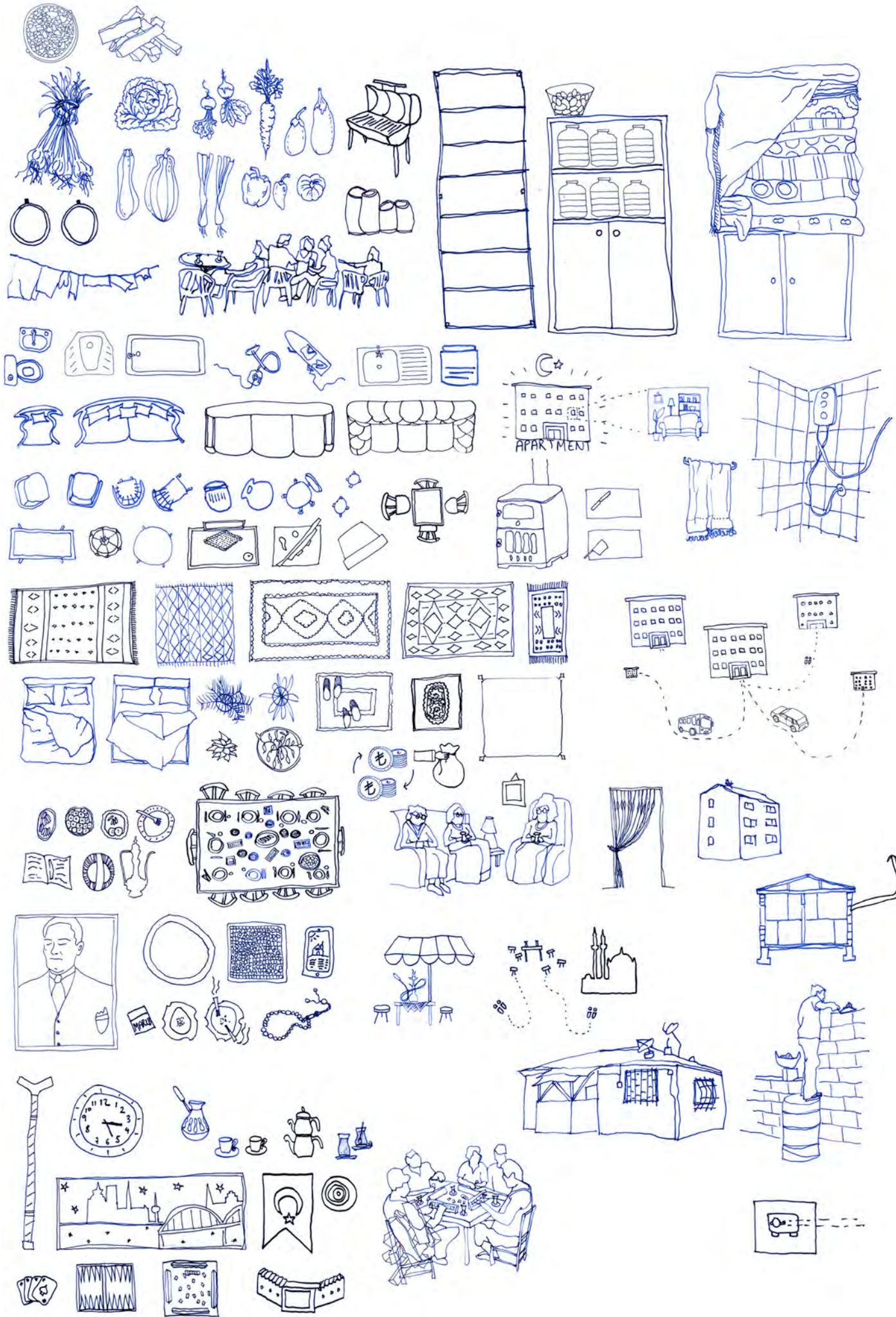# Micro-histories of an Istanbul gecekondu

A Graphic Ethnography unearthing the socio-spatial dynamics of a Turkish informal settlement

HPM Final Paper - Architecture
AR9027HPM Research Project II

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31/03/2023

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Harnessing a Graphic Ethnography, this research analyses socio-spatial aspects of incrementality of the Istanbul gecekondu, looking at how the typology acts as a facilitator of the Arrival City. Harnessing the case study of the Ordu population of Umraniye's Kazim Karabekir neighbourhood, specific architectural and urban relationships are studied to understand their impact on the manifestation of daily gecekondu practices and traditions, and how this has evolved over time. The research looks at incremental growth at both the home and neighbourhood scale, from the urgent need to construct shelter to the more grounded establishment of Third Place. The research looks at how such development is propped up the intangible network of hometown relationships, into which migrants are received.
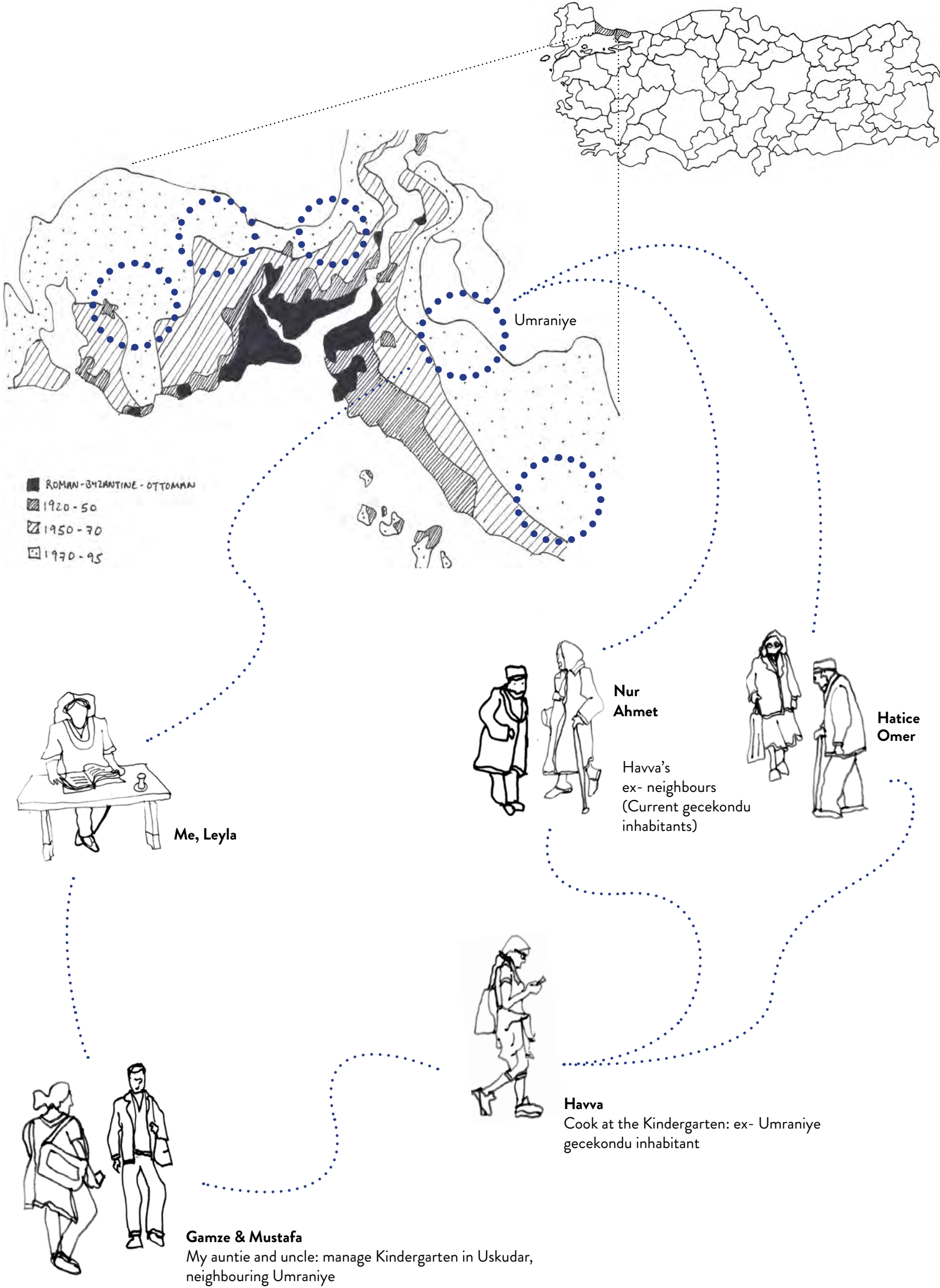
Although focusing on one population, the Ordu inhabitants of Kazim Karabekir, the story is one of many [hundreds of thousands]. It is therefore significant as an attempt to understand not just the details of these specific families, but of the many migrants who have contributed to the gecekondu phenomenon in Turkey. It aims to portray a counter-narrative to the historically negative rendering of gecekondu neighbourhoods, by analysis of the topic through a new lens. Through understanding the inhabitant as expert of their environment, the graphic representation of the research will act as a tool to accessibly present the domestic and neighbourhood histories of such inhabitants.

Key Words:

Istanbul, Umraniye, Gecekondu, Informal, Incremental, Arrival City, Third Place, Graphic Ethnography

ROMAN - BYZANTINE - OTTOMAN
1920 - 50
1950 - 70
1970 - 95

Umraniye

Nur
Ahmet

Hatice
Omer

Havva's
ex- neighbours
(Current gecekondu
inhabitants)

Me, Leyla

Havva
Cook at the Kindergarten: ex- Umraniye
gecekondu inhabitant

Gamze & Mustafa
My auntie and uncle: manage Kindergarten in Uskudar,
neighbouring Umraniye

Figure 1 - Kazim Karabekir Gecekondu

The beginnings of this project are rooted in my fascination with the informalities of peripheral Istanbul, a city where I have been visiting family for 20 years. The research brings together my fascination in histories of lived-in architecture with my Turkish heritage. The city's edges have always intrigued me, more than the historic centre, as proven thresholds for informal potential.

In order to unearth the micro-histories of a gecekondu, initially situated upon one such edge, it was essential to find an 'entry point' into the settlement; in which I had to harness my family connections in the city. Although discussions with academics aided in locating potential gecekondu case studies, the most fruitful connections were those who could physically introduce me to a gecekondu family. In the end, this came in the form of my Auntie Gamze and Uncle Mustafa, who introduced me to Havva, the cook at the kindergarten they manage in Uskudar. As an ex-gecekondu resident of the neighbouring municipality Umraniye, Havva in turn introduced me to her ex-neighbours: two gecekondu families still residing in the gecekondu neighbourhood of Kazim Karabekir, Umraniye. Once introduced and accompanied by Havva, a truly trusted member of the neighbourhood, I was myself trusted. Upon arrival at the gecekondu, I was treated with the upmost hospitality (and intrigue).

DEFINITIONS

Incremental Housing

Incremental housing is a step-by-step process, where housing communities begins with the citizens. It is not immediate or complete, as development decisions are made over time by the owner.[1] A home begins as a multi-purpose room with a form of kitchen and bathroom, with the possibility to expand over time based on increased financial and material resources available to the inhabitant. Incremental housing is a flexible approach to city growth, where costs associated to more formal housing construction methods are reduced for the inhabitant. Incremental housing can act as a catalyst to engage locals both socially and economically, as local businesses grow alongside home improvements. Although the gecekondu has no 'architect-designed' multi-functional core provided, the gecekondu encourages an inhabitant-led incrementality built upon their first iteration.

Arrival City

Cities of 'arrival', such as Istanbul, are continuously shifting demographically, culturally and politically as they see the impact of rural to urban migration. The leverage of these cities cannot be overlooked as their populations soar. A phenomenon of rapidly growing metropolises around the world, Arrival Cities provide for new inhabitants attempting to integrate into the existing, and often peripheral, urban fabric, as they establish new lives. The potential of a successful Arrival City is its creation of a new, economically-strong middle class, for which in the case of Istanbul, the gecekondu has been a facilitator.[2]

Gecekondu

The Turkish word 'gecekondu' translates as 'put at night', describing a settlement (understood as a home or a neighbourhood) built illegally overnight by its inhabitants.[3] The gecekondu could therefore be understood as a form of incremental housing due to the additions made by inhabitants over time, at both the scale of the home and neighbourhood. One cannot distinguish the gecekondu itself from its process. In fact, the term gecekondu both defines the home itself, as well as the neighbourhood. Despite the demolition of most initial one-storey 'gecekondu' homes, and in their place the construction of multi-storey concrete structures, the neighbourhood is still referred to as a 'gecekondu'.
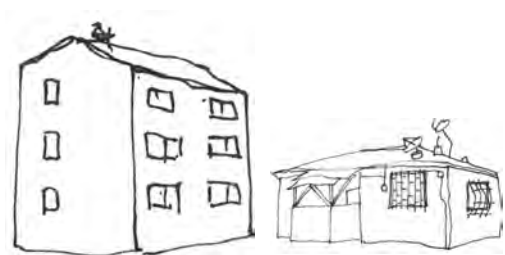
Third Place

Ray Oldenburg, an American Sociologist, coined the term Third Place in 1989 in his book The Great Good Place.[4] A Third Place describes a social space outside of one's home (First Place) or work (Second Place) that provides a sense of place and an equal platform for discussion in the city. His book is a plea for appreciation of informal urban life; or the Third Spaces that form the landscape of a citizen's daily life. This research analyses the importance of Third Place in settling oneself within the Arrival City, building upon intangible networks of Komsuluk and Hemsehri (see definitions).
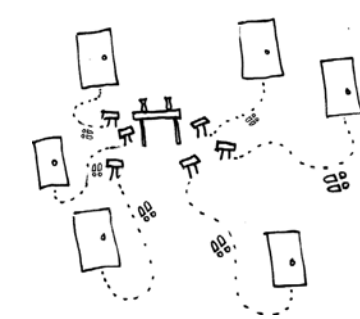
Komsuluk

Although the Turkish word directly translates as 'neighbourliness', it more specifically refers to the sense of trust between those from the same, usually rural, hometown.[5] Komsuluk networks are based on fluid kinship and countrymen relationships, and are harnessed by migrants arriving in the gecekondu. The komsuluk will provide an entry point to accessing both housing and employment – urban systems that rural migrants are inherently separate from.

Hemsehri

Translating a 'countrymen', Hemsire Associations are set up in the city for those from the same hometown; generally a place for migrants to connect with fellow countrymen. In Turkey, the presence of such organisations grew hand in hand with its rapid urbanisation, and hence gecekondu presence, since 1940s.[6] They allow for an occupation of physical urban space by a 'outsider' group, providing a level of validity to something informal. It is one way in which gecekondu inhabitants can strengthen komsuluk relations and place themselves in not just their new social landscape, but their political one too. In fact, alongside the Kahvehanes (male-dominated cafés often connected to specific Hemsehri Organisations), the associations' connections to local politics, are incremental in achieving material change for their populations, who congregate in the same neighbourhoods.

Kahvehane

Today, the Kahvehane is essentially a humble coffee-house, frequented by a homogeneous demographic of working-class retired men. Acting as a Third Place, they are regularly dispersed along the streets of more working-class neighbourhoods, as well as the gecekondu. Despite its beginnings as a diverse hub of the intellectual elite in the Ottoman times, bringing Jews and Armenians together with Turks, there has since been a cultural and demographic shift in the Kahvehane.[7] Many Istanbulites view it as a place to 'waste time', yet for many it is essential in the settling of oneself within their new neighbourhood, as with in the gecekondu.

Altin Gunu

Altin Gunu translates as 'Day of Gold' and describes the weekly meetings of an organised Gun 'group'; often 6-12 married women. The name derives from the tradition of women pooling their resources in the form of golden coins, and in turn, sharing these at each meeting.[8] The group is always intimate, consisting of childhood friends, neighbours, or relatives, and is based on trust, solidarity and reciprocity. Interpreted as a Third Place for Turkish Women, the Altin Gunu differs from the men's Kahvehane, as it is acted out behind closed doors.

INTRODUCTION

Figure 2 - Kazim Karabekir Gecekondu

Background and Rationale

In developing countries, rural-to-urban migration is fuelling a doubling of urban populations by 2030.[9] This is facilitated by the 'Arrival City' phenomenon, a term coined by Doug Saunders, and exemplified globally through rapidly growing metropolises such as Mumbai, Buenos Aries, Sao Paulo, Nairobi and Istanbul. The Arrival City provides for migrants attempting to integrate into the marginal urban fabric, as they establish new lives. The potential of a successful Arrival City cannot be overlooked in is its ability to bolster a new middle class, for which the gecekondu, the Turkish informal settlement, has been a facilitator.

In Turkey specifically, this urban population growth translates as a jump from 25% in 1950 to 75% today.[10] The chain-migration of poorer rural settlers from the East in search of work in the city, has encouraged the growth of informal settlements on the fringes of metropolitan areas, such as Istanbul. Turkey's push for industrialisation since the 1950s, hence an increased need for factory workers in cities, led to a rapid rise in squatter settlements alongside its rapid urbanisation. The complex system of illegal public land acquisition and following amnesty laws that cemented the gecekondu more permanently in Turkey's urban peripheries separates the gecekondu from other informal typologies globally. The impact of its presence has been and continues to be staggering on not just the urban fabric, but on a social, cultural, and political level. The marginalised gecekondu has a history of a negative and homogeneous representation in the media, that ignores the nuanced micro-histories of inhabitants, and the coming together of their streets and neighbourhoods. There deserves to be a re-contextualising of this narrative, one that begins with the inhabitant.

Many gecekondus require upgrading due to their vulnerability to Istanbul's high seismic risk, exasperated by their location on often environmentally precarious land. The micro-histories of one such neighbourhood at the hands of neo-liberal mass housing policies, Kazim Karabekir in Umraniye, will therefore be documented before it's too late. Specific socio-spatial aspects of incrementality are at play in the former margins of the city, settling one within the gecekondu. The Arrival City exists as a complex entanglement of such aspects; from land acquisition and ownership, housing typologies, intangible hometown neighbourhood relationships and employment to gendered 'Third Places'.

Figure 3 - Typical demolition and eviction of gecekondu

Figure 4 - TOKI's unaffordable and distant mass housing for gecekondu evictees

Problem Statement

Neo-liberal mass housing policies have resulted in their forced eviction/demolition of gecekondus alongside inappropriate rehousing, disrupting the unique socio-spatial structure in place. Bricks and mortar have been valued over the economic and social livelihoods of inhabitants. Despite the gecekondu's success in facilitating Istanbul's growth as an Arrival City, the demolition of such neighbourhoods by municipalities in collaboration with TOKI, Turkey's private but government-backed mass housing firm, cuts inhabitants from their Third Places, essential in rooting oneself within the Arrival City.

Many unique socio-spatial aspects of the gecekondu are being lost, hence deserve documentation before it is too late. Further to this, such aspects of gecekondus have not been documented in an accessible way to wider publics. Although there is vast documentation of the political and urban development of the Istanbul gecekondu, including those of Umraniye, there is a lack of documentation related specifically to the ties between the social and architectural fabric.

There has not been a socio-spatial analysis of the incrementality of the Istanbul gecekondu through the lens of Graphic Ethnography. This resulting knowledge gap exists alongside historical and ethnographic research on the development of Umraniye's gecekondu, including mentions of the Ordu population in Kazim Karabekir, are not rooted in the specific architectures that manifest certain behaviours.
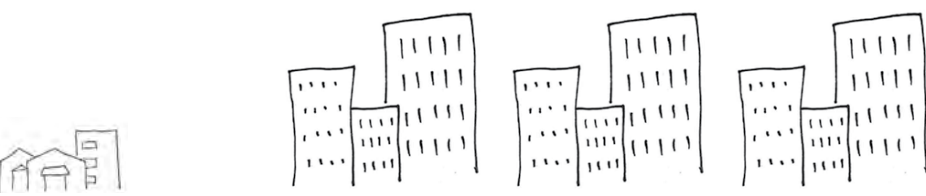
Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are twofold: rooted in new knowledge finding and new knowledge representation.

Knowledge finding:

This research aims to analyse socio-spatial aspects of incrementality of the Istanbul gecekondu, looking at how the typology acts as a facilitator of the Arrival City. Harnessing the case study of the Ordu population of Umraniye's Kazim Karabekir, specific architectural and urban relationships will be studied in order to understand their impact on the manifestation of certain gecekondu traditions and behaviours. The research looks at incremental growth at both the home and neighbourhood level, from the initial need to construct shelter to more grounded establishment of Third Place. Although focusing on one population, the Ordu inhabitants of Kazim Karabekir, the story is one of many [hundreds of thousands]. It is therefore significant as an attempt to understand not just the details of these specific families, but of the many migrants who have contributed to the gecekondu phenomenon in Turkey. It aims to portray a counter-narrative to the negative portrayal of gecekondu neighbourhoods, by looking at the topic through a new lens.

