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ENTHUSIASM FOR SPACE: AFFECTS AND HIERARCHIES IN THE PRODUCTION OF TARLABAŞI

Abstract

The pilot urban renewal project in Tarlabası has amounted to the displacement and dispossession of communities. While the demolition in the area opened the space to curious visitors, researchers, activists and artists triggering an enthusiasm for the case, its impact already transforms the everyday life of the inhabitants in the surrounding of the construction site. How do these interventions affect the everyday relations of the production of space? In this article, I investigate the connotations of this question to open up a discussion about the modes of resistance with regards to the political significance of ‘affects’.

Keywords: space, affects, power, urban transformation, resistance

1. Introduction

Tarlabası is a residential area in Beyoğlu District that consists of the Bostan, Bülbül, Çukur, Hüseyinağa, Kalyoncukulluğu, Kamer Hatun, Şehirmuhtar, Sururimehmetefendi, and Yenişehir neighborhoods. It is surrounded by popular nodes of commercial, cultural, and recreative activities on Tarlabası Boulevard, Taksim Square, Dolapdere Avenue, and İstiklal Street (Figure 1). It was founded in early 16th century as the settlement of the Non-Muslim communities working for the newly established embassies due to the capitulation contracts between the Ottoman Empire and European powers. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the demographical structure in the area changed through several events caused by the construction of nation-state ideology. The non-Muslim population was dissolved by the effects of the Wealth Tax enacted in 1942, the nationalist attacks and pillages on 6th and 7th September 1955, the deportation of citizens of Greek nationality in 1964, and finally the conflict over Northern Cyprus in the 1970s.

Consequently, the uncertain legal conditions and decreasing rental values made it possible for newcomers to squat, sell, or rent the properties. In the 1960s, the Roma community and migrants, prominently from northern Anatolia, started to settle in Tarlabası. Subsequent to the intensification of the violent conflict between the state and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in the 1980s, people started to move to the area from their villages in south-eastern Turkey. In the second half of the 1980s, the construction of Tarlabası Boulevard was a large-scale transformation for which hundreds of historical buildings were demolished. The detachment of the neighborhoods from the commercial center brought a second wave of economic, social, and infrastructural deprivation. In connection with the construction of the Tarlabası Boulevard, transgender people and immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa started to take shelter in Tarlabası in the 1990s. While the migrant inhabitants from Anatolia left the area as their economic conditions improved, many refugees¹ also came to Tarlabası after the outbreak of the war in Syria.

After the economic crisis in 2001, state-led gentrification through state-private sector partnerships became the prominent method of value extraction from the urban space. Beside the urban transformation projects for *gecekondu* neighbourhoods, inner city urban protected sites such as Tarlabası were declared as 'urban renewal areas'. These projects set forth reconstruction principles for registered historical assets that were challenged by the existing laws, such as the Law No. 2863 on the Protection of Cultural Assets. To make these radical changes in the original plans of the buildings possible, new laws and regulations were enacted by the government, such as the Law on Renewal No. 5366 enacted in 5/7/2005, and the Law on the Amendments to Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage and Various Laws No. 5226 enacted in 14/7/2004. As the financial and cultural centre of Turkey, Istanbul received its share from this attempt substantially. The renewal of the neighbourhoods was connected to mega-urban transformation projects. Together, these projects restructure the social setting in the entire city through dispossession and displacement of existing communities. Finally, on 20th February 2006, 9 plots in Tarlabası in the vicinity of Tarlabası Boulevard were declared as pilot Urban Renewal Area due to Decision 2006/10172 of the Council of Ministers. The illustrations of the imagination of New Tarlabası defined the area explicitly for upper classes, bringing a 'sterilized' development similar to the vivid streets around İstiklal Avenue such as the infamous

French Street. The renewal is aimed to be extended to the entire Tarlabası and its surrounding.

During the negotiations between the inhabitants, the state officials and the company carrying out the Project, an association was founded by the participation of lawyers and specialists that supported the inhabitants.² Initially, the rights of tenants were also negotiated. However, tough expropriation conditions forced by the state and the company during the bargaining process caused the exclusion of tenants, and the collectivity of property owners was also dissolved substantially. Finally, properties were expropriated for prices that were extremely low in proportion to the new values established by the Project.

During the time of the negotiations, especially in 2010, there had been several protests against the Project. Visits of the civil servants from the Ministry of Culture were protested by the inhabitants during their investigation of the building in the renewal area. Therefore, initially, employees of the City and the Company were entering the area undercover to avoid the reaction of inhabitants. However, in 2012, the demolition of the pilot project area started and most of the inhabitants were evicted by police forces violently. The ruins were shielded by large billboards advertising the Project throughout the Tarlabası Boulevard promising a 'secure' and 'vivid' New Tarlabası (Figure 2). Once known as somewhere to stay out, Tarlabası started to receive visits of curious visitors, scholars, and artists after the demolition. During this intense attention, Ali Öz, who had been photographing Tarlabası before the demolition captured a tag on the remaining façade of a ruin that read "You couldn't get enough of taking pictures! Except for Mr. Ali".

Nevertheless, in the summer of 2012, several street festivals were organized between the ruins (such as 'VJFest', 'Division Unfolded: Tarlabası Intervention' – an art exhibition, and 'Heyt Be!' – an exhibition of fanzines). In my dissertation, I focused on the Tarlabası Street Art Festival which was organized on 16 September as the last one of these festivals with the support of sponsors and the City of Beyoğlu. This street art festival was protested by a group of activists with banners for its support for the new imagination of Tarlabası. Moreover, the activist-sociologist Begüm Özden Fırat criticized the festival as 'pornography of ruins' for contributing to the co-optation of public art by the market.

According to the curators of the festival, these protests were vain and offensive for denying the new value that the Project would bring in for everyone because inhabitants also danced during the festival 'enjoying'

the music performed by the street musicians and that urban transformation was inevitable. For one of the artists that took part in the festival, the ruins suited the soul of graffiti.³

Referring to the spatiality of the relations between place attachment, identity and everyday experience of diversity, I will illustrate the path of the governance of affects in the production of social space during the urban transformation process. In order to investigate the affective relations and social hierarchies in Tarlaşa, I conducted an ethnographical research through participant observation and open-ended interviews with the representatives of the Tarlaşa 360 Project Marketing Department, the Tarlaşa Community Centre, activists from Migrant Solidarity Kitchen, and the inhabitants in the not-yet-gentrified area that surrounds the pilot Urban Renