

FROM URBAN IDENTITY POLITICS
TO URBAN MARKET POLITICS:
MASS HOUSING IN BAŐAKŐEHİR



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İSTANBUL ŐEHİR UNIVERSITY

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**FROM URBAN IDENTITY POLITICS
TO URBAN MARKET POLITICS:
MASS HOUSING IN BAŐAKŐEHİR**

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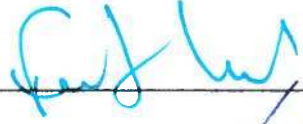
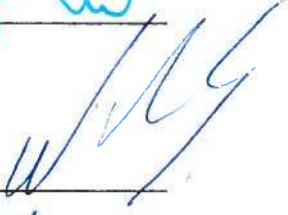

MUSTAFA OŐUZHAN ŐOLAK

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FOR
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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and standards of ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and standards, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a series of vertical and horizontal strokes, all enclosed within a circular flourish.

ABSTRACT

FROM URBAN IDENTITY POLITICS TO URBAN MARKET POLITICS: MASS HOUSING IN BAŞAKŞEHİR

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Başakşehir was urbanized first by members of the Welfare Party via local administrations and later by the mass housing projects implemented by the central government during the rule of the Justice and Development Party. The housing projects in Başakşehir, developed by Islamist managers, became a model that would be applied all across Turkey. This study scrutinizes how this housing supply model was developed, how it is implemented and what kind of social, political and economic transformations it led to.

The housing process carried out by the public institutions KİPTAŞ and TOKİ in the Başakşehir region, constitute prime examples of a model that was applied all across Turkey. The need for housing and the desire to live in houses which provide higher standards of living, result in a growing demand for projects produced by this model. On the other hand, this model that was primarily aimed at constructing an identity and was supported with Islamic discourse and symbols, transformed through capitalist market conditions and engendered a large flow of capital in Turkey as well as a new capitalist class. Furthermore, the implemented housing projects have resulted in the re-production of social inequality in a different form, in Turkey via urban rent seeking.

Keywords: TOKİ, KİPTAŞ, Housing Supply Model, Mass Housing, Urban Development, Başakşehir, Justice and Development Part

ÖZ

KENTSEL KİMLİK POLİTİKALARINDAN KENTSEL PİYASA POLİTİKALARINA BAŞAKŞEHİR TOPLU KONUT UYGULAMALARI

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Başakşehir, ilk başta Refah Partisi mensupları tarafından yerel yönetimler eliyle, daha sonra ise Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi döneminde merkezi hükümet tarafından uygulanan toplu konut projeleriyle kentleşmiştir. İslamcı yöneticiler tarafından geliştirilen Başakşehir'deki konut projeleri daha sonra tüm Türkiye'de uygulanan bir model olmuştur. Bu çalışmada bu konut sunum modelinin nasıl geliştirildiği, hangi şekilde uygulandığı ve ne tür sosyal, siyasal ve ekonomik dönüşümlere yol açtığı incelenmektedir.

Başakşehir bölgesinde kamu kurumları olan KİPTAŞ ve TOKİ eliyle yürütülen konutlaşma süreci tüm Türkiye'de uygulanan bir modelin örneğini teşkil etmektedir. Konut ihtiyacı ve insanların yaşam standartları daha yüksek konutlarda oturma isteği bu modelin ürettiği projelere talebi arttırmaktadır. Öte yandan başta bir kimlik inşası amacı taşıyan ve İslami söylem ve sembollerle desteklenen bu model kapitalist piyasa şartları içerisinde dönüşerek Türkiye'de büyük bir sermaye hareketi oluşturmuş ve yeni bir kapitalist sınıfın doğmasına neden olmuştur. Ayrıca uygulanan konut projeleri Türkiye'de kent rantı üzerinden sosyal eşitsizliğin farklı bir şekilde yeniden üretilmesini netice vermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: TOKİ, KİPTAŞ, Konut Sunum Modeli, Toplu Konut, Başakşehir, Kentsel Gelişim, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi



I dedicate this thesis to my lovely wife, Imran, for all of her deepest love and support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AEP: Emergency Action Plan
- AKP: Justice and Development Party
- DPT: State Planning Organization
- FP: Virtue Party
- İBB: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- İOSB: İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone
- KİPTAŞ: Istanbul Residence Development Plan Industry and Trade Inc.
- MSB: Ministry of National Defense
- OYAK: Armed Forces Pension Fund
- RP: Welfare Party
- TEM: Trans-European Motorway
- TCMB: Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey
- TOKİ: Housing Development Administration
- TÜİK: Turkish Statistical Institute
- ÜST BİRLİK: Onurkent Building Societies Association

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The district of Başakşehir which is the subject of this study was formed through a similar transformation process as many other neighborhoods which had been urbanized under the effect of state interventions. There are many urban areas like Başakşehir in Turkey. However, what distinguishes Başakşehir's as the subject of this study, is the fact that its urbanization process appeared, to a great extent, first under the administration of the Welfare Party and then under the rule of the Justice and Development Party. Up until now various housing supply models have been implemented in Turkey and this model which was created by İslamist politicians has also benefitted from the experiences gained from these models. What distinguishes the model that the İslamists implemented is that they adopted the use of Islamic symbolism and that it played a crucial part in the creation of Islamic public spaces. This model was continued on up until Erdoğan became Prime Minister in 2003.

At the beginning of 2003, the Urgent Action Plan announced by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan contained a new urbanization act. The way Erdoğan adopted to resolve the previous problems was to equip the Mass Housing Administration with the authority to build hundreds of thousands of flats, as though it were a construction company. This method is regarded as a significantly larger and systematic version of the model which he tried to implement with KİPTAŞ, a municipality owned company from the period when Erdoğan was the mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) in 1994. From this date on, TOKİ has built about 800.000 residential buildings all over Turkey, and 120.000 of were erected in İstanbul. Thus, it has become a monopoly in the housing sector. Additionally, approximately 60.000 of the houses constructed by TOKİ are located in the Kayaşehir neighborhood in north Başakşehir (TOKİ Konut Üretim Raporu, 2017).

The TOKİ model in which the state participates in the housing sector like a fully authorized company and also cooperates with the private sector, can be regarded as

a novel development that would alter the urbanization process. The state, which intervened in the housing industry with various instruments, collaborated closely with the private sector for the first time. And consequently, this situation led to a significant flow of capital and the rise of a new capitalist class in Turkey since construction firms had been acquiring a great deal of money through colossal mass housing projects.

The region discussed in this study constitutes a prominent example in this sense, since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was in charge of the Mayor's office at the time when the first regular mass housing in Başakşehir was built by KİPTAŞ, belonging to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. While KİPTAŞ initiated the first Başak Houses project under Erdoğan's administration, at the same time, it embarked on the project of Hilal Residences in the eastern part of the Asian side of Istanbul. In addition to this, the names “Başak” meaning ear of wheat and “Hilal” meaning crescent, were the symbols of the Welfare Party which had adopted an Islamist political approach at that time. In a sense, these projects were constituting exemplary urban models of the Welfare Party Municipality (Bora, 1999, p. 55-56). Furthermore, by means of them it was also aimed to offer the religious population the opportunity to live in gated communities with social facilities, built around safe mosque-school-market triangles.

1.1. Setting the Problem

This study's main aim is to explain how the “vision of a city” of Islamist politicians, who set out to establish an Islamic gated community through the use of Islamic rhetoric and symbols, and who created their own housing supply model with the aim of constructing safe, good-quality and affordable mass housing projects; evolved within capitalist market conditions. To serve this aim, it scrutinizes the case of Başakşehir which urbanized under the administration of Islamist politicians starting from its very inception.

In order to answer the main question, I will also seek to answer the following questions: Through which discourses and symbols did the Islamic politicians create the city, ideal urban areas and urban identities? How did the rhetoric and policies

pertaining to urbanization policies change, from the Welfare Party to the Justice and Development Party? How has the "housing supply model" implemented by Islamists via KİPTAŞ and TOKİ, been effected by economic dynamics? How did the dynamics of obtaining rent and creating an Islamic public space influence city policies?

Another important goal of this thesis is to understand the kind of social and economic transformations that Islamist politicians and the "housing supply model" have led to, in Turkey. In order to comprehend these transformations, I examine how TOKİ and KİPTAS, the public institutions that Islamists use in housing production, shape the housing market and how they cooperate with the private sector. I also deal with how TOKİ's housing policies have an effect on the distribution of urban resources where social inequality prevails.

In this thesis, I have simplified rather complex urbanization processes to make it easier to understand. Therefore, I did not discuss the development plans and the decision making processes. Instead, I concentrated on the discourses of Islamic politicians, who had a say in Başakşehir's urbanization process, in order to understand the housing supply model applied by Islamists.

In the thesis, I provided a rundown of the Başakşehir district in the second chapter. Apart from this, the concept of Başakşehir includes the Başak Houses built by KİPTAŞ which constitute the first collective housing of the region. For the housing projects that TOKİ constructed in Başakşehir, I used the name "Kayaşehir" which is the name of the neighborhood it was constructed in.

1.2. Methodology

In this study, qualitative research methods was used. Then, five-year development plans, government programs, newspaper articles and news pieces, the official statements of the central government and local administrators, law texts and regulations and development plans were scrutinized through the critical discourse analysis method.

For the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 people including the deputy mayor, municipal council member, the president of the supreme council of cooperatives, the president of the cooperative, municipal employees, political party neighborhood officials, contractors, real estate agents, and householders. Interviews were held with nine men and three women from different income groups ranging in age from 31 to 62 years. Their names are changed in order to protect their personal privacy in the thesis. The interviews lasted approximately 80-100 minutes. Semi-structured interview techniques were employed so that the interviews progressed systematically and the flexible questionnaire served as a means of obtaining more detailed information. During the interviews, there were people – particularly among the managers – who did not want to have their voice recorded, and therefore their interviews were not recorded. Apart from this, voice recordings were taken and notes were kept during these interviews. The interviews were mostly held in Başakşehir, and the research subjects including related projects were examined in this field before and after the interview, and field notes were kept.

Due to the political content of the thesis subject, the documents and texts studied, and the interviews are based on biased comments and statements. For instance, some interviewees blamed opposing political groups during the interviews. Moreover, people who held managerial positions in municipalities denied their political responsibilities in some cases. Most of the texts examined about KİPTAŞ, especially due to the lack of academic studies related to KİPTAŞ, consist of documents in which the company describes and advertises its projects. Moreover, it has been observed that the ideological affiliations of senior executives who are currently in office influenced the interviews and led to contradictory statements during talks. To overcome this issue, efforts were made to create an environment where interviewees could feel comfortable. During the interviews, the same questions were directed at different people and contradictory statements were focused on scrupulously.

The documents and interview records obtained at the end of the study were examined within the framework of academic impartiality and scientific principles.

This data is described in chronological order and the observations made are interpreted. Thus, it is aimed that the readers can thoroughly understand the process of urbanization in Başakşehir.

These people were selected from among the people who experienced the urbanization process of Başakşehir, according to the examination of related documents at first and then new participants were reached by using the snowball method. These people were visited by personal reference, and thus it was aimed to obtain information through mutual trust. The participants with diverse experiences were interviewed to enable the possibility of a holistic analysis and an in-depth study. Attention is drawn to the fact that these persons are from different professions and have disparate experiences concerning the subject of study.

1.3. Hypotheses

When we look at the story of Başakşehir, we see that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is the mayor of Istanbul in 1994, and the parties he belonged to (the Welfare Party and Justice and Development Party respectively) are the sole authorities on urban planning. From the beginning of the story, we see that the relevant party managers have shaped Başakşehir by designing and implementing urban plans and projects through their managerial authorities. Therefore, I need to pay particular attention to these political formations in my work. One of the biggest criticisms made within this political tradition that took its power from the municipal activities is the saying that “the Mujahideen became contractors”. With these words, it is implied that this formation, which pursued some political-religious goals in the beginning, has subsequently sought worldly gains through contracting and made massive amounts of money. One of the hypotheses of my work in this framework is that the construction of Başakşehir, which was conceived amid ideological and religious discourses, has become an area in which capitalist interactions took place with the effect of market conditions over time. For this purpose, major construction projects were built to accompany Başakşehir, and a great economic movement was established.

One of the factors suggested for the emergence of Başakşehir is religious-ideological reasons. Accordingly, for the first time in the 1990s, the Islamist political movement, which gained importance in the municipalities, felt the need to build residential areas where one could live in comfort and peace, to meet the expectations of conservative-religious voters who supported it. To achieve this, Başakşehir was chosen as one of the most favorable regions in the western part of Istanbul on the European side since it had not been urbanized yet, and the land was comparatively cheap for construction investments. Thus, there many gated residential areas with worship areas, social and living facilities were built. These projects were carried out by a construction company established by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, where the Islamic Welfare Party was dominant at the time, and these houses were mostly bought by the citizens who had similar religious-ideological approaches. Over time, the environment opened the door to new demands, and further housing projects were actualized in this direction to bring Başakşehir forth.

Although Başakşehir began to be structured by mass housing projects built in the direction of creating livable urban spaces, especially within the framework of the Islamists' Refah municipalities, capitalist market conditions became more influential in the practice of forming this zone. Market conditions have a considerable influence on the story of Başakşehir becoming one of the most attractive areas with the improvement of transportation services. Construction projects, which became more profitable with the increase in real estate prices, provided not only the projects of KİPTAŞ belonging to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality but also many private sector investments. In this respect, although ideological approaches and ideas are at the forefront of the projects of Başakşehir, profitability and rent-seeking gain more significance later on.

The general trend of urbanization in Istanbul emerged as a salient factor in bringing the Başakşehir district to its present state. After 1980, with the elements of multi-centered urban texture brought about by housing and the advancements in technological possibilities, smaller city centers called "satellite cities" emerged in different regions of Istanbul. It became desirable to reside in newly developed

satellite cities due to problems in slum areas or neighborhood settlements. Problems such as old buildings in the central regions, traffic and parking issues, and lack of social facilities were reducing the living standards of the people residing in these areas. Minimizing these problems in newly built mass housing projects also increased the demand for these projects. Moreover, depending on the improvement of the housing conditions, it became a popular and desired lifestyle among people. It is an important factor in the urbanization of Başakşehir that a conservative-religious community, which started to gain a political and economic voice in these years, took such initiatives as much as possible.

The importance given by the Justice and Development Party to the housing and the construction sector led to the birth of a new capitalist class in Turkey. With the termination of the import-substitution Industry Model after 1980, a new bourgeois class emerged in the Turkish economy, which was integrated with the global economy, together with Erdoğan's construction-oriented development push. With the transformation of the profits of the construction sector into investments in other areas, there was a vast capital movement in Turkey, and a new group was added to the bourgeoisie. There are also non-religious people in this group as well as Islamists. This new wealthy class supports the Justice and Development Party. This group, which supports Erdoğan and has investments in almost every sector, also has an influence on the political equilibrium in Turkey.

Finally, KİPTAŞ and the Housing Development Administration's luxury residences for the upper-income group created new ghettos alongside their safe assets and high prices. High-income and high-status people living in these sites, along with their families, have become communities detached from the low-income group and the middle-class. In particular, they have invested their newly formed wealth in luxurious housing projects, thus bringing gated communities out of the reach of lower classes.

1.4. Organization of Thesis

Before I begin discussing this urbanization story, I analyze how the topic of urbanization is addressed in the sociology literature and take a look at the theories

on this subject. After some discussion on the urban research literature in Turkey, I examine, in detail, the story of Başakşehir's urbanization on which Islamist politicians, especially Erdoğan, had an influence since 1994.

The first chapter begins with a brief discussion about urban sociology theories, and the urban studies literature in Turkey. Then, the urbanization process that Istanbul underwent during the republic period was expounded on. In the second chapter, some space is ascribed for general information about the Başakşehir district and the actors shaping the region.

The main theme of the third chapter provides the layout of Başakşehir's urbanization period from 1990 to 2004. This section basically consists of three periods: the term before Erdoğan becomes the mayor, Erdoğan's mayoralty, and the Justice and Development Party rule. This part deals with how Islamist politicians put forward their own housing supply models and how they constructed the first mass housing project, the Başakşehir Houses, through KIPTAS. It is also explained, that the rhetoric and Islamic symbolism used during the construction of the Başak Houses, were all steps towards the creation of an urban identity. In this part, urban identity politics is examined through in-depth interviews conducted with the administrators who witnessed the construction process of the Başak Houses, along with the people who resided in the Başak Houses.

The fourth chapter which covers from the year 2004 and onwards, describes the period when both the central government and the local government were influenced by the administration of the Justice and Development Party. During this time, Başakşehir witnessed a rapid development and mass housing projects were constructed. It is described how the Housing Development Administration was restructured by the Justice and Development Party and used in residential policies. In addition, large mass housing projects which KIPTAS carried out are examined as well. This section also discusses the housing supply model implemented by the AKP on a national scale, along with the social and economic transformations that it led to.

In the conclusion part, the findings are evaluated and summarized. In this part, it is emphasized that the Islamist housing mobilization has engendered social and economic transformations in Turkey such as the capital flow from the industrial sectors to the construction sector, the emergence of a new capitalist class and finally the re-production of social inequality.

1.5. Theories of Urban Sociology

The city is not a phenomenon that has been analyzed directly in the framework of classical sociological theories. While the founding fathers of sociology such as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber conducted macro-scale analyses, they considered the city as a place where social relations brought by capitalism were established. In this sense, cities have been studied in the West as places where new relations or inequalities were re-established in the transition from feudalism to capitalism (Saunders, 1986, p. 1-3).

Especially in the 20th Century, urban studies rose to prominence with the acceleration of urbanization in the West. With the diversification of these studies, the followers of the three founding sociologists began to follow different approaches as well. In short, Durkheim's division of labor approach was incorporated into urban growth and differentiation theories in the 1920s, Weber's political sovereignty approach was theorized in 1960 as the urban elite's resource distribution system and Marx's social class struggle-based approach was adopted in the 1970s by political economy approaches (Şentürk, 2011, p. 22).

The Chicago School, which is renowned as “the first modern school of urban sociology”, focused more on the invasion of urban spaces and on the competition in this regard, which is called the ecological approach. In this approach, in summary, it is suggested that the city is a structure that differs from the center to the periphery; and various sub-cultures in these circles are competing with one another via immigration to the center (Saunders, 2001, p. 40-42). This approach has been criticized for being American-centered and for considering the factors that make up the city from a deterministic framework (Şentürk, 2011, p. 26-27).

When we come to the 1960s, interest in this area increased as the Weberian and Marxist approaches began to focus more intensely on the city, and these two approaches began to take effect instead of the Chicago School. Sociologists such as John Rex, R. E. Pahl, and Peter Saunders adopted a Weberian approach; Sociologists such as Manuel Castells, Henri Lefebvre, and David Harvey viewed the city from a Marxist window. These two traditions have also dealt with the process of bringing the city to an era; they concentrate on the actors and causes that are effective in these processes. While the Weberian view is based on the question of how public resources are distributed in the city, the Marxist view revolves around the effect of the flow of capital on the emerging of the city.

When we look at Weberian approaches, we first encounter the Housing Classes Theory, developed by John Rex and Robert Moore from the studies on Birmingham city center. By developing the Chicago School's ecological approach Rex and Moore argue that there is competition for settlements, unused buildings and financial resources in the city. This approach, which deals with the layout and conflicts on the issue of buying a house, examines the role of the state in a restricted area (Rex & Moore, 1974, p. 1-5).

Another sociologist who views the city from a state-intervention perspective is Ray Pahl. Pahl's Urban Managerialism Approach questions who distributes the scarce resources in the city and who obtains these resources through whose decisions (Pahl, 1975, p. 185-186). According to Pahl, wealth, power, and prestige, which are scarce resources in the urban system, are desired by everyone, but acquiring these resources depends according to the power. Also, those who secure these scarce resources are also influencing other people in the system and consolidating their strength. Pahl suggests that urban interventions have shaped this power balance, especially through city administrators, so the question of who governs them is of vital importance (Pahl, 1975, p. 147).

According to Pahl, the concept of city directors does not solely involve politicians. Those who are influential in the decisions taken in the city are also included as “the

gatekeepers” such as city planners, social workers, architects, estate agents, and property developers (Williams, 1978, p. 236). The most important decision in the city is how to plan the city in zones where trade areas, residential areas or industrial areas are located, as this affects land prices and cause wealthy and powerful segments of society to change. For this reason, how the public resources are distributed directly affects the social and economic structure of the urban community (Pahl, 1975, p. 208-210).

Saunders claims that neither Pahl’s Urban Management nor the Chicago School’s approaches were comprehensive enough to analyze urban issues in the 1980s. According to him, The Chicago School had studied American cities and Pahl had examined the British case which was a product of the welfare state, but a new social structure had emerged in the 1980s (Saunders, 1986, p. 235). So, he suggested that it was necessary to look at the channels of consumption to understand social inequalities. According to Saunders, the state can make socialized consumption interventions in the city. In this sense, the decisions of the city administrators are effective in the reconstruction of social inequality (Saunders, 1986, p. 204).

Castells, like Saunders, argues that the state is influential in the distribution of consumption resources such as housing, health, education, and transportation. Government interventions cause the political struggles of the capitalists and the people, and the urbanization process is shaped under the effects of these struggles (Castells, 1978, p. 18-20). According to Castells, cities are areas where common means of consumption are produced, distributed and managed. The transformations in the cities constitute social contradictions, and the state interferes to remove these contradictions (Giddens, 2009, p. 216-217).

Although Castells stresses on the social contradictions, Lefebvre does not define cities as a place where capitalist processes are experienced but argues that the city is a commodity for capitalism. According to Lefebvre, capitalism seizes urban areas and succeeds in surviving via the means of reproduction. Therefore, he suggested that what is essential for capitalism is not the place itself but the actual value of exchange

of that place. Capitalism makes the city a scarce resource as do other production processes and generates income from urban areas. Lefebvre emphasizes that urban planning is important because it has an impact on the use of scarce resources. He also stresses that planning affects everyday life, which in turn leads to the recreation of social relations (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 10).

Harvey, like Lefebvre, defends the idea that the city is commodified. In this framework, he emphasizes that there is a relationship between the urbanization process and capital accumulation. By adopting a Marxist approach to study urban processes, Harvey suggests that the surplus value of production is transformed into cities. In other words, the values gained through industrial production are turned into capital by the commodification of urban areas and this causes capitalists to accrue significant profits (Harvey, 2012, p. 5-6).

Harvey emphasizes that, unlike Lefebvre, surplus values in industrial production provide urbanization. Hence, the process of urbanization is shaped not by urban planners but by the capital accumulations of industrial capitalists (Harvey, 1985, p. 3-5). Industrial capitalists do not only profit by converting their capital into real estate investments, but also by selling their products during the urbanization process. In other words, urbanization constitutes another dimension of capitalist consumption processes (Harvey, 2012, p. 40-42).

Harvey thinks that although many actors, such as the state, capitalists, and social classes, are involved in the urbanization process, the main factor is the decisions of the capitalists who have capital accumulation in the urbanization process. According to Harvey, even though state planning and incentives are effective in the formation of the urban area, the possibilities for profitability in the region where investment decisions are made are more effective, since capital owners have the means of production in their hands. For example, the regions in which capital owners have gravitated for real estate investment, are zoned for housing, people are buying houses in these areas because they think they are profitable, and new housing areas can emerge (Harvey, 2012, p. 46-47).

In brief, the city as a whole is created by the capitalist way of interactions, as claimed by Marxist approaches, and the intervention of the state, and city administrators, as suggested by Weberian approaches. Therefore, the most comprehensive way to understand an urban area should be developed by coupling the interventions made in the city with capital movements. The distribution of resources by the favor of the public can be performed in the direction of decisions on which some ideological considerations are effective. On the other hand, capitalist market conditions and attitudes of other actors in this market are also influential in the implementation of these decisions.

When both Weberian and Marxist views are examined, it can be suggested that the most comprehensive approach can be achieved by combining Pahl's Urban Management Approach with Harvey's perspective of capital accumulation. These two theoretical approaches provide a comprehensive view of the public interventions on the scarce resources of the city, to understand together with the effects of capital movements and the processes that are based on the struggles of different social groups.

In particular, in Başakşehir, the effectiveness of public institutions in the urbanization process and the huge capital movements along with this process necessitate the combined use of these two approaches. Pahl's theory does not reflect Turkey as a whole, but the idea that the city administrators are influential in the distribution of urban resources serves as an appropriate approach for Turkey. Therefore, I examine the urban intervention decisions and the urban perception of Islamist politicians, in my thesis. I have adopted Lefebvre's concept of social space to understand these urban interventions and the formation process of Başakşehir as an Islamic social space.

1.6. Literature Review

At the beginning of the Republican era, the developments in urban planning necessitated a substantial flow of information in this field, hence studies began to be conducted towards the publishing of research. In this context, Turkey's first

municipality magazine the İstanbul Şehremaneti Mecmuası was published in 1924. In this period, studies on urbanization were translated and published. The first original work was Osman Nuri Ergin's book "İstanbul Şehreminleri" published in 1927 (Tekeli, 2010, p. 310).

Urban studies began to be systematically taught at universities as a subject, thanks to the conferences Fritz Neumark gave at the University of İstanbul between 1935 and 1936. Again, Ernst Reuter gave lectures on Introduction to Urbanism at Ankara University from 1938 and 1940 (Tekeli, 2010, p. 311). In the following years, Fehmi Yavuz, Cevat Geray, Ruskin Keles and İlhan Tekeli studied and published on the subject of urban studies (Şatıroğlu, 2011, p. 349).

A growing interest in urban studies can be observed towards the 1960s. After these years, especially in İstanbul, we see that with the emergence of shanty regions, academic studies concentrated on the phenomenon of "squatters" (gecekondu). The research carried out from these years until the 1980s aimed at defining "squatter" dwellings and engaged in demographic studies related to these regions (Özbay, 2015, p. 219-220). There are also works that examine the relationship between the need for housing and industrialization as well as the labor force.

For example, Mübeccel Kiray asserted that squatter dwellings are the consequence of the accumulation of the population in urban areas in industrialized societies (Kiray, 1972, p. 561-562). From a functionalist point of view, Kiray also defines structures that maintain the balance among new and old institutions during the transformation of society, as "buffer mechanisms" (Kiray, 1982, p. 16-17). Squatter dwellings serve as a kind of buffer mechanism for new comers in order for them to be able to survive in cities (Kiray, 1998, p. 92-93). Tansı Şenyapılı also studied the relationship between industrialization and the emergence of "squatter" neighborhoods. She states that through inexpensive housing, the cheap labour force required by the industry can easily be accommodated despite their low income. Furthermore, she underlines that the squatter dwellings meet this need for shelter. Thus, Şenyapılı does not only deal

with squatter dwellings as a housing problem but also as a problem pertaining to the labor force as well (Şenyapılı, 1978, p. 7).

In 1984, with the repairment of the shanty areas through amnesties and the transformation of these slums into legally permitted apartments, squatter dwellings became a tool of rant-seeking. It is observed that, academics who study urbanism are inclined to dwell on this subject after these years (Erman, 2001, p. 987). For example, Tansı Şenyapılı argues that the problem of the squatter house changed and then generated a new urban rent tension in the urban area. The inequalities arising from the differential rent that is formed between different areas in the city, and the shortage of urban resources due to the new arrivals to the city have produced the concept of “varoş” in urban studies. Despite the conversion of the shanty areas into the apartment buildings, the people who live here are regarded as non-urbanized, uneducated, urban looters, and this phenomenon is explained through the concept of “suburbs” (Şengül, 2009, p. 131). Sencer Ayata emphasized that although the people living in squatter neighborhoods were not considered as a threat in earlier periods, people who lived in certain regions started to get concerned about the squatter regions since they were turning into a source of irregularity and violence. Ayata also asserts that people use the term “varoş”, which refers to the social aspects of squatters, to define regions in which people could not be integrated in to the city (Ayata, 1996, p. 18). In this regard, there were many studies conducted in the Gültepe, Pendik, Ümraniye, and Kuştepe neighborhoods of Istanbul within the framework of “varoş” in 1990s (Şatıroğlu, 2011, p. 353).

Coming up to the 2000's, the theme of poverty is rises to prominence in the studies focusing on squatter dwellers. Oğuz Işık and Melih Pınarcıoğlu's book, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk*, constitutes a prime example of poverty-based studies. They conducted a research in the Sultanbeyli district of Istanbul, and described the new urban poor that had formed along with the transformation of the shanty phenomenon after the 1980s. On one hand, old squatter dwellings that existed before were turned into apartments with the laws pardoning squatters. On the other hand, the new-comers' squatter houses were considered as illegal, and they were faced with countless

problems. So, in their book Işık and Melihcioğlu expressed how the previous squatters were able to gain wealth, and hence transferred their poverty to the new-comers and non-privileged groups. (Işık & Pınarcıoğlu, 2001, p. 155-156). Buğra and Keyder also prepared a report entitled “New Poverty and the Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey” which investigates the urban poverty in Istanbul. In their study, they claim that employment and housing problems generate social exclusion, and poor families are the ones who end up being subjected to this exclusion (Buğra & Keyder, 2006, p. 22-23).

Alongside poverty, the concept of the new wealth observed in cities was also the object of studies in the 2000s. These studies expound on how the wealthy people in cities build new living spaces in the form of safe luxury settlements by creating “gated communities”. Ayfer Bartu’s work on Kemer County and Hatice Kurtuluş’s study on Beykoz Konakları constitute fine examples of this type of work. According to Bartu, gated communities emerged as a new symbol of consumerist culture, and as a means for newly rising classes to flaunt their high-status in society (Bartu, 2001, p. 148-149). For instance, Beykoz Konakları is a good example of premium gated communities. Kurtuluş, highlights that Beykoz Konakları were constructed by classes that increased their wealth due to the cheap labour force and that these classes have different political agendas and daily lives compared to the area they live in. (Kurtuluş, 2005, p. 183-184).

The literature on gentrification projects was also introduced with the growing global real estate investment in Istanbul in the 2000s. Besime Şen claims that the gentrification project, which consists of reconstructing deteriorated urban areas in the city center, is regarded as the cleansing of undeveloped areas in the city center from poor and marginal groups. On the other hand, the exile of the poorer classes from city centers bolsters social inequality. (Şen, 2005, p. 156). These studies deal with the fact that, people living in deteriorated areas in the city center are told to leave their homes and are sent to social housing outside the city. Gentrification projects have also been studied regarding urban wealth and the re-production of

poverty. These studies were mostly carried out in districts like Sulukule, Balat, and Tarlabası (Şatıroğlu, 2011, p. 360-362).

In summary, urban studies in Turkey started in the early republican period and starting from the 1960s onwards a keen interest in these studies grew with the formation of shanty areas in the most crowded cities. Initially, its aim was to define the shanty phenomenon, and to discuss the effects of industrial and labor force relations on the formation of shanty regions. Later on, squatter dwellings had been transformed into apartments with the law that pardoned squatters and integrated them into the city. This type of transformed squatter dwelling were studied through the themes of crime, urban rent, and poverty. In the year 2000, with the emergence of a new wealthy social group in the city and the entry of international capital into the market, studies were carried out on gentrification projects and gated communities in which wealthier residents of the city lived.

The subject of my thesis, Başakşehir, has been studied from various aspects as an Islamic gated community. One of the most extensive studies on this subject is Ayşe Çavdar's study titled "The Loss of Modesty: The journey of Muslim family from 'mahalle' to gated community". In this study Çavdar looks for the answers of three main questions: The first one is "how does urban life affect religiosity?" and the second question is "how does religiosity express itself in a modern urban environment?" The third one is "how do religions transform cities?" (Çavdar, 2011, p. 2). The housing supply model put forward by Islamist politicians has not been discussed within a framework of both identity and market politics. Hence, my main purpose is to understand this housing supply model, within a framework that includes both identity and market politics, through Başakşehir in which this model has been produced from the very start, and to examine the changes that the model has undergone over time. Another one of my aims is to discuss the social and economic changes that the model has caused in Turkey.

This study examines how a political movement implements its housing model through state interventions, and investigates how Islamists who criticized the

capitalists have transformed over time into a capitalist class themselves. The study addresses the example of mass housing projects in eastern Başakşehir, which has been urbanized under the influence of the Islamist political staff.

1.7. The Urban Development of Istanbul during the Republican Period

At the beginning of the Republic era, Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire had been put aside, and the state had concentrated on the development of the new capital, Ankara. There was a great need of housing services for civil servants who would live in Ankara, and the new capital was also a symbol of an emerging political change. The interest in Ankara, which was rapidly built as a modern city from the beginning of the 1930s, had persisted in spite of the war years until 1950 when Adnan Menderes was elected as the prime minister (Akpınar, 2003, p. 171).

Adnan Menderes inaugurated rapid construction projects in Istanbul which had remained untouched for many years (Boysan, 1993, p. 84). While these steps were being taken to build a modern city, the collapse of many historic buildings and the construction of wide boulevards instead brought about various debates with them. In this respect, Menderes was severely criticized both for destroying the history and for triggering the increase in the population of Istanbul. The industrialization movement and urban policies that were implemented increased migration to Istanbul, and consequently, this resulted in the formation of squatter settlements which would later become one of the major problems of Istanbul (Boysan, 1993, p. 86-87).

The initiative of Menderes to establish a modern Istanbul cover three main points. The first was to construct wide boulevards and expand the roads, the second was to enlarge the squares, and the third was to restore old historical buildings for touristic purposes. In line with these purposes the Vatan, Millet and Kennedy boulevards, which are quite wide compared to roads of that period, were constructed, and the restoration of, primarily, religious structures was carried out (Ensari Kara & Ertuğal, 2010, p. 592). This can be interpreted as bringing the legacy of the empire at the forefront against Ankara which was built by the Republican People's Party (Gül, 2009,

p. 140). These construction activities indicate that Menderes had an aim to make Istanbul a modern center with its Islamic tradition (Akpınar, 2003, p. 181).

Menderes issued the Construction Law No. 6785 and the Expropriation Law No. 6830 in 1956 to provide the legal basis of his construction projects. In conjunction with the passing of these laws from parliament, Menderes rapidly demolished the current structures and started replacing with the new ones that had been planned. These construction projects, as we shall see later, constitute one of the most prominent examples of state intervention in the urban fabric conducted via the formation of a legal basis, in history of Istanbul.

After the 1960 military coup, a new era started for Istanbul which would last until the 1980 military coup. In this period, the central government was more influential on the city in terms of zone planning while the authorities of the local administrations were very limited (Keleş, 2008, p. 80). This period includes a process in which Turkey focused on industrialization and adopted the model of Import Substituting Industrialization which prefers replacing foreign imports with domestic products. In these years, we see that industrial enterprises were encouraged by the state and the industry was concentrated predominantly in major cities. The adoption of an industry-oriented development model during this period resulted in the concentration of economic activities in the major cities of the country. Thus, the rural population began to migrate to the urban areas and cities inevitably began to grow. (Akşit, 1998, p. 23).

One of the biggest problems facing the migrating population was the housing issue. The crowds which could not afford housing in legal markets began to build small squatters in state-owned lands. This single or two-storey house model was not sufficient to meet their housing needs and there was also the problem of lack of infrastructure in squatter settlements (Şenyapılı, 1978, p. 85). With the intensity of the migration movement, squatters built on state land also been increased, and consequently, the vast squatter neighborhoods emerged (Erman, 2001, p. 985).

During this period, people living in squatter areas commonly labored in factories or workshops as workers. In other words, the labor force required by the industrial enterprises was provided through the migration of the rural population to the city. While squatter areas were rapidly increasing between the years of 1960-1980, due to its industrialization policy the state did not make sufficient interventions that would prevent the formation of these areas. While the resources of Turkey were allocated to rapid industrialization, the infrastructure of Istanbul was severely neglected, and the issues pertaining to the need for housing were largely ignored. As a result, the problems of traffic, crowded population, lack of infrastructure and environmental pollution escalated. Furthermore, all these problems coupled with the need of shelter led to the emergence of an illegal housing market beyond the states control (Şentürk, 2011, p. 254-259).

Although there were many state interventions implemented to prevent the new squatter areas, these trials were unsuccessful. In 1966, the 775 numbered Slum ("Gecekondu" in Turkish) Law was enacted and legal arrangements were made to prevent slum areas (Resmi Gazete, 1966). However, this law was not implemented properly due to reasons such as the need for cheap labor for industrialization and to the fact that the people living in squatters had the capacity to influence politics (Schüler, 1999, p. 83-85). In later years, pardons for existing squatters was frequently given and thus this further encouraged people to build new squatters (Keleş, 2008, p. 596-598).

In the period between the years of 1960-1980, while the new arriving low-income group continued to build squatters in the city, the middle class i.e. the former inhabitants of the city preferred to live in apartment buildings. The squatters were constructed on the state-owned land and were illegal buildings. However, apartments which were preferred by middle-class people were built on private-registered lands and those were legal and modern settlements. Moreover, the apartments had the infrastructure services and were more comfortable than squatters, so people desired to live in apartments. (Işık & Pınarcıoğlu, 2005, p. 103).

With the increasing population in Istanbul, the old buildings were demolished in many points of the city, and were replaced by new apartments. After the Law of Property Ownership was issued in 1965, the owners of old buildings agreed with contractors to build new apartments. In this relation, the need for land was met by the building owner, and after constructing the new facility, the contractor would get some part of the apartments as the service cost. This model is called the build-and-sell model. Today, many apartment buildings in the city center were built during this period. The build-and-sell model was supported by the state because it activated the industrial and labor markets in Turkey (Işık & Pınarcıoğlu, 2005, p. 105-110).

Just before the 1980 coup, Turkey was struggling with both political and economic problems. At that time a new economic policy was announced on January 24, 1980, as a way out. With this decision, Turkey made a return to liberal economic policies by abandoning the Import Substituting Industrialization Model. With these arrangements, Turkey has gained an internationally-oriented and competitive market structure (Uludağ & Arıcan, 2003, p. 47-48). Although the new economic policy was announced in early 1980, the implementation of liberal policies were only possible after the 1980 military coup. From this date on, Turkey became integrated with the international market and Istanbul became the center of this global vision (Uludağ & Arıcan, 2003, p. 51-52).

Following the end of the Import Substituting Industrial policies after 1980, the squatter settlements were deprived of the tolerance shown in the previous period. With the incessant migration from rural to urban areas, the need for labor began to decline compared to the prior period and population density became a problem for cities. For these reasons, the government made efforts to prevent new squatter areas. In 1981 the Pardon Law for Squatters was established, the state gained income through giving permits for certificates of occupancy. With the legal acceptance of these squatters, it became possible to transform these settlements into apartment buildings. In the Constitution of 1982, the statement that the housing is a social right and this right will be supported by the state were given place in article 57 (TC Anayasası, 2010). From this date on, the state attempted to renovate the buildings in

the city according to the global vision of liberal economic policy, and tried to regulate the housing market.

The state encouraged mass housing to prevent the squatter areas after 1980, but this did not play a leading role in the field. Cooperatives were supported in this period, and various legal regulations were made to create a legal housing market. Additionally, the state tried to gain support for mass housing from some state-owned establishments such as Housing Development Administration (TOKİ), Urban Land Office, and Emlak Bank. Also, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) Mayor Dalan worked towards decentralizing industrial facilities in the city center. As a result of this effort, the İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone which is the core of Başakşehir was established (Şentürk, 2011, p. 316-319).

The decentralization of industrial enterprises and the pardon law for squatters created a new urban rent in the 1990s. The increasing population and efforts to prevent the new slum areas resulted in allowing the transformation of squatter settlements into multi-storey apartments in the center of the city. While squatter dwellings located in the center were transformed into apartment buildings, the others around the industrial establishments were converted into mass housing through state interventions (Erman, 2001, p. 987).

After 1994, with Erdoğan's İBB mayoralty KİPTAS, which belongs to the municipality, was restructured and hence it became an effective actor in the housing market. KİPTAS has constructed mass housing projects in several parts of Istanbul. Then in 2002, Erdoğan became prime minister when the AKP came to power and implemented a "housing supply model" similar to KİPTAS's model, throughout Turkey via TOKİ. In this period TOKİ was restructured and also equipped with a wide array of competencies, and hence it became a monopoly in the construction sector in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL OVERVIEW ON BAŞAKŞEHİR

Başakşehir is one of the most recent districts located on the European side of İstanbul, surrounded by many districts. The Arnavutköy district is in the north of Başakşehir while the Eyüp district lies to the north east of it. The Sultangazi and Esenler districts are located in the east and the southern neighbors of Başakşehir are Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, and Avcılar. Finally, Esenyurt is in the southwest of Başakşehir.



Figure 2.1 Location of Başakşehir District in İstanbul (Source: wowturkey.com)

Başakşehir was officially established in 2008 through the subdivision of the Küçükçekmece and Esenler district municipalities and the Bahçeşehir first tier municipality, within the framework of the Law on the Establishment of the District within the Boundaries of the Metropolitan Municipality and with the amendments in the relevant laws, numbered 5747. The 1st and 2nd stages of Başakşehir, Kayabaşı, Ziya Gökalp, Güvercintepe, Altınşehir, Şahintepe neighborhoods and some parts of the Mehmet Akif neighborhood located to the north of the Trans-European Motorway (TEM) were severed from the Küçükçekmece district. Also, the 4th and 5th stages of Başakşehir were taken from the Esenler district. The 1st and 2nd stages of

Bahçeşehir and Şamlar neighborhoods are located in the north of TEM and the east region of the Hoşdere/Esenyurt-Hadımköy road were severed from Bahçeşehir.

2.1. Transportation

Regarding transportation, Başakşehir has a variety of connections, including both highways and railroads. The TEM which provides the link to Europe and the 1st and 2nd Bosphorus Bridges pass from just the south of Başakşehir. Furthermore, the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge and followed by the Northern Marmara Motorway came into service in 2016, and served as a new transportation line for Başakşehir. The access to highway connections has expanded the transportation network of Başakşehir to both the center and the surrounding areas. These developments have rendered Başakşehir as one of the most popular residential areas in Istanbul.

Apart from the highways, Başakşehir has also alternate means of transportation. First of all, bus and minibus services are also regularly provided by the İBB. One of these is the Sirkeci-Halkalı railway line which also serves as a railroad linking Istanbul to Europe (Çelik, 2010, p. 9-10). However, due to the suspension of the suburban trains, this line is currently closed for a short time. On the other hand, starting from 2013, the M3 metro line operating between Kirazlı-Metrokent, with an average daily passenger capacity of 100.000, is one of the significant links to more central districts. Additionally, another subway line construction project for the district is still underway. The main purpose of it is to establish a connection to central areas of Istanbul such as Bakırköy, Kabataş and Gayrettepe (Ray Haber, 2013).

2.2. Two Different Urbanization Characteristics of Başakşehir

2.2.1. Planned Settlements

Planned buildings are mostly located in Başakşehir, the 1st and 2nd Başakşehir neighborhoods in the Başakşehir district. There are numerous mass housing projects implemented by KİPTAŞ, TOKİ and some other private construction companies in these regions. In particular, TOKİ and KİPTAŞ played a pivotal role in the emergence of Başakşehir as a residential area. The buildings in these neighborhoods are planned, licensed and made using high-quality materials. There are mostly 10 to 20-storey

buildings located within the sites, along with several luxury villas constructed in the region. These regions were selected as the pilot area for the Squatter Prevention Zone and have now become residential settlements (Çiftçi, 2010, p. 17-18).



Figure 2.2 Planned and Unplanned Settlements in Başakşehir (Source: İBB)

2.2.2. Unplanned Settlements

The Altınşehir, Ziya Gökalp, Güvercintepe and Şahintepe neighborhoods can be considered as unplanned settlements. The construction of dwellings in these regions began in the 1980's and were mostly squatter settlements (Çiftçi, 2010, p. 15). The region underwent a lot of construction during the 1990s, both licensed and unlicensed, and the constructions which were built without a license were pardoned with the Amnesty Law Number 2981. These neighborhoods did not have multi-storey buildings. However, it has been observed that the shanty-type houses evolved into 3 to 4-storey buildings by adding stories without a license (Çiftçi, 2010, p. 16). In the 2000s, the urban transformation projects via TOKİ began to be implemented. The

reconstruction plans were revised for the conversion projects in the Northern Ayazma, which was declared as the Squatter Prevention Zone (Vatan, 2016).

This thesis deals with the Başak, Başakşehir and Kayaşehir neighborhoods which are subject to the ordered structure of Başakşehir in addition to the İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone. Bahçeşehir is out of the question as it is located on the west side of Başakşehir and shows significant discrepancies in terms of urbanization.

The main reason for the selection of these regions as the subject of this thesis is that public institutions and organizations are actively involved, and that planned mass housing projects were foreseen and implemented in the urbanization process of these regions. In this process, which began in the early 1990s, the organizational mosaic consisting of diverse state institutions such as TOKİ and KİPTAŞ constitute a concrete example of how an unsettled region urbanized under the influence of state interventions. Moreover, the example of Başakşehir reveals one of the unique examples of how state institutions have shaped urbanization and thus the urban rent.

In this study, it is of vital importance to analyze how these mentioned state institutions and organizations that planned and managed the urbanization of the region carried out this process along with the formation of the Başakşehir district. Furthermore, it is possible to demonstrate how this process was shaped by which institutions and actors.

2.3. Big Players in Construction Sector

It is critical to consider the players who are influential on the urban projects in Başakşehir. Since, the legal basis for the big corporations and state agencies, and their nature will provide crucial knowledge to explain how the urbanization process is shaped through these players' decisions. There are three bodies which are working as construction companies and controlled by state officials.

2.3.1. The Housing Development Administration (TOKİ)

The Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKİ) was established on March 17, 1984. It is the most important state institution which can undertake colossal construction projects in Turkey. Although TOKİ was founded in 1984, the institution became a monopoly after its re-construction in the early year of the AKP. The AKP has efficiently used TOKİ to carry out mass housing projects all across Turkey. TOKİ built approximately 500.000 housing units for citizens from varying economic classes in the first eight years of the AKP government (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2011). Today, more than 790.000 housing units and hundreds of schools, hospitals, mosques, dormitories, and libraries have been constructed by TOKİ (TOKİ Konut Üretim Raporu, 2017). So, TOKİ can be defined as the central state institution which is responsible for construction projects.

What renders TOKİ immensely powerful in the practice of construction projects is the re-construction of the Mass Housing Law of 1984 which determined the tasks of TOKİ during the AKP rule. The law adorns TOKİ with a wide array of competencies such as creating mass housing projects, developing different finance models regarding housing production, reevaluating the urban plan in the country, and expropriating both public and private owned land. The Administration has also been authorized, with a legal arrangement in 2004, to amend zoning plans of all types and scales. It is also capable of amending zoning plans in areas where it is to implement squatter transformation projects, or in plots and lands under its possession, or in areas determined as mass housing settlement sites by local governors (Resmi Gazete, 2004). Since TOKİ is bound to the Prime Ministry, it is possibly malleable to the government's effect through its political decisions.

2.3.2. The Armed Forces Pension Fund (OYAK)

The Armed Forces Pension Fund (OYAK) was established on 9 January 1961 by The Oyak Law of 1961. It is simply an institution related to the Ministry of National Defense which provides mutual assistance for members of the Turkish Armed Forces (Resmi Gazete, 1961). Shortly after the 1960 military coup, OYAK was founded while the junta was still governing Turkey. It is one of the most powerful economic actors

in Turkey and is controlled by members of the Turkish army. Today, it still retains its influence over the Turkish economy with more than 280.000 members and tens of large companies in different areas of interest.

Considering the OYAK Law, the institution has salient privileges such as exemption from income tax, inheritance tax, and expenditure tax. In addition to this, OYAK enjoys the same rights and privileges as state property. Thus, any offense against such assets of the institution shall be subjected to the same legal remedies as offenses against the state property. OYAK also has an extensive field of activities such as the establishment of private educational institutions, establishment, and partnership of companies which operate in every sector, the creation of construction projects, accommodation, and lending loans for its members with up to 20-years of repayment, and providing housing units for its members (Atik, 2005, p. 132-140).

It must be noted that since this thesis mainly scrutinizes the housing supply model of Islamist politicians, the housing projects of OYAK shall not be dealt with, as it falls outside of the scope of this thesis.

2.3.3. Istanbul Residence Development Plan Industry and Trade Inc. (KİPTAŞ)

Istanbul Residence Development Plan Industry and Trade Inc. (KİPTAŞ) is a private company owned by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB). Unfortunately, scientific studies regarding KİPTAŞ are in short supply, hence relevant information pertaining to the company is composed of data provided by its own sources, and statements of interviewees.

Municipalities have rights to establish private companies in Turkey. First, the privatization process was initiated in 1983. Then, the powers of the districts were extended through the legal basis of The Implementation of Privatization Law of 1994. According to the Law Number 5393, municipalities can operate private companies in line with their missions and responsibilities through a legal basis. Therefore, almost all municipalities run businesses through establishing corporations in various sectors. Since municipalities are responsible for drawing up urban plans, they are also able to

influence the real estate industry through their construction corporations. Moreover, municipalities are the main institutions provided with building permits for projects, and they can generate a tremendous amount of income both to create projects and to give out construction permits. In this regard, the Başakşehir case is a prime example in which the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality was responsible for both urban plans and housing projects.

KİPTAŞ was first established in the name of İMAR WEIDLEPLAN with a foreign capital partnership in 1987. Despite becoming inactive following the elections of 1989, it restructured and took the name KİPTAŞ (İstanbul Konut İmar Plan Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş.) after the election of 1994 (KİPTAŞ, 2016). When KİPTAŞ embarked on its first construction project in Başakşehir, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was the İBB Mayor. In this regard, similarities between TOKİ and KİPTAŞ should be taken into account scrupulously in order to comprehend the urban policies of the AKP.

After finishing the first stage of the Başakşehir Houses project, KİPTAŞ went on to construct the second, fourth, fifth stages, İkitelli Masko Houses and the Metrokent project of the Başakşehir district. The company has built around 63.000 housing units in countless projects since the date of its establishment. Among these, the Başakşehir Houses constitute one of the major housing projects in Istanbul (KİPTAŞ, 2017).

KİPTAŞ's housing projects can be categorized under three main methods. The first, KİPTAŞ as a company owned by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, it has the right to carry out housing projects on the municipality owned land through legal regulations. The second, KİPTAŞ may construct projects as a building contractor. These projects are built on private property, and the company sells the houses itself upon the completion of construction. Finally, KİPTAŞ may buy privately owned land from owners, and construct projects on the land (KİPTAŞ, 2016).

All of three methods are appropriate for accumulating large amounts of revenue for the company. KİPTAŞ can buy lands without a construction permit for low prices, and then the İBB is able to open lands for construction with its authorization by giving a

construction permit and designing an urban plan. Thus, prices may climb dramatically. Hence, low prices enable the installment of cheap housing units.



CHAPTER 3

URBAN IDENTITY POLITICS: CREATING AN ISLAMIC GATED COMMUNITY

3.1. Erdogan's Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayoralty

The most significant event which has created Başakşehir would be Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's victory of the local election in 1994. In this election, the Islamist Welfare Party gained a huge victory, and the party's candidates won mayoralty in many cities such as Istanbul and Ankara (Çakır, 2005, p. 548-550). This triumph provided Islamists with the opportunity to regain their power and clout through their success in municipal services.

When Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected as the İBB mayor in 1994, there were countless problems in the city. Unplanned urbanization had led to lack of infrastructure, transportation complications and the disorderly expansion of the city, which overwhelmed the inhabitants of Istanbul. Services provided by the municipality had not been functioning properly either. For instance, there was a shortage of drinking water and lack of cleaning services (Akinci, 1999, p. 77-79). Hence, Erdoğan's commitments and priorities were directed towards tackling these problems even before he ran for mayor in 1994.

Among these problems, the housing supply was brought up by Erdoğan immediately. Firstly, he restructured the formerly established İMAR VE İDARE PLANI, and re-named it KİPTAŞ. Then KİPTAŞ embarked on its first mass housing projects named Başak (ear of wheat) and Hilal (crescent) which were the symbols used in the logo of the Welfare Party. So, it would not be a farfetched statement to say that the Başak Houses were also a prestige project for Islamist politicians to prove that Islamists could provide low-cost and high quality housing for the public (Şentürk, 2011, p. 382).

When KİPTAŞ began working on the first stage of the Başak Houses project, there were only İOSB and immigrant dwellers in Başakşehir. During the early 1990s, the population of Istanbul had been growing rapidly, and Başakşehir was located near

the western border of Istanbul. Over the course of this time, Istanbul was continually expanding west between two highways, the E5 and the TEM. While the south of the E5 freeway was urbanizing, there was still no intensive construction going on in the North of the TEM. Unlike the settlement between E5 and TEM highways, the northern part of the TEM still remained uninhabited. The climate was harsh, and there existed no sufficient transportation networks in Başakşehir

3.1.1. Erdoğan's Interventions to the City

At the very beginning of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's mayoralty, one of the primary objectives of the Welfare Party was to maximize the electorate's satisfaction with its municipal services and to come to power in the general elections (Çavdar, 2016, p. 512). Istanbul was the major target in this regard as it is Turkey's most crowded city. Islamist politician also regarded Istanbul of vital importance due to its historical symbolism. The city was once the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and the local election victory was perceived as a kind of re-conquering Istanbul. The Welfare Party Leader Necmettin Erbakan proclaimed that they "re-conquered Istanbul again" after their triumph in the local elections (Hürriyet, 1994, April 2). In other words, Erbakan asserted that they conquered, like Sultan Mehmet's conquest of Istanbul from Byzantium, Istanbul which had been governing by people who were stranger to Muslim people's values.

During Erdoğan's mayoralty, Islamic symbols began to emerge in public spaces, especially in those that were designed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. For instance, praying areas (masjids) opened up within the municipality's facilities (Hürriyet, 1996, December 19). Another step Erdoğan took was to restore Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey (TURING) owned social facilities and open them to the public after the restoration. Islamist writer Abdurrahman Dilipak claimed that Erdoğan had been battling the elites to establish social facilities for the public, especially for Islamist and pious people, when he was mayor:

You'll remember that there was a crisis concerning TURING's social facilities during the time of Erdoğan's İBB mayoralty. Erdoğan wanted the social facilities under the municipality's control and stated that he would then open them up to the public. However the White Turks, a term used for the urban

republican elite, were furious. How on earth was İstanbul's high society expected to be in the same places as the people coming from Anatolia. Fledglings would have no clue as to how we have come to these days from those days (Dilipak, 2015).

So, it can be gleaned that Islamist politicians made changes in public spaces with Islamist motives and desired to use Islamic symbols in their intervention in İstanbul. They mainly endeavored to make Islamic symbols and life styles more visible in public spaces. One such endeavor was constructing a grand mosque in Taksim Square, the most prominent square in İstanbul, and this sparked a debate regarding Islamist's intention to transform the Kemalist regime in Turkey (Milliyet, 1994, p. 14).

3.1.2. Erdoğan's Vision of a City

Scrutinizing Erdoğan's conception of the "city" is key in understanding the Islamists' vision of an urbanization model. Erdoğan was dreaming of a city where the population did not increase rapidly, and there were no squatters, and nature was not destroyed. First of all, Erdoğan claimed that migration from Anatolia to İstanbul was a great problem for İstanbul, so population growth had to be contained via state intervention (Milliyet, 1994, p. 26). One of his radical proposals was putting in place a visa requirement for İstanbul. He asserted that the state should implement visa restrictions to prevent population growth in the city (Milliyet, 1994, p. 26).

Erdoğan had also opposed the Third Bosphorus Bridge Project, and proposed instead the construction of a tube-tunnel that would go under the Bosphorus, since the bridge would demolish the forests located in the Northern part of İstanbul (Milliyet, 1994, p. 5).

When we look at Erdoğan's proclamations about the housing supply policy, we can see that priority was given to prevent squatter settlements, as he claimed that he would overcome the problem of squatter settlements in İstanbul (Milliyet, 1994, p. 23). So, one of the primary objectives of the mass housing projects constructed by KİPTAŞ was to avoid new squatter settlements by creating mass housing for people. Erdoğan asserted that the prevention of squatter settlements was an immense

achievement for him (Hürriyet, 1996, August 23). Besides preventing squatter settlements another motive was providing low-cost and high quality housing for the public (Hürriyet, 1996, November 21). The uniqueness of Erdoğan's housing supply model was that the profit-seeking private company KİPTAŞ was owned by the İBB and the municipality, without the central government's support, and had become an actor in the housing market directly for the first time (Hürriyet, 1995, March 24).

3.2. Construction of the First and Second Stages of Başak Houses

After the necessary protocol, was signed with the MSB, KİPTAŞ began working on the Stage 1 construction project, which encompassed 3004 housing units in May 1995. After a year later, in July 1996, a second project named Stage 2 was initiated immediately and within the project, a city area similar to the first one with 2304 apartments and social living spaces was constructed. In these two fast-built stages, a living area emerged on approximately 83 hectares of land (KİPTAŞ, 2017). The formation of this area brought about many changes.

The main significance of the Başak Houses was that, for the first time, an Islamic political entity had accomplished a housing supply project. The first two stages, which hosted about 25 thousand people, constituted a center with as many people as an average Anatolian county. Secondly, although the cooperative model was supported by the state, it was criticized by the public since there were countless problems for many years. Though KİPTAŞ' housing model, constituted the first mass housing project constructed by the municipality in Istanbul:

When Başakşehir was first being constructed it was a symbol of the Welfare Party. Our aim here was to solve the housing problem. Back then these flats were not worth much anyway and they were sold off cheap. But it was a first for a municipality to build flats. We started the construction of houses and finished them in a short time. People realized that cooperatives would take 15 to 20 years but ours was finished in a very short time and was of much better quality too (Tanrıverdi, personal interview, June 18, 2016).

So it would serve as a reference point for other mass housing applications constructed in a short period, unlike cooperatives. At the same time, KİPTAŞ's project

provided a certain standard and also allured people with its reasonable prices. Hence, people trusted in KİPTAŞ's credibility in terms of mass housing supply:

At first, my friends bought apartments from Kagithane. Then we looked and realized that it made a lot of money in 1-2 years. By that time the municipality had never built such a flat. Also, people were afraid of the cooperatives and they did not trust the municipality at first. However, we saw that they completed the construction of the apartment and we could take delivery of the flat without delay. Through this the municipality gained the trust of people (Ünlü, personal interview, March 14, 2017).