Knowledge Representation:

The research challenges the traditional 20th Century definition of Architect as form-giver, understanding the settlement firstly as a performative object, enabled by an inhabitant-led architecture. Understanding the inhabitant as expert of their environment, the representation of the work will act as a tool to accessibly represent the domestic and neighbourhood histories of such inhabitants. A Graphic Ethnography will be developed and harnessed for representation of the observation, interviews and socio-spatial analysis of domestic and neighbourhood practices. This research is therefore significant as it attempts to combine the architectural and the ethnographic perspective: by encapsulating the social dimension within the spatial. This is a step forward in re-imagining what socio-spatial aspects are important for such rehousing.

How can the **incremental** nature of the **gecekondu** be analysed and represented through a **Graphic Ethnography** of people and place?

COLLECTION

- What are the socio-spatial aspects of incrementality manifested in the gecekondu?

- How have such aspects evolved at the scale of home and neighbourhood, from 'built for necessity', to increasingly grounded?

- How do intangible networks of community, such as the dependency on Komsuluk and Hemsehri relationships, impact such developments?

- How do Third Places, such as the male-dominated Kahvehane and female-dominated Altin Gunu, play a role in settling migrants in the gecekondu, and hence the City?

DISPLAY

- How is an appropriate Graphic Ethnography constructed in terms of bringing together Interviews, Observation and Socio-spatial analysis?
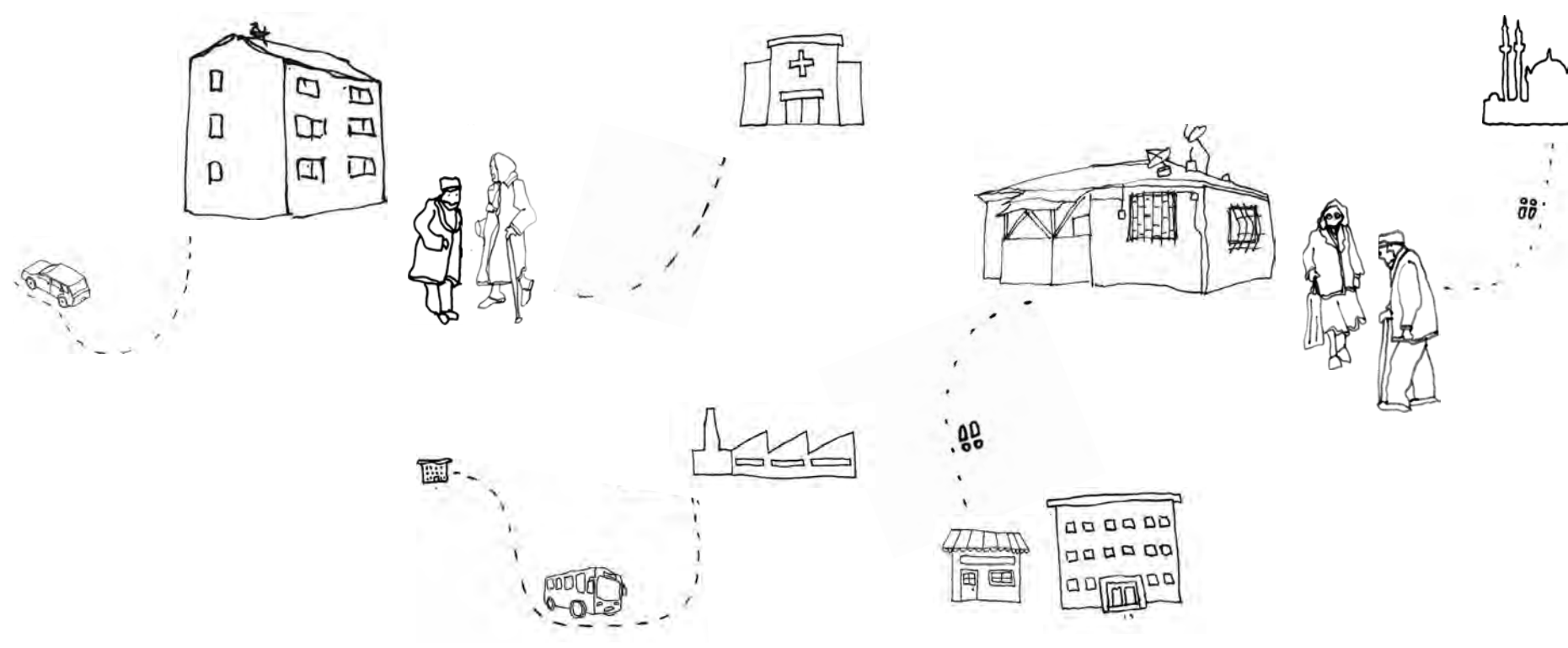

Figure 5 - Gecekondu Connections: People / Pathways / Places


Figure 6 - Traces of Inhabitation

Methodology

Literature research into methodology was carried out through studying precedents of socio-spatial and/or ethnographic methods.

The chosen methods harnessed for this research build upon the diverse practices of Interview/Observation/ Graphic Analysis of Rapaport, Alexander, Fathy, Nishiyama, and Menzel/Qingjun & Hongjie. However, this research reinterprets aspects of their methods to align best with the goals of a socio-spatial graphic analysis of the Istanbul gecekondu.

Amos Rapoport's *House Form and Culture*[11]

Rapoport work is inherently cross-disciplinary through investigating the behavioural aspect of settlements as a cultural geographer. He believes that Anthropologists ignore the physical setting where these traditions are played out and to which they are inherently tied. He focuses on the vernacular building process, breaking up environmental and social-cultural aspects of the home into general patterns.
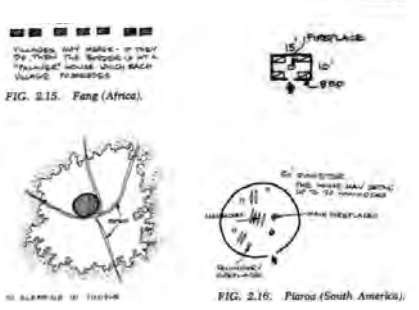
Hassan Fathy's *Architecture for the Poor*[12]

His seminal research in New Gourna demands that architects pay attention to the socio-cultural values of the inhabitants for which they design. He persevered with a unique interview process, viewed as peculiar in its political context, by interviewing each family separately to inspire a specific home for each resident. Inhabitants were truly heard; taken to view housing and asked to explain aspects of their living situations that they enjoyed.

Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*[13]

Coming from a mathematical background, Alexander poses a scientific language or database of settings required for an effective city. His database of city makeup is both social and scientific; focusing on both architectural and natural places to 'wait' or 'hang out', such as the tree to gather for shade, yet always systematically defined. He focuses on scales from building construction (where he suggests a pattern for one to construct their own home efficiently), to that of the town and city (where he situates such a plan within a wider cultural pattern).
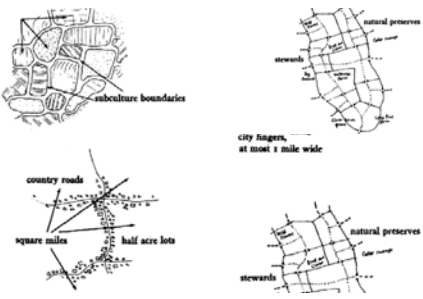
Nishiyama's Ethnographic Drawings[14]

Nishiyama mapped daily patterns of life through hand-sketching in a diagrammatic way. His work includes layers of information through line drawing and annotation. His use of the perspective room plan, for example, was annotated with the types of objects and movement of people within. It combines the qualitative and the quantitative in a legible format.
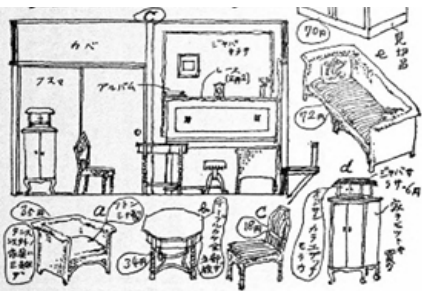
Menzel's Material World: *A Global Family Portrait*[15], and Qingjun & Hongjie's *Family Stuff*[16]

Both researches turned family homes inside-out; asking families to display their possessions in front of their homes. Inspired by Menzel's Material World, focusing on a statistically-average family in 30 cities around the world, Family Stuff harnesses the methodology in China. The families' choice over the layout of possessions tells a story, where specific objects are (sub)consciously highlighted related to their associated level of importance. Based on a variety of cultural factors, it is clear that value is assigned for reasons varying from monetary, use, or sentimentality.

Figure 7 - Research Method Precedents

Method

A combined method of Interview/Observation/Graphic Analysis informs the Graphic Ethnography produced during this research. The Graphic Ethnography is both the results (of representation) and the method (of collection) of the research, through the fact that the illustrations (explanatory diagrams and analytical plan drawings) and photographs all serve as a tactic to document while researching, but also are the basis of the final representation.

The ethnographic approach is important as the informal and complex network of the gecekondu could not be unpacked without key information from the inhabitants themselves. However, as the gecekondu is built upon a network of countryman trust, or 'komsuluk', I was not immediately trusted, but seen as a foreigner to the neighbourhood. As photographing, drawing, and interviewing can understandably make one feel vulnerable and uncomfortable, especially when exposing the interior of their homes to a 'stranger', it became apparent upon arrival in Istanbul that it would not be a simple process to locate accessible domestic case studies.

Therefore, I harnessed aspects of the afore mentioned researchers in the intersecting fields of architecture and ethnography/anthropology, in both collection and representation.

Collection - New knowledge finding:

Just as Rapaport comes from an anthropological background, insisting on an essential appreciation of the behavioural alongside the spatial, this research will ensure an essential appreciation of the behavioural first, manifested by the spatial (not typical for an architect). This will be ensured through an interview approach like Fathy's, where the inhabitants will not be treated as clients, but their stories genuinely listened to. Of course in this research, there is not the end goal of design such as with Fathy, but instead of representation of such stories played out in space. Hidden information on domestic and urban practices gathered through oral histories will influence and be overlaid with socio-spatial analyses of the homes and neighbourhood of Kazim Karabekir. This will bring the graphical aspect to the ethnographic collection of histories.

Display - New knowledge representing:

The systematic graphic documentation of Alexander in breaking down the make-up of cities will be harnessed for the gecekondu at both the scale of the home and the neighbourhood. This will allow each case study to be approached methodically in their analysis and representation. The research will also harness the graphic method of Nishiyama to document home visits to the gecekondu, where spatial and oral information must be noted quickly, but also in order to accessibly tell the story to a wider audience in a digestible way. The understanding that objects drawn will represent specific behavioural and architectural traditions is rooted in the photography work by Menzel/ Qingjun & Hongjie, where cultural heritage of specific populations is presented very differently to that portrayed by the media. Graphic importance will be given to objects that gecekondu inhabitants focus on in the interview, in order to unearth specific micro-histories. However, photography (in a rather amateur way) of the gecekondu itself will also play a role in documenting the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER 1:
POSITIONING THE RESEARCH - THEORY

Figure 8 - Fields of Umraniye from nearby Camlica Hill, 1940

Arrival City: Gecekondu as facilitator

The historic Istanbul of Ottoman palaces one reads about is confined to the shores of the Bosphorus, and is in fact dwarfed in area by the residential inland, and its peripheries. A fuller story of Istanbul, is one as an Arrival City, where the gecekondu acts as a facilitator of such occupation. What was once the peripheries of historic Istanbul is now coveted central real-estate, much of which hosts a history as a gecekondu.

In the 1950s, Turkey's economy shifted from an agricultural to an industrialised one. To modernise transport and farming processes, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes replaced the former dirt tracks of the Silk Road with a modern highway system and sent 40,000 tractors to the countryside. Its success led to a major influx of migrants to support the cities' industrial boom. However, Turkish cities were not equipped to house the increase in rural migrants. Despite higher wages and availability of labour, compared to its waning accessibility in their home provinces, migrants were met with no formal governmental support. This led to the establishment of informal and incremental settlements, or 'gecekondus', on peripheral public land. This illegal process was tolerated by municipalities as their cheap labour was an essential part of the cities' industrialisation process.[1]

An important milestone in Istanbul's position as an Arrival City was the 1950s erection of Harem Bus, where the modern Turkish Road system made it possible for migrants to cross the vast country efficiently. It acted as the last stop on the central Silk Road Route, with 500,000 settlers arriving in the city annually in the 1980-90s. Despite the city's 'fullness', the bus station continues to host the arrival of many of Istanbul's 250,000 annual newcomers. [2]

This phenomenon created a dualistic urban system between the existing (formal) and the 'other' (informal), both socially and politically. Despite the need for gecekondu inhabitants in Istanbul's economy, the unexpected 'new Istanbul' which emerged within one generation, was consistently looked down upon by existing Istanbulite elite.[3] However, over the decades, their arrival en-masse and hence potential as voters and taxpayers, demanded attention from municipalities. These ex-rural peripheries, founded similarly across the developing world, have therefore proved themselves as influential, despite their informality, on a national and global scale: where people are lifted form poverty, and a new middle-class is forged. They 'are the places where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born, or where the next great explosion of violence will occur... depending on our ability to notice, and our willingness to engage'.[4] Gecekondus have transformed into more than the initial and urgent need for simple shelter, into a complex social and political issue spanning local and national administrations.[5]

As Saunders states, 'in the fight for space in the city, the main weapon of the rural émigré is physical presence'. In Istanbul, this took effect, where the reality of thousands of families settling on the periphery, and forging their own 'Guerrilla' connections to city services such as electricity or water, was enough to force the municipality to allow them to remain, and oftentimes provide them with improved utilities. It is a paradoxical situation, where government-appointed teachers taught at illegally built schools, and municipality bus routes emerged where gecekondu entrepreneurs had been taxying residents between the neighbourhood and the city centre informally.[6]

During Umraniye's village period, the muhtar established connection to electricity grid, by stealing materials from the local IETT warehouse and holding a deputy hostage. This dramatic situation pushed the mayor at time to bring electricity officially to the people.[7] Mass informality creates agency for the marginalised, as they encroach upon the majority. Utilising their komsuluk, gecekondu neighbourhoods can have sway within their local municipalities, essential in demanding state-provided infrastructure for their self-built housing. Access is often through a combination of hidden and open channels, such as with Kazim Karabekir's 1980 muhtar. A 'bankrupt businessman from Gaziantep' managed to leverage his city-level connections to mobilise the telephone, electricity, and asphalting process for the previously muddy wasteland. His connections allowed him to form the Cami Yaptırma Derneği (Mosque construction Association) and construction of the local school.

However, the gecekondu era as it was known is over. The neo-gecekondu resident is impoverished and disconnected; forced to find remote land far from existing communities, reducing their agency through group action when demanding infrastructure from the government. However, the sense of perseverance in setting up a new life for oneself is still strong in the rural periphery. Just as gecekondu arrival in the 1970s were looked down upon, yet succeeded, perhaps there is potential yet for those newly arriving.
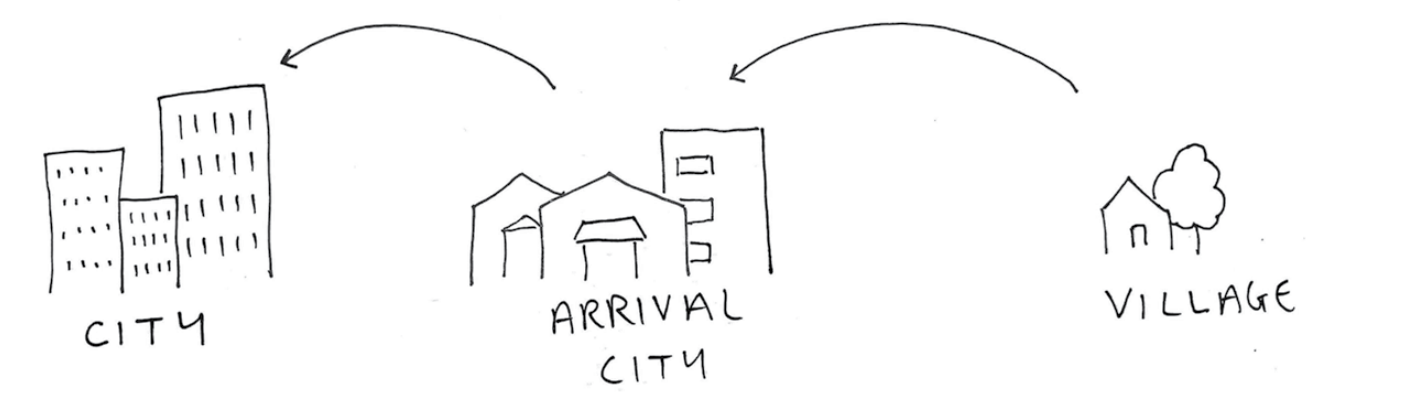

CITY   ARRIVAL   VILLAGE
            CITY

Third Place

Ray Oldenburg, an American Sociologist, coined the term Third Place in 1989 in his book The Great Good Place.[8] A Third Place describes a social space outside of one's home (First Place) or work (Second Place) that provides a sense of place and an equal platform for discussion in the city. The importance of the Third Place in the Arrival City is its ability to strengthen komsuluk relations and hence create a stronger presence to demand for rights. Informal public gathering places are 'part of the landscape as of the citizen's daily life', where a human being is seen as a person, as opposed to an anonymous customer[9] Cities become icons of their Third Places, so much so that Turkey is known for its tea and coffee-drinking haunts. Such spaces are the 'essence of the city' as they nourish interaction, without which, inhabitants would feel 'lonely within their crowds'.[10] However, In Istanbul, such iconic Third Places are reserved for male populations of the city. The female equivalent, which Oldenburg evades, acts in the private sphere, hidden from society, yet still provides connection to others, as a Third Place should.

Although komsuluk relationships can be developed in many ways, such as through daily chats on the street or at the mosque, almost half of Kazim Karabekir frequently access the Kahvehane for this purpose. This space becomes important for men to strengthen such relations and position themselves within their new society. In fact, specific Kahvehanes are often associated to their specific 'Hemsehri Association'; in this case Ordu, where regulars have migrated from the same hometown.

Both the Associations and the Kahvehane act as forms of town hall, where one could find local informal leaders from their respective villages, as well as current small-business owners, and retired civil servants. This allowed for questions regarding the village, and the gecekondu, to be answered at ease. The men would meet daily and could communicate comfortably in their own accents, discussing topics mainly at the neighbourhood level. Associations were also often based in the Kahvehane, providing a sense of establishment and institutionalisation to an informal coffee-house; a more physical presence within the city for migrant populations. This encouraged politicians from different parties to visit and mobilise townspeople, a simple way to gather locals in a space comfortable to them.
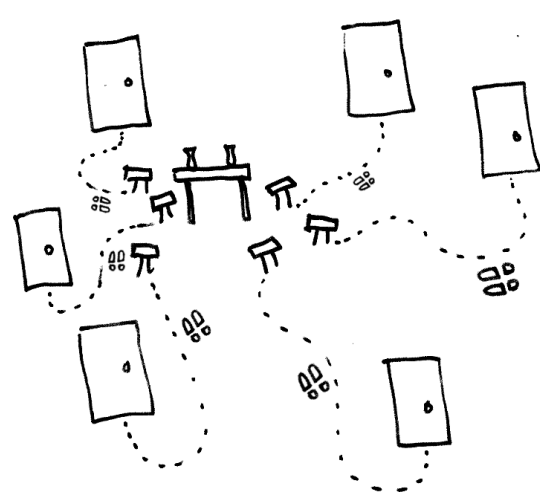
Threat to Third Place: TOKI

Third Places of the gecekondu are at risk at the hands of neo-liberal policy. TOKI, the 'Housing Development Administration of the Republic of Turkey', was established by The Mass Housing Law of 1984 in response to the situation of inadequate housing in Turkey. Government-backed TOKI have been constructing and financing mass housing projects for 35 years, completing 43,000 dwellings pre-2002, with credit support for a further 940,000. This may sound essential in the face of the housing crisis, but for both TOKI and the government, profit has been valued over the livelihoods of gecekondu communities, where TOKI work with local municipalities to identify gecekondu settlements to demolish, evict inhabitants from their neighbourhoods and push them to often unaffordable high-rises in vacant areas far from the city centre. As TOKI continues to be given increased political powers, cooperatives that operate in gecekondu areas have much less agency. Alongside the destruction of traditional ways of living, is the destruction of Third Places and hence one's sense of 'civic-ness'.

In 2003, "The Emergency Action Plan for Housing and Urban Development" was passed, setting a five-year goal of creating 250,000 quality housing units by 2007, which TOKI reached by 2011.[11]

Plans to demolish Kazim Karabekir and its adjacent neighbourhoods are moving forward with the municipality. In its place, the construction of high-rise concrete apartment blocks has been proposed, as is typical with TOKI projects throughout Turkey, whether when replacing gecekondus or on vacant land.

