülsuyu. First of all, since the neighborhood had not objected to the plan within the legal period, the urban transformation project automatically became operative. The next step was the arrival of the private building company which signed the contract with TOKİ to the neighborhood. However, the locals, thinking that they would lose their houses and get into high amounts of debt to acquire new houses in the project, physically resisted the entrance of the private building company into the neighborhood. Following this, the private building company again attempted to enter the land, this time with heavy police assistance. Confrontation between police and residents continued for almost 60 days, during which time 52 neighborhood residents were



detained and 38 people injured, with two of them severely wounded. While the situation escalated in this way in the neighborhood, the confrontations were reflected in the media as the irrational acts of a group of people resisting an urban transformation that would actually improve their living conditions:

Some of these projects are presented with interesting obstacles. What happened to the building contractor İnan Gözgül, the protagonist of one of the last examples of these preventions, surprises everyone who knows about it. The gecekondu lobby was against the common urban transformation project of the municipality of the Başbüyük neighborhood in Maltepe and TOKİ to demolish 1,700 gecekondus and build modern houses instead. This lobby started propaganda against the project by visiting every house... As the effort of the municipality to persuade the people living in gecekondus was not successful, people from the neighborhood didn't let the building contractor enter the construction area. As a result, the building contractor İnan Gözgül requested his abdication from the project. Gözgül said, "I couldn't understand the reactions to the project, which would bring to the area a distinct appearance."<sup>79</sup>

Due to the of the confrontation between residents and the police and private building company, the neighborhood was sued, since they were preventing a legal project through resorting to illegal means. The headman of the Başbüyük neighborhood organization claims that they were forced to resort to illegal means of struggle through the attitude of the district municipality:

What is the use of bringing in a special police force of 1,500 as the mayor? People are resisting. Can't you say "these are my voters, get away from them, don't stand between me and my people?" He left his own responsibility to us, and sued us. He sued us as terrorists and looters.

---

<sup>79</sup> "Bu projelerden bazıları ilginç engellemelerle karşılaşılıyor. Bu konudaki son örneklerden birinin kahramanı olan müteahhit İnan Gözgül'ün başına gelenler, duyanları hayrete düşürüyor. Maltepe'deki Başbüyük Mahallesi'nde belediye ile Toplu Konut İdaresi'nin ortaklaşa yaptığı kentsel dönüşüm projesi kapsamında bin 700 gecekondunun yıkılıp yerine modern evlerin yapılmasına gecekondu lobisi karşı çıktı. Bu lobi, ev ev dolaşarak proje aleyhine propaganda başlattı...Belediyenin gecekondularını ikna çabası sonuç vermezken mahalleli, ihaleyi alan müteahhidi inşaat alanına sokmadı. Bunun üzerine müteahhit İnan Gözgül projeden feragatini istedi. Gözgül, "Bölgeye ayrı bir görünüm kazandıracak projeye tepkileri anlamadım." dedi.": <http://www.tumgazeteler.com/?a=2392485>

We were sued in 11 cases.”<sup>80</sup>

My informants related the experience of the Başbüyük Neighborhood and their naïve trust in their district Municipality. They claim that the Başbüyük residents did not take the urban transformation process seriously, since almost 70 per cent of the neighborhood voted for the AKP municipality in the previous elections. In other words, they did not think the municipality to which they showed their loyalty through their votes would “harm” their neighborhood. One of my informants articulates this:

At first, for example, the Başbüyük people said “leftist, terrorist and communist people live in Gülsuyu. Go there first and destroy that area. What do you want from us? We are already on your side.” At the point we have reached it is understood that urban transformation has nothing to do with right or left, but is a process that exiles the poor from this place.<sup>81</sup>

So the story of Başbüyük, when thought in relation to the story of Gülsuyu, illustrates that the urban transformation process renders certain ways of resistance more legitimate than others. When the Başbüyük neighborhood missed the legal period to apply for the annulment of the plan, residents sought other ways of struggling against the urban transformation. However, the strategies employed by the neighborhood brought it into confrontation with other agencies of the state, which presented the struggle of the neighborhood as an irrational and criminal act.