When KİPTAŞ undertook its first mass housing project, Başak Houses, the creation of an Islamic gated community was not intended. When we look at Erdoğan's claims it is seen that his main objective was to provide affordable housing units for people. So, KİPTAŞ's housing supply model's main goal was to prevent squatter settlements and to supply high quality apartments for people in Istanbul where lack of planned housing constituted a serious urban problem. During the first phase of construction the project was presented as a supply of cheap housing. In Milliyet newspaper, the project was proclaimed as "Tayyip Erdoğan provides housing for the poor" (Milliyet, 1994, p. 7).

Although KİPTAŞ provided high quality apartments at affordable, even cheap prices in first stage of Başak Houses, demand was dramatically low in the first months. The most important reason of low demand was the lack of both social facilities and infrastructure in the region: "Back then this place was a remote area on top of a mountain! We'd wait five minutes and we'd either see one car or none at all. Who would've thought that this place would become like this?" (Kalkan, personal interview, February 2, 2017).

From another point of view, the shortage of demand was striking when we look at the application of residential sales through the Islamists inner network. Although KİPTAŞ had produced affordable housing, people were hesitant since the region had remained untouched in terms housing. Due to lack of transportation networks, the distance to the city center and limited social facilities, people did not want to live in these houses. When KİPTAŞ could not sell all the apartments, the municipality

managers found a practical way to sell them. Owing to the lack of demand at the beginning as it was a remote area far from the center of Istanbul, they resorted to political connections and offered apartments to members of the Welfare Party. Since the Islamist politicians did not want to fail in the project, the party members who could afford the apartments were urged to buy them. The price was also rather cheap, and it was regarded as a good investment. On the other hand, people could not have imagined how Başakşehir would rapidly develop only in a few years:

They told me too when they first started here in Başakşehir. It was rather cheap. In 1994 they were selling flats for 40-50 million there. I did not go. It's a remote place on top of a mountain what would my kids do if I took them there? Nevertheless it was quite cheap too. When they could not sell them they informed the party branches. 10 to Bağcılar, 15 to Beyoğlu etc. And they sold the flats to those who had money. That's how the first people went. Then the municipality ran a bus line through it and made the area more beautiful by working there. People started to go there after that (Kopuz, personal interview, July 4, 2016).

KİPTAŞ's selling strategy resulted in many conservative Muslims moving to Başakşehir, and living in the Başak Houses in the early development stage of the region. This was not a consciously taken decision, and nor did there exist the intention of creating a gated Islamic community. On the other hand, the social interactions among people were a major factor in the formation an Islamic public space in Başakşehir, as people had heard about the first Başak House project through their close friends or family members. Lack of advanced communication technology meant that people were more informed through word of mouth and personal relationships about the construction projects. Since KİPTAŞ was managed by Islamist politicians, mostly Islamist people knew about the Başak Houses and they bought them first:

Before, there would have been a site erected in let's say Levent and we wouldn't have known about it. Communication technology was not this advanced. Before, there were rich building contractors who would do business for the government. They would build something amongst themselves and then rich people would buy places from there. We wouldn't even have heard. When KİPTAŞ built Başak we found out through organization of our party. We knew about it through our own network (Kaya, personal interview, July 10, 2016).

When we look at the first and second stages of Başakşehir, there was no place for pubs or liquor stores in the market place. So, this was one major difference that rendered KİPTAŞ's project more suitable for Islamists. This stark difference can be regarded as an attempt to create an ideal Islamist city. Moreover, it is seen that KİPTAŞ designed a housing supply model around a mosque, school, and market place at the center of the project. This is the typical formation of KİPTAŞ's mass housing projects:

This is a typical feature, go and look at KİPTAŞ's projects today and you will see that all of them have a mosque. On the one hand it is a need. When the Başak houses were first built this place was empty. You need a mosque to go and do your Friday prayer. What a person to do in a place he can't find a mosque? (Tanrıverdi, personal interview, June 18, 2016).

On the other hand, the Başak Houses were very similar to many other mass housing projects which were constructed all across the world in terms of mass housing supply. The project consisted of six to eight storey buildings alongside social facilities, and it was very similar to, for instance Ataköy located in the Bakırköy district of Istanbul. There were mosques also in Ataköy. So, the Başak Houses constituted a typical gated community which was already common in the Istanbul of the 1990s. The important question is how Başakşehir became a specifically Islamic gated community although there was nothing in particular that set it aside from other gated residential compounds. Another key question is what made Başakşehir more Islamic than other mass housing projects such as Ataköy. There are two simple answers for these questions. The first is that the first residents of Başakşehir made the Başak Houses more desirable for Islamist who wished to live in a new form of gated residential compound. The second answer is that the Islamist urban intervention to create Islamic public spaces was successful due to the unique case of Başakşehir that had urbanized under the control of Islamist politicians.



Figure 3.1 Mass Housing Units in Başakşehir (Left) and Ataköy Districts (Right) (Source: Mteyapi.com and Hayrullah Uzuner)

Since the first-comers of the Başak Houses were mostly Islamist people, many other Islamists who had demanded to live in gated residential compounds had opted to move to Başakşehir. Their main concern was to feel more at home by living with like-minded people in terms of religion and ideology:

If a woman in a burqa were to go to Ataköy in the 90's she would've been frowned upon. Muslim families could not be comfortable there. When this place was built Muslim families began to come. We thought that with neighbours like themselves, their children would be comfortable. There are parks for children and it's a safe environment. Many came here for just for this (Yardımcı, personal interview, January 2, 2017).

Especially people who had lived in the city center faced problems such as lack of parking facilities and social facilities. The buildings they lived in were also old and so they wanted to move to new urban areas in which they would not have to face problems they had experienced before. Moreover, apartment prices were dramatically low, hence this also rendered the Başak Houses a profitable investment area. The Islamists were the first to come to the region, and were thus also the most advantaged group, since they were able to benefit from the increasing prices by selling their houses that they had bought for a relatively much cheaper price in the first mass housing projects in Başakşehir:

I bought the apartment for the first time in the 4th Stage. In 2001 I came with my family. I used to live in Sefaköy before. There were parking problems and old buildings. My wife wanted to move out. Then there was no school service bus here for my child, so I sold the place and moved into another apartment again in the 4th Stage. I made money by buying cheap and selling the house for more here (Tezcan, personal interview, March 17, 2017).

Although late-comers were not able to benefit from price increases as much as the first-comers had enjoyed, the desire of making an investment was still a prevalent factor in their decision to buy an apartment:

When I bought the house in 2013, I bought it for 130 thousand liras and spent some more money on it. We were just about to get married so it should be nice and pristine. Now my house would be worth around 350 thousand. It's been a good investment. I knew this place would increase in value when I was buying the house (Ünlü, personal interview, March 14, 2017).

This is because the late-comers had witnessed the rapid urban development in Başakşehir where the first-comers had not had the chance to see it. So, at the beginning, ideology and religion were more deciding factors in the urban development of Başakşehir. Even today, it is expressed in the interviews that residents of the 1st and 2nd Stages feel ideologically close to Islamist ideology. The sale of apartments through the Welfare Party channel in the earlier stages of the project is an important reason why Islamist or religious Muslim people chose to live in Başakşehir in later stages. Thus, well-paid and religious people moved to Başakşehir, which offers a better standard of living compared to the old neighborhoods in the city center and as a result a more religious and Islamist population emerged in the region:

The people who live in the 1st and 2nd stages all own their own homes. Well, probably around 80-90 percent. Of those living in the 4th stage perhaps around 60 percent are home owners the rest pay rent. When they first built the 1st stage they sold them through references. Let's say the family are not really devout Muslims then they find an excuse and don't sell them the house. Probably around half of the 4th stage are like this too. But with the places that were built later on, there was a lot of demand so they did not care who got the houses and just started to give them through a lottery system (Kopuz, personal interview, July 4, 2016).

Although Islamists felt comfortable in Başakşehir, the emergence of an Islamic gated community had a reverse effect on people who were not Islamists. For instance, Alevite or non-religious people did not feel comfortable in Başakşehir, as it did not cater to their way of life. They could not find stores to buy alcohol. So, insisting on an Islamic way of life did not make non-Islamist or non-religious people feel welcome:

We have a neighbour here (referring to their place of business) the store across from here is his. They are an Alevite family that used to live in Halkalı.

They came here but they could only stand it for a year and then they went back. They couldn't make it here. Just as we couldn't make it in Ataköy they couldn't make it here. There's no one harassing them or anything but people feel lonely and just can't feel comfortable (Ünlü, personal interview, March 14, 2017).

People had moved to Başakşehir, not only because of identity issue but also certain rational factors. People had wanted to live in a clean and comfortable urban areas in which social facilities were located. Moreover, buying an apartment in Başakşehir was seen as a good investment because people had predicted a price increase. So, there were many different factors which affected people in terms of deciding live in Başakşehir.

3.3. Reasons to Move to Başakşehir

People who moved to Başakşehir had various motivations in doing so. Nurullah Gündüz conducted a research in the fourth and fifth stages of the Başak Houses to understand residents' motives to move to Başakşehir. According to his findings, 78 percent of residents had lived in Istanbul for more than 20 years (Gündüz, 2015, p. 471). Half of them claimed that they moved due to of lack of infrastructure and social facilities in their previous area of residence. More than half had chosen Başakşehir as it was safe, planned, clean, and had a family-friendly environment (Gündüz, 2015: 472). Ayşe Çavdar has also pointed that people opted for Başakşehir due to hopes of privacy in a planned and secure environment. She claimed that investment was also another motive to buy an apartment in Başakşehir (Çavdar, 2011: 138-139).

Proximity to work was also another significant incentive we encountered, for people to opt for a life in Başakşehir. The fact that the mass housing project was built around the İkitelli Industrial Estate, in other words, the fact that it was located in an area of commercial importance meant that regular daily activities would also take place in this area. Thus people who worked near this area decided to move into the housing estates in Başakşehir:

I bought a house here because it is close to my work place. Now that my son is born the house is too small for us and we want to move to a bigger house. I'll look around here for one. The traffic in İstanbul drives a person mad. There

was a time when I closed the store here and opened up a store in Aksaray with my father. Of course it's close to my father. Going and coming every day, I didn't really use my car. As soon as I got on the subway I was in Aksaray. Here is good in terms of that too. I mean it has a subway and a bus line. Then I returned to my store here. It's good to be close to work (Tezcan, personal interview, March 17, 2017).

In my interviews, it is seen that the main deciding actor for moving families was mostly women. While women wanted to move to the Başak Houses due to the demand of attaining a higher standard of living, their husbands were also concerned their wives did not feel comfortable and safe in other mass housing projects. People felt a sense of security in knowing that their neighbors were Islamists or pious Muslim people: "Before I got married I was in Fatih but here is better for my wife and child. The people are more decent. So, I am happy with my neighbors. Most of them are religious like us, so my wife does not feel uncomfortable" (Yardımcı, personal interview, January 2, 2017).

When walking down the streets of Başakşehir, the fact that most of the women we see wear headscarves is one of the things that strikes us first. This situation alone is significant as it reflects the Islamic symbolism in Başakşehir. On the other hand, when we look at the lives of women with headscarves in Başakşehir it can be gleaned that they feel more comfortable due to this situation:

Not everyone knows each other here. But everyone feels familiar. I mean if you go outside and look around you will see that it is all the same type of people. I do not know, if you went to Bahçeşehir you would encounter different types of people. But here people usually wear headscarves and they have families. You feel more safety this way (Ergüven, personal interview, April 12, 2017).

In addition to feeling safe, another important point is that women consider living in Başakşehir as an indication of modernity. The women who lived in the old neighborhoods of Istanbul used to describe Başakşehir as a modern living center and thought that living there implied that they held a higher status:

We used to live in Esenler. You can adorn your home with as many high-tech machines as you want but when you come into the neighborhood and you see all the buildings on top of each other and all the concrete, it's quite depressing. If you say that you live in Esenler you can feel the change in how

people look at you. It's almost as though they pity you. Başakşehir is not like Esenler it's a modern area. Here people live comfortably, it's a nice place. When we first came here it was as though we had entered a new world and we were finally able to breathe (Ergüven, personal interview, April 12, 2017).

3.4. Neighbor Relations in Başakşehir

According to Gündüz's findings, while a quarter of people get together with all their neighbors, the other quarter prefer to do so only with a few of their neighbors. Half of them claimed that they do not know their neighbors really well. When it comes to the type of socialization, 70 percent of people preferred to gather with their neighbors in their homes. Tea parties, religious meetings and social meetings organized by non-governmental organizations were found to be the main means of social interaction between neighbors (Gündüz, 2015, p. 474-475).

The Başak Houses provide people with a degree of privacy they could not have in a neighborhood setting, hence this also renders it an area people would prefer to live in. In a neighborhood setting people know each other considerably well and can easily follow up on what each person is up to. This results in people feeling under pressure due to the reactions of other people and not having a sense of freedom. However, this is not the case in the Başak Houses, since it is a mass housing project that is home to thousands of people are living together.

The best neighbor is one who does not disturb you. You know how there are curious old women in neighborhoods. They sit by the window and look to see who is coming and going. Then they sit with their peers and gossip. Saying things like: So and so's daughter is like this and so and so's son is like this. But these women don't exist here. Of course there's gossip everywhere but there is nothing that would bother you. What's important is to live in peace without drawing anyone's attention (Hasgüler, personal interview, April 17, 2017).

Another example: In the study Ayşe Çavdar conducted, an interviewee stated that he made a lot of money and bought himself a luxurious Mercedes in his younger days while he was living in Fatih. But he felt excluded in his neighborhood as the only owner of such a luxurious car in his neighborhood. Furthermore, people would sit on his car because it drew attention and this would disturb this person. Feeling excluded and the disturbances finally urged him to move. This person stated that he felt happy

in Başakşehir and that neither him nor his car were the object of anyone's interest here (Çavdar, 2011, p. 148-149). So, moving Başakşehir from Fatih was also an upward social mobility for people.

3.5. The Symbolism in the Naming of Başakşehir's Spaces

As Islamist politicians made use of Islamic symbolism in the public spaces of Istanbul, they also acted in a similar manner with regard to the urbanization process of Başakşehir. Several different mosques, streets and facility buildings were given names bearing Islamic symbolism. So, it is highly common to see the names of many prominent people who were important in Islamist tradition gracing signposts in Başakşehir.

When we look at mosques that were built by KİPTAŞ in Başakşehir, it is seen that their names were selected from among the names of Muslim religious leaders. For example, a huge mosque located in the fifth stage of the Başak Houses was named after İmam-ı Azam, the leader of the Hanefi school of Islamic Law which is followed by the majority of Sunni people in Turkey. Another example is the Yesevi Mosque. Ahmet Yesevi is known as one of the prominent religious leaders endeavored to spread Islam across Anatolia in spite of the fact that he lived in Central Asia. Then there is, the Bilal-i Habeşi Mosque that was named after the first person to recite the adhan in Islamic tradition. There are also mosques which were named after the leaders of modern religious groups' such as Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, the leader of the Süleymancı movement, and Mehmet Zahit Kotku of whom Necmettin Erbakan was also a follower.

Streets and schools were also named in line with Islamic symbolism. Names of state officials, poets, academics, politicians and historical heroes of Islamic tradition were given to places. Celaleddin Rumi, Necmettin Erbakan, Cahit Zarifoğlu, Nurettin Topçu, Ahmet Kabaklı, Sabahattin Zaim are just some examples of the names given to public places. On the other hand, the names of people who represented the Kemalist ideology were not used in Başakşehir. Thus, the representation of an Islamic city was undergirded by the names of public spaces in the area.

In time, Başakşehir became associated with the Islamist Welfare Party. Başakşehir is mentioned as “The Welfare Party’s Bahçeşehir” in newspaper articles (Milliyet, 1996, p. 13). So, Başakşehir was not only regarded as a modern form of housing supply like Ataköy and Bahçeşehir but also as housing supply model of political Islam. In other words, the Başak Houses served as a means of making the Islamic life style visible in the public sphere.

3.6. The New Lifestyle of the Islamist Upper-Middle Class

While the houses being built in the first stage of the Başak houses mostly catered to low and middle income levels, housing projects that catered to the upper-middle class were developed after the fifth stage and onwards. Hence, Muslim families with higher levels of income began to move to the area. The housing projects of this period were of “gated community” standards with walls around them and private security. It is observed that the changes the housing projects underwent also brought about changes in life styles:

KİPTAŞ carries out countless projects and requires financing. It also has the status of a private company. It aims to make profits of course. Now there are plenty of projects everywhere. These cater to the upper crust. Those who earn a good salary are going to live in good houses. They will not go and move into a tiny house. It’ll have a suite bathroom, that would’ve been a luxury before. Look at Metrokent there are apartments that cater to every income level (Çağan, personal interview, May 12, 2016).

The fact that Muslims who were becoming wealthier began to drive luxurious cars and pay more attention to fashion and appearances transformed the representation of the upper-middle class Muslims. The religious people residing in Başakşehir were aware of the changing perception of upper-middle class Muslims:

If you look now, young girls with headscarves are getting all dolled up and are wearing fancy clothes. They drive cars. It wasn’t like this before. I don’t know, the burqa and the headscarf have diminished. Perhaps the world is a worse place. I mean there are a lot of Muslims but once they become wealthy their lives change too. There are people like that here too among the neighbors who came before to the 1st stage. As people earn more money people want better things. It’s only human to do so (Hasgüler, personal interview, April 17, 2017).

There are those who believe that this transformation will effect piety as well. There are residents of Başakşehir who state that piety consists of the most basic forms of worship such as namaz, but they say that they have observed that the number of those who pray five times a day is diminishing despite the growing number of mosques. They say that there are still festivities and Street iftars (breaking of fast) held especially in the month of Ramadan, but that eventhough people join these types of rituals they are not as religious as they once were:

There are festivities during Ramadan and we go out with the kids. There are festivities in Sultanahmet as well, I used to go there but now it's too far. The municipality organizes street iftars too. These are nice things. And people are interested in them too. But look at the mosques when it's time for teravih (Ramadan prayer) there are at most two lines of people. They seem religious but the mosques are empty (Kalkan, personal interview, February 2, 2017).

Another point to mention is how the move of wealthier Muslims to Başakşehir has prompted parents who give importance to the religious and moral education of their child to seek out private schools for their children. This incentivized private schools close to religious groups to open schools in Başakşehir. The private schools in the fifth stage that were opened by the Ensar Foundation and Burc College that was run by members of the Gulen community are a prime example of the "gated community" formed at this period in terms of changing life styles. These schools were institutions set up by foundations that serve within the framework of Islamist-religious ideology.

These organizations targeted wealthy religious groups in Başakşehir. Wealthy religious families residing in this area wanted neighbors from the same religious background as themselves and to send their children to school with kids from similar families. These private schools also provided high-quality education opportunities (Demir, Acar, & Toprak, 2004, p. 171-175).

On the other hand, the opening of private schools constituted a fine example of the involvement of the rich Islamist businessmen in the field of education. This tendency, which has increased in recent years, is not only a profit-oriented initiative but has also been handled as a social responsibility project:

We make money from construction work. Praise God our businesses are doing well. Some of us take this money abroad. We had a brother like this who played around with millions of dollars. We spoke after the failed 15th of July coup attempt and he said he had moved his money abroad. So he leaves as much money as he needs here to do business and ensures that the rest is safe. We made our fortunes here so we think that we owe our country. We opened a school with a few friends. We have set them up in Başakşehir as the ... Schools for now. There is a huge gap in education so we invested in this area. It does not concern me that others have taken their money abroad (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

Parents, who do not want to send their children to public schools or who want their children to receive religious education within the National Education Curriculum in schools, have especially opted for such private schools. These schools have been preferred since they have satisfied their needs:

Our neighbor sends her youngest daughter to a private school. It's close to home and it is run by trustworthy people. They are highly attentive and they teach her religious and moral values. She also receives a better education than she would have at a public school. Nowadays people splurge tons of money on schools. We are thinking of sending our son to a private school when he's older. Our child is our future and we would want him to be raised in the best way possible (Hasgüler, personal interview, April 17, 2017).

Alongside private schools, preacher schools (imam hatip) have also become wide spread in Başakşehir. There are 12 preacher schools located in the areas of the district which were built by KİPTAŞ and TOKİ. Among these schools is Turkey's largest preacher school Mehmet Emin Saraç Anatolian Preacher School. This school also stands out, as it is ranked as Turkey's fourth most successful school in the high-school entrance exams.

With the emergence of new demands due to improving living standards, KİPTAŞ began to give importance to social areas within its mass housing projects. One of the most significant examples of this is, a large social area called "Sular Vadisi" (Valley of Waters) that was built in the valley between the fourth and fifth stages. Sular Vadisi is comprised of walkways, sports fields and social facilities. This project aimed to add to the appeal of the area and enhance the living quality of the residents (KİPTAŞ, 2017).

Upon close inspection of the housing practice in Başakşehir in its nascent years, it is seen that this city space where the mass housing constructed by KİPTAŞ is located, is regarded as a space through which Islamist politicians can represent themselves in the public space. Henri Lefebvre asserts that “social space is a social product” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26). Additionally, he states that “every society and mode of production with its sub-variants produces a space, its own space” (Lefebvre, 1977, p. 31). Therefore, Islamist politicians have intended to represent Başakşehir as an Islamic gated community, through their discourse and use of Islamic symbolism.

Although it may have started off as the attempt of a party aiming to create cheap and good quality houses in order to gain more votes, it transformed into an Islamic gated community project once the first houses were sold to people within the Islamists network. Through the effective use of Islamic symbolism throughout Başakşehir, a district that was not so different from other mass housing projects, the district became a city area symbolizing Islamism. Therefore we can see that along with Islamic symbolism the construction of an urban identity was also influential during the first stages of Başakşehir’s urbanization.

Interpreting this identity construction merely as gaining votes or using Islamic symbolism would fall short. As Lefebvre states changing life will change society too and it is not possible to make this change without constructing a new space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 59). What the Welfare Part did during that period can be interpreted as creating a new social space in order to realize the new order, which is in line with Islamist policies, that it mentioned on several occasions. This can be seen when we look at the Islamist administrators statements provided above, especially during the time when KİPTAŞ was carrying out its first projects. On the other hand, the question of whether they were successful or not is open to debate. This issue will be dealt with again when talking about TOKİ and its projects in later sections of the thesis. We shall continue on with the urbanization process of Başakşehir.

When KİPTAŞ implemented its first housing projects, the seed of Başakşehir was sown. Although the first two stages of KİPTAŞ had an average district size and

constituted the core of Başakşehir, it only occupied a small area in a metropolis like Istanbul where millions of people live. However, the essential function of these projects has been to increase peoples' interest in the region as well as the demand for projects to be built by KİPTAŞ. The rising demand and interest in these projects rendered them more popular in Başakşehir which is located within the growth axis of Istanbul which is a city suffering from significant housing shortage and a highly dense population. On the other hand, in Başakşehir, there were also squatter settlements inhabited by people working in the industrial zone of the area. So, the state took action against squatter dwellings in line with the Seventh Development Plan and this paved the way for the Onurkent Mass Housing Area.

3.7. Onurkent Mass Housing Area

After the political crisis in February 1997, the Islamist Welfare Party was overthrown. The political crisis also hampered negotiations between KİPTAŞ and the Ministry of National Defense (MSB) regarding Stage 3 of the Başak Houses. Then, on 16 October 1997, a protocol was signed between the Küçükçekmece Municipality and the MSB and as a result the area that Stage 3 was to be constructed on was transferred to the district municipality. With this agreement, the Küçükçekmece Municipality took over 750 hectares to be allocated for cooperatives in return for service provision. 5192 houses were built in this area, comprising 142 blocks and 104 cooperatives. This area was then called Onurkent and the houses built in the area were of less quality and cost compared to those built by KİPTAŞ. Hence, people from low-income levels preferred these houses.

The construction of Onurkent was, in a sense, aimed at supporting the mass housing projects targeted in the Seventh Development Plan. Nurettin Şen was the Küçükçekmece Mayor from the Democratic Left Party during the allocation of Onurkent. The agreement signed with the MSB in October coincided with highly turbulent political developments. In June 1997, the Islamist Welfare Party, led by Necmettin Erbakan, was overthrown in a process called the post-modern coup and Islamic activities were put under pressure (Yılmaz, 2012, p. 374-376). In such a process, a new concept was created called the third stage of Başakşehir which largely

differed from the first two stages. Furthermore, the land on which Onurkent rests on today was assigned to the Union of Onurkent Cooperatives, where 104 cooperatives came together.

In this urban area, the residences differ from typical KİPTAŞ residences. The area of Onurkent is about eight times the size of the area where the first two stages were built. Cooperatives in this region, that are located further to the north, continued their construction work within themselves and every cooperative tried to form its own managerial board as well as collect dues from its members and finance their construction: “Cooperatives established their own managerial boards and began construction work. As there were those who came together based on their professions such as judges, lawyers and engineers, there were also cooperatives comprised of workers and villagers like us” (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

As a supreme organization concerning all these cooperatives, the Onurkent Building Societies Association (ÜST BİRLİK) was been established, and the general coordination began to be organized by the ÜST BİRLİK. During these years, the Welfare Party was banned, and then Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was dismissed from İBB mayorship and was sent to the prison for four months in 1999. This political atmosphere hindered the effectiveness of KİPTAŞ. Nevertheless, KİPTAŞ completed the Fourth Stage of the Başak Houses while Ali Müfit Gürtuna took on mayorship in Istanbul. At that time, construction activities continued in Onurkent.

Since Onurkent was given to cooperatives by the municipality of the Democratic Left Party, religious life did not come to the forefront like it had in Başakşehir. In fact, this can be regarded as a reaction to Islamist politicians and the KİPTAŞ housing projects that they ordered, during the February 28 process. It was stated in the interviews held that the first members of the cooperative were mostly Alevites or non-Islamists:

When Onurkent was first given to the cooperatives there were a lot of Alevite citizens here. In that respect here is very different from the Başak Houses. But most could not complete the construction of their buildings. After 2004, the AKP municipality gave them hassle. Finally, they went and gave their

places to Fuzul Construction and it completed most of the buildings (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

Onurkent also displays a different characteristic from the houses built by KİPTAŞ through the problems experienced in the cooperatives and during the construction of the houses over several years. Buildings over ten years old, as well as the ongoing cases due to problems with contractors, and the low quality of the buildings, have challenged homeowners and caused various problems. Due to the changes made in the plans, there were severe repercussions and troubles in resettlement. Issues that came up following the acquisition of title deeds, as well as the difficulties engendered by deed restrictions, were partially resolved when the region entered into the jurisdiction of the Başakşehir Municipality and through the initiatives of this administration: “The story here has not come to an end. Eventhough the buildings were finished, we couldn’t get planning permission and problems occurred. In 2009 Mevlüt Uysal from the AKP was elected as mayor. He came and said that this is our debt to you, we will resolve the title deed problem. And it was resolved” (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

The debt problems of the cooperatives, which are still not liquidated, and the continuation of the cases are significant problems of the housing owners: “Some cooperatives are drowning in debt, some couldn’t get settlement. The houses were of poor quality. There have been a lot of complications here. And these problems continue to persist” (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

All these problems affect the housing prices in the region and distinguish Onurkent from Başak Houses. However, after the removal of long-standing deed restrictions, loans could be obtained for the purchase and sale of the houses, and the prices of the apartments doubled in only one month. The low quality of materials and administrative deficiencies reduced the desirability of the apartments in Onurkent compared to the apartments built by KİPTAŞ. Thus, Onurkent became one of the residential areas preferred by groups with relatively low-income levels in Başakşehir:

The long standing deed restrictions have been removed and the banks have started to give credit for the houses here. Prices doubled in 1-2 months. So

they're worth their actual value now. But the demand for this area will still be a lot less, while the Başak Houses are here. They are of much higher quality. Mostly people with low incomes would consider here (Görgülü, personal interview, December 12, 2016).

3.8. The Gölcük and Düzce Earthquakes in 1999

On August 17, 1999, one of the biggest earthquakes in Turkish history was experienced. The Gölcük earthquake with a magnitude of 7.4 caused severe damage in several parts of Istanbul. The earthquakes had many ramifications for the building sector. First, people moved out of damaged old buildings in the city center and opted for new buildings that they believed to be safer. Secondly, the interest in areas that hadn't yet been urbanized around Istanbul grew (Orhan, 2015, p. 698-700). So, the demand for housing increased in Başakşehir in the aftermath of the earthquake. The fact that the area had not suffered severe damage during the earthquake resulted in house prices to soar alongside the interest in the region (Şahin Malkoç, 2014, p. 176).

The Gölcük and Düzce Earthquakes in 1999 altered the public opinion on the construction sector, and led to several measures that aimed to ensure the resistance of buildings. New criteria for buildings were put in place, making it necessary to build apartments with high resistance capacity against earthquakes (Orhan, 2015, p. 696). Since, countless buildings were destroyed during the earthquake, people lost their trust in contractors, and turned to mass housing projects. This situation paved the way for the rise of new mass housing projects in Başakşehir.

3.9. Eighth Development Plan

By 2000, Turkey was in tremendous turbulence both in terms of the political atmosphere and economic conditions. The Eighth Development Plan that covered the years 2001-2005 was also announced in 2000. Upon scrutinizing the urbanization and infrastructure chapters in this text defining the general strategy of the government, the influence of great earthquakes that took place in 1999 is evident. In the document in which these quakes are examined, it is stated that urbanization will continue and illegal construction shall increase as the state cannot build adequate and planned housing. It is exclaimed that the analysis of the available data cannot be carried out

due to lack of personnel and technical information. The text also underlines that the state should focus on financing housing and developing planned urban areas (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2000).

One of the most important parts of the text, which states that there is a need for over 3 million housing units to be built in the aftermath of the great catastrophe, emphasizes that necessary arrangements for housing financing should be made. The text, in the anticipation of the necessary regulations for banks to finance the housing deficit, provides tips for the mass construction projects in Turkey.

Another critical section of the Eighth Development Plan was transportation. In this part, it was stated that not only the road networks; but also, sea routes and railway transportation networks should be developed. The plan also includes a separate section for architecture, engineering, and the construction sectors. Besides, it was demonstrated that Turkey came in 10th place in these sectors and hence should be supported. It was highlighted that these fields should be supported to provide residential accommodation after the earthquake that occurred on 17 August 1999 with the help of these sectors. Therefore they should be encouraged to provide services via trained personnel and should be on a par with EU standards. Furthermore, the significance of digitalization and data collection in the field of Land Registry and Cadaster was emphasized. It is also explained that the landholding operations required could be carried out easily and that these steps would tackle illegal structures.

In sum, the Eighth Development Plan foresaw that this need would be met through illegal structures if the government could not provide housing by adopting necessary measures. The plan suggested that this issue would engender inequality, security issues, and environmental problems. To prevent this, it was proclaimed that the production of land, financing, and the taking steps to ensure good quality and planned living spaces were among the duties of the government. In this process, support for engineering, architecture and the construction businesses and the data collection processes were regarded to be of vital important. While all these steps

were taken, the aim was to extend the authority and responsibilities of the local administrations so they could take initiative to accelerate the regulative processes.

3.10. The Economic Crisis of 2000 and 2001

The 1999 Marmara earthquake hit the regions where the economic activities of Turkey were mostly concentrated and the devastating destruction of these areas took its toll on the economy. The three-year standby agreement with the IMF in 1999 was not sufficient, and inflation continued to rise rapidly. This agreement reduced the value of Turkish lira and increased the current deficit. Furthermore, the withdrawal of foreign investors was added to this and liquidity problems were experienced. As a result, overnight interest rates rose remarkably. On February 19, 2001, the debate between Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and President Ahmet Necdet Sezer took place during the National Security Council meeting, was a turning point. After the meeting, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's statement "There is a crisis in the administration of the state" triggered the biggest economic crisis in Turkey's history (Çakmak, 2007, p. 88-89).

This crisis was followed by a floating exchange rate policy and a devaluation of around 50 percent within a day. As a result, many companies went bankrupt, and a severe unemployment issue broke out (Akyüz & Boratav, 2003, p. 1556-1559). The social problems caused by the economic crisis led to a great political change in the November 2002 elections (Çarkoğlu, 2002, p. 131-132). For the first time in many years, a bipartisan parliament was formed, and the Justice and Development Party, which came from the National Outlook tradition, entered the election under the leadership of Abdullah Gül and came to power alone. After a few months, Abdullah Gül left his place to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan whose political ban had been lifted in the parliament and so began a leadership that would last for many years (Müftüler-Baç, 2004, p. 424).

During the crisis period, the immense increase in inflation and the economic recession also hit investments in the building sector. Throughout the financial crisis, there were dramatic changes in macroeconomic indicators and this resulted in the

downsizing of the construction industry (Bekmez & Özpolat, 2013, p. 173-175). Foreseeable long-term market conditions were important in terms of credits to buy housing. However, the political and economic crises prevented all of these. High-interest rates were also blocking new investments. Overall the economic conditions obstructed the building industry.

Despite the negative trends in macroeconomic indicators, it is observed that the urbanization activities in Başakşehir continued. The fact that the first and second parts of the fourth stage of Başakşehir as a KİPTAŞ project, which began in 2000, was completed without any problems in sales, should be analyzed as a unique example. Başakşehir was considered as a region which was less influenced by the economic crisis:

Prices here haven't dropped at all. It's been 20 years since I got here and the market is always moving. But lately things are a little more stagnant. Prices increased once with the earthquake and again when the Syrians arrived. They had probably doubled with the earthquake. People started moving here when they saw that the buildings here were still standing strong. There were no cracks or anything (Görgülü, personal interview, December 12, 2016).

This fact can be linked to the search for safe buildings after the 1999 earthquake, the demand for mass housing and the success of the previous projects of KİPTAŞ.

3.11. The AKP's Electoral Declaration of 2002 and the 58th Government Program

When the AKP's 2002 Election Declaration is examined, it is seen that the economy occupies a large part of it due to the economic crisis conditions in the country. It is noteworthy that the primary objective of the privatization and export-oriented program was to rein in the inflation and interest rates to reasonable levels. However, although there was a separate part reserved for the transportation issue, it was stated that the construction sector would only be given one paragraph, and the housing need was not even mentioned in the text (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2002).

This government was a government which was established by Abdullah Gul, as Erdoğan's ban prevented him from participating in the elections, and would only have a life of four months. Despite this, many areas began to flourish and obtained

concrete gains in European policy negotiations, especially in foreign policy (Demiral, 2015, p. 52-54). Four months later, in the task change, Abdullah Gül became Minister of Foreign Affairs and continued his work within his own field (Demiral, 2015, p. 59).

3.12. Erdogan's Prime Ministry and the 59th Government Program

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who could not be a deputy since he was banned in the November 2002 elections, became prime minister and consequently the leader of the Justice and Development Party in March 2003, with a regulation that was issued a few months later and the renewal of elections in Siirt. Thus, from March 14, 2003, until August 29, 2007, the first Erdoğan government began its activities (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2007, p. 26-27).

Since the 58th Government Program announced by Abdullah Gül had passed four months, it was stated in the 59th Government Program announced by Erdoğan that this reassignment would not change the government agenda (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2003). However, when you examine these two programs, there is a noteworthy important difference. In the case of Erdoğan's government program, it is pointed out that the weight was to be given to housing and contracting businesses, eventhough it was not included in the previous program or the 2002 election declaration:

A large portion of the activities in the process of the opening up national income, employment and the economy, are carried out by the service sector. Hence, in this regard, domestic and foreign trade, internal and external contracting services, tourism as well as domestic and foreign shipping is of vital importance. There shall be practices and regulations to increase the economic contributions of these sectors, within the framework of economic principles (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2003).

In the 59th Government Program, Erdoğan's reading of "Making cities into livable spaces one of the top priorities of our government" is a sign of the significant construction moves to be undertaken during this administration period:

The type of cities that a country produces determine the quality of the administration and the state of society within the circle of civilization. Hence, the issue of urbanization and housing has meaning that stretches far beyond

its technical content. One of our government's main priorities shall be to transform cities into livable spaces by preventing unhealthy and unpleasant urbanization. Cheap housing shall be provided for those that live in squatter dwellings. Through long term programs, necessary steps shall be taken to make cities livable, healthy and beautiful; and to solve problems relating to transportation and infrastructure" (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2003).

It is evident that one of the steps taken by the Erdoğan government was to give priority to the construction sector. David Harvey talks about how construction work is used for rapid recovery after financial crises and explains how this succeeded in New York and Paris. Since the construction sector employs many of its subsidiaries and therefore, it is instrumental in exiting from the recessions (Harvey, 2012, p. 7-12). From this point of view, giving weight to the construction sector appears to be a viable solution for a Turkey that is recovering from an economic crisis.

CHAPTER 4
THE INFLUENCE OF URBAN MARKET POLITICS: THE RAPID URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OF BAŞAKŞEHİR: 2004-2017

4.1. How and Why Cities Develop?

It will be useful to know why and how a city has developed to comprehend the formation of Başakşehir. It would be an incomplete approach indeed to deal with the emergence of Başakşehir merely on its own. In fact, Başakşehir, which is located in the center as a result of Istanbul's development, was considered as one of the growth areas nearest to the heart of the city, in the vicinity of the center. Urbanization started here with the preparation of zoning plans. To thoroughly understand this process, we will briefly discuss urban growth models and the real estate project appraisal process. This discussion will give us an idea of how the demand for the region is formed. Now we will first talk about rent theory, and then we will look at factors that affect real estate prices.

4.1.1. The Concept of Land Rent and the Value of Land

Land is a scarce source and the first necessity of construction projects. So, while companies are building construction projects concurrently the scarcity of land becomes a major issue in a neighborhood, as the scarcity problem leads to the escalation of property prices. In this sense, land rent is one of the key components which render real estate investments profitable for investors.

Economic rent is simply any benefit gained from non-produced inputs. As a non-produced factor, land provides an opportunity to acquire rent profit for owners. Land rent is firstly mentioned by David Ricardo who based his theory, the law of rent, on agricultural production. According to Ricardo, land value depends on its productivity, proximity to the market, and the cost of its output. He asserts that land is not equal regarding fertility and profitability. Hence, distinctive land features cause disparate rent values (Lackman, 1976, p. 291-293). Ricardo coined the difference between distinct lands' values as "differential rent" and claimed that the main cause of this is

the problem of land scarcity. He states that people need agricultural goods to survive, hence they move to the most productive lands to cultivate them. However, since fertile lands are scarce, as the population escalates people have to move to less productive lands. Thus, the discrepancies between the qualities of land people have moved to lead to differential rent (Thrall, 2002, p. 61-62).

In addition to differential rent, Marx coined the term “absolute ground rent” to define the owners’ monopolized right of access to land. According to him, private property engenders the monopolization of access to land for land owners. The Monopoly right on land adds extra value on the land since there is only limited land to use (Ramirez, 2009, p. 72-75).

The formation of urban land rent is based on a rather similar logic to that of classical land rent. The Bid Rent Theory is instrumental in explaining how real estate prices are shaped through geographical features in an urban area. According to the bid rent theory, the most accessible area is usually the most expensive one and this area becomes the core of the city which is then named as the central business district (CBD) in theory. Then, the city expands from the inner core to the outer skirts of the city according to people’s needs (Alonso, 1960, p. 156-158).

According to the theory delineated above, land prices tend to increase as they get closer to the city center due to the lack of available land suitable for construction in urban centers. So, it is possible to make lucrative profits solely from high-rise construction projects, but these projects only require as many financial resources as the numbered company can attempt. On the other hand, it is possible to make significant profits in vacant places that have not yet been urbanized but are close to the city. Since these instruments are relatively cheaper, they are more open to entry. Cheap land also means more affordable housing; which implies that further housing is available for people to buy.

4.1.2. Factors Affecting Real Estate Prices

Since housing prices, as well as land prices, are necessary for investment, we also need to look at the valuations of real estate projects. Scholars argue that several factors are influential in property prices in a neighborhood. Ding and Knaap (2002, p. 721) claim that new construction projects, higher numbers of households, and more people working in the service sector are all factors that lead to increasing prices of real estates. Simons et al. (1998, p. 158-159) also assert that new construction projects increase the prices of current buildings. When we look at the study of Ding et al. (2000, p. 43-44), there are four main arguments pertaining to real estate pricing. First, new construction projects only influence prices in limited geographical boundaries. Second, new construction projects are even more influential on real estate prices than renovation projects. Third, new construction and renovation projects have positive impacts on real estate prices in the neighborhood. Fourth, the effect of small scale construction projects on prices is negligible.

Mass housing projects usually increase real estate prices. Nourse (Nourse, 1963, p. 440-441) studies the effect of congregate housing projects on existing houses, and the research results indicate that this kind of project increases prices in a neighborhood. Rabiega et al. (1984, p. 179) conducted a study similar to Nourse's research, and they assert that congregate housing projects increase the values of current buildings. Chandler et al. (1993, p. 31-32) also found similar results, and they claim that the renovation of the existing congregate houses also influences the prices positively.

The quality of materials used in construction, the beauty of the landscape, aesthetic quality of projects, location, inhabitants' profile, and environmental issues are other factors which influence real estate prices in a neighborhood. In this sense, constructing new projects and the renovation of current buildings are the two most salient ways to bolster real estate prices in an area. Moreover, profits can be increased via using high-quality materials and creating aesthetically pleasing urban centers which are also close to the city center (Kılıç, 2006, p. 22-24). While prices are rising, only people from the upper economic class can afford to invest in these

projects, so it also escalates prices. According to scholars, this is the best way to garner maximum profits in the real estate sector.

4.2. Changing the Concept of Urbanization in Başakşehir

Being located in the growth area of Istanbul is one of the most important factors in the emergence of Başakşehir as a county of Istanbul. KİPTAŞ has been constructing the area step by step implementing mass housing projects, as it is one of the most advantageous regions in terms of its transportation convenience. The fact that the central government and the local administration took initiative and made the necessary arrangements has paved the way for this process. After this the municipality began to integrate important means of transportation such as the subway. All these developments rendered the area more attractive and hence, resulted in rising house prices and a growing interest of the construction companies due to the profitability. Another development this led to was that people regarded the area as a valuable investment or a desirable home. Another cornerstone in the urbanization of Başakşehir is when major actors such as TOKİ broke into the market and led to a rapid increase in housing based on demand. All in all, today's urbanized Başakşehir is the product of these processes.

Briefly, when we look at Başakşehir in particular, we see that, in 2003, the city was within the boundaries of the northwest settlement and that it still had lands suited for new urban projects. The real estate projects up until 2003 led to a rise in house prices in this region, and bolstered the demand for new projects that were still on the rise. As a result, it is seen that Başakşehir, which was one of the most sought after regions in Istanbul in 2003, had very suitable conditions to accommodate the continuation of urbanization. These conditions generated a rapid process of urbanization once the central government's housing mobilization and the practices of the local administration aligned.

After 2003, with the rule of the Justice and Development Party, we can see that Başakşehir entered a rather dissimilar process regarding urbanization. Unlike the previous period, much larger housing projects were undertaken in this process, and

hence the need for substantial financial resources for these projects arose. In this period, we also see that the central government directly intervened in the housing sector via legal regulations. Major construction projects that were initiated after this time in all of Turkey resulted in significant capital flows and led to the birth of a new capitalist class in Turkey. Although Başakşehir was initially regarded as a housing supply model by political staff from Islamic tradition, it has caused the capital to change hands due to the large housing mobilization initiated in 2003; in this sense, it has been continually urbanizing within the capitalist conditions Harvey underlines.

This section primarily examines the legal arrangements of the central government, the decisions taken by the local administrations, and how these broad urbanization movements have been realized as a result of these decisions.

4.2.1. Legal Arrangements Made by the AKP Government

At the beginning of 2003, the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) became the main locomotive of housing mobilization, which was initiated by the Urgent Action Plan announced by Erdoğan. Following this year, legal arrangements were made firstly about TOKİ and then houses began to swiftly be built all across Turkey. When we look at the subject area of the study in Başakşehir, the project of Kayaşehir, built by TOKİ, is striking. The vast city with 60,000 houses in this area is imperative in demonstrating how effective TOKİ is on urbanization (Uydu Kentler, 2017). Now, let's look at the kind of legal arrangements TOKİ was subjected to, firstly in the previous parties' ruling periods and then in the ruling of the Justice and Development Party.

4.2.1.1. Legal Regulations of Mass Housing

In the aftermath of the 1980 coup, the state prioritized supporting mass housing projects. In this vein, the Law on Mass Housing No 2487 was issued in 1981, and a share was allocated from the budget under the name of Public Housing Fund to meet the housing need. This Law defined the mass housing phenomenon and it is seen that the primary purpose of it is solving the housing problem with significant mass housing projects. In this Law, the aim was to enable families who are not property owners to easily become house owners in exchange for regular payments through cooperatives.

Furthermore, the main target was constructing housing units for lower and middle-income instead of luxury housing projects.

While housing was supported through cooperatives by Law No. 2487, in the 1982 Constitution, there was also an article underlining that the state would support collective housing initiatives. Then, in 1983, by the decree law, the Supreme Board of Mass Housing was established. It seems that the state was gravely disturbed by irregular settlements and the problems they brought about such as an illegal housing market outside of the governments control, escalating crime rates and environmental problems due to lack infrastructure; hence it decided to take concrete steps regarding squatter settlements. In addition to legal steps mentioned above it supported mass housing supply models such as cooperatives, cooperatives supported by local administrations and private construction companies.

When it came to 1984, a second mass housing law numbered 2985 entered into force and the law numbered 2487 was repealed. Again with the No. 2983 Law on the Incentive of Savings and Acceleration of Public Investments, the Public Partnership Fund was established. This fund is attached to the Mass Housing and Public Partnership Administration within the prime ministry; previous deposits were made available for the use of this administration under the name of the Mass Housing Fund. This fund was supported through curtailing the consumption of certain items or spending instead of through the central budget. At the same time, the fund was made available for use in areas such as tourist and sports facilities as well as housing (Resmi Gazete, 1984).

By 1990, by the Decree Laws No. 412 and No. 414, two separate institutions, the Housing Development Administration and the Public Partnership Administration, emerged, and Housing Administration started to become a major actor in the construction sector through the expansion of its competencies. In 2000, the Housing Development Administration, which was authorized for projects related to the clearing of the squatter regions, amelioration and prevention zones, also became the official institution in this field (Resmi Gazete, 2000). In 2001, the Mass Housing Fund

was abolished, and the revenue of the Administration was cut off (Resmi Gazete, 2001). Finally, in March 2002 the competencies of the Housing Development Administration were broadened. In this regard, it obtained a wide array of powers across activities ranging from getting mortgage bank loans, to making disaster housings and from squatter breeding projects to village housing financing (Resmi Gazete, 2002).

When the AKP took office in early 2003, the Housing Development Administration had an extensive area of influence. But it had not sufficiently been made use of by previous governments mostly due to lack of financial resources. The AKP, on the other hand, began to use the Housing Development Administration actively in the mass housing mobilization that it initiated, unlike the previous administrations. The institution which was established to support cooperatives in the prior periods and that was therefore closed to private sector initiatives has now begun to work on a new model under the name of Revenue Sharing Equivalent Land Sales by the AKP (Tekeli, 2009, p. 252-253). In short, the Administration put its properties out to tender and the private entrepreneur who offers the highest bid to the Administration wins the tender. Then, the project is realized by the entrepreneur and the revenue is then shared with the Administration. This revenue is also used as a resource by the Administration to generate more housing projects (Erözgü-Satılmış, 2011, p. 112-113).

At the beginning of 2003, the Erdoğan government declared an Urgent Action Plan aimed at building 500,000 residences throughout Turkey until 2011, and by 2011 it doubled this target (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2011). The Erdoğan government has made many legal arrangements and granted the Housing Development Administration with further power to reach the aim of 500,000 residences. Now let's examine how the Housing Development Administration has been restructured during the period of the Justice and Development Party.

4.2.1.2. The Restructuring of TOKİ in the Early AKP Period

Erdogan's government quickly made legal arrangements to implement the Revenue Sharing Equivalent Land Sales model. These arrangements have rendered TOKİ much more active and have granted it with the necessary power to dominate the housing sector. For instance, in 2001, the state-owned Emlak Bank received a liquidation decision and it had valuable real estates and with the law numbered 4864 issued in 2003, these properties were transferred to the Housing Development Administration. These lands are vitally important in terms of providing the lands for TOKİ to go out to tender for project development.

After the aforementioned transfer of the lands a further competency was granted in July 2003, with the law numbered 4966 and the transfer of public lands to the institution free of charge upon the request of the administration and the approval of the relevant ministers was also made possible. Moreover, the Administration was authorized to establish a company, become a partner with private companies and carry out profit-making activities. This law, in sum, rendered TOKİ a construction company with unlimited land opportunities and enabled it to become a monopoly in the construction sector in Turkey. With the Law No. 4964 issued in the same year, the activities of TOKİ were excluded from the provisions of the Public Procurement Law since it does not require public expenditures and it remained so in 2004. Then, the Revenue Sharing Model was defined and it was explained how it would come into practice by the Sales and Revenue Sharing Tender Regulation of the Housing Development Administration.

After this date, the powers of the Housing Development Administration have continued to be expand. In 2006, the Sale and Revenue Sharing Tender Regulation of the Housing Development Administration was abolished and replaced by the Housing Development Administration Sale, Transfer, Transition, Lease, Barter, Establishing Limited Real Rights and Revenue Sharing Equivalent Land Tender Regulation was put into effect. With this regulation, TOKİ was authorized to rent, exchange and establish an incorporeal right of real estate; and the Revenue Sharing Model's name was changed to the Land Equivalent Revenue Sharing Model.

One of the key features that enabled TOKİ to become the leading actor in the market is its large land capacity. The primary source of this capacity is the closing down of the Urban Land Office with the law no. 5273 and the incorporation of the Emlak Vakıf Investment Partnership Incorporated Company into TOKİ. By this means, TOKİ has achieved such an extensive portfolio of real estate that it can implement and invest in the partnership model.

The vast land owned by TOKİ made the institution a monopoly in the market. On the other hand, the body derives its actual implementation ability from the legal powers that the state grants it. TOKİ, which can act as a market company in this sense, has also been authorized to make expropriation, construction, planning and to take-over, the land within the Ministry of Treasury and the Ministry of Public Works without charge by the laws numbered 5162 and 5609.

To sum up, TOKİ has rapidly been dramatically transformed since 2003 and has become a sovereign monopoly in the market with its new form. The ability to both establish companies and to enter into partnerships with companies; as well as the authority to intervene in the expropriation and construction plans, renders TOKİ a unique example in this sense. The acquisition of the Treasury's lands free of charge grants the institution an endless rent opportunity in the direction of demand. The fact that this institution is attached to the Prime Minister and the possibility of acting in accordance with the political power not only provides the opportunity for construction; but also, the realization of an entire urban area through transportation, infrastructure, finance, etc. opportunities granted by the state power.

All activities carried out by TOKİ are supported by legal legislation and aimed to solve the housing need in Turkey. What is interesting at this point is that the state has partnered with the private sector to become a homebuilder for the first time, and it has done this through an institution equipped with extraordinary powers. The fact that the social housing projects implemented by TOKİ in the course of time have sought to make higher profits with the market conditions, shows that the approach to the initial housing problem has undergone significant change. It has been thought

that TOKİ, by working on an even larger scale, should make more profits so as to implement more projects, and hence its activities are concentrated in this area (Altınok, 2012, p. 142-146).

The Applied Land Sales Equivalent Revenue Model has enabled not only TOKİ to make large profits, but also private construction companies entering into partnerships to do so. When we consider the fact that the number of apartments and the prices of these apartments are increasing rapidly, owing to these projects, we also see that the capital is changing hands on a large scale during the period of the Justice and Development Party (Altınok, 2012, p. 249-254). This flow of money has resulted in the emergence of a new capitalist class in Turkey supporting the AKP. Through the prioritization of the housing and construction sector, the capital has flowed from industrial establishments to construction companies. The increased revenue of construction companies have even affected the market shares of holding companies operating in the Turkish economy (Kaya, Yalçinkaya, & Hüseyini, 2013, p. 155-157).

From this perspective, until the 1994 local elections, Islamists who had been both politically and economically marginalized, created sites with safe social facilities where they could live together with likeminded people. However, following the rule of the Justice and Development Party in 2002, these houses have eventually turned into masses of houses such as the ones built in Kayaşehir. On the other hand, there is a capitalist class shift with a focus on profit at the heart of this transformation. Through combining the profitability and demand of housing, the purpose of constructing more housing resulted in neglecting the social dimensions of urbanization (Karatepe, 2016, p. 56-57).

Nevertheless, when TOKİ's operation is examined, it is also seen that this institution serves as a serious investment for elections. Solving the housing problem which is one of the most fundamental problems of the entire country and the fact that purchased houses become a lucrative investment with high premium in a short period, transform institutional activities into a serious increase in votes for the Justice and the Development Party (Marschall, Aydoğan, & Bulut, 2016, p. 210-211). We

observe that, in the previous times, political investments were in the form of permitting squatter dwellings, then bringing services to the squatter neighborhoods, and giving title deeds to squatters (Marschall, Aydogan, & Bulut, 2016, p. 204-205). In the period of the AKP, it is evident that the government has served as an actor in the field of housing construction and has created homes for its voters through TOKİ. Moreover, TOKİ's activities were welcomed by the electorate and their appreciation returned to the Justice and Development Party in the form of votes.

4.3. The AKP's Local Election Victory of 2004

The local elections held in Turkey in 2004 were the first local election experience of the Justice and Development Party. The Justice and Development Party, formed by members of religious parties that had closed down, was the beginning of a new political movement with an Islamist slant, which gained power due to the municipal government. That's why the first local elections served as a significant test for the AKP.

After the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) was shut down, several mayors were removed from their posts and among them was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Ali Müfit Gürtuna took up the position after him and participated in the Virtue Party (FP), which was initially established in place of the RP. Gürtuna later opted to continue on as an independent mayor upon the closing down of the FP.

Candidates of the newly established AKP won both the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Presidency and the Küçükçekmece and Esenler Municipalities where the mass housing projects in Başakşehir were implemented. This achievement indicates how the AKP successfully united the power of the local government with the central government at the same time. After this period, it was aimed to present a holistic city service in Istanbul and work started towards this target (Sabah, 2004).

4.4. Integration of Urban Services and House Construction

In previous chapters, it was mentioned that during the building of the first stages of KİPTAŞ, the dwellings were in danger of remaining vacant due to lack of infrastructure

and lack of social life. Undoubtedly, the provision of living standards at a certain level affects the demand for housing in a region along with the investment value of that area. With the passing of the local administration to the Justice and Development Party in 2004, an integrated urban service began to be provided to ameliorate living standards.

In this period, the services of buses and minibuses were expanded by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to ensure regular and smoother transportation for people living in Başakşehir and working in other regions. Furthermore, road works were carried out to better the quality of roads and shorten transportation times. However, it must be noted that besides the aforementioned developments and other rapid infrastructure developments, serious effort has also been put into improving the quality of life of people by adopting a more holistic approach regarding social facilities (Çağan, personal interview, May 12, 2016).

KİPTAŞ also has attached great importance to social facilities in the projects it has undertaken. For instance, the extensive bazaar areas in the projects are a fine example of this. In addition to this, it aims to render the projects in the region more attractive also with the Sular Vadisi (Valley of Waters) project and the social facilities in the area (KİPTAŞ, 2017).

In short, with the use of public resources, the projects implemented in the region have been designed holistically in a way that will respond to people's needs. This situation has further bolstered the interest in the area, and this interest has led to the realization of new projects. The most salient step in implementing the holistic urban services concept was the triumph of the local administrations in 2004. Since this date, both the central government and local governments have been ruled by members of the Justice and Development Party. Thus, Başakşehir continued its the process of urbanization under the influence of Erdoğan and his friends, who came from the Welfare Party.

4.5. Onurkent Between 2004-2009

The election of Aziz Yeniay, candidate of the Justice and Development Party, to the Küçükçekmece Municipality Presidency in 2004, also brought about a change in Onurkent. As mentioned before, the Onurkent region would be the third stage project of KİPTAŞ. After the political crisis in February 1997, it was allocated to the Küçükçekmece Municipality, which was ruled by the Democratic Social Party at that time and a cooperatives region was established here. When Aziz Yeniay became the Küçükçekmece District Mayor, this area also came under the control of the AKP.

In 2004, although the construction was largely finished at Onurkent, the municipality had not given the necessary official permits for buildings. The land was transferred to the Municipality of Küçükçekmece to be presented to the cooperatives, but the municipal authority could not make this decision because the previous decisions had been omitted by the previous municipal council. Yeniay became mayor during such a period and became the head of ÜST BİRLİK (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

With Yeniay as the mayor, physical changes were made to Onurkent's settlement plan. For example, infrastructure has been cited as a source of discontent and an area which was allocated to be a green space was changed to a shopping mall, Olimpa AVM (Milli Gazete, 23 November 2013). Moreover, although the obligations of the cooperative members had been terminated, title deeds were not given (Kaya, personal interview, July 10, 2016).

4.6. The Urbanization Process of Başakşehir After 2004: The Market Effect

As a consequence of legal regulations, which started in 2003 and rapidly continued up to mid-2004, the Housing Development Administration became the leading actor in the construction market. Nevertheless, it is observed that Istanbul has been the scene of several public housing projects implemented by KİPTAŞ. In such an environment, Başakşehir became an area of rapid urbanization. The development of this urbanization process somewhat diverged from the previous period. The 5th Stage

and İkitelli Masko Houses were built first, then the Metrokent project was passed on (KİPTAŞ, 2017).

First of all, during this process, constructions have undergone changes in terms of architecture compared to previous projects. Look at housing projects applied in the 1st and 2nd stages, it is observed that structures built had less stories. However, after the 4th stage, the buildings erected began were getting taller and taller and the land was to be used to build even more houses. As a result, projects have expanded, and more houses have been built and sold. Additionally, the increase in demand also impacts the rise in land value. In fact, due to the immense interest in the housing projects which KİPTAŞ undertook, the houses began to be sold through lotteries. Both the confidence in KİPTAŞ projects and the fact that the residences built became profitable investments garnered more interest. This led to the expansion of plans for further housing projects.

Another significant change was the target mass of houses and material-workmanship qualities. When we look at the houses constructed before 2003, we see that the projects are produced with the goal of providing social housing. However, unlike its predecessors that were targeting settlers from lower and middle-income levels, the 5th stage and Metrokent targeted people with higher income levels. In Başakşehir, villa type houses were built through the luxury residence production of KİPTAŞ. While TOKİ strove to provide housing for the lower income level, KİPTAŞ switched to providing housing for the middle and upper-income level group on demand in the market during this period.