Threat to Third Place

In collaboration with Urban Planners Muad Planlama, a neighbourhood-wide masterplan has been established, taking advantage of Urban Renewal Laws that earmark much of Umraniye as land for development.[12] TOKI's construction could be viewed as slum upgrading; 'insufficient, overly expensive and traps us in a hopeless catch-up mode'.[13] This reactive approach to rapidly rehouse is expensive and socially disruptive, ignoring long-term goals of development. Firstly, it will be unlikely that any gecekondu dweller will be able to afford the rent in such a home, forcing them to move out of their neighbourhood. For example, as most gecekondu residents are not formally employed due to their education level, their access and proximity to Informal Work is an issue in the new TOKI housing. Daily transportation costs for workers are too high to make commuting to the nearby city worth it. It also impacts on the smaller scale, where the intangible sense of community, where public spaces are appropriated as extensions of the interior, has been lost. This includes access to Third Places (civic nodes).

As can be inferred from proposed renderings of the below construction project, the replacement form of housing is inappropriate for gecekondu evictees in terms of socio-spatiality.

Constructing for rapid urbanisation demands fast, large-scale responses to meet immediate needs while providing for the community in the long-term. Housing construction cannot continue as it has done in Turkey, where traditional street lives are being lost through the creation of TOKI's mass housing. With government policies focusing on profit, speed and scale, the social practices enacted in the squatter settlements to be destructed are ignored. Incremental Housing could therefore be a more culturally-appropriate part of Turkey's housing solution.

Figure 9 - TOKI's vision for Kazim Karabekir gecekondu

Apartment-isation

In the early 1900s, the narrow streets of central Istanbul were lined with an eclectic mix of newly-built concrete structures and traditional timber Ottoman ones. Unlike this, the 'modern' urban apartment 'block' for the 'modern' nuclear family was characterised as 'multi-storey, rectangular masses with large windows and unadorned facades'.[14] This was the physical manifestation of a modern city life, which the gecekondu inhabitants left their rural hometowns in search of. Despite the initial gecekondu providing for their needs, both immediate and those developed thereafter, it was often the dream of inhabitants to live in an 'apartment'. This gave rise to 'Yap-Sat' construction, where inhabitants were able to achieve a sense of validity within the city; providing themselves with this modern way of life.

When early rural migrants began to move to the periphery of the city, these 'modern' apartment were not accessible to them, who instead populated gecekondu settlements. As early as the 1950s-1960s brought 'modern' mass housing construction with the aim of slum-clearance.[15] This, however, was not accessible for the gecekondu inhabitants, as it is today with TOKI's mass rehousing schemes,

The word 'housewife' directly connects the woman to domestic space, as it does in its Turkish 'ev kadını'. It presents the house as an extension to the woman's identity.[16] The Turkish woman was in control of the aesthetics of her home, harnessing it as an extension to her persona, reflecting her ability as a successful homemaker, as well as her husband's financial status. This modern image stretched as far as the patriarchal household structure would allow, and could afford, as ultimately the wife was still existing within her domestic realm.[17] The apartment also had specifically represented a specifically modern 'woman'.

The middle-class Turkish Woman was at the forefront of the modernisation research of Turkey. In 1930s, the first Republican women were represented as educated and working; making an impact in the public sphere. However, by 1950s, this image had been replaced by one of domestication; a ruler solely of her domestic sphere.[18] This duality of supposed equality to men in the public sphere, yet as solely a housewife in the private sphere, was heavily influenced by Turkey's alliance with the USA, and hence image of the American housewife.[19] The gecekondu woman was separated from this discourse somewhat, as lower-class and more conservative rural migrants. However, her image as a homemaker, albeit without any expensive electrical machinery to aid household chores, was synonymous with that of women around the country.
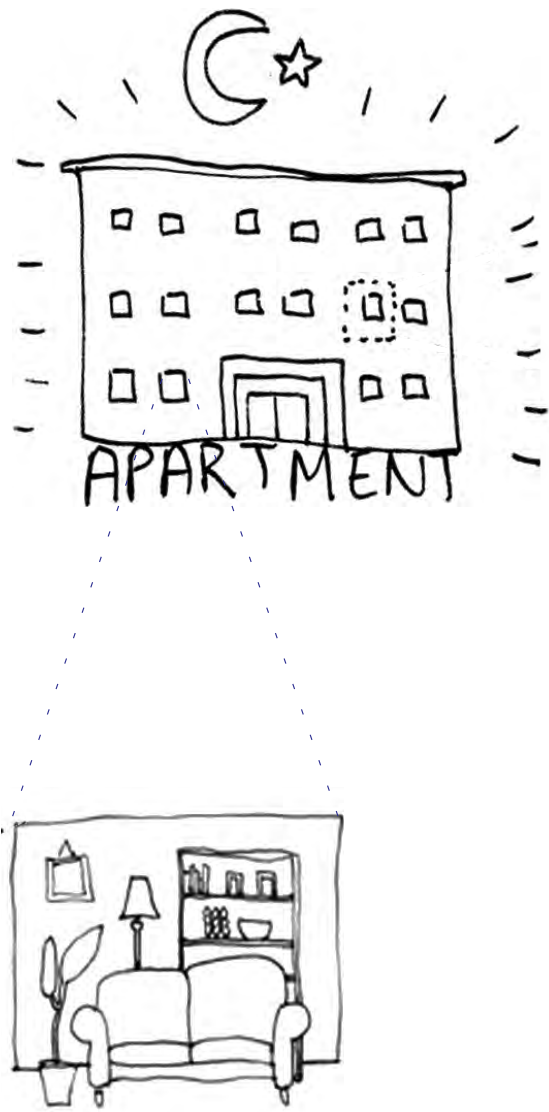
Chapter 2:
LOCATING THE GECEKONDU

Figure 10 - Umraniye Gecekondu Life, 1940s

province

"Our hearts lies in Ordu"
Omer

Istanbul

Ordu

municipality

Umraniye

neighbourhood

Kazim Karabekir

"There are so many Ordu people here - we all know each other!"
Ahmet

Figure 11- Locating the Gecekondu

City // Municipality // Neighbourhood

Istanbul

As one of the oldest cities in the world, Istanbul retains centuries of layered history; acting as the capitol of the Roman, Byzantine, Latin, and Ottoman Empires, and hence boasts a diverse cultural legacy.[1] Despite the move of the capital to Ankara at the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Istanbul has retained its place as an economic and cultural hub.

Turkey strategically straddles Europe and Asia both geographically and culturally, with the border running through Istanbul as the Bosphorus strait. Istanbul has therefore been at the intersection of trade routes between the continents for centuries, and still acts as one of the most active ports globally. It is the densest city in Turkey, with 2,800 inhabitants per square kilometre, and a total population of 14.4 million.[2]Since the 1950s' industrialisation, it became a hotbed for the gecekondu, alongside Ankara. However, by the early 1980s, the proportion of Istanbulites living in such settlements reached 50% of its 3 million inhabitants.[3] Umraniye

Umraniye

Umraniye is located on the Asian side of Istanbul, just inland of its neighbouring municipality, Uskudar, from which it was separated in 1906 when both were just villages. Despite Umraniye's humble beginnings of 500 Black Sea immigrants in 1940, it has seen exponential growth since the 1950s, forming its own municipality in 1963. However, turbulent times lay ahead: the municipality was abolished and reconnected to Uskudar by the 1980 military coup, before regaining independence in 1989.[4]

Umraniye today is composed of a lively commercial district to support its 645,000-strong population negotiating both the informal and formal housing sector. It balances the evolving gecekondu neighbourhoods of its outskirts from single-story shacks to 4-storey apartments, alongside modern high-rises constructed in the commercial centre.

Umraniye is located on a main motorway with which one can traverse one of the two bridges linking Asia to Europe, making it an attractive real-estate investment. Despite its growth, it has managed to retain more greenery and wider streets compared to similarly rapidly growing neighbourhoods on the European side of the city.

Kazim Karabekir

Migration patterns to Umraniye shifted in 1970s towards those from rural Anatolia. This research unearths the stories of such newcomers to Kazim Karabekir neighbourhood, specifically the people of Ordu, an Eastern province of the Black Sea Coast. More specifically, it looks at the stories of families living just off the neighbourhood's main road, which they named Ordu Caddesi.

Kazim Karabekir is located by the forested North-East border of Umraniye. Although previously empty fields attached to the adjacent Inkilap neighbourhood, rapid population in the 1970s warranted its formal separation as a neighbourhood. It took its name in 1978, after the controversial military and political figure Kazim Karabekir, born in 1882 in Istanbul.[5] His role as Eastern Front Commander, rescued most of Turkey's Eastern states from the Russians post-WWI, securing him as a National Hero for Turkey's Eastern populations – of whom the neighbourhood is composed of. His following political career was tumultuous, as chairman of the opposition party of the newly-founded Republic, swiftly shut down by Ataturk in 1925.[6]

The establishment of the Umraniye municipality, and the Kazim Karabekir neighbourhood, provided a sense of political legitimacy to settlers, and therefore more formal connections to political parties. Kazim Karabekir is not a standard gecekondu neighbourhood, but is in fact aspired to as a place to live by gecekondu residents elsewhere. Today, despite the majority of the neighbourhood being built up already, it is still seen as a final step in upward social mobility, as many inhabitants are received from other, worse-off gecekondu areas, or squalid timber tenement homes in more central Istanbul. The process of achieving gecekondu presence in Kazim Karabekir has now shifted from constructing a home on the forested periphery of the city, to renting an apartment in what could now be viewed as central Istanbul.
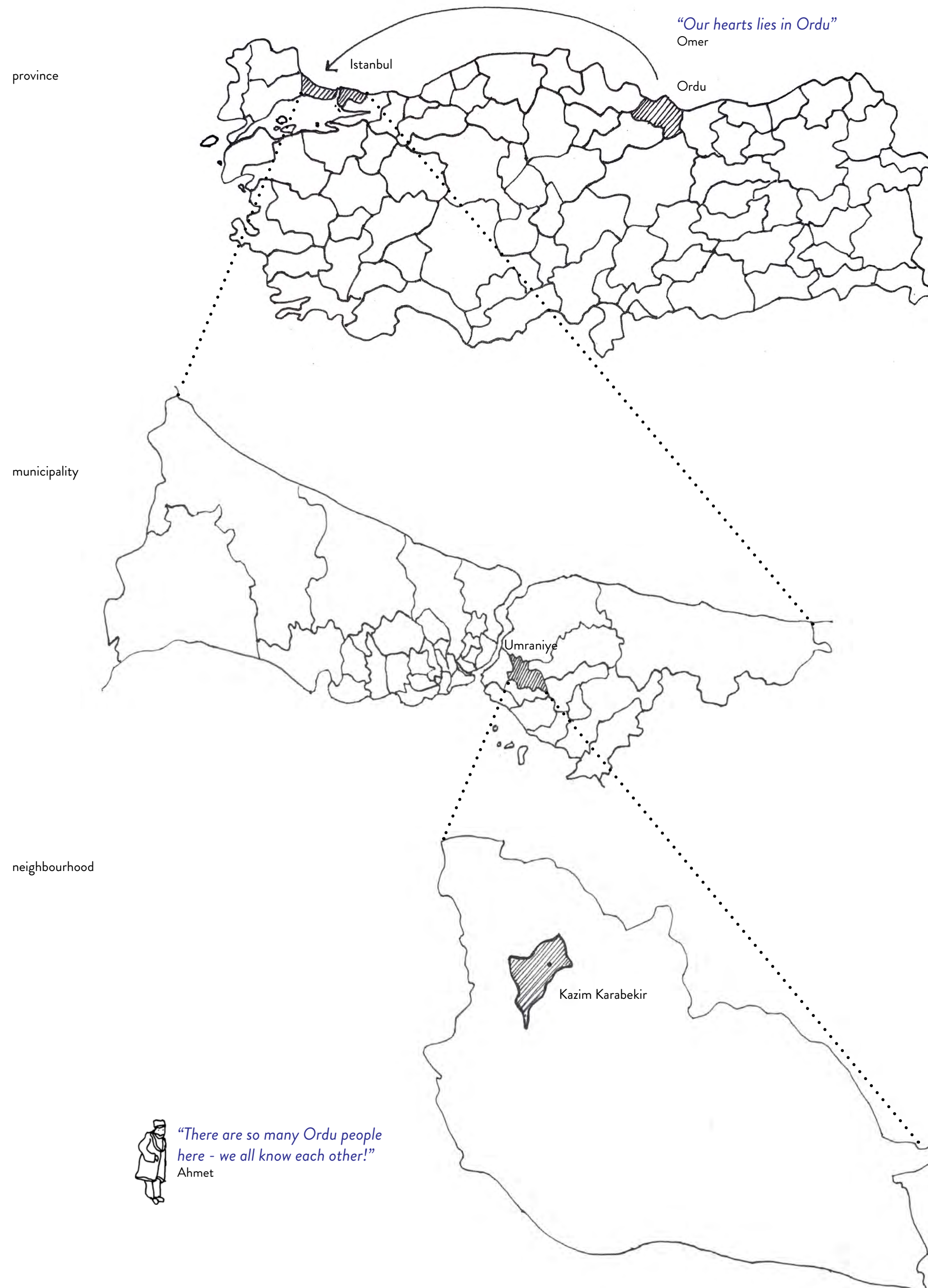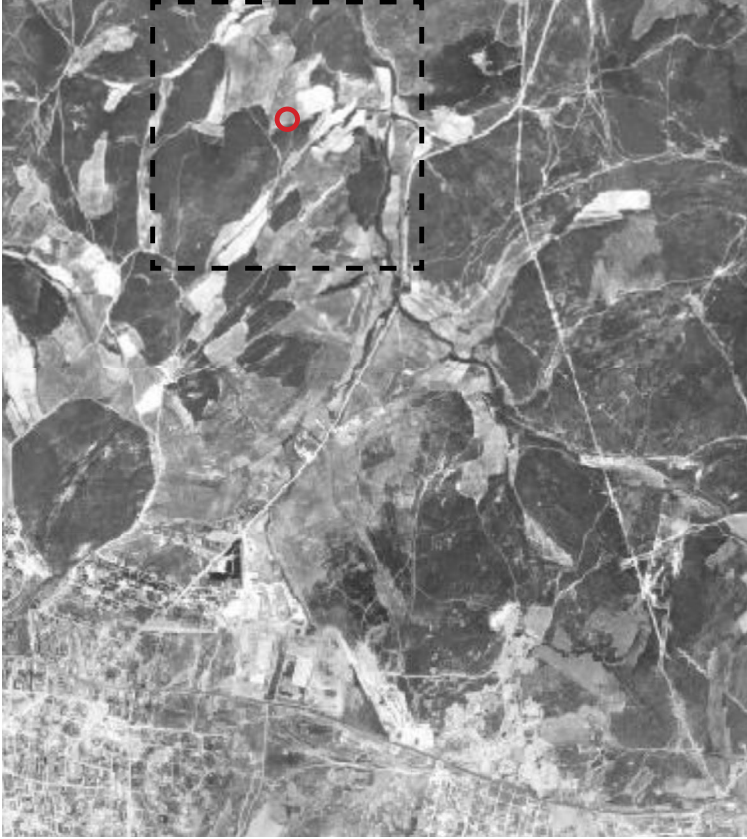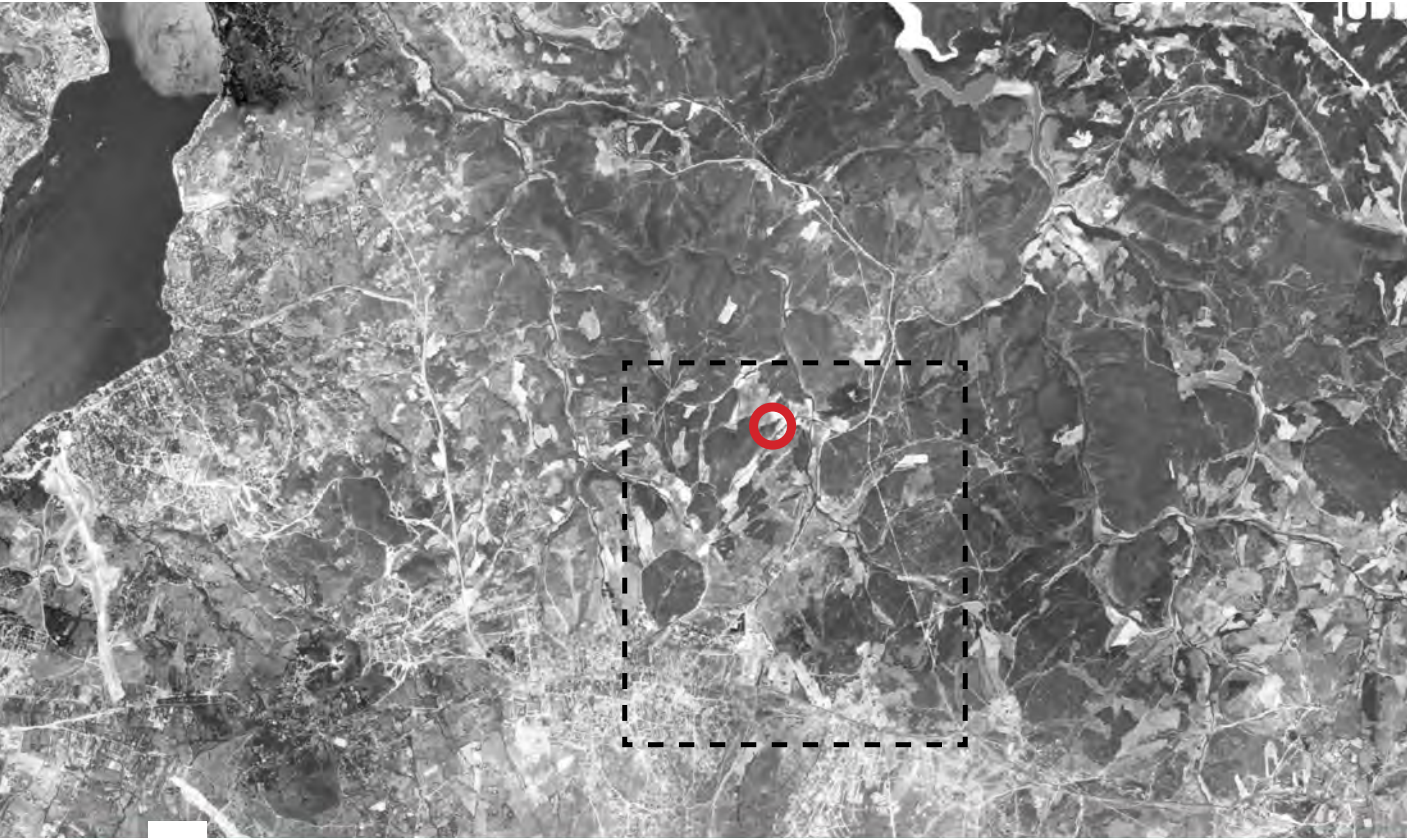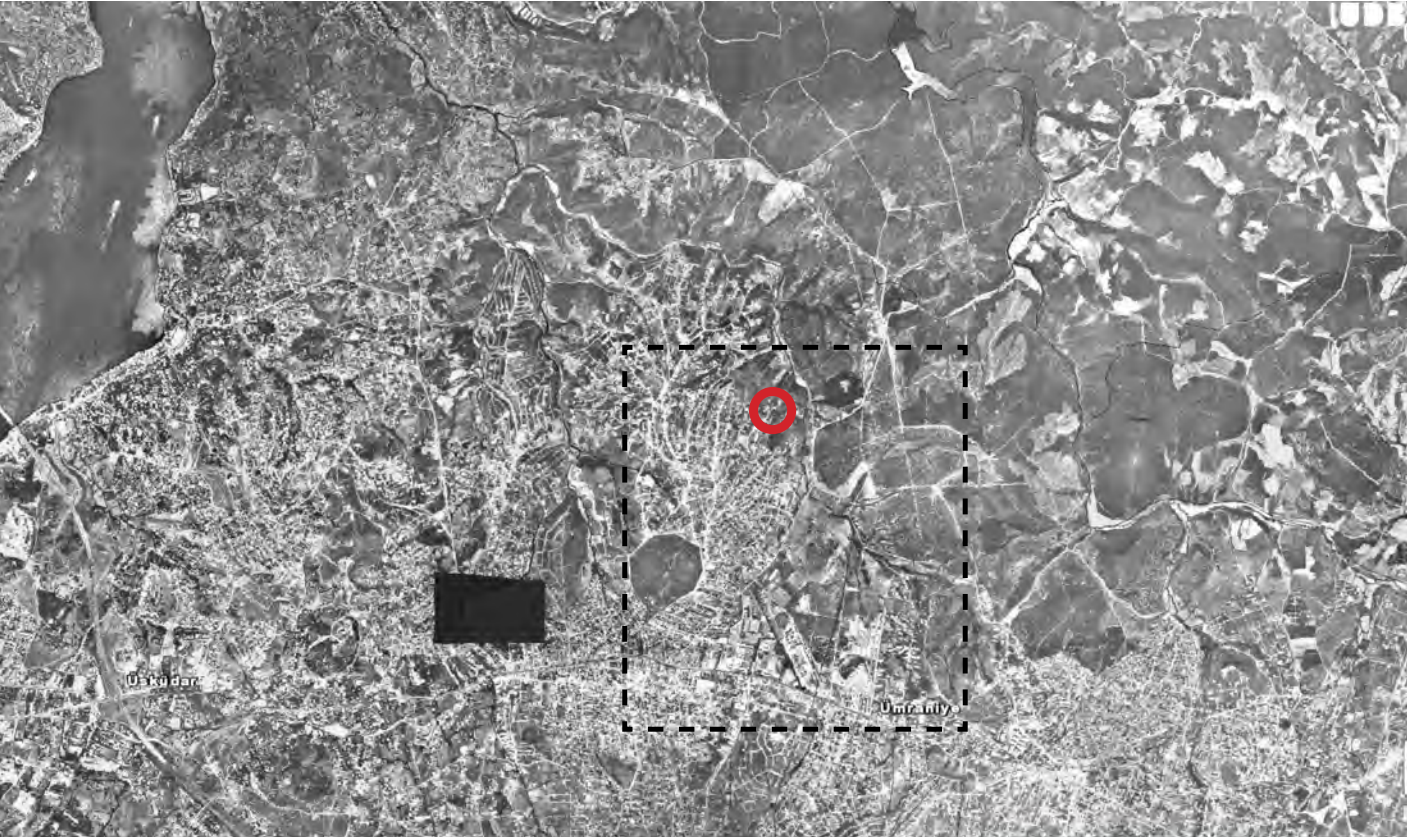
Land Development