---

<sup>80</sup> “Belediye başkan olarak buraya 1500 çevik kuvvet getirmenin alemi ne? Millet direniyor. Diyemezmiydin “bunlar benim seçmenim, çekilin yoldan, halkımla arama girmeyin”.Kendi sorumluluğunu bizim üzerimize yıktı,bizi dava etti. Bizi teröre, gaspa soktu. 11 davadan yargılanıyoruz.”: Express 2008-5

<sup>81</sup> “İlk başlarda örneğin Başbüyükte şey diyorlardı işte solcular, terroristler, komünistler Gülsuyu’nda yaşıyor gidin önce orayı yıkın diye. Hani bizden ne istiyorsunuz biz zaten arkanızdayız. Ama oysa gelenin aşamada bu işin sağcılıkla, solculukla bir ilişkisi olmadığını, asıl olarak kentsel dönüşüm sürecinin yoksulları, fakirleri burdan süren bir süreç olduğu anlaşıldı.”

## Conclusion

In this chapter, by focusing on the Gülsuyu neighborhood' experience of the urban transformation project and the stories told relating to it, I have tried to analyze the newly emerging subjectivities in the struggle against the process. I have argued that the most significant thing that affects the formation of the self for my informants is their distrust towards the state; a distrust which is also reinforced by the ambiguity inherent in the urban transformation project. On the other hand, I tried to argue that the struggle of Gülsuyu can also be read as a resistance to being excluded from the group of actors determined by state made laws, who command the urban process through policies that call the residents of their target neighborhoods to passive subject positions. Lastly, via focusing on the experience of another neighborhood in the process, I tried to show how Gülsuyu actually carries out its struggle by means that are rendered legitimate by the process itself, in a period when politics is perceived as ineffective to struggle against urban transformation.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

One of my informants concluded his narrative by saying “in the past, we were struggling to build our houses; today we are struggling to prevent them from being demolished”.

This study can be read as an attempt to understand the past and the present that are characterized by “struggles” at everyday level in Gülsuyu neighborhood. In the second chapter of this study, I focused on the stories related to past of the neighborhood. I argued this period is important in my informants’ lives since this is when the rules of attachment and belonging and the fundamental principles of living here were set. The main themes in stories of establishment are difficulty of everyday life and social solidarity. At the end despite all difficulty and suffering, I argued that the period is narrated to have concluded with “ success” since the area is transformed into a developed place through struggles at the everyday level despite deprivations that characterized life in the neighborhood at the time. Because in the end people did acquire houses and they produced a “locale”, a neighborhood with self-built material setting. Thus lacking any support for service from local government and deprived of any professional knowledge, the transformation of an empty forest land into a neighborhood with roads, houses and –despite being illegal-electricity and water is told as a story of success as well a story of misery. Beside that protecting the neighborhood from outside processes such as state agencies and fascist played a further role in creating a sense of collective identification and belonging. In other words, I claimed collective labor and collective identity in relation to “ others” were the basis for making Gülsuyu into a “meaningful” place.

In the second part of chapter 2, I analyzed stories related to September 12, 1980 military coup which is very often narrated as a break point for the neighborhood. In relation to stories of the coup, I claimed that coup is narrated as an event that interrupts belonging to neighborhood by destroying the features through which belonging to locality is articulated. I argued that, from the viewpoint of my informants the aftermath of the coup is a period that reflects disruption of belonging through loss of feeling security and also the values that characterized community. Thus although the coup provided services for the neighborhood, it also alienated people from the “home” that is made and robbed them from the tools that rendered them successful in their struggle at the everyday level. Hence while pre coup is characterized by social solidarity, the post coup period is defined through its dissolution and loss. Moreover dissolution of these moral values—which regulated social relations at the everyday level- is claimed to have brought along the dissolution of social control in the neighborhood. So in the stories of the coup the neighborhood, which was initially characterized by social solidarity and altruism is depicted to inhabit degenerate and self-caring individuals. The second impact of the coup that is widely narrated is the transformation and reshaping of the relationship between revolutionary groups and ordinary residents of Gülsuyu at the everyday level. The revolutionary people which were depicted as the authority effective in shaping the landscape of area but also became a source of a value with great impact on collective culture, in the aftermath of the coup become to signify the state violence they themselves experienced.

After focusing on the struggles of the past, I focused on the struggle of the present. Thus in the third chapter of this thesis I focused on stories related to urban transformation process in Gülsuyu neighborhood. I tried to analyze the emerging new

subjectivities in the face of urban transformation. I argued that the narratives and practices of the new subjectivities emerging are mainly shaped by the distrust toward the state and the ambiguity inherent in the project itself.