4.6.1. The Falling of Inflation and Interest Rates

In the first period of the Justice and Development Party, the economic policies implemented were successful and the interest and inflation rates, which adversely affected the real market, were under control. In the 2001 crisis, the interest rate, which had been around 75-80% per annum, fell to single-digit figures as of 2009 (TCMB, 2017). Again, the inflation rate, which stood at 70-75 percent in 2001, dropped to 5-6 percent in 2009 (TÜİK, 2017).

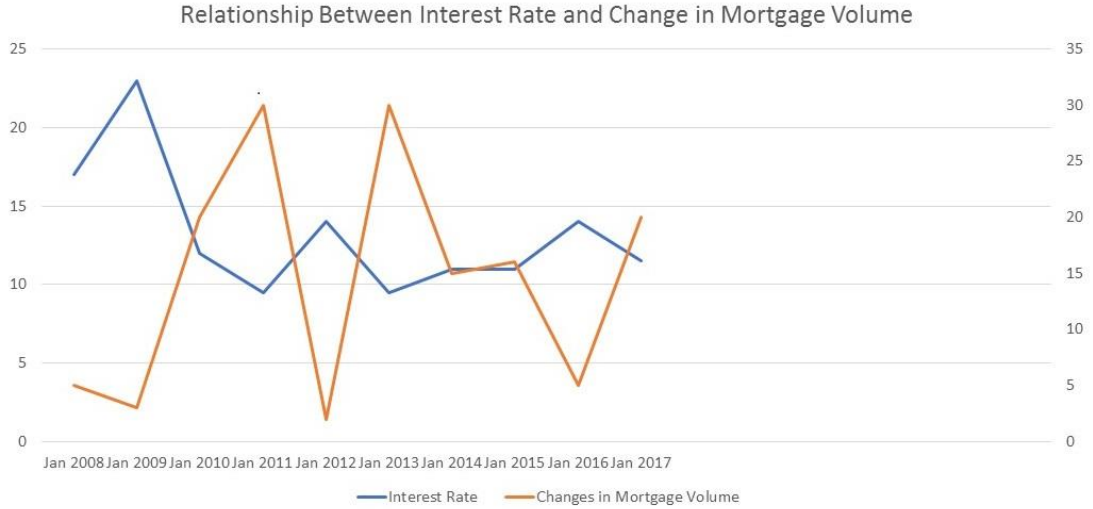


Figure 4.1 Relationship Between Interest Rate and Change in Mortgage Volume (Source: Emlak Konut)

As long-term loans are provided in the housing sector, the most important factor in the movement of the market is long-term predictability and stability. Especially in the 2001 crisis, investments decreased considerably due to extremely high-interest rates and inflation rates. The housing sector was also adversely affected by this situation. The financing problem and low profitability led to the downsizing of the construction field (Özgün, 2010, p. 12). In the AKP period, the amelioration of the general financial state facilitated the breakthrough of the housing sector, and the construction industry was mobilized. Credit interest rates fell sharply, and housing purchases surged in this regard. Furthermore, long-term predictability and stability cleared the way for foreign credit agreements made by banks (Özgün, 2010, p. 147-150).

4.6.2. M3 Başakşehir Line and the Northern Marmara Motorway

When it came to May 2006, the newly established city started to rise to prominence with the houses completed in the region. The increase in population and mobility also piqued the interest of people, hence new housing projects continued to come into the picture. But at this stage, a major problem was drawing attention. Başakşehir had highly challenging conditions especially for people who did not own cars, in terms of transportation to other parts of Istanbul. Although buses and minibuses that the employees in the industry used ran frequently, they had problems both regarding comfort and timing. Traffic, which has become a growing problem with the growing

population and the increased use of cars, was another grievance. In such an environment, the solution was found in the construction of the metro line, which would connect the region with other districts of Istanbul and alleviate traffic. Thus, the line of M3 Başakşehir metro was planned and contracted (Anlağan, 2015, p. 59-60).

Once the line construction that went on until June 2013 was completed, it was linked to important central areas such as Aksaray, Bağcılar, Otogar and the Airport via subway lines. The improvements in transportation also led to a rise in house prices, especially those near subway stations. It was observed that the number of passengers using the new metro line was escalating, as the number of residents in the buildings in Başakşehir increased (Anlağan, 2015, p. 75-83).

One of the steps that resolved the transportation problem of Başakşehir was the Northern Marmara Motorway. This road passing through the northern part of the province is connected to the Anatolian side by the Third Bosphorus Bridge and constitutes the third main artery passing from the north of Istanbul. Hence, again increased transportation opportunities positively impacted prices and enabled new projects (Ayhan, 2011, p. 41).

4.7. The Ninth Development Plan

The Ninth development plan was prepared for a seven-year period complying with the European Union Environmental Programs and was accepted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 28 June 2006. Considering the Ninth Development Plan was developed in this framework, it is evident that the primary vision is about “Turkey, growing in stability, sharing income fairly, becoming a competitive power on a global scale, turning into an information society and completing the process of adaptation for EU membership” (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2006).

The issue of housing has not been addressed in the plan, although many areas such as education, energy, employment, and transportation have been analyzed in detail and targets were specified. In the program, the issue of urbanization was mentioned

merely as a subject matter concerned with the improvement of urban infrastructures. It is possible to conclude that the housing mobilization that the AKP initiated with the Mass Housing Administration, was not a general strategy of the state. In other words, it is understood that TOKİ and the mass housing mobilization projects were models formed by Prime Minister Erdoğan and supported by him, as other state institutions did not endorse Erdoğan's model.

4.8. The AKP's Electoral Declaration of 2007 and 60th Government Program

As a result of the 2007 General Elections, the Justice and Development Party came to power alone, by gaining a higher number of votes than it had in the previous election. Looking at the 60th Government Programme, expressed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the Parliament after he set up the 60th government, it is striking that this speech is a manifesto, presenting both an account and summary of the previous periods' practices as well as announcing the new targets. The housing policy of the party was discussed with the title of "Mass Housing Mobilization" under the section on the Improvement of the Quality of Life.

The Prime Ministry Housing Authority was praised in the 60th Government Program. In the speech, it was stated that 140 thousand houses had been completed along with social facilities, across the past four years and that the construction of the 140.000 TOKİ houses were to be continued. Erdoğan mentioned that the government's rapid housing mobilization in the first period would carry on and that the number of housing built would reach 500 thousand until 2011. The announcement the target of 500.000 houses is a crucial indication that the housing mobilization would continue in the following periods.

Underlining the Mass Housing Administration as an institution establishing modern cities in the 60th Government Program is significant in terms of indicating the importance of TOKİ for the AKP government. The text submits that TOKİ has initiated a rapid and comprehensive urbanization movement that never existed before the period of 2003. Furthermore it emphasizes that citizens have the opportunity to own

their residences as if they were paying rent from a 10 to 20 year period (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2007).

One of the greatest advantages TOKİ offers to citizens, is the chance to become a homeowner in the long run by paying monthly rent. The demand for TOKİ projects is probably closely related to this attractive opportunity. Also, for dwellings built by TOKİ, loans could be received from state banks at a more appealing rate compared to other banks. Since a less amount is paid; institutional projects become more attractive, and hence demand increases.

4.9. Local Elections of 2009

Until 2009 the mass housing zones, the subject of this thesis, were included in Küçükçekmece and Esenler district borders. However, after thousands of houses were moved into, the population of this area sky rocketed. This case considerably bolstered the clout of district municipalities. Başak Housings, Onurkent, Oyakkent, İkitelli and Bahçeşehir zones were regarded as separate districts. Thus the Başakşehir district was established as it is today.

2009 was also the year of local elections again after the five-year period. Mevlüt Uysal, the candidate of the AKP, won the mayoral election in the region which entered these local elections as a separate district. Thus, in the Başakşehir district, municipal services continued to be provided by the same party with the central government, and since it became a separate district the resources allocated to the region grew. In the same elections, the İBB Mayor Kadir Topbaş was elected as president again. Thus the influence of the Justice and Development Party remained just as strong.

After the election, the Başakşehir mayor Mevlüt Uysal claimed that “As İstanbul is the pearl of the world, Başakşehir would also be the pearl of İstanbul.” He also asserted that the Başakşehir Municipality would construct the biggest hospital in Turkey, and there would be a bosphorus, mentioned to Kanal İstanbul project, constructed near

Kayaşehir neighbor (Akşam, 2014). So, it is seen that the main goal of the municipality was development of urban areas in Başakşehir after 2009.

4.9.1. The Solutions of the Title Deed Problem in Onurkent and Başakşehir

After Mevlüt Uysal became mayor in 2009, one of his initial actions was to tackle Onurkent and Başakşehir's stage 1 and 2 problems. The title deeds had not been given to house owners in these regions yet due to the mistakes made in the plans and in the definition of social housing regarding not covering the housing of over 100 square meters. The definition of social housing was expanded with the law enacted for TOKİ so that the title deeds of Başakşehir 1st and 2nd stage houses and Onurkent could be given to owners (Başakşehir Belediyesi, 2013).

Although the title deeds were given, Onurkent had an annotation on the title deeds since the buildings were not made in accordance with the plans. Thus, the owners could not go forward with the conveyance of title deeds and could not get loans for the houses from the bank. Mayor Uysal turned his attention to this matter once again, and the annotations on the titles were removed at the end of the process.

4.10. The Difference Between Low-Income and High-Income Housing Projects of TOKİ

The most salient difference in the sales of TOKİ implementations is whether the rights to sell and the use of the project are geared towards lower-income groups. For instance, in the project for the low-income group, the condition is laid down that neither the applicant nor their spouse and children own any real-estate property. However, there exists no such requirement in the open sales that aim to provide housing for middle-high income levels. It is also stipulated for low-income groups that the applicant must live in the residence until the payment period comes to an end. Moreover, in these projects, housing is not permitted to be rented or sold either; otherwise, a sanction is imposed. On the other hand, there is no such stipulation in the open sales (TOKİ, 2017).

The open sales system creates several advantages for those who use housing for investment purposes, as well as opportunities for those who want to own their own house. To further illustrate, in the case of Kayaşehir, housing prices increased two to three times in a few years and hence served as a source of high revenues for the middle-high income level owners who bought houses from the open sales. This indicates that housing has transformed from a social need into a means of investment for those who could sell their houses, through the state. Thereby, a platform was formed in which TOKİ, partnering companies, and middle-high income level house owners from projects could all earn money. This is how the exchange of capital through the state took place and a new capitalist class emerged. Thus, since TOKİ provided housing to low income level people but did not allow them to sell or rent out their houses as it was mentioned previously, but permitted middle-high income level people to rent and sell as they wished which in turn made them a lot wealthier, it can easily be said that TOKİ serves as an instrument that re-creates social inequality through its projects.

When categorizing these projects TOKİ's main criteria is how many square meters the house is. While 45-87 square-meter houses are constructed for lower income levels and poor people, 87-146 square-meter homes are presented to middle income groups (TOKİ, 2016). During this classification neither house prices nor geographical location are taken into consideration. Consequently, houses in different parts of Turkey with large price discrepancies, were classified under the same category. Hence, TOKİ's housing categorization is insufficient to comprehend the economic impacts of the institution.

Only a mere 20% of TOKİ's housing projects are carried out for the poor and low income levels, while 43% of them are for lower-middle income levels. The activities TOKİ engages in under the name of resource development, with the aim of financing its other projects, comprise approximately 15% of all its activities. Furthermore, the market value of its resource development projects constitutes more than half of the total tender prices (TOKİ Konut Üretim Raporu, 2017). Considering that, houses built for lower-middle income levels are being sold at high prices even in cities such as

İstanbul, in which house prices are already high, it is evident that providing housing to those who do not own homes is not TOKİ's primary aim as it has proclaimed. This situation also results in the re-creation of social inequality.

4.11. The Capital Flow Generated by TOKİ Projects

TOKİ's becoming a monopoly in the construction sector in Turkey and its ability to establish partnerships with companies in the private sector, resulted in large capital flows in Turkey. TOKİ has concluded tenders worth 95 billion TL in total up until now, since the beginning of the AKP's rule. When we look at the companies that were given the tenders, we are faced with an interesting site to behold. Despite the existence of around 70 thousand contractor firms in Turkey who are able to participate in government tenders, it is seen that major tenders, especially, are given to Ağaoğlu, Kuzu Group, Torunlar GYO, Kolin, Limak, Nurool, Cengiz, Doğuş, Çalık, Varyap, Kalyon, Albayrak Group, İhlas Holding and Türkerler. Now let's proceed to take a closer look at these firms.

When we look at the large firms that received tenders from TOKİ, the first thing that strikes us is the absence of Turkey's major industry groups such as Koç Group, Eczacıbaşı and Sabancı Group. These large holdings are holdings of great importance and influence in the Turkish economy and are holdings that grew with the Import Substitution Industrialization policies of the state even before the 1980's. It must be noted that it is not possible to associate holdings that are members of TÜSİAD, with an Islamist discourse. However, it must be noted that some of the largest holdings in Turkey who associate themselves with the İslamic capital such as ÜLKER, are also not among the firms that have received tenders from TOKİ. Moreover, Turkish Privatization Board had cancelled 5.7 billion dollar privatization tender of bridges and highways which would have given the winning Ülker Group-Koç Holding consortium (Daily Sabah, 2013). In brief, the industrial enterprises that dominated Turkey before the AKP, did not benefit from the TOKİ tenders.

On the other hand, when we look at the firms that received the tenders, two diverging groups can be observed. The first group consists of companies such as

Albayrak, Çalık and İhlas Holding that had Islamist features prior to the AKP's rule and that were close to Erdoğan. The CEO of Çalık Group Serhat Albayrak is the brother of Erdoğan's son in law Berat Albayrak. Hence, there are people who are friends and relatives of Erdoğan, whom he has known from before. The second group, on the other hand, contains companies that cannot be associated with Islamists, such as Ağaoğlu, Limak and Doğu Group. For instance, Ali Ağaoğlu, the owner of Ağaoğlu Group, frequently makes the headlines in the media with his love life and his non-Islamic lifestyle (Hürriyet, 2017). Turning to Doğu Group, it strikes us as a holding that has held a long and powerful place in Turkey's economy and one that has continued to further expand its power in the AKP period too.

Looking at the tenders that the groups mentioned above received, it is seen that billion dollar projects in Ankara and İstanbul were carried out mostly by these groups. For instance, Kuzu Group undertook the construction of the Sea Pearl Ataköy Project along the Ataköy coastline which was subjected to debate when it was opened to construction. This project was implemented with TOKİ's construction order, in spite of the laws that clearly state that beach areas cannot be opened up to construction, and the houses were sold for millions of dollars (Sözcü, 2015).

The prevalence of familial ties is also evident from the firms who received tenders. For instance, Aydınli Group, which is owned by the son in law of the İBB mayor Kadir Topbaş, constructed the Koru Florya project in Florya, İstanbul (Aydınli İnşaat, 2016). The brother of Erdoğan's son in law Serhat Albayrak is the CEO of Çalık Group, and the group also carried out the Tarlabası and Fener-Balat transformation projects (Çalık Gayrimenkul, 2014).

It observed that, from among these companies those that focus on the construction sector win much more tenders. It is possible to explain this through the activity areas and focus points of these companies. For instance, Ağaoğlu Construction has partnered up with TOKİ in countless major projects such as, My World Europe, Maslak 1453, The İstanbul Finance Center, My Town Ispartatower, My Office Ataşehir and My Home Ayazağa. Again, Varyap implemented projects such as the Turkish Telekom

Arena, Uphill Court Ataşehir, Çağlayan Courthouse, Varyap Meridian and Uphill Court Bahçeşehir (TOKİ, 2017).

Other than the construction sector Doğu Group, İhlas Group and Kalyon Construction Firms are also in the media sector, as they own prominent institutions of the Turkish media sector. Among these, Doğu Group owns Star TV and NTV; İhlas Group owns TGRT, the Türkiye Newspaper and İhlas News Agency; Albayrak Group owns Yenişafak Newspaper and TVNET; Kalyon Construction owns ATV that was previously owned by Çalık Holding, Sabah Newspaper and Takvim Newspaper. While Kalyon Construction entered the sector later on, the other groups had already been active in the media sector (Freedom House, 2014, p. 12-14). A noteworthy point to be made here is that, the general publication and broadcasting policies of the media companies mentioned above are in support of the rule of the AKP.

Another key point regarding the firms that won tenders from TOKİ is that these firms have expanded their work scope to include ventures in other sectors as well. These firms are not solely active in the construction sector, but also across a wide array of sectors, namely the banking, media and energy sectors. Furthermore, when we look specifically at the Privatization Administrations tenders, it is observed that these firms have won most of the tenders (Mülksüzleştirme Ağları, 2017).

We see that the firms mentioned above have also won government tenders as well as the tenders of TOKİ and the Privatization Administration. These firms have been successful in the tenders, especially, the speed train and metro tenders held by the Ministry of Transportation. While the Doğu Group won the tenders for the Kadıköy-Kartal Metro, the Ankara-Eskişehir Speed Train Project and the Otogar-Başakşehir Metro; Kalyon Construction undertook the construction of the Mecidiyeköy-Mahmutbey Metro (Mülksüzleştirme Ağları, 2017). The Kalyon-Cengiz-Limak-Kolin-Mapa partnership won the tender for the construction of the third airport. The firms mentioned above have made huge amounts of money through government tenders along with the other construction work carried out in Turkey (Milliyet, 2013).

To sum up, after the AKP came to power it first, restructured TOKİ and enabled it to become a monopoly in the construction sector, and then built large housing projects by entering into partnerships with companies in the private sector. Upon close inspection of these projects it is seen that tenders are mostly won by certain firms. Since the subject matter of this thesis is mass housing projects, these projects have been the main focus. Nevertheless, it is seen that the firms mentioned above have been active in tenders held by the Privatization Administration and the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund as well. These activities have engendered a large capital flow in Turkey and a new capitalist class has emerged.

The most typical feature of this class that developed through public tenders, is that they operate in the construction sector. The members of this class are people who have extensive financial resources and who were active in terms of business in the period before the AKP. Furthermore, these members invested the financial power they gained from the construction sector, during the period of the AKP, into other sectors and hence, grew especially in the media and energy sectors. It is observed that, the members who own media groups support the AKP with their publishing and broadcasting policies, and that the AKP's growth policy centered around the construction sector is in line with the interests of the new capitalist class. This situation alters the structure of the Turkish economy on the one hand, and further bolsters the AKP's political rule, on the other.

4.12. From Kayabaşı to Kayaşehir

While the housing projects of KİPTAŞ continue, TOKİ embarked on an enormous city project with 60.000 houses in Northern Başakşehir. The place selected for this project was the Kayabaşı neighborhood in the North region, where there was no regular settlement yet. The project was called Kayaşehir, and the first buildings were completed by 2010.

The Kayaşehir project constitutes approximately half of the houses that TOKİ produced in Istanbul. In terms of the number of houses, it is seen that there were more houses built than there were in the previous mass housing projects in

Başakşehir. Hence, it is a region that hosts a vast population by itself (TOKİ Konut Üretim Raporu, 2017).

Compared to the previous implementations, the Kayaşehir project has a slightly different architectural structure when compared to the rest of Başakşehir. The primary purpose was to construct as many houses as possible in the blocks which consisted of very high buildings and several parts. In this sense, it is one of the largest urban areas established in such a short period of time. Social facilities were also to be more compact and with a lesser population density.