Gecekondu

CITY PERIPHERY: FIELDS

1982

Gecekondu

INDUSTRY GROWING

To European side via 2nd Bosphorus Bridge ↑

2020

Gecekondu

CITYWIDE TRANSPORT LINKS
ESTABLISHED

Figure 12 - Umraniye satellite imagery (all on spread)

Spatial vs. Socio-Political Timeline

NETAS Factory Established, 1970

Alemdag Main Shopping Street, 1970

Umraniye no longer peripheral, 2020

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

'Dudullu' area, now part of industrial Umraniye, functioned as the forested hunting ground of Sultan Abdulaziz

1967:
Establishment of factories Umran Boru and NETAS. One a high-quality global steel pipe manufacturer and the other a system integration R&D, modernising Turkey's defence communication

1969:
Establishment of industry (Furniture Decoration), in Dudullu supported by Ministry of Industry and Trade

1976:
Establishment of Industrial Site in Dudullu (650,000 msq), procured from Land Registry - construction took 10 years

Dudullu's Organised Industrial Zone produces machinery metal, furniture, automotive parts, food and beverage, electronics, textiles, chemistry, paper, construction, and carries out customs clearance and warehouse

1987:
Establishment of 2 industrial sites in Dudullu, procured from State Land Office - construction took 10 years. Today the DES site (390,000 msq) still employs 12,000.

1897:
Construction of single-minaretted Cevherags Mosque (a.k.a Umraniye Mosque) by Sultan II under reign of Abdulhamid Han

1913:
Construction begins on Uskudar/Alemdag Electric Tram Line - but never completed..

1945:
Establishment of Umraniye Radio Transmitter - enabled village to be connected to the city. It is still the only vacant area of the district.

1950:
Opening of Uskudar-Sile Road, connecting the districts improved Umraniye's quarries and brickwork, as people started to move from Sile and Black Sea

1964:
Commencement of municipal bus service between Uskudar and Alemdag Village, but discontinued 2 years later.

1965:
Greater Istanbul Masterplan designated Umraniye as one of 9 Industrial Areas providing 970 hectares of periphery land

1968:
Establishment of Umraniye High School

1971:
Implementation of 1971 Masterplan - approving 'Ring Roads Position Plan' and tendered Bosphorus Bridge. Development Loan agreement with World Bank developed practical programs necessary for the predicted development asociated with the new bridge and ringroad.

1973:
Opening of Bosphorus Bridge

"In the 1980s, every morning we woke up, there would be five new homes on our street"
Ahmet

1988:
Opening of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge. This, alongside the ring road leading to it from Umraniye's cente, played huge role in development of the District.

1993:
Explosion of Hekimbasi Dump - as a result of methane gas accumulation from improper disposal of landfill. 11 adjacent gecekondu homes were engulfed, killing 39 inhabitants.

MAJOR EXPANSION:

2012:
Opening of Mimar Sinan Mosque to worship
Construction of large shopping malls (including Istanbul's first branch of IKEA!)

MODERNISATION AND CONNECTION

2017:
Construction begins for Goztepe-Umraniye Metro

2017:
Establishment of Umraniye Municipality's Youth Sports Club, alongside the start of an annual Traditional Archery Competition and Folk Dance Festival.

2018:
Opening of Uskudar-Umraniye Metro

2018:
Closure of Alemdag Street to traffic part of Pedestrianisation Research

1940 population: Umraniye 500 of Istanbul's 790,000

1955 population: Umraniye 1,800 of Istanbul's ~1 million

1970 population: Umraniye 28,000 of Istanbul's 2.1 million
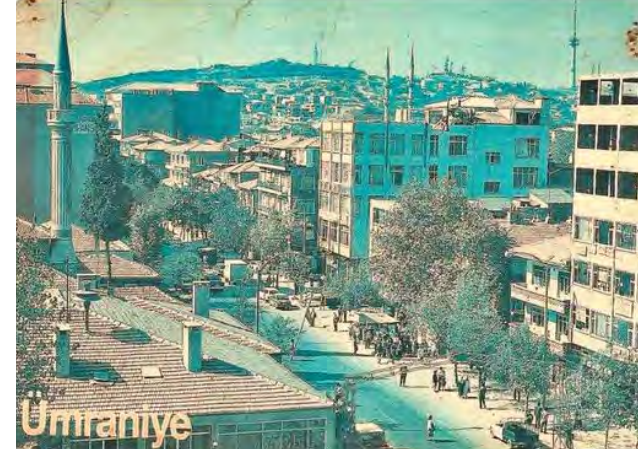
1975-1980: Umraniye is 3rd fastest-growing district in Istanbul due to inner-city migration

1980 population: Umraniye 100,000 of Istanbul's 2.9 million

1990 population: Umraniye 300,000 of Istanbul's 6.6 million

2000 population: Umraniye 610,000 of Istanbul's 8.1 million

2010 population: Umraniye 600,000 of Istanbul's 12.6 million

2020 population: Umraniye 713,000 of Istanbul's 15.2 million

SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

1923:
FORMATION OF TURKISH REPUBLIC

1955: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 22%
No. gecekondus: 55,000

1960: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 25%
No. gecekondus: 240,000

1965: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 30%
No. gecekondus: 420,000

1970: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 33%
No. gecekondus: 600,000

1980: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 45%
No. gecekondus: 1.15 million

1990: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 51%
No. gecekondus: 1.75 million

1995: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 55%
No. gecekondus: 2 million

2002: TURKEY
Urbanisation rate: 62%
No. gecekondus: 2.2 million

1906:
Umraniye gains village status
Formally separated from Bulgurlu Village (30 minutes away), yet remains a part of Uskudar district. It is inhabited by Black Sea migrants from agricultural backgrounds.

1978:
Establishment of Kazim Karabekir mahalle
Named after controversial military and political figure. It separates from Inkilap district.

1987:
Re-establishment of Umraniye as a district, separate to Uskudar

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

COUP PERIOD

1963:
First Mayoral Election of Umraniye: Ahmet Mert
Candidate of the refugees. During his 4 years in office, gecekondu developments took place through legal means: selling of land to settlers with shared title deeds - parcellation plans accelerated.

1962:
Establishment of Umraniye Municipality

1970:
Unofficial establishment of 1 Mayis District (named after political events of May 1st - Socialist Party protests)

1980:
Major Coup in Turkey: September 12 Revolution.
Umraniye Municipality was closed, and set up as a branch of Uskudar Municipality, where it served under many managers.

1977:
Demolition of the unofficial 1 Mayis District gecekondus led to mass destruction where weapons were used

1977:
Establishment of People's Committee in 1 Mayis Quarter - to manage gecekondu-building activities on behalf of settlers. As their power waned, they set up Elderly Committee, the most important step in eventually legalising the 1 Mayis Quarter

1987:
5 workers massacred by Comunist militants in Umraniye

After the coup, 1 Mayis District was renamed Mustafa Kemal District

Umraniye's gecekondus grow significantly

Turkey's gecekondus are at major risk from Urban Renewal policies - many are destroyed

1949:
Law 5431 'Demolition of Illegally Built Structures' passed, encouraged the demolition of gecekondu neighbourhoods, yet did not discourage new constructions.

1966:
Law 775 'Gecekondu Act' passed: builds on previous laws encouraging destruction, however, it was not consistently put in place for a variety of socio-economic reasons. Gecekondu numbers soared.

1970s:
Gecekondu populations continue to grow despite (failing) Laws to demolish. Authorities see potential in legalising settlements in order to encourage housing improvement, and collect taxes.

1983/1984:
Amnesty Laws 2805 and 2981 passed
Legalising gecekondu settlements previously built on public lands by providing inhabitants with deeds. However, Those built on government-owned land must pay a monthly rent.

2005:
Law 5393 passed: allowed designation of 'urban renewal' zones by local municipalities in 'risk zones' based on broad reasoning e.g. protecting the "historical and cultural texture of the city" or "against natural disaster", meanings both widely taken advantage of for privately-built housing, industrial sites and business centres. This often resulted in mass evictions of gecekondu neighbourhoods.

2010:
Law 5998 passed: an amendment to Law 5393, erased the requirement for City Council permission in the designation process, further encouraging its misuse.

2012:
Law 6303 passed: allows local municipalities, TOKI (Turkey's Housing Development Administration), and Ministry of Environment and Urbanism to disregard previously-designated risk zones in the implementation of 'urban renewal' zones.

Umraniye as inhabitants began to arrive

Beginnings of widespread concrete construction

Umraniye Sports Club and Field, 1988

All Timeline Information interpreted from Istanbul Sehir University, Centre for Urban Studies[7]
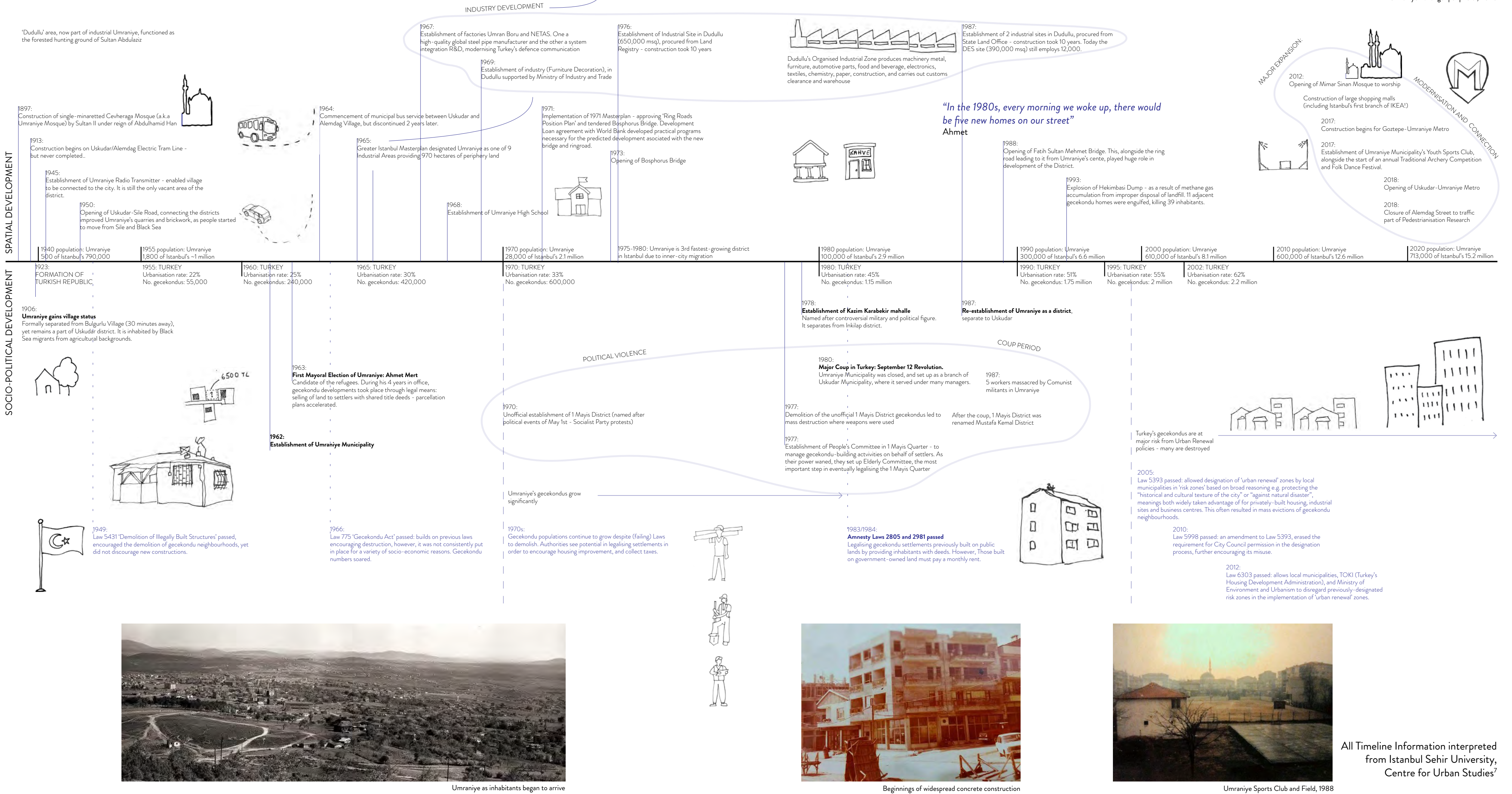
Figure 13 - Timeline (all information and images on spread)

Land Development

State land available for gecekondu construction often came with contested property rights, just as exemplified by the unique case of Kazim Karabekir. The agricultural land beneath and adjacent to this neighbourhood, was owned and used as hunting grounds by an Ottoman prince since the 1800s. Formerly known as the Hekimbasi Estate, it was seized by the state after the 1923 formation of the Republic along with all sultanic property. The land was registered to the Ministry of Treasury as forest in the 1940s, which sparked outrage amongst the descendants of the Ottoman prince.[8] They sued the state for ownership until the 1990s, yet to no avail. And to increase contestation, they sold parcels of the former estate to settlers, to pay for these lawsuits. The transactions were 'legitimised' with the prince's former Ottoman title deeds. Although illegal in many respects, these sales, known as 'village title deeds', were taken advantage of by settlers in the hope of future amnesty to be granted; which did indeed occur.[9]

Upon arrival of the early settlers, Umraniye was empty, with only wild bores home to the area. The growth began as a small number of gecekondu constructions scattered in farmland: part of a complex web of deedless transactions. This unregulated selling and re-selling of land parcels by second- and third-hand buyers and sellers continued due to the lack of regulation and need for workers. In fact, often a large parcel of land would be sold to one man to re-parcel and market as a 'street' to a specific village. Many of these men would accept the 'honour' of naming the street after themselves thanks to their success.[10]

Those with the goal of migrating from Ordu, heard of available land parcels through komsuluk relationship channels, and would in turn visit the plot to assess its suitability. After the purchase of a parcel, it typically took 10 years before construction begun, as the family saved enough capitol, or often waited for services to arrive, such as water, roads, transportation, and primary schools. However, it was also known that the muhtar, as a very 'warm-hearted person', provided free land to the poor escaping terrorism in the East.

"It's too crowded - not everyone knows each other or is as warm as in the past"
Omer

"We have lost the sense of street"
Hatice

Amnesty Laws

Amnesty laws enacted between 1983 and 1988 granted construction permits to gecekondu residents, legalising their plot of land.[11] The 1984 Law in particular enabled four-storey construction, encouraging the 'apartment-isation' of many gecekondu, providing owners with precious and immediate property rights.[12] However, this resulted in the legitimisation of sub-standard housing, and hence '25% of the urban population in Turkey live in dwellings vulnerable to natural disasters'.[13]

Gecekondu inhabitants are proud of their formal position in the city. Families invested their own capital in constructing their own homes, which has provided them a sense of ownership within what is no longer the periphery of the city. Although initially not formally metabolised by the city's economic systems, their growing physical presence, through constructing their own homes and neighbourhoods around, allowed gecekondu inhabitants to claim their place both physically and economically.

Although city land parcels were also advertised through newspapers adverts and real estate agents in rural areas, today gecekondu homes are even advertised on online property websites.[14] Despite their history of 'illegality', this connects a very informal process to something more official, cementing the gecekondu in the formal city economy.

HUNTING GROUNDS

PARCEL-ISATION

CONTINUED MIGRATION AND PARCEL-ISATION

YAP-SAT
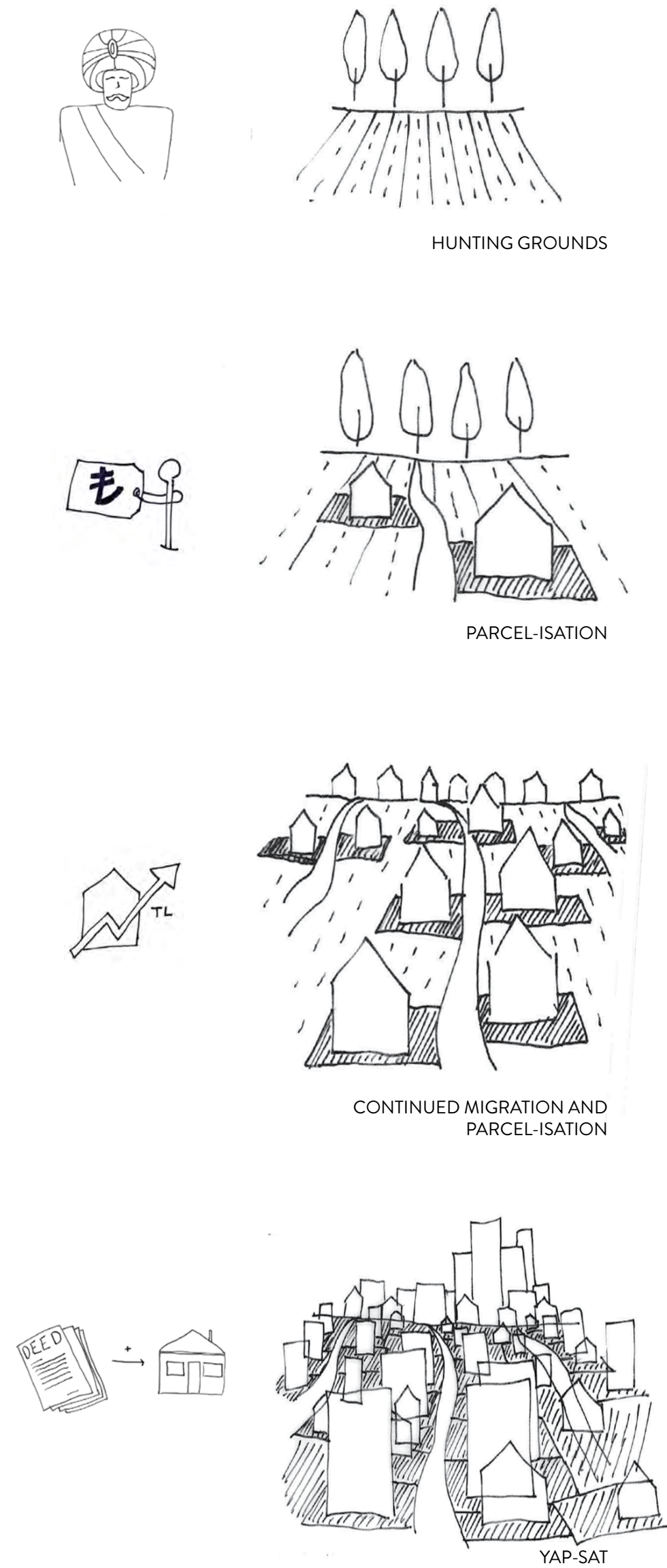
Figure 14 - Land Development

Figure 15 - Threshold Documentation

Figure 16 - Volume Documentation

Neighbourhood Amenities

Factories

Sports centre

Periphery

Banks

Hospital

Shopping Mall

Shops / Bazaar

Primary / Middle / High Schools

Towards Umraniye centre   (Alemdag Caddesi - main shopping street)

ORDU CADDESI

Yap-Sat

Gecekondu

Main mosque

But many smaller ones - on every few streets of neighbourhood. Money collected by locals for construction (pulling on village traditions)

Local

Kahvehane and Hemsire Association (male dominated Third Places)

Local

Groceries and hardware stores (started to pop up as neighbourhood settled)

Figure 17 - Immediate Neighbourhood Analysis

Connection to Umraniye Centre: The Bus

The connection to Umraniye is stronger now due to improvements over the past 20 years, where roads have built up between the initially isolated neighbourhood and the centre, as well as the rest of the city. The increased demand for transport (among other infrastructures) from a continuous stream of new settlers encouraged the informal establishment of a network of local dolmus (small bus) routes. Based on demand, and hence on the layout of the growing gecekondu, such bus routes have become formalised over the decades and continue to be taken advantage of by the majority of the neighbourhood commuting today.