I claimed that the struggle of Gülsuyu against urban transformation process could also be read as a resistance to being excluded from the group of actors determined by state made laws, who command the urban process through policies that call the residents of their target neighborhoods to passive subject positions. Lastly, via focusing on the experience of another neighborhood in the process, I tried to show how Gülsuyu actually carries out its struggle by means that are rendered legitimate by the process itself, in a period when politics is perceived as ineffective to achieve their ends; that is, protecting their houses and lives.

Actually rather than declaring that the politics is ineffective to achieve certain ends today, considering the stories of the past and present, this thesis can conclude that, today Gülsuyu neighborhood is engaging in a new space of politics that is informed by present socio-economic process. The inhabitants who used to collaborate with revolutionary organization both psychically and socially to build their neighborhood and most of whom become politicized through this process, today collaborating with engineers, lawyers, academicians in other words “experts” to protect their neighborhood.



Fig 1. The view of Gülsuyu-Gülensu Neighborhood from the bridge over E-5 highway.



Fig 2. “Beautiful panorama” of Gülsuyu Neighborhood.





Fig 3. A photo of Gülsuyu-Gülensu Neighborhood taken by the “gaze” from the space.

## REFERENCES

- Alsop, R., Fitzsimons, A., & Lennon, K. (2002). *Theorizing gender: An introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Aslan, Ş. (2004). *1 Mayıs mahallesi : 1980 öncesi toplumsal mücadeleler ve kent*. [1 Mayıs neighborhood: Social struggles and city before 1980]. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Atayurt, U. (2008, May 15). Toki Neye Derman Oluyor? *Express*, 89, 37-37.
- Bartu, A., & Kolluoğlu, B. (2008). Emerging spaces of neoliberalism: A gated town and a public housing project in İstanbul. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 39, 5-46.
- Birules, F. (2009, May 16). Interview with Judith Butler: Gender is extramoral. Retrieved August 20, 2009, from <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/butler160509.html>.
- Bozkulak, S. (2005). Gecekondu dan varoşa: Gülsuyu Mahallesi [From *Gecekondu* to *varoş*: Gülsuyu Neighborhood]. In H. Kurtuluş (Ed.), *İstanbul'da Kentsel Ayırışma* (pp.239-266). İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık.
- Bruner, E. M. (1986). Ethnography as narrative. In V. Turner & E.M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp.139-155). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Buğra, A. (1998). Immoral economy of housing in Turkey. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 22, 303-317.
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. Retrieved August 28, 2009, from <http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/PoMoSeminar/Readings/BtlrPerfActs.pdf>.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter : On the discursive limits of "sex"*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1995). Conscience doth make subjects of us all. *Yale French Studies*, 88, 6-26.
- Caldeira, T. (2000). *City of walls : Crime, segregation, and citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Castles, S., & Davidson, A. (2000). *Citizenship and migration: Globalization and the politics of belonging*. New York: Routledge.
- Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley : University of California Press.

- Comaroff, J., & Comaroff J. (2006). Law and disorder in postcolony: An introduction . In J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff (Eds.), *Law and disorder in postcolony* (pp. 1-57). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place : A short introduction*. Malden : Blackwell Publications.
- Dayanışmacı Atölye. (2008). Gülsuyu'nda farklı bir planlama deneyimi [A distinct planning experience in Gülsuyu ]. Unpublished report, İstanbul.
- Demirel, T. (2005).Comparative perspective lessons of military regimes and democracy: The Turkish case in a comparative perspective. *Armed Forces & Society* , 31 , 245-271.
- Erder L., & Tekeli İ. (1981). Settlement distribution and structural change in Turkish agriculture: A key to migration models and policy. In J. Balán (Ed.), *Why people move : comparative perspectives on the dynamics of internal migration* (pp. 122-139). Paris: Unesco Press.
- Erder, S. (1996). *İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye* [A city landed on İstanbul: Ümraniye]. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Feldman, A. (1991). *Formations of violence: The narrative of body and political terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferguson, J. (1999). *Expectations of modernity : Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley : University of California Press.
- Feroz, A. (1981).Military intervention and the crisis in Turkey. *MERIP Reports*, 93, 5-24.
- Fortier, A.M.(1999) Re-membering places and the performance of belonging(s). *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16, 41-64.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp.208-226). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1984). Panopticism. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (pp.206-213). England: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality, vol.1: An introduction*. New York : Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1993). About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self. *Political Theory*, 21, 118-220.