Kayaşehir was a region experiencing transportation and infrastructure problems, since it was also far away from the center of Başakşehir. However, in line with the holistic city approach, public transportation lines were established in no time, and connection with the city center was enabled. The houses in Kayaşehir, where a highway connection was formed through the construction of the Northern Marmara Highway, gained considerable value with this project. Housing prices in Kayaşehir, which reached a price increase over 130 percent in the last 4 years, are rapidly increasing along with the population of Başakşehir. In the coming years, it is planned for the metro to extend to Kayaşehir, and this will in turn increase the demand of the region.

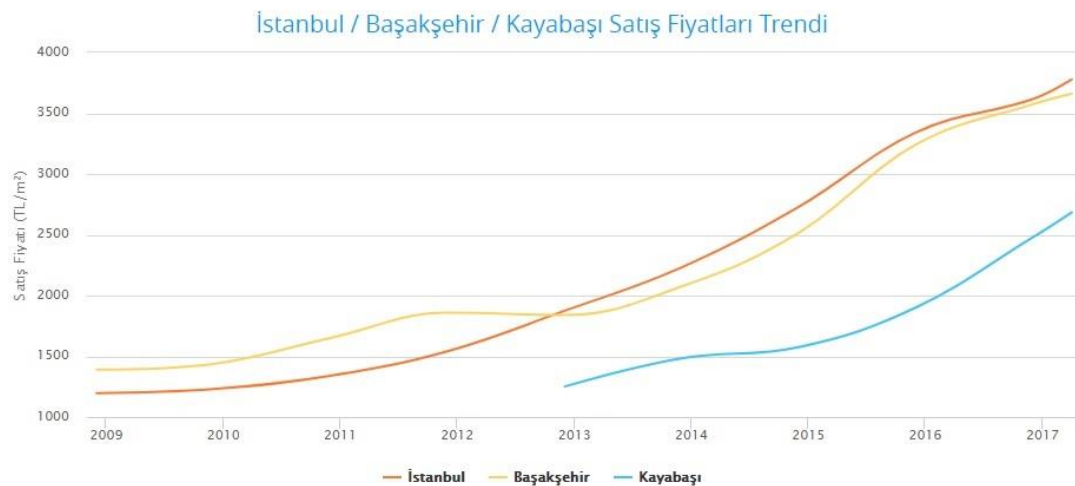


Figure 4.2 Sale Price Trends of İstanbul, Başakşehir and Kayabaşı (Source: Zingat Real Estate Investments)

In Kayaşehir, where TOKİ has built 60.000 houses, KİPTAŞ also constructed the Kayabaşı Houses project consisting of 1140 houses. In 2010, the project was completed with a mosque, school and bazaar area alike other KİPTAŞ projects (KİPTAŞ, 2017). The 15-storey blocks were constructed similarly to each other, as the KİPTAŞ blocks and TOKİ blocks are rather reminiscent of each other both in terms of architecture and quality.

4.13. İkitelli-Masko Houses and Metrokent Projects

KİPTAŞ finally completed the İkitelli Masko Houses and Metrokent projects in Başakşehir. From these projects, the İkitelli Masko Houses are located in the west of the region surrounded by the industrial zone, separate from other mass housing projects. Within the scope of this project, 420 houses were built in the form of 15-storey blocks. This project, which was completed in 2010, does not have a mosque, a bazaar area, or a school despite the existence of other social facilities (KİPTAŞ, 2017).

At the close of 2011, KİPTAŞ realized its final project, Metrokent, in the region. Metrokent is a KİPTAŞ project produced in the luxury housing segment and constitutes the highest priced housing in the region. Within the scope of this project, 1492 houses which would appeal to different families ranging from 1 + 1 to 5 + 1 house types in each 23-storey block that was built. Metrokent was built as a giant complex with a swimming pool, a fitness center, social facilities, a shopping center, cafés and restaurants and even a cultural center. Furthermore, it is also located right next to the Waters Valley, which also offers extensive sports and social facilities (KİPTAŞ, 2017).

These two projects are also on the M3 Metro Line, which was completed in 2013. Additionally, unlike Kayaşehir, it is situated in the center of the town, as it is located in an area that had already urbanized area. Housing prices are relatively affordable due to the existence of industrial zones around the İkitelli Masko Houses. On the other hand, the Metrokent project is located around the Waters Valley, which was planned as a major social facility area.



Figure 4.3 Buildings in Başak Houses (Left) and Kayabaşı (Right) (Sources: KİPTAŞ and Milliyet)

When comparing the 1st and 2nd Stages of the Başak Houses with its later stages, it is seen how the blocks are getting taller and taller. While the buildings of the 1st and 2nd stages are maximum 7 or 8 storeys, the buildings constructed in KİPTAŞ's Metrokent project and TOKİ's Kayaşehir in are colossal structures with 23 storeys. It can be inferred that the rising height of the buildings is correlated with the motivation to build even more houses, since the prices of houses have increased over the years along with the demand for the region. This demonstrates that KİPTAŞ's desire, in later stages, to build more houses has outweighed its former endeavors towards identity formation.

4.14. The Impact of Syrian Migrants on Başakşehir

An immense influx of migrants into Turkey was triggered with the civil war in Syria in 2010. This migration increased dramatically as the war went on and became even more brutal over the next few years. As a consequence, about 4 million Syrians have now migrated to Turkey. Although, this migration wave influenced greatly impacted all cities in Turkey, especially Kilis and Gaziantep, big cities were the prime choice of Syrians mostly due to better job opportunities. (UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, 2017).

In Istanbul, Başakşehir was one of the regions that was affected most by the influx of migrants. Immigrants opted for Başakşehir since the İOSB, which offers job opportunities, cheaper and better quality housing facilities compared to the city center, is located there. This demand motivated the housing market and increased

housing prices. Following the 1999 earthquake, a similar move had taken place and had also resulted in the escalation of housing prices in Kayaşehir.

Today, a considerable number of foreign nationals live in Başakşehir and it is possible to frequently encounter those who own housing. Although, there are less foreigners in the 5th stage and Metrokent due to high costs, they are more common in areas that are reasonably priced, especially in Kayasehir and Onurkent. Due to this situation, there are even site managers who prepare the warning signs and fee schedules in Arabic and English for foreign dwellers:

I work in construction. I currently have around 200-250 houses. I sell a lot of apartments to Arabs. Now, almost 20% of the people here (around Onurkent) are Arabs. Site managers are putting up signs in Arabic too because of them. Because they demanded it and said that they didn't. For instance the maintenance fee is also written in Arabic and English. Without them the market was stagnant, once they came things started to get moving (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

The foreign population in Başakşehir also affects many other sectors. For instance, the presence of foreign families, have resulted in attempts to open International Schools in the district:

A Canadian company came to me the other day and said that they wanted to open an international school. They said find us a place. It's a big organization. They said they were going to give lessons in English. A place for foreign students to go to. They first found a place in Maslak. But they then couldn't come to an agreement. They'd gathered 200 students even before they had a school. They registered students through a website. When there was no place in Maslak they checked their lists and saw that most of their students were coming from Başakşehir. That's why they came and told me to find them a place. It's a cosmopolitan area. There are a lot of Arab kids in particular (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

All this results in the formation of a cosmopolitan structure in the district. When we look at the foreign population, it is seen that these people mostly come from Middle Eastern countries, and this in turn increases the interest of the Arabs in Başakşehir. Through the houses sold foreigners keep the residential sector alive, and this provides an opportunity for the emergence of new projects:

There are people from Qatar, from Saudi Arabia and a few from Egypt as well. They buy the apartment and come in the summer to stay for 2 weeks or just

buys it as an investment. I rent out some of them, collect the rent and give it to them. If they come for a year, they pay an annual maintenance fee. They say they'd rather have a place here than go and stay in a hotel (Aslan, personal interview, March 3, 2017).

4.15. The AKP's Electoral Declaration of 2011 and 61st Government Program

In the general elections held in 2011, the Justice and Development Party came to power alone with close to a majority of 50%. This period was named as Erdoğan's "mastery period" and was a period of political power that paved the way for the AKP to rise to the top. For this reason, the 61st Government Program is a salient element to be scrutinized in order to understand Turkey.

In this document, urbanization policies were provided in great detail under the heading "Livable Environment and Brand Cities". It was stated that TOKİ's housing target of 500.000 had been achieved in the program and it was suggested that the target would be revised as 1 million. It was also emphasized that the budgets of the local administrations were insufficient and that the projects required for the development of inner and outer transportation lines would be funded from the central government budget.

In the 61st Government Program, Erdoğan stresses that the high level of urbanization is an indicator of wealth and development. He asserts that during their rule, urbanization increased in Turkey and hence so did the level of development and civilization:

The cities of a country constitute one of the factors that determines the level of development of a society, the quality of the ruling administration and the contributions made to civilization, in that country. Today, urbanization of a high standard has become an indicator of increasing levels of wealth and development. In the European Union, on average, around 85 percent of the people live in cities. Looking at Turkey, this rate has undergone a 9 percent increase and has reached 73 percent (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2011).

When we look at Erdoğan's urbanization target, the concept of "livable and brand cities" strikes us: "Our cities have suffered for many years due to major problems

such as migration, squatter dwellings, insufficient resources, legal issues and irregular urbanization. Hence, transforming our cities into “livable” and “brand” cities remains to be one of our greatest priorities” (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2011).

Erdogan also proclaims that, in alignment with principles of social justice, those who are not home owners shall be made so through TOKİ and long term credits:

We have begun the construction of 505 thousand residences through TOKİ and have completed 360 thousand of them and given them to their rightful owners. We have built social housing projects to be given to poor families with no income, in installments of 100-350 TL over the course of 10-20 years. Thus we have displayed the importance we give to social justice, in this area as well (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2011).

Another point that was emphasized in the field of housing production in the Government Program was the fact that about half of the existing housing stocks in Turkey were past their economic life span. As a solution to this, the concept of “urban transformation” was introduced, and it was explained that transformation projects in 60 cities would be carried out through TOKİ. It was foreseen that the old buildings located in the city center would be renewed with the urban transformation. These projects in many parts of Turkey have become a salient phenomenon shaping the urban area.

Looking at Erdoğan’s statements, it is evident that the number of houses built is being highlighted. Moreover, in the statements it is continually emphasized that cities are regarded as a yardstick of development and that new city areas are to be constructed. More importantly, in these statements it is not possible to encounter traces of Islamic symbolism or urban identity that used to be highlighted during the period of Erdoğan’s mayoralty in 1994.

4.16. The Tenth Development Plan

When we look at the Tenth Development Plan, it is easily seen that there were many similarities between the 61st Government Program and the Tenth Development Plan. In this development plan, it is very significant that a large portion was devoted to urban policies under the heading of “Living Spaces and Sustainable Environment”.

This section includes the targets within the scope of this title, and also the projects that are taking in international finance such as the Istanbul International Finance Center. Emphasis on urban policies with such strong references opened the way for construction projects and accelerated urbanization practices throughout Turkey.

One of the key issues mentioned in the plan is the support for urban transformation projects. The interesting point is that urban transformation is regarded as an instrument of urbanization that generates its own financing. Additionally, the fact that it has been stated that urban transformation projects would contribute to the sector as they would be consuming what the industrial sector produced, is also of significance:

With its specification of space of an appropriate size and good planning, urban transformation has the potential to become an instrument that generates its own financing and that provides healthier, safer and better quality living environments. Furthermore, the work load that is generated by the need for urban transformation in our country, provides a wide array of business and investment opportunities for many sectors, namely the materials industry (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2013).

This statement echoes Harvey's hypothesis that real estate investments constitute a cycle of capitalist accumulation. Harvey asserts that, capitalists make profits via converting their wealth into real estate investments and that they garner further profits by selling the materials, which they produce themselves, required for the construction projects (Harvey, 2010, p. 40-42). The fact that, urban transformation projects finance themselves through the means of unearned income and that they contribute to the economy by consuming industrial materials that are produced, lends further support to Harvey's argument.

This development plan also aimed to transform Istanbul into an International Finance Centre:

Work towards the construction of the Istanbul Finance Center began in 2009, with the purpose of bolstering economic growth and developing the finance sector which has a high value added. It is of importance that the work towards the Istanbul Finance Centre - which will contribute to the formation of a finance sector integrated with global markets, that can render services on an international level and that will enable resources to be accumulated and

distributed effectively - is continued to be carried out with determination (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2013).

The Istanbul Finance Centre is a project, which is planned to be built in Ataşehir on the Anatolian side, that will host the offices of global finance companies. The main purpose of this project is to expand Turkey's financial power and economic capacity. This project is significant in terms of demonstrating how urbanization policies align with the capitalist market structure based on the idea of creating a global city. Hence, in 1994, we can see how the aim creating an urban identity transformed into urban market politics through the housing supply.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Following the triumph of the Islamist Welfare Party in the 1994 municipality elections, it wanted to increase its electorate satisfaction through high quality municipality services across Turkey, and ultimately aimed to become the ruling power in the general elections. On the other hand, as an Islamist party, they adopted the use of Islamic symbols in public spaces, endeavoring to achieve a publicly visible image of Islam. This Islamist concern coupled with Turkey's long-standing problem of planned high-quality housing needs in cities, led to the emergence of a "housing supply model" created by Islamist politicians that was the first of its kind.

KİPTAŞ, which was a company that was owned by the municipality during Erdoğan's İBB mayoralty in 1994, provided the first project of this "housing supply model" named the Başak Houses in the İkitelli region of Istanbul. Looking at the statements of the officials of the Welfare Party, it is evident that their primary aim was to create good quality houses for reasonable prices and to provide a viable solution to Istanbul's housing need and growing slum problems. On the other hand, after its construction these housing estates were predominantly bought by Islamists and conservative Muslims, and hence, this region emerged as an Islamic gated community over time. The prevalent use of Islamic symbolism as well as the Welfare Party officials' advertisement of the project as a modern urban living space for religious communities played an effective role in this.

The transformation of KİPTAŞ's Başak Houses, into an Islamic gated community can be regarded as one of the first the material results of the Islamist politicians desire to create a new urban space that would represent their ideals. Henri Lefebvre argues that abstract ideas and ideologies exist through creating their own forms in urban spaces. In this sense, Başakşehir (Başak Houses district later named as Başak-city) is a project carried out by Islamist politicians that introduces political Islam into an urban space.

After the Justice and Development Party took office in the general elections, the “housing supply model” of Islamist politicians transformed into a model that would widely be applied by TOKİ all across Turkey. The fact that TOKİ was designed as a state institution who partners with private companies, and was restructured to be a monopoly controlling the entire construction sector, renders it most fundamental characteristic of the “housing supply model”.

There are discrepancies between the statements of AKP executives, especially Erdogan’s, who is the leading actor in presenting this model, and the nature and character of TOKİ’s housing projects. The first advertised goal of the TOKİ projects was to meet Turkey’s ever-growing housing needs and hence prevent unplanned urbanization. As the AKP consolidated more and more political power through the years, their discourse also evolved from creating “livable cities” at first, to building “global cities” in which Istanbul was the model city leading the efforts. During this period, in which urbanization was regarded as a measure of civilization and progress, it is striking that the emphasis on urban identity and Islamic symbolism was gradually abandoned.

From this point of view, it can be said that the "housing supply model" that was first advertised through Başakşehir by Islamist politicians, evolved into an Islamic gated community through the use of a certain discourse and symbolism. After the AKP came to power, this model then transformed into a collective housing policy shaped by capitalist market policies. In fact, looking at the entire process it is understood that the “housing supply model” is not so different from other mass housing examples, except that it maintains an Islamic discourse and symbolism. For instance, there are no visible discrepancies when photographs of Ataköy and Başakşehir are compared. What distinguishes Başakşehir is how the identity of the residents comes through and the meaning attributed to the region. Indeed, Islamist politicians have constructed the Başakşehir urban area within capitalist market relations. On the other hand, Başakşehir, as an Islamic gated community, is a social space constructed by consumers, not Muslims. Once the construction of this identity ceased to exist in the later projects of TOKİ, the AKP’s ‘housing supply model’ lost its edge.

When the "housing supply model" of the AKP is scrutinized from a socio-economic perspective, it appears that this model has resulted in the re-creation of social inequality and has engendered a major flow of capital altering the economic structure of Turkey. The primary source of social inequality is the difference between the sales models of KIPTAŞ and TOKİ that cater to the poor and the ones that appeal to the middle-higher income level. The ensuing capital flow is a result of the Erdogan Government's construction sector-oriented development policies, TOKİ's partnership with the private sector, and the investment of the money accrued from the construction sector, into other sectors.

Firstly, the method that KIPTAŞ and TOKİ adopt in their residential sales, condemns the people who do not own houses to live in a fixed place for 15-20 years. Moreover, houses purchased prior to the end of payments cannot be sold or rented either. Also, the fact that they have to make payments during this process already places poor people in a difficult situation. On the other hand, people with middle-higher income levels are able to sell or rent to their homes after they have purchased their residences, prior to completing their payments. This renders housing, which is already a profitable investment, highly attractive for middle-higher income levels, and leads to a rise in housing prices, which in turn enables people to benefit from the city rent. This sales system exacerbates the income gap between the poor and the middle-income group and re-creates social inequality through the city-rent that was generated via public institutions. In Başakşehir, considering that the first residential areas were occupied by the Islamist middle class, it can be deduced that this group also benefited from the urban rent and bolstered their economic power.

Secondly, construction industry oriented growth policies of the Erdoğan government and housing reforms are transforming the economic structure and capitalist class in Turkey. Looking at the firms that have won lucrative TOKİ tenders, certain firms distinguish themselves. These firms are also active in public tenders and are expanding their activities in industries other than construction. Hence, it is observed that, during the rule of the AKP, new firms heavily involved in construction work have

been added to the capitalist class, which developed as a result of government policies from 1960 to 1980 and is predominantly comprised of industrial companies.

Among the owners of these firms, there are also people who are not interested in Islamism as there are people from the Islamic bourgeoisie. The common point of the companies is that they are benefiting from the AKP's construction-oriented development policies. As David Harvey argues, the capitalist class transfers its savings to the real estate market, and practices of urbanization emerge as a result of the cooperation between the government and the capitalist class. In turn, it is seen that this group, which is particularly influential in the media sector, supports the AKP through the broadcasting and publishing policies of the television channels and newspapers that it owns. Hence, this situation also reinforces the AKP's political power.

In sum, the "housing supply model" that was implemented through KİPTAŞ by Islamist politicians, and later through TOKİ by AKP executives led to significant social, economic and political reforms in Turkey. Even though, the model adopted Islamic symbolism along with an Islamic discourse at first, it is a model of urbanization that complies with capitalist market conditions. Furthermore, this model recreates social inequality, transforms Turkey's socio-economic structure and consolidates the political power of the AKP.

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APPENDIX
LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Abdullah Çağın: Member of İstanbul Metropolitan Municipal Assembly, May 12, 2016

Hikmet Tanrıverdi: Manager in KİPTAŞ, June 18, 2016

Melih Kopuz: Former district chairman of Welfare Party, July 4, 2016

Muhammed Aslan: General Director of Onurkent Building Societies Association, March 3, 2017

Çetin Kaya: Deputy Mayor of Küçükçekmece district, July 10, 2016

Emel Görgülü: Real Estate Broker, December 12, 2016

Semih Yardımcı: 2nd stage of Başak Houses Resident, January 2, 2017

Hasan Kalkan: 1st Stage of Başak Houses Resident, February 2, 2017

Naci Ünlü: 4th stage of Başak Houses Resident, March 14, 2017

Ali Sami Tezcan: 4th Stage of Başak Houses Resident, March 17, 2017

Ayşen Ergüven: 5th Stage of Başak Houses Resident, April 12, 2017

Melike Hasgüler: Metrokent Resident, April 17, 2017