As Kazim Karabekir is situated at the top of a hill, the bus is one of their most cherished resources. In previous decades, as there was little-to-no car ownership, the gecekondu inhabitants would walk to Umraniye for work, or for other duties such as paying bills or vaccinations; just as the children would walk to school. As Umraniye did not even have its own bazaar until it formalised as a municipality, the bus was instrumental in travelling to those of neighbouring districts.

Figure 20 - Bus serving other neighbourhoods of Umraniye, 1950

Figure 18 - Main Umraniye Mosque

Figure 19 - Local Kahvehane

Figure 21 - Local Grocery

People of Ordu

Komsuluk

"I do not trust the people of Istanbul, only my fellow countrymen"
Ahmet

Upon arrival in the (periphery of) the city, the urban experience is built upon komsuluk, where inherently trusted relations between relatives and other villagers are relied upon to settle oneself.[15] As newcomers were not metabolised by the formal systems of housing and employment, such informal relationship channels from their home provinces, in this case Ordu, were utilised to locate a plot of land, communally construct the gecekondu, and source an income to exist. Within the komsuluk network, family relations are always the most trusted, whereas the 'countrymen relations' take time to build up to this level.

Despite leaving Ordu, their sense of 'home' remains there, with 62% of Kazim Karabekir regularly sending food back and visiting relatives.[16] Although each interviewee reported that the gecekondu was not in fact their 'home', their sense of komsuluk, where most households retain daily relationships with relatives in the neighbourhood, brings an aspect of home to the gecekondu. The specific founding process, where neighbours shoulder many of the same difficulties, is formative in the bonding between countrymen: forming a sense of "citizenship" and "belonging" in their new neighbourhood.

Komsuluk has encouraged a steady stream of villagers to the gecekondu, known as 'chain migration'. This has lead to increased proportions of those from the same origin and cultural identity and is a main motivator for migration, as opposed to factors such as employment, for which just 2% of Kazim Karabekir migrated.[17] Interestingly, despite 62% of Kazim Karabekir marrying within their own hometown pool, only 20% arrived already married.[18] This confirms the strength in komsuluk in retaining one's village traditions within the city, and continuing a localised homogeneity within the city neighbourhood.

Hemsehri

Gecekondu settlers utilised their presence, and hence its associated power as they grew, to reform the institutional structure (of municipalities, muhtars, political parties) into a new informal system. Their local politics differs from city's formal structure, based upon which locals can relate to their local leaders through informal relations.[19] These relations occur in the neighbourhood itself, in Third Places such as the Kahvehane, or Hemsehri Associations where one can reach their local representative. In this way, residents are connected to their local issues; many remember their fight for the first public buildings, such as the mosque and primary school, as well as connecting infrastructures.

There are many specifically Ordu Associations in Umraniye. Their impact can be felt on many levels, from personal to political. Such Hemsehri Associations' success is rooted in forging a collective identity. For example, when there is a hometown funeral, the Association will set up a bus service to bring all those form the same town from Umraniye to their relatives.

Employment

Most migrants arrived from an agricultural background, knowing they would switch to work 'blue collar jobs' upon arrival to the city. Due to komsuluk relationship channel, migrants were often referred for work in the same industry as fellow countrymen. Despite commonly working in the Umraniye factories, on a smaller scale it was said that those from Konya became greengrocers, those from the Black Sea became builders, and those form Cankiri became plumbers.[20]

Gecekondus become an opportunity for enterprise and profitability outside of formal city rules. Migrants could take advantage of guaranteed migration to the city periphery. The pioneering immigrants beginning the wave of chain migration, had the potential to prosper in business based on their komsuluk relationships.[21] Many arriving alone took advantage of informal economy built their careers from 'construction worker' to 'contractor' as the gecekondu construction industry grew.

However, before 1990, the Turkish Retirement Laws allowed for early retirement at 38 years of age if the worker has been contributing to taxes for 25 years. Despite the beginning of the gecekondu attracting young individuals or families starting a new life in the city, today it has led to a gecekondu full of mostly retired inhabitants. Although most are not working formally due to the early retirement age, many take up occasional informal work based upon their connections or specific skills.

Ordu Caddesi

N
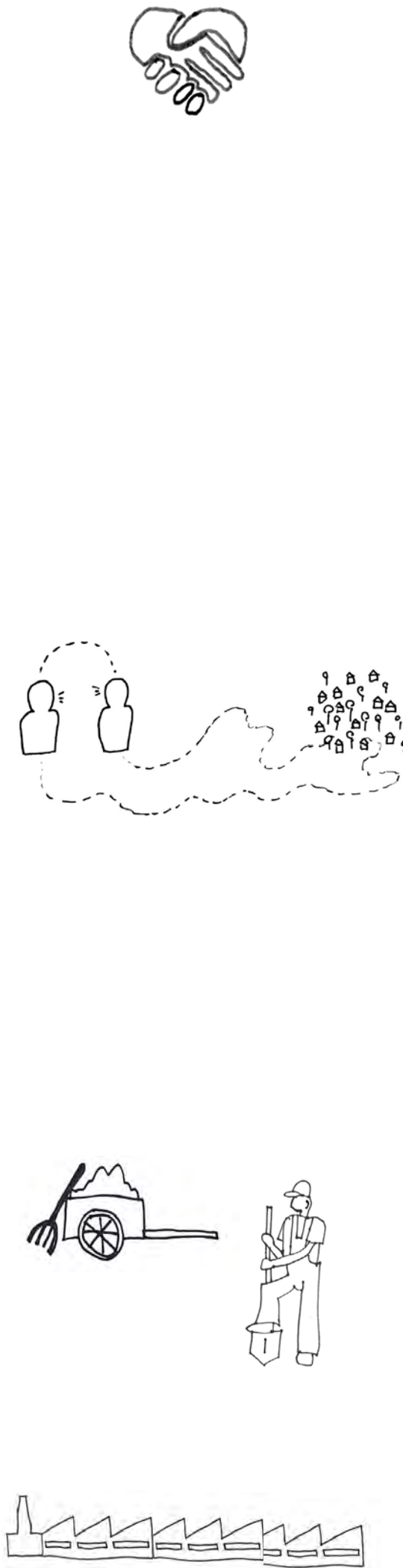
Figure 22 - Ground Plan of Gecekondu Cluster

Naming one's Street

When migrants began to arrive, what used to be Ordu 'Cul-de-Sac', was settled upon by the new inhabitants. However, over time, the street was formally and proudly established by the neighbourhood as 'Ordu Caddesi', or 'Ordu Road'. This was voted on by a strongly Ordu majority, who voted in pride of their hometown. Although many of the older residents interviewed do not feel as though they are from Umraniye, but from their hometown Ordu, their children who grew up in Istanbul, feel as though they are from Umraniye. The parents often spend their summers in Ordu, while the children remain settled in the city.

Both the Gecekondu and Yap-Sat case studies investigated sit just of Ordu Caddesi, in a 'pocket' of housing organised in an informal manner over the decades. The homes are placed on irregularly-sized plots, with differing garden to street thresholds. Many of their back gardens are connected by just a fence, a walkway or courtyard.

Local Residential Fabric

Figure 26 - Overhang

Figure 27 - Set back and discarded

Figure 23 - Porch

The architectural language of the gecekondu, rooted in the initial urgency of construction, and development thereafter, is clear. Although each home is specific, there are patterns rooted in the coloured plastered walls, tiled pitched roofs, overhangs, narrow chimneys, PVC windows and gutters, metal gates, doors and window gratings, exposed wiring and piping, and the red street names and house numbers; formalising an initially informal system. Each one-storey gecekondu construction is juxtaposed by a taller more recently developed Yap-Sat construction, demonstrating the evolution of the gecekondu neighbourhood.

Figure 24 - Blue on Ordu Caddesi

Figure 25 - Material Assemblage

Figure 28 - Irregular Corner Plot

Housing Typologies

Gecekondu

Due to the history of land acquisition and development, gecekondu neighbourhoods are characterised by an irregular settlement pattern of narrow winding roads with passages between homes. This organic growth is spread over decades as the gecekondu settles itself. At the scale of the home, additions are made by inhabitants over time, as their financial situation improves. Due to the unique legal situation stipulating that a fully built home could not be demolished (although regularly ignored by authorities), the gecekondu had to be constructed in one night. Therefore the homes shared similar architectural characteristics inherent in this sense of urgency.

They are constructed from both found and second-hand materials as well as those from local hardware shops set up by newly settled entrepreneurial inhabitants. Their typical foundation consisted of a concrete slab, upon which a small simple room was constructed, with an informal outdoor kitchen and toilet situation. The walls are constructed from hollow clay tiles beneath a rough-plastered straw lathe, with a low-pitched tile or metal corrugated roof, a metal door and window gratings.[22] Over time, as neighbourhoods achieved a greater degree of permanence and inhabitants' wealth increased, rooms and indoor plumbing (including kitchens and bathrooms) were gradually added.

As the initial gecekondus were set up in fields, their connection to the land is strong. There is still a fluidity between the indoors and outdoors, just as in their village homes, where the garden acts as a threshold between street and home.

However, the gecekondu is changing as the Yap-Sat takes over. Some interviewees described that as more newcomers arrive in the neighbourhood from the East of Turkey, and buildings continue to increase in height, their surrounding are becoming more anonymous as they become further settled in the city.
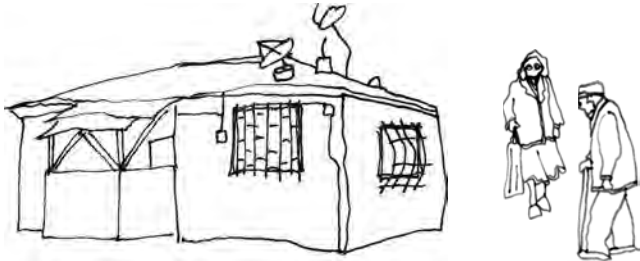
Yap-Sat

Translated as 'Build-Sell', Yap-Sat refers to a construction process prolific in Turkey: that of a land-owner engaging a small-scale contractor to construct a four- or five-storey block of apartments upon their plot. Specific to the deal, the units are split between the land-owner and the contractor, allowing each to gain rental income alongside housing; bolstering many into the middle-classes. Since the 1950s, this development model rapidly transformed the Turkish city, increasing density and homogeneity in the urban fabric. However, nowhere more so than the gecekondu, where the legal land ownership granted to inhabitants by the Amnesty Laws of 1983/4 combined with the lack of public peripheral land encouraged the 'apartmentisation' of once low-rise neighbourhoods.

The initial gecekondu was built initially for shelter purposes only, harbouring 'use value' as opposed to any 'exchange value'. They did not act as an investment, but as a means for existence; where the constructor and inhabitant were of the same social strata, and often the same family. In the case of early migrant to Istanbul's edges, who over time accrued the financial capability, the potential to convert the gecekondu through Yap-Sat was lucrative. One could capitalise on their legal plot ownership alongside the increased need for housing as an investment opportunity, demolishing and constructing in its place an apartment block for rent. However, newer, and often more disadvantaged, migrants were not as fortunate.

This shifts the sole 'use value' to 'exchange value' and enters the previously informal into a semi-formal economy dealing with slightly different labour and material flows. As 'apartmentisation' of the gecekondu occurs, aspects of informality are being lost, yet the residents still feel as though they are from the 'gecekondu'.[23] The word holds a lot of meaning; it's a sense of identity.

The media's assumption of the gecekondu as a homogeneous population does not reflect the impact of the Yap-Sat: where newcomers arrive to rent from existing residents who have scaled-up, in a bid for upwards mobility.[24]

Figure 29 - Single-storey Gecekondu

Figure 30 - Double-storey Yap-Sat

Figure 31 - Home sits within garden

Garden as Semi-Permeable Threshold

The garden acted as the threshold between the street and the home, so was both semi-public/semi-private. It was a collective space; both productive (vegetables grown and pots/carpets washed with neighbours), whilst remaining social (religious events celebrated with neighbours). Aspects mostly lost.

In both of the homes interviewed, the inhabitants lamented for their more social past in the garden, which despite its existence still in front of many one-storey gecekondus, has lost its importance. Neighbours recounted stories of gathering; bringing food or tea to share whilst they chatted and watched the children play in the street in front.

"The garden made way for the 'brotherhood' to form."
Havva

Figure 32 - Garden as Productive

CHAPTER 3:
GECEKONDU

Figure 33 - A Rural Life in the City

Introduction

In the gecekondu lives the wife and her husband, now in their 70s, who arrived form Ordu in the 1970s. Their children have moved away to other neighbourhoods in Istanbul after marriage. The family have a strong relationship with production from their rural heritage in agriculture and making, such as the wife's father, who was a basket weaver. They brought this aspect of their hometown living to their gecekondu through their garden, which continues to provide for the family.

Adjusting to life in the gecekondu was traumatic for the wife, where she felt abandoned that her parents 'sent [her] away to the other side of the world' without checking the state of her new life. This 'new life' in the city was entirely different to how she expected, and experienced in her hometown village. When the wife was brought over to live with her husband and is parents, she didn't know where Istanbul was (let alone Umraniye), or the difficulties of the urban condition they were to settle themselves within. In fact, she continued to suffer terribly; living with a lack of water, gas, electricity, and paved roads for years.

In the early days, before essential infrastructures had reached the neighbourhood, the women of the street had to trapse through deep mud in boots to collect water a three-hour walk away, using large plastic containers. Bread and other foods were brought on a tractor to Kazim Karabekir and sold off the back of it. However, for items they could not grow, make, or buy from the tractor, they would travel to the closest bazaar in the neighbouring municipality, as they did not have their own until Umraniye established itself as one.

It was exhausting activities such as this which encouraged a family-like bond between the neighbours, which has served them through many trials over the decades. For example, recently the neighbours unified to support a family member during a night-time fight!

"People are willing to help, no matter what the time"
Havva

Figure 34 - Wife welcoming us to the Gecekondu home

Salon + Living Room

It is common for modern middle-class Turkish homes to feature a 'salon' acting as the public stage of the home; a symbolic representation of the inhabitants' modernity, reserved usually for guests only. [1] Although the domestic interior is ultimately private, it held the public role of hosting guests, and therefore acted as a showcase of the inhabitants' social status and civic identity as a modern family.[2]

This public 'front stage' (hosting the formal) was strictly separated from the private 'backstage' (the Living Room - housing the informal).[3] The Living Room was used for more intimate family time, where objects were modest and practical in comparison to the salon. Here, the family would relax, by watching TV and have conversations etc. From this emerged a domestic phenomenon, the 'closed-salon practice', where the salon was genuinely locked from, and devoid of all traces of, everyday family activity. [4] A modern material identity was presented through furniture and display objects that embodied idealised modern social practices. Such representative objects appeared in the salon, and were, or attempted to be, expensive, precious, and very-well maintained furniture. [5]

The gecekondu inhabitants clearly also attempted to manifest such a separation, but slightly more informally due to the process from which their living situation came about. However, in both the gecekondu and Yap-Sat, it was clear that there was a separate Salon and Living Room, which were sometimes used for both public (formal) and private (informal) purposes due to the impacts of space in the homes. In this apartment, the Altin Gunu, prestigious enough to occupy the salon, was therefore linked directly to the domestic and its modernity, while being a gathering of women from the same rural background.

Figure 36 - Hospitality and kindness shown through elaborate preparations

Construction Process

As the gecekondu home must be constructed in one night, they share characteristics inherited by the sense of urgency. They are constructed from both found and second-hand materials as well as those from local hardware shops set up by newly settled entrepreneurial inhabitants. Their typical foundation consists of a concrete slab, upon which a small simple room was constructed, with an informal outdoor kitchen and toilet situation.

Over time, as neighbourhoods achieved a greater degree of permanence and inhabitants' wealth increased, rooms and indoor plumbing (including kitchens and bathrooms) were gradually added, as can be seen in this case study. If the construction is due to take longer than one night, dirt is raked over the surface of the trench foundations in order to keep hidden the work from the municipality.[6] The next night, the bricks (often compressed mud or hollow clay tile) are laid without mortar beneath a rough-plastered straw lathe. Simple metal doors and windows are inserted, and corrugated metal sheets laid onto the low-pitched roof to allow the family to move in. The simple construction necessary due to time limits, ensured difficult living conditions when families first arrived. For example, uninsulated walls resulted in very cold winters, where Istanbul often faces deep snow.

Despite aspects of village life clear in the gecekondu, such as their small scale, the homes were not direct replicas. The impact of urgency upon their design meant that they did not employ traditional methods of construction witnessed in the inhabitants' hometowns.[7] In fact, there was not even a 'plan' created; everyone based dimensions of the initial room , and those thereafter, upon the surrounding neighbours' homes.
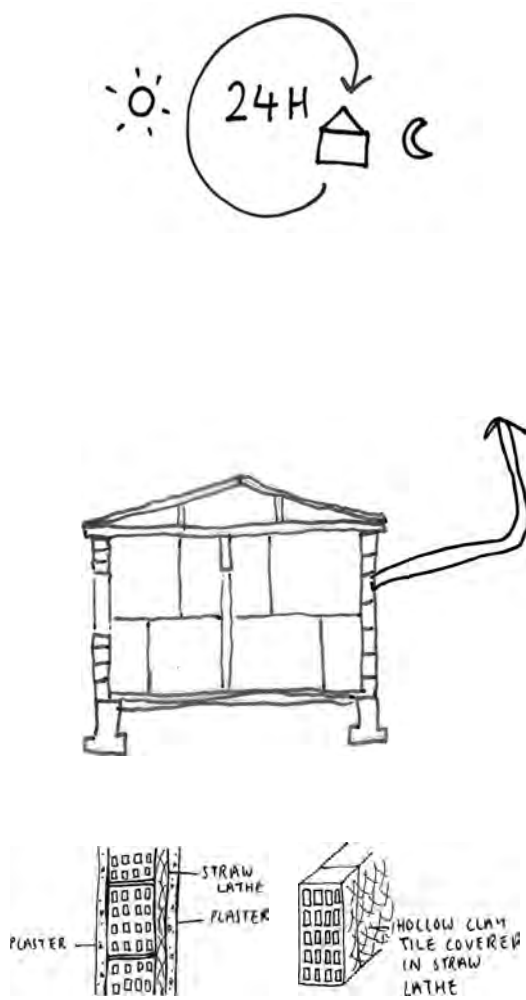
Figure 38 - Gecekondu plot awaiting renovation, 2021
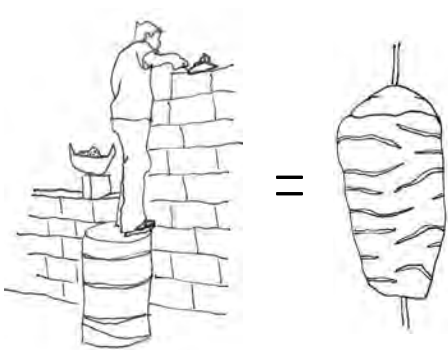
Informal Construction Industry

Opportunists witnessing the speed of the gecekondu development, took advantage of the new business opportunity. They set up construction shops where newcomers could purchase materials such as brick, timber, metal sheeting, and doors/windows etc. This is an example of incremental growth at a neighbourhood level, where the gecekondu, which lay outside of the formal economy, has influenced its economic surroundings.

Imece: Collective Construction

The construction process of the gecekondu is complex and varies across neighbourhoods. However, a key characteristic is building collectively, known as Imece. There is a great sense of solidarity between neighbours, as they survived through the same difficulties in both construction of their homes and thereafter settling themselves within the city.