- Green, L. (1999). *Fear as a way of life : Mayan widows in rural Guatemala*. New York : Columbia University Press.
- Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: Who Needs "Identity"? In S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (pp.1-17). London; California : Sage Publications.
- Harvey, D. (2008). The right to the city. *New Left Review*,53, 23-40.
- Heper, M., & Tachau, F. (1983). The state, politics, and the military in Turkey. *Comparative Politics*, 16, 17-33.
- Oxford advanced learners dictionary of current English (8th ed.). (1988). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Işık, O., & Pınarcıoğlu, M. (2001). *Nöbetleşe yoksulluk: Sultanbeyli örneği* [Poverty on turns: The case of Sultanbeyli]. İstanbul: İletişim
- İçduygu A., & Sirkeci İ. (1999). Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Göç Hareketleri [The Migration Movements in Republican Turkey]. In O. Baydar (Ed.), *75 Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere* (pp.249-268). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.
- İslamoğlu-İnan, H. (2002). IMF kaynaklı kurumsal reformlar ve tütün yasası [Institutional reforms related to IMF and Tobacco Law]. *Birikim*,158, 20-27.
- Keyder, Ç. (2000). Arka Plan [The setting]. In Ç. Keyder (Ed.), *İstanbul: Küresel ile yerel arasında* (pp.9-40). İstanbul: Metis.
- Koskela, H. (2002). 'Cam era' – The contemporary urban panopticon . *Surveillance & Society*, 1, 292-313.
- Linde, C. (1993). *Life stories : The creation of coherence*. Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press.
- Lloyd, M. (1999). Performativity, Parody, Politics. *Theory Culture Society*, 16, 195-213.
- Neyzi, L. (2001). Object or subject? The paradox of "youth" in Turkey. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33, 411-432.
- Ochberg R.L., & Rosenwald G.C. (1992 ). *Storied lives :The cultural politics of self-understanding*. New Haven : Yale University Press
- Öncü, A. (1997). The myth of the "ideal home": Travels across cultural borders to Istanbul. In A. Öncü & P. Weyland (Eds.), *Space, culture and power: New identities in globalizing cities* (pp.56-72). London: Zed Books.

- Özbay, F.(1999). İstanbul'da göç ve il içi nüfus hareketleri (1985-1990) [Migration and intra-provincial Movements in İstanbul between 1985-1990]. In O. Baydar (Ed.), *75 Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere* (pp.277-294).İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.
- Portelli, A. (1998). Oral history as genre. In M. Chamberlain & P. Thompson (Eds.), *Narrative and genre* (pp. 23-45). New York : Routledge,
- Portelli, A. (2009). A dialogic relationship: Oral history. Retrieved August 29,2009, from [http:// www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/expressions\\_portelli.pdf](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/expressions_portelli.pdf).
- Rabinow, P. (1984). Introduction. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 3-29). England: Penguin Books.
- Rosaldo, R. (1989). *Culture & truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Satana, N. S. (2007). Transformation of the Turkish military and the path to democracy. *Armed Forces & Society*, 34, 357-388.
- Sturge, K. (2007). *Representing others: Translation, ethnography and the museum*. Manchester: St.Jerome Publishing.
- Shore, C., & Wright, S. (1997). Policy: A new field of anthropology. In C. Shore & S. Wright (Eds.), *Anthropology of policy : Critical perspectives on governance and power* (pp.3-39). New York : Routledge.
- Şenyapılı, T. (1981). *Gecekondu: 'Çevre' işçilerin mekanı* [Gecekondu: The space of 'peripheral' workers]. Ankara: ODTÜ Basım İşliđi.
- Tuđal, C. (2008). The greening of İstanbul. *New Left Review*, 51, 65-80.
- Uzun, C. N. (2001). *Gentrification in İstanbul : A diagnostic study*. Utrecht : University of Utrecht Press.
- Üstündađ, N. (2005). *Belonging to the modern: Women's suffering and subjectivities in urban Turkey*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Indiana University, Indiana.