The story of Imece starts even before the construction of the gecekondu, where fellow countrymen looking to move into the neighbourhood, would stay in the houses of existing Umraniye inhabitants while they organised a plot of land to start their own gecekondu construction. Whether relatives, friends or strangers from their village hometown, gecekondu inhabitants were willing to aid those going through the same difficult process they experienced.

The collective construction process begins at night, where a truck arrives loaded with material. According to interviewees, up to 10 people work throughout the night to finish plastering the stacked brick walls. The workers then sleep through the day in preparation for the next night's construction, for other families moving in to the newly, and rapidly forming gecekondu. More settled inhabitants who were employed during the day, however informally, would 'arrive home form work, and help newcomers build their gecekondu in the garden!'.
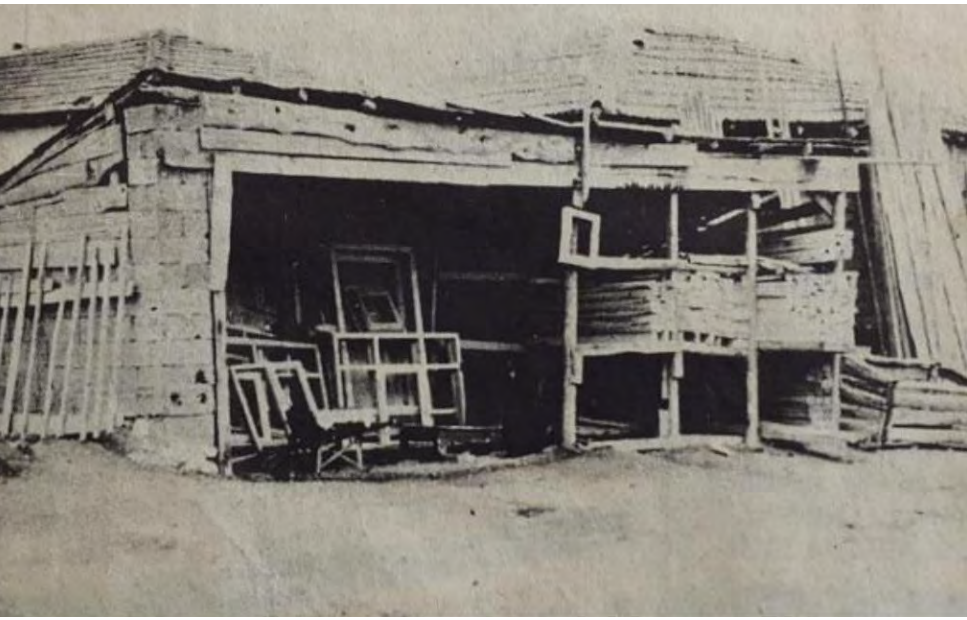

Figure 37 - Imece: Group Construction

Figure 39 - Informal Construction Store set up for new Gecekondu arrivals
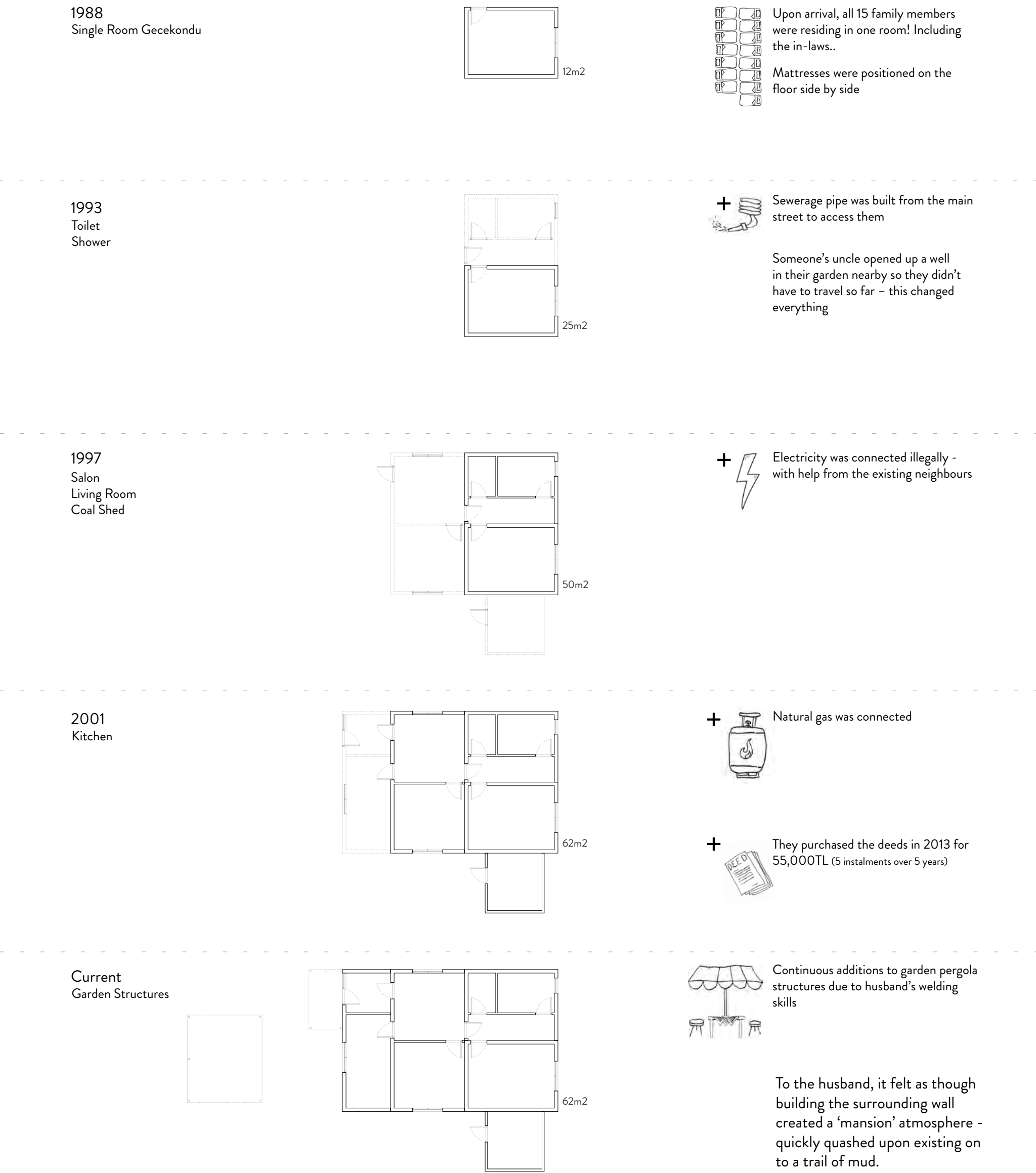
Incrementality

1988
Single Room Gecekondu

12m2

Upon arrival, all 15 family members were residing in one room! Including the in-laws..

Mattresses were positioned on the floor side by side

1993
Toilet
Shower

25m2

Sewerage pipe was built from the main street to access them

Someone's uncle opened up a well in their garden nearby so they didn't have to travel so far – this changed everything

1997
Salon
Living Room
Coal Shed

50m2

Electricity was connected illegally - with help from the existing neighbours

2001
Kitchen

62m2

Natural gas was connected

They purchased the deeds in 2013 for 55,000TL (5 instalments over 5 years)

Current
Garden Structures

62m2

Continuous additions to garden pergola structures due to husband's welding skills

To the husband, it felt as though building the surrounding wall created a 'mansion' atmosphere - quickly quashed upon existing on to a trail of mud.

Figure 40 - Gecekondu Incrementality Timeline

Figure 41 - Ad-hoc space to gather

Micro-histories

Duvets for guests

Collection of duvets to represent their hospitality and welcome nature

Timber / Coal for stove

"I never go to the tailor, I do everything myself!"

Handmade lace dividers & curtains

Knitted by the wife at home. She still spends most of her day here crochet-ing to sell for pocket money.

Fold-out Dinner Table

Dinner is often eaten on small trays, or outside due to the lack of space.

Foldable tables are stored in the corridor for special occasions e.g. Altin Gunu.

Vegetable garden
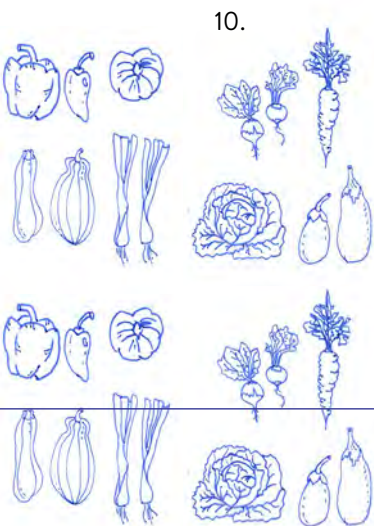
Continuous work of the wife in the garden in order to sustain family's need

Slippers   As one enters, it is Turkish custom to replace outdoor shoes with slippers

Collectivised domestic work

In the past, women would gather to wash pots or clean carpets in the threshold garden spaces. Today, this space is very underused in a collective manner.

The family still make social use of their garden, meeting with neighbours once a week in summer

"How could I live in an apartment after this beautiful garden?"

"In the village, picking hazelnuts from the trees every August was our whole life"
Hatice

Figure 42 - Gecekondu Analysis

1. Entrance Porch
2. Salon
3. Toilet a-la-Turka
4. Wash Room
5. Corridor
6. Bedroom
7. Living Room
8. Kitchen
9. Timber/Coal/Tool Shed
10. Productive Garden
11. Outdoor Strutures

N

Figure 43 - Post-interview relaxing in the garden

Figure 44 - Walkway as Storage for Garden Maintenance

Figure 45 - Main bedroom

Figure 46 - Traditional stove heating in Living Room

Figure 47 - Bathroom

Figure 48 - Salon

CHAPTER 4:
YAP-SAT

Figure 49 - Beginnings of Multi-Storey Construction

Introduction

This Yap-Sat, a neighbour to the previous gecekondu studied, was built by one family, consisting now of a husband and wife, their daughter and her family. This husband and wife, originally from Ordu, arrived to Kazim Karabekir from Bakirkoy, Istanbul. The husband bought the plot in 1978 for 6500TL to the 'person' illegally parcelling and selling land, and arrived to the street in 1980, when there were just three one-storey gecekondu homes.

The family harnessed the Imece concept, as with the majority of gecekondu dwellers, to collectively construct their initial one-storey gecekondu with the existing neighbours. However, they never imagined they would demolish this first home within 10 years. With the help of the Amnesty Laws granting them rights to their land, within 18 years, in the place of their gecekondu, they managed to construct a three-storey concrete apartment block which now homes their growing extended family, as well as the builders who constructed each level.

It was a privilege to meet the women of both families, who were proud of the everyday objects within their homes, taking time to explain their meanings to me. The architecture itself became the backdrop for the stories told through objects and activities played out in the home. The objects represented their specific stories of connection to their hometown Ordu, and the difficulties they faced in setting up a life in Kazim Karabekir. The women were vulnerable with us, made possible through our (in)direct connection to them, which was essential in being able to unearth the micro-histories of this gecekondu. The men, however, were more closed off in terms of acknowledging the hardships faced upon arrival in the neighbourhood, focusing instead on a neighbourhood level of home construction and the local coffee house.

Despite the inhabitants' limited means, elaborate meals were prepared for us. We were more than just 'invited in' to carry out an interview, but instead truly 'welcomed' with food and parting gifts.

Nostalgia for the Gecekondu

The wife suffered terribly upon arrival at the gecekondu, mainly due to the reduced standard of living compared to her hometown. The constant construction issues such as leaking roofs, and the elongated wait for essential provisions such as water, were reasons she was looking forward to move into the Yap-Sat. Despite the difficulties faces in such living conditions, the family remain nostalgic for the gecekondu life now that they have been living in the Yap-Sat for. Despite this, she holds a strong sense of nostalgia for her former gecekondu construction.

Their two children were born and grew up in the gecekondu; playing on the street, which was more of a dirt track surrounded by grassland and forest. The most important aspect of their gecekondu to them was this connection to the street, through their front garden shared with their neighbours. Alongside growing food, it was a space to gather like in their hometown; collectively working, cooking, celebrating holidays, or mourning post-funeral. Although they managed to retain a plot of land adjacent to the apartment as a productive garden for the family, it does not retain the same sense of sociability from their now third-storey apartment.

Through the Yap-Sat's removal of the semi-permeable front garden threshold, the connection to the street has disintegrated. With this comes a disintegration of sociability so central to the culture of the gecekondu. Therefore, despite Yap-Sat construction providing the opportunity for early inhabitants to raise their standard of living, it leaves many nostalgic for their past in the one-storey gardened gecekondu homes. Despite this shift in typology, the layout of irregular plots and streets retain the gecekondu's DNA, despite the increased homogeneity in their architectural typology.

Figure 50 - Wife welcoming us to the Yap-Sat

Figure 51 - Post-interview: Yap-Sat at Night

Figure 52 - Neighbouring Yap-Sat

Construction Process

After construction of the Yap-Sat, the family also realised that they missed the flexibility of the one-storey gecekondu, where additions to both the interior and exterior required more structural consideration. In 1990, after 10 years of living in the one-storey gecekondu, which was constructed very similarly to the previous example, the family began the Yap-Sat process. They had saved up enough money to both demolish the gecekondu, and in its place construct a one-storey concrete building, with the view of building more floors as their financial situation improved. There was never any backlash over the construction of their apartments...

The municipality's interaction with the gecekondu residents is still relatively contradictory on the subject of the Yap-Sat. In fact, certain interviewees were recommended to merge their deeds in order approach contractors for five-storey apartment constructions. Whereas some were illegally provided with 10-storey construction limits.

'No-one can report us for not having architects' plans or permissions, as they also have nothing!'
Omer

16 pilons for building stability

'In the 1999 earthquake it didn't even move'
Omer

Level 3   Level 2
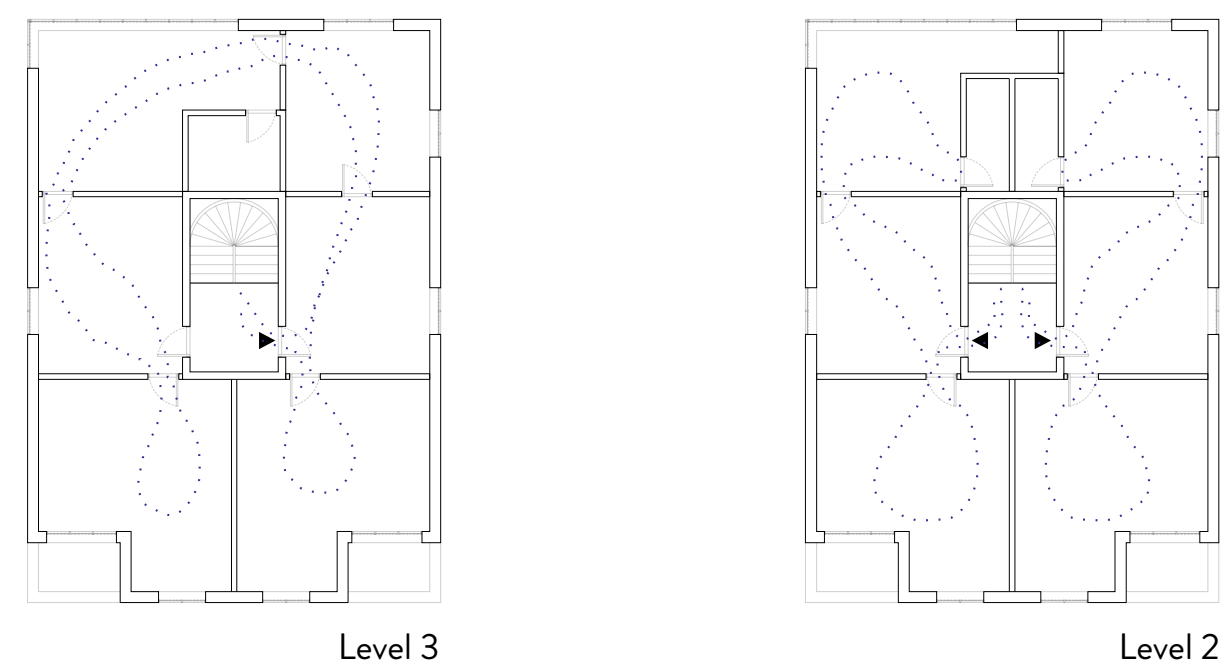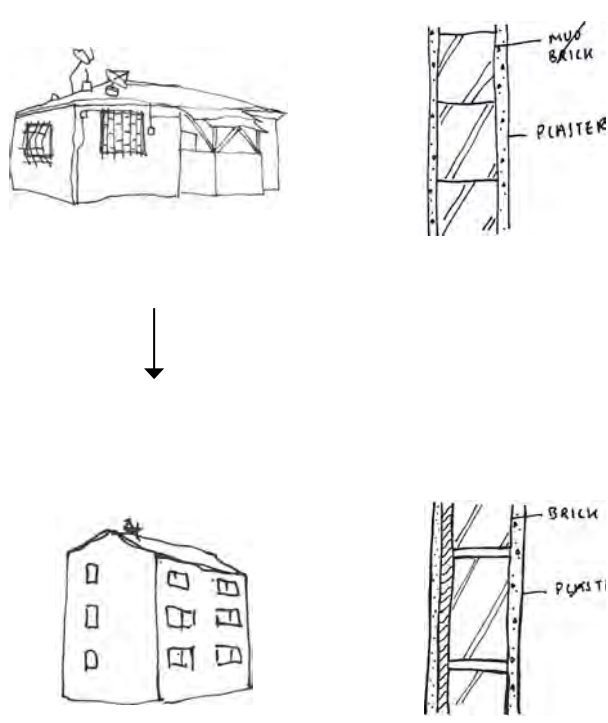
Figure 53 - Yap-Sat Plans
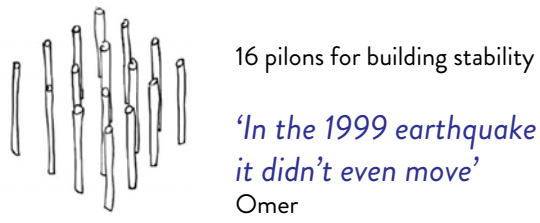
Inhabitant as Architect

Just as with the rest of the gecekondu homes, there was no formal architect involved in the construction of the Yap-Sat. The husband hired three different builders over the course of eight years: one for the construction of each floor. Their only discussion over the construction of the apartment block was the number of units required per floor (two), the cost split (between the builder and owner), and in the case of the ground floor, the overall perimeter (160m2).

Each floor repeated the layout of the floor below: with two units per level. The third floor, however similar, was designed with a different (single) bathroom situation, and with just one operable front door, as it was for use by just one family. The strange layout of the third floor apartment makes clear the lack of architectural intervention, and the limited flexibility of a Yap-Sat apartment vs. the previous gecekondu.

Figure 54 - Gecekondu vs. Yap-Sat (with visible preparative construction of imminent upper floor)

Incrementality

The Yap-Sat can be viewed as an incremental development of the gecekondu itself. Just as with the incremental development of the one-storey gecekondu structures, through which families were aiming to improve their standard of living, the vertical additions to the apartment block improved the financial standing of the family.

Through the Yap-Sat model of incremental development, the family were able to construct a new floor every fours years after the first, when they had saved up enough money to do so. With each floor, they moved up the apartment, and sold or rented out a portion of the lower floors to the builder himself.
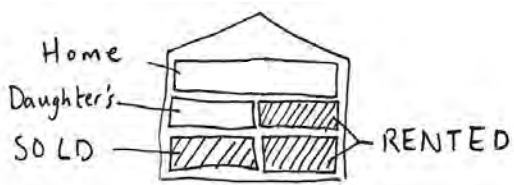
1980
Gecekondu
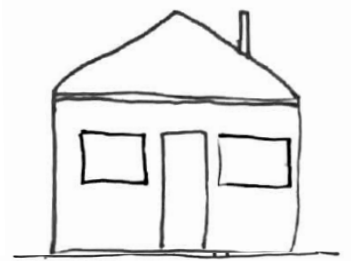
family

IMECE

50m2

When constructing the initial gecekondu, the husband paid his friend 1TL per day to help with additions!

1990
First Floor:

sold   family
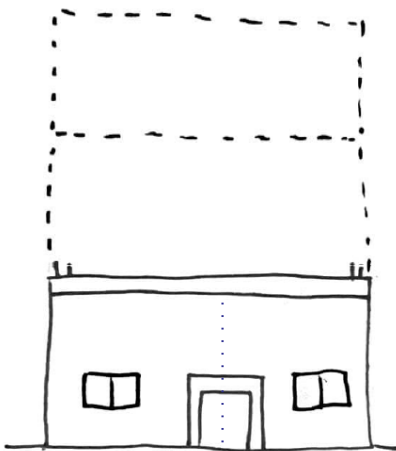
BUILDER 1

160m2
2 flats
(1 for family, 1 sold)

1994
Second Floor:

daughter + son   parents

sold   rented
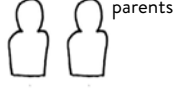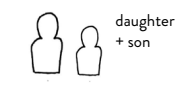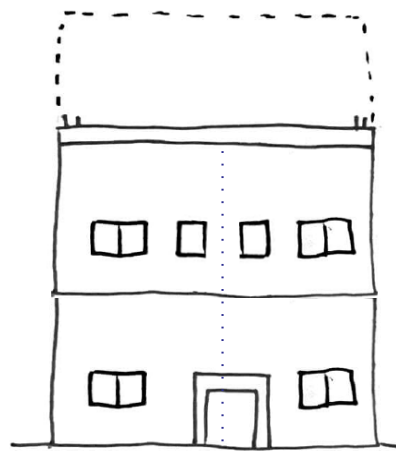
BUILDER 2

+ 2 flats
(family occupied both and rented former 1st floor flat)

1998
Third Floor

parents

daughter's family   rented

sold   rented
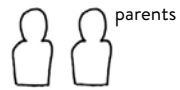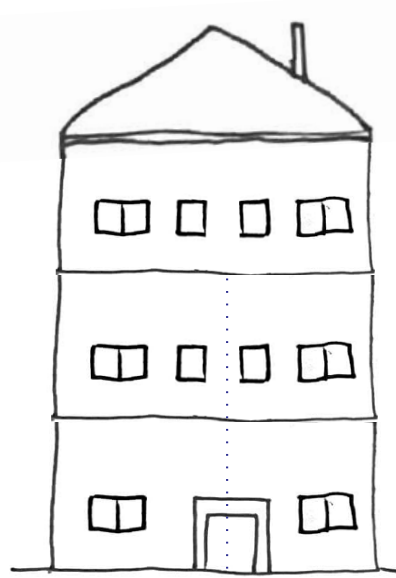
BUILDER 3

+ 2 flats
(parents combined top floor flats for themselves, rented their former 2nd floor flat, and their daughter's family moved into her former 2nd floor flat
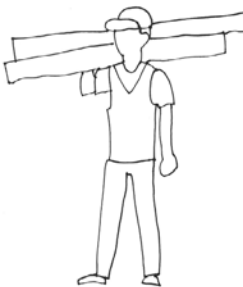
2005: Natural gas arrived to the street

Sewerage pipe was built from the main street to access them

Home
Daughter's
SOLD → RENTED

Figure 55 - Yap-Sat Incrementality Timeline

Figure 56- Neighbouring Yap-Sat under renovation, 2021

Micro-histories
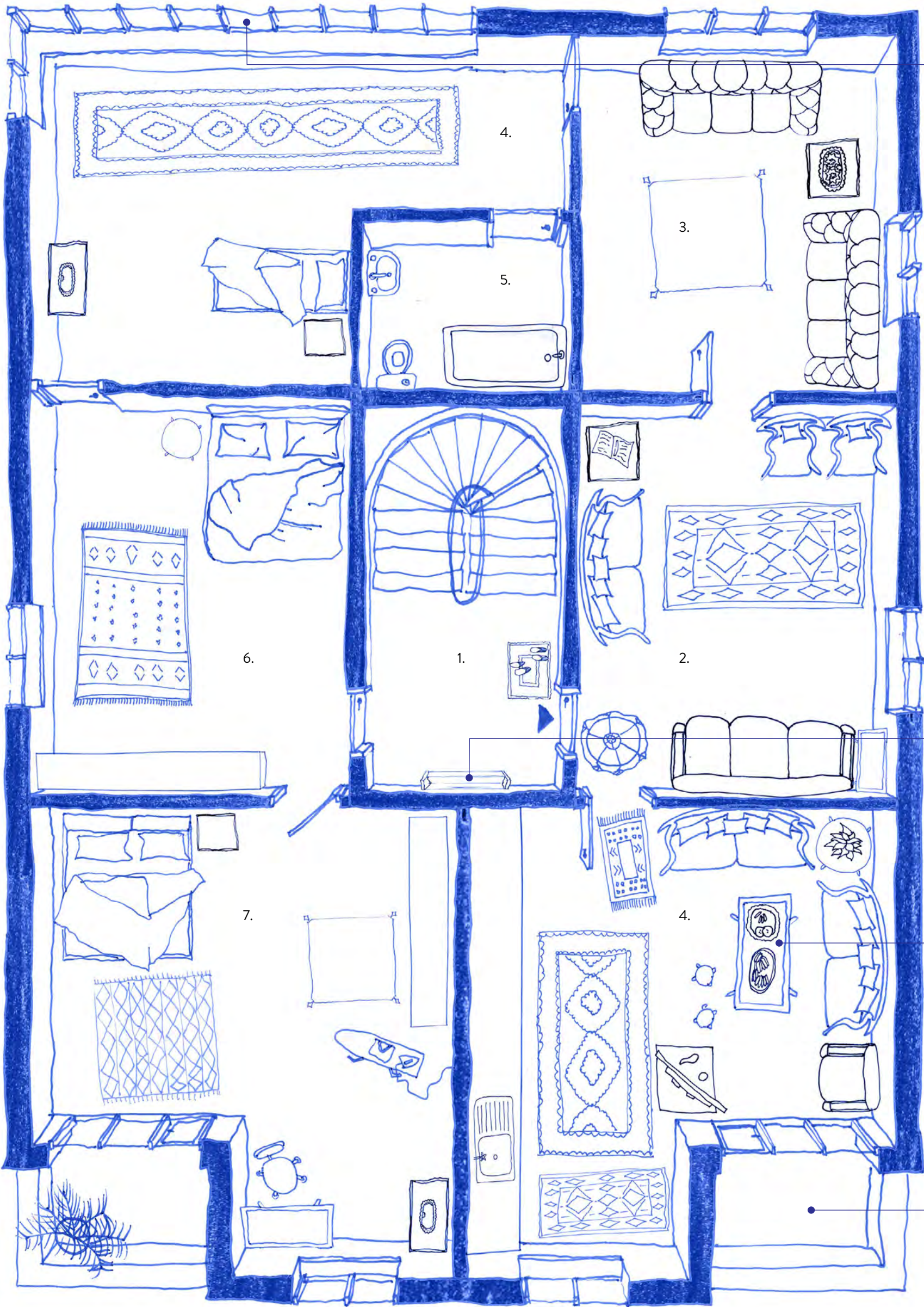
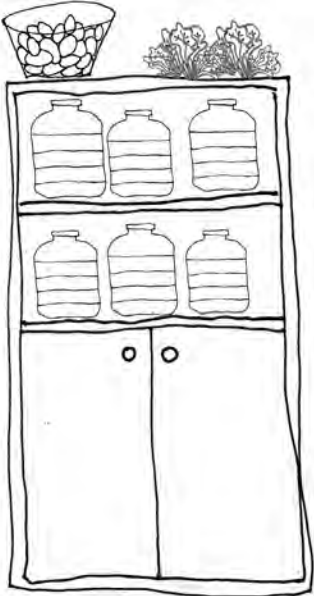

Figure 57 - Yap-Sat Analysis

Window towards Hekimbasi

1993: Hekimbasi Waste Dump Explosion
Viewed by inhabitants from this window, inhabitants were reminded of their informal presence in the city.

The explosion triggered a landslide that sucked in the neighbouring gecekondu; where 12 homes and 39 lives were lost.

In Summer, it is tradition to pickle and dry vegetables, and create pastes and soups with them for the Winter. This currently occurs in kitchen, yet is stored in the stair core, until needed in winter once again.

This was once collective work in the gecekondu garden, but is now carried out on a very individual bases.

*'It is too expensive to eat out...
and I feel like everyone is
looking at me!'*
Nur

Pickle & Dried food storage

Informal eating space / Altin Gunu

All cooking and eating is done in this space, as well as hosting the Altin Gunu.

Altin Gunu has always been important for her - and she continues the tradition in the apartment. In the gecekondu, not just gold was given, but sometimes necessities such as oil, flour and sugar.

The wife received 15 golden bracelets from her round at the Altin Gunu: to aid in the construction of their Yap-Sat.

She would also sit here most days to knit things to sell.

Only connection to outside

When a gecekondu, they used to have a big cow and 2 sheep, feeding them in the adjacent field

The most important aspect of their gecekondu was the garden - they grew enough to sustain themselves

Almost everyone still keeps chickens in their garden!

The blue eggs fetch higher prices due to their higher protein!

"In our previous apartment on the European side, we didn't even know our neighbours. But here, we still know everyone who walks down the street."

1. Stair Core / Entrance
2. Salon
3. Living Room
4. Single Bedroom
5. Toilet / Washroom
6. Double Bedroom
7. Double Bedroom

N

Figure 58 - Pickled/Dried Food Storage

Figure 59 - 'Blue' Eggs Collected

Figure 61 - Salon

Figure 62 - Kitchen

Figure 60 - Entrance

CHAPTER 5:
GENDERED THIRD SPACE

Figure 63

Introduction

Female-dominated Third Places are ignored by Oldenburg, and act inherently differently to the informal male-dominated public spaces he describes. It was therefore important to consider an alternate Third Place for the women of the gecekondu. The Altin Gunu, or weekly coffee morning, is an organised, intimate meeting in a domestic setting. Although the Third Places for both men and women are rooted in gathering, the Kahvehane positioned in the public sphere separates men from their First and Second Place, whereas the female Altin Gunu existing in the private sphere, connects women with both their First and Second Place. As the majority of gecekondu women are housewives, their domestic realm is simultaneously their workspace and social space; therefore holding a different kind of importance.

Oldenburg does however describe how 'Third Places serve to separate the sexes, not to absorb them into equal and undifferentiated participation', as is immediately clear in the Kahvehane and Altin Gunu.[1] Due to the domestic role of the Turkish Housewife, and the public role of the Turkish husband (connected to local economic and political systems), it was understandable that these Third Places existed separately in Turkey. In fact, the women interviewed were anything but jealous of their husband's Third Place, and this sentiment was mirrored by their husbands view of their wives'.

As the relationship between men can occur in public, there is more opportunity to widen one's networks. Activities and relationships outside of the home do not involve women and children - they are reserved solely for the meeting of men. Discussions here sit on a less-personal level, where men connect with a wider circle outside of their relatives. However, women's gatherings in the home are based upon intense solidarity and trust, where they share their issues revolving around family and children.

An invite into the domestic sphere is usually reserved for relatives, with friends having less access to domestic life. This seems to disadvantage the woman of the gecekondu, as they are more disconnected from both friendship networks the networks of local informal politics unlike the 'head of the house', who may regularly and comfortably meet other community members outside of the home. This is how the Altin Gunu meetings have evolved into something much more formal and infrequent that the public gathering of the men.
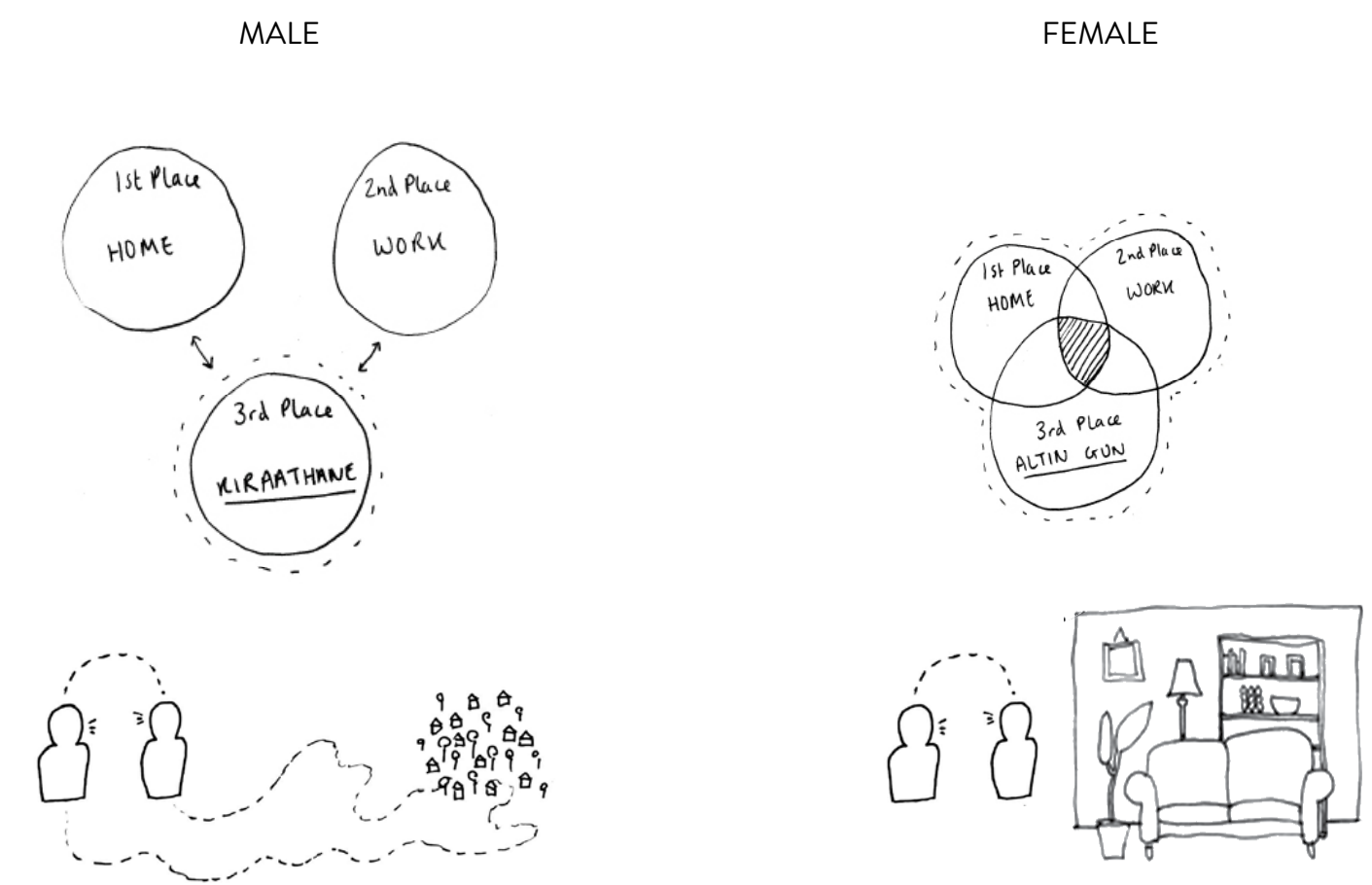
MALE

FEMALE

Figure 64 - Third Place Diagrams

Figure 65 - Male-dominated Kahvehane

Male-dominated Kahvehane

Introduction

The Ottoman Kahvehane was a hub of the intellectual elite, from a diverse ethnic background bringing Jews and Armenians together with Turks. It was initially known as the 'Kahvehane', where 'Kiraat' translates as 'reading', and 'hane' as 'place', highlighting the Kahvehane as a node of intellect and discussion.[2] Today, the majority of middle-class Istanbulites view the Kahvehane as 'a place to waste time', where there has been a shift in culture and demographic since the Republican Era.

It is therefore a more recent shift in the past half century that the Kahvehane has lost its sense of occasion. One interviewee believes that most early retirees do not plan activities for their retirement, therefore leaving them with just the Kahvehane to fill their time. There was minimal entertainment accessible to the poorer rural immigrants in the gecekondu, encouraging the Kahvehane as a place of entertainment for lower-class customers, who with them brought their more rural Eastern culture.

Figure 66 - Storage for Classic Turkish game, Okey

Figure 67 - Typical Furnishings of the Kahvehane

Figure 68 - Kahvehane regular shows off home built 'in the village'

"In the Kahvehane, my heart doesn't want tea nor coffee, my heart wants close friendship"
Omer

This Turkish saying represents that the key ingredient to the Kahvehane is the socialising, just as with the Altin Gunu meetings. What holds a place for the Kahvehane as a Third Place is the opportunity for men to feel comfortable and bond with familiar faces. In the same way that the Altin Gunu was described as 'therapy' by one interviewee, the Kahvehane was described as 'good for men who didn't talk much at home'.

There appears to be scales of intimacy between Kahvehanes, where many interviewees did not feel comfortable entering if they were not local. Upon arriving, the large open space meant that one could see everyone distributed in the space, allowing them to observe the location of their closest friends, or absence thereof, before deciding on where to sit, or to leave. The Kahvehane therefore presents how space can manifest hierarchies, through behavioural practices manifested in its architecture. In this case, how the large open room, and sense of locality, encourages the regular locals to feel somewhat superior. It would act as a figurative barrier to entering the space, interesting as the Kahvehane is situated upon the street.

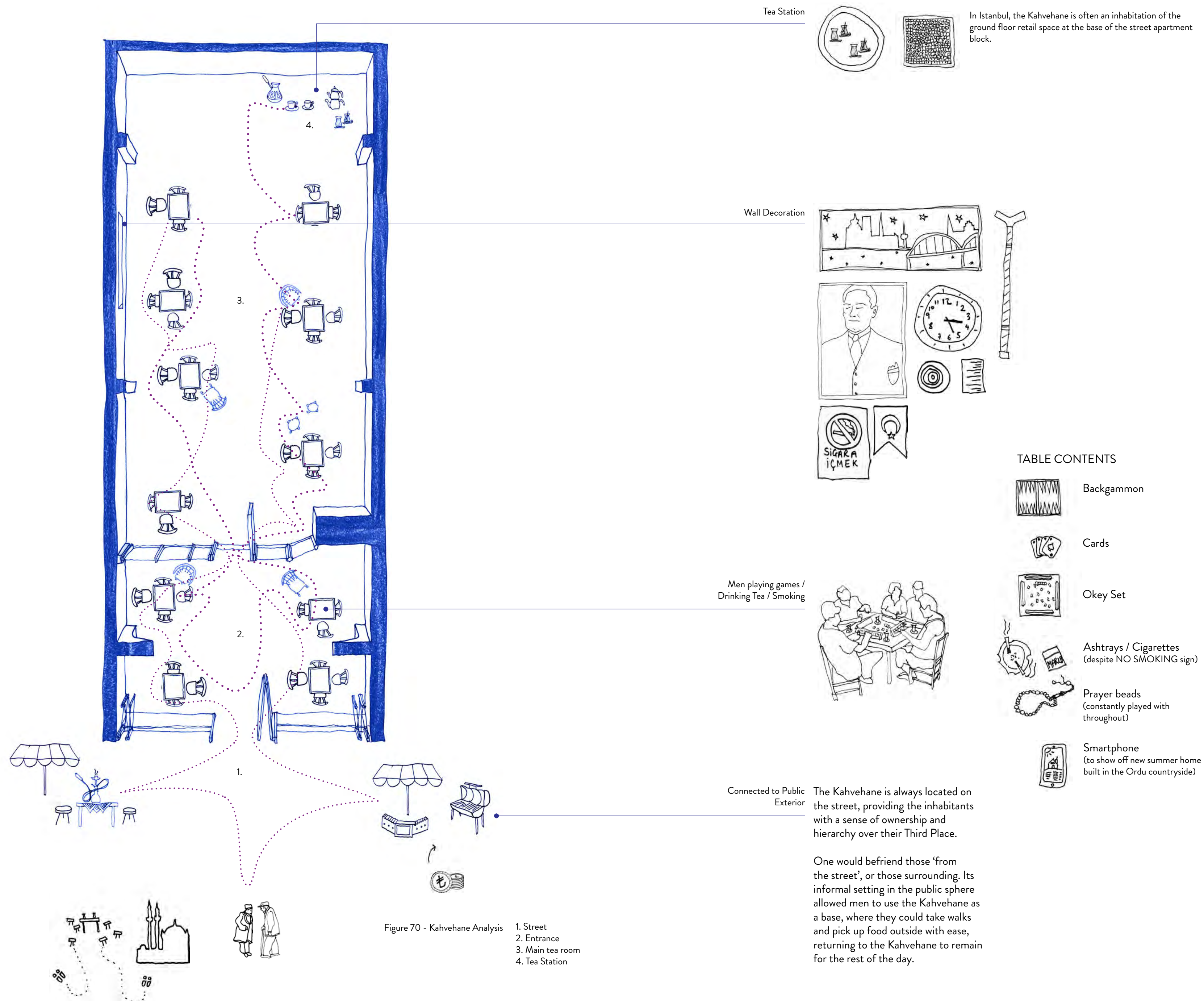Figure 69 - Regulars were somewhat surprised at the entrance of a woman

Micro-histories

Tea Station

In Istanbul, the Kahvehane is often an inhabitation of the ground floor retail space at the base of the street apartment block.

4.

Wall Decoration

SİGARA İÇMEK

3.

TABLE CONTENTS

Backgammon

Cards

Okey Set

Men playing games /
Drinking Tea / Smoking

Ashtrays / Cigarettes
(despite NO SMOKING sign)

2.

Prayer beads
(constantly played with
throughout)

Smartphone
(to show off new summer home
built in the Ordu countryside)

Connected to Public
Exterior

The Kahvehane is always located on the street, providing the inhabitants with a sense of ownership and hierarchy over their Third Place.

One would befriend those 'from the street', or those surrounding. Its informal setting in the public sphere allowed men to use the Kahvehane as a base, where they could take walks and pick up food outside with ease, returning to the Kahvehane to remain for the rest of the day.

1.

Figure 70 - Kahvehane Analysis

1. Street
2. Entrance
3. Main tea room
4. Tea Station

Female-dominated Altin Gunu

Introduction

Altin Gunu translates as 'Day of Gold' and is the name used to describe the organised and regular meetings of a Gun 'group'; often 6-12 married women. The name is derived from the fact that the women traditionally pooled their resources in the form of golden coins, acting as a 'lending club... based on trust, solidarity and reciprocity with a financial aspect'.[3] To gain an insight into the Altin Gunu, a hidden phenomenon carried out behind closed doors, the interviewing of women who attended such meetings was essential. The group is always intimate, consisting of childhood friends, neighbours, or relatives.

The women meet at regular intervals, whether that be weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The meetings are hosted by a different woman each time, with each attendee contributing to a common pot of gold or money that is handed to the host. The women must trust each other enough to make the regular payments to the 'lending club', making it therefore difficult to join existing groups, without a specific invite from the organiser, who is also in charge of revoking membership.[4]

Men actively avoid Altin Gunu meetings, and are indeed not welcomed to such intimate occasions between the women. However, as the space is also their home, their fleeting presence would not seem 'out of place', unlike in the Kahvehane, where the woman is truly seen as out of place.

Figure 71 - Exterior Space to Gather

Figure 72 - The Garden as the hart of the home

The fact that the men were often at their Third Place, the Kahvehane, provided the women a sense of freedom. In the time the husband was away, the wife could leave the home without worry, or attend or host an Altin Gunu meeting, as long as the food was prepared and the house was clean by the husband's evening return. The gecekondu women described that those whose husbands do not frequent the Kahvehane do not experience such 'freedom'. If the man spends most of his time at home in his early retirement, it becomes difficult for his wife to invite friends over or travel to meet them, which socially segregated her.
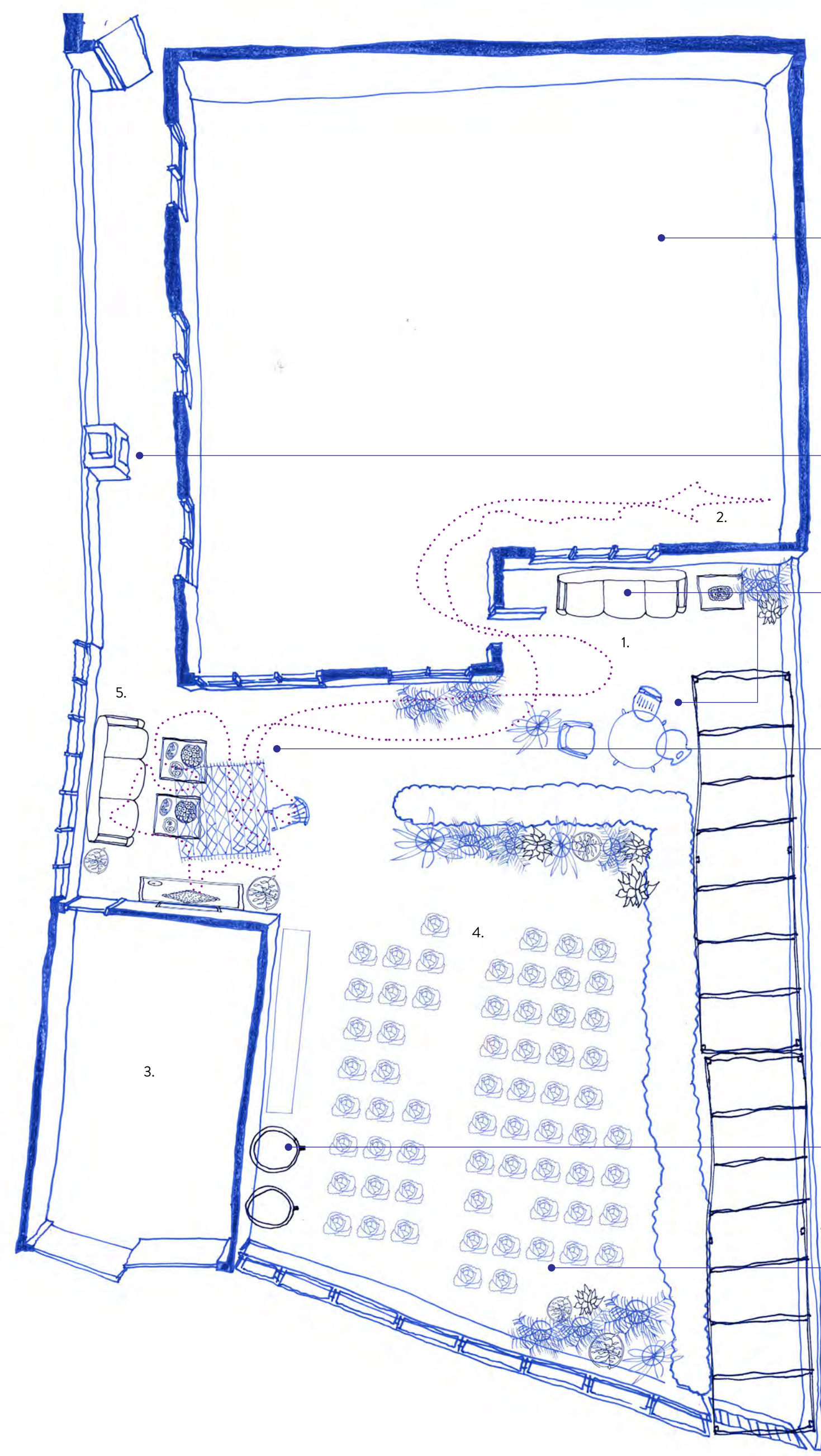
This therefore adds another layer of importance to these gendered Third Places, where it was essential for the Turkish woman to attend her organised Gun meetings as a form of civic experience.
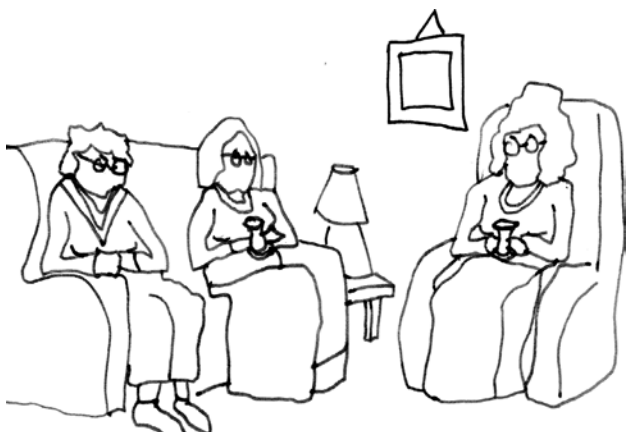

Figure 73 - Space doubles as a storage space for home maintenance

Figure 74 - Covered Space where the Altin Gunu is hosted outside of Winter

Micro-histories

Altin Gunu: Interior Gathering

In apartment blocks, the women would gather inside the home. This also occurs in the gecekondu in the Winter months, but outside of this, the garden space is taken advantage off in order to accommodate such hosting.

Outdoor Stove

When the outdoor gathering space is not being used for the Altin Gunu, it is used as a storage space for the wood that is lit in the outdoor stove in winter.

Multiple Exterior Spaces

There are many moments of gathering outside of the Altin Gunu. On this sofa by the entrance to the home, for example, the family often relax with tea with a neighbour who drops by.

Altin Gunu: Exterior Gathering

As the Altin Gunu is not a gecekondu-specific phenomenon (but instead a Turkish migrant woman's practice), it is the notion of outdoor gathering that sets this Third Place apart.

An unexpected find from this research was the connection between the Third Place and the incrementality of the gecekondu. The money collected at the Altin Gun was put towards the next stage of construction. It is here that the collective impact of the women can be seen physically on an urban scale.
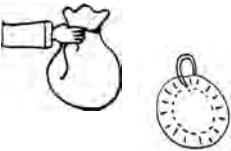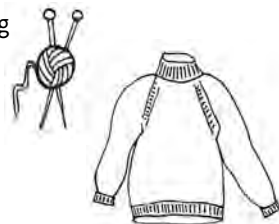
GATHERING PRACTICES

Collective Saving Practices

Knitting

Chatting as Therapy

Extreme Cooking

Water Storage

Vegetable garden

As with the previous gecekondus described, this family relies on their garden as a productive entity to supply their fresh produce.

1. Entrance Porch
2. Kitchen
3. Timber/Coal/Tool Shed
4. Productive Garden
5. Outdoor Structures

N

Figure 75 - Altin Gunu Analysis
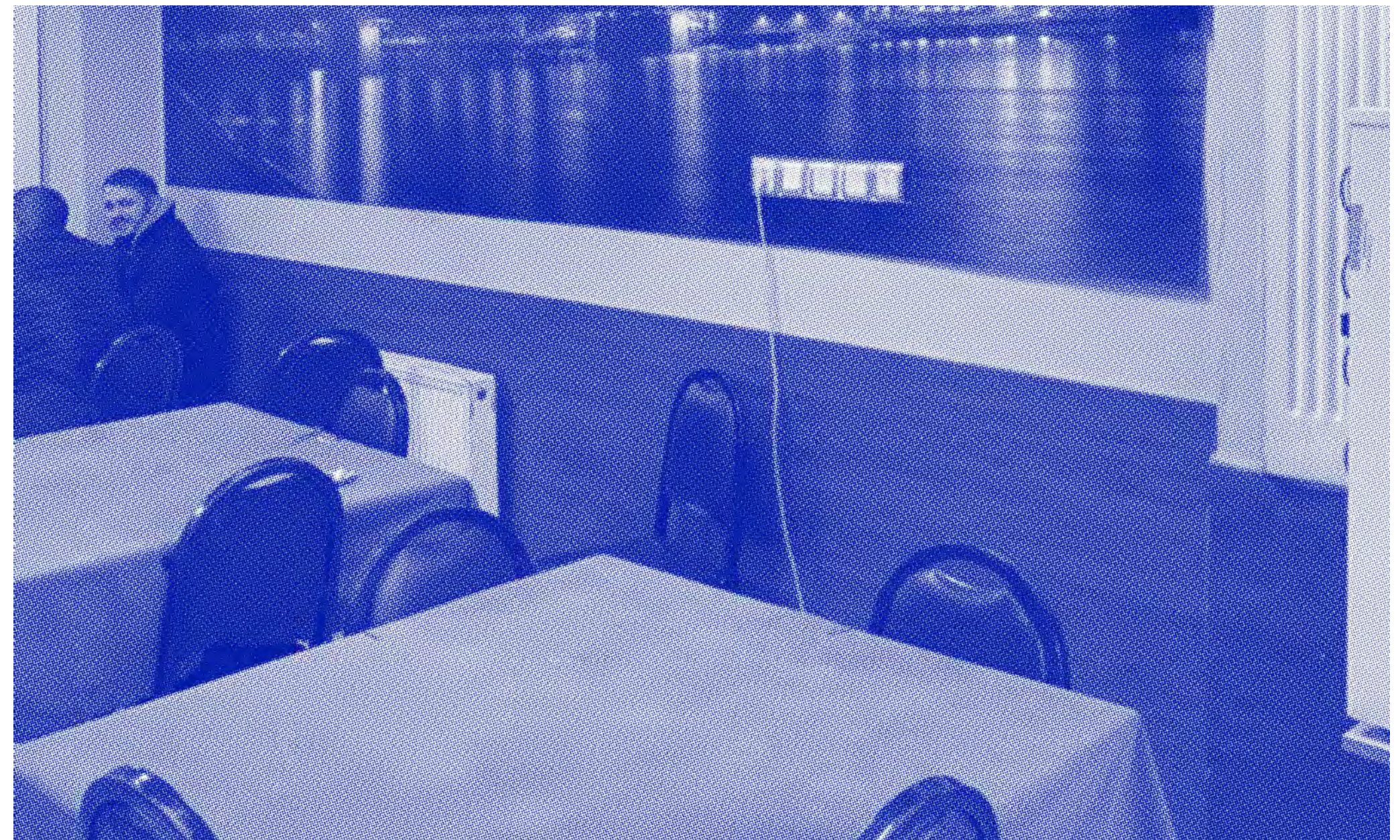
CONCLUSION

Figure 76

Socio-Spatial aspects of Incrementality

The objectives of this research in to the socio-spatial dynamics of the gecekondu were twofold: rooted in new knowledge finding and new knowledge representation. This conclusion will first discuss the socio-spatial aspects of gecekondu incrementality, before looking at how the method was successful in presenting such knowledge.

This research, albeit an example of an early gecekondu, cannot act as a representation of all Turkish informal settlements, especially as the face of today's gecekondu varies vastly from that of the 1950s in terms of the demographic of settlers and the more urban typology in which one is settling themselves. The gecekondu phenomenon is a complex and dynamic incremental process of unique socio-spatial specificities aligning to the timeline of each locality. Over the decades, the gecekondus of Turkey of course share similarities at both the home an neighbourhood scale, in their strong foundation upon intangible hometown networks, initial land acquisition and construction methods, the establishment of local amenities including Third Places, and demand for basic civic infrastructure. However, today, each gecekondu sits in a vulnerable situation that varies greatly from its neighbour as these former city margins are absorbed at varying levels by the metropolis. Many have now been demolished and evicted, or are at the brink of such. On the basis of this, it is therefore difficult to analyse the success of the gecekondu today in settling migrants within the city, if the neighbourhoods are still to be erased by profit-driven construction. However, based on the ethnographic research, it can be said that the gecekondu was successful in the past in settling migrants within the city, when there was no other formal option available to them but for an initial existence on the periphery.

As the city was synonymous with modern, and rural was representative of backwards, it was the dream for arrivals to start a new life within the metropolis. At the home scale, the research has presented patterns of a specific architectural language based on the initial urgency of gecekondu construction, and the incremental development thereafter. Beginning with the addition of necessary amenities, and ultimately more luxury ones, the inhabitants have been able to forge themselves a life within the city; one that can harbour their rural practices rooted in the garden. For some early settlers capitalising on the legalisation of their plot, the Yap-Sat phenomenon came into play, where incrementality stepped further than horizontal addition to vertical 'apartment-isation'. In some ways, this was a successful move in forging a new middle-class in the periphery of the city, where the inhabitant can rent out rooms to supplement their living. It also allowed the owners to feel a more valid presence in the city, aligning with their initial dream. The process showcases the importance of informal settlements as a response to the failure of formal urban planning and governance in addressing the housing needs of the urban poor. Umraniye's gecekondus are no longer isolated from the rest of the city, but rather, are integrated into the urban fabric of Istanbul. However, it comes at a price, where the Yap-Sat phenomenon has resulted in an increased anonymity for neighbours, who feel they have lost the collective presence on the street and in the gardens.

The Ordu migrants, as is with migrants arriving in cities today, faced many challenges when not metabolised by the city's formal systems. What became clear throughout the research is that the solidarity built through the shared burden, although not to be glorified, indeed bonded individuals and families from the same hometown, and increased access to housing and employment opportunities. The incremental nature of the gecekondu allowed for growth of not just one's home, but a sense of community, essential in organising and demanding for the needs of inhabitants from the municipality. Gecekondu settlers utilised their presence, and hence its associated power as they grew, to create more informal political local systems based on countrymen relationships. An informal economy built upon the socio-cultural needs of the population as the neighbourhood settled itself resulted in the establishment of construction stores for new arrivals, alongside Third Places such as the Kahvehane or Hemsehri Associations. It was here that one could reach their local representative, and therefore became instrumental civic nodes within the informal neighbourhood to plants seeds of thought relating to specific neighbourhood demands. In this way, residents, albeit solely men, were highly connected to their local politics; be it the fight for water, gas, electricity, the first public buildings such as the mosque and primary school, or connecting transport infrastructures. Women, however, through the Altin Gunu, also managed to settle themselves within the city, despite in a more domestic manner that still managed to provide them with a form of social respite, as a Third Place should.

What is perhaps contradictory about 'settling oneself', is that although over decades the neighbourhood has become increasingly grounded the city, each day that passes, the homes of the gecekondu is at higher risk of demolition. In fact, although the Amnesty Laws provided the legality and accompanying opportunity for economic gain for inhabitant, they also allow for the gecekondu plots to be more easily taken over by TOKI as part of larger Urban Renewal projects. Therefore, despite the Amnesty Laws initialising a more formal presence for the gecekondu within the city, it simultaneously opened the door for a dismantling of such, which has only come into play since the 2000s. Once legalised, the gecekondu plots could be monetised, initially by the inhabitants, but now by the private sector as part of TOKI-led urban redevelopment projects. Therefore, although successful in facilitating the absorption of migrants into the Arrival City of Istanbul, the gecekondu remains at the mercy of modern neo-liberal policies. Earmarked for demolition and eviction, gecekondu homes built 50 years ago by the current inhabitants will be erased, and with it the socio-spatial specificities of home, garden and street tradition. Each day, the developed and settled neighbourhood steps towards a more vulnerable situation.

One aspect I was aware of throughout the research was the potential for glorification of what was, and is for many, still can be a low-standard of living. What was intriguing was the nostalgia held by inhabitants for the 'old gecekondu', which may have led to rose-tinted tellings of certain stories. The fact that the inhabitants could describe their lament for the lost days of the gecekondu alongside descriptions of pain and regret upon arrival, demonstrated the complex notion of nostalgia and memory. Many inhabitants mentioned that they would happily move into an apartment if one was offered, which seemed to contrast their negative views on the anonymity that the apartment blocks are bringing to the neighbourhood.

A Graphic Ethnography

The graphic ethnography approach, combining and displaying the knowledge gained through Interview, Observation and socio-spatial analysis at the home and neighbourhood scale, provides a valuable insight into the incremental complexities of the gecekondu. The use of visual representations of smaller scale micro-histories provides a more comprehensive understanding of the larger-scale gecekondu phenomenon as a whole, including the challenges faced by the inhabitants and their relationship with the broader urban community.

The graphic ethnography approach highlights the accessibility of such representation methods, in being easily enjoyed and understood by the inhabitants of the gecekondu themselves. By understanding the inhabitant as expert of their environment and hence centring the research on their involvement, it was appropriate to therefore ensure the representation of such research was also accessible to those that participated. Inhabitants were empowered to share their stories and experiences, contributing to a more inclusive understanding of a typological analysis, focused on the socio-spatial aspects of incrementality. Furthermore, the use of visual representations is more accessible to inhabitants with whom I have had to converse with through translator, but now can understand their stories as part of a wider phenomena through drawing.

A method harnessed before to analyse informal housing globally, I believe that the project has succeeded in providing a more inclusive approach to research and representation, in terms of a socio-spatial analysis of Turkish informal housing in particular. It is fitting for such a method to be harnessed in the demystifying of the incremental informal settlement and re-contextualising the often negatively portrayed narrative. I hope that the project highlights the importance of addressing the housing needs of the urban poor through inclusive and informed policy and planning decisions. This research can be harnessed as a suggestion towards an urban policy of Third Place, working against the notoriously top-town neo-liberal approach in place.

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Interviews

Interviews during home visits were conducted and recorded in October-December 2021, with interviewee names changed for privacy. They formed the basis for socio-spatial analyses.

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6   Hersant and Toumarkine (2005)
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Chapter 4

Chapter 5
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Conclusion

Unless referenced below, all Figures (illustration or photography) are Author's Own, created in 2021-3.

Figures

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Figure 4   TOKIstanbul. Retrieved from https://www.superscalar.eu/TOKIstanbul

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Figure 12   Istanbul Urban Database. Retrieved from http://www.istanbulurbandatabase.com/

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Figure 20   Umraniye Tarihi Foto. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/tarih_foto/

Figure 33   Old Istanbul Photo Archive. Retrieved from https://hayalleme.tumblr.com/post/107300760357/k%C4%B1s%C4%B1kl%C4%B1dan-%C3%BCmraniye-giri%C5%9Fi-1965

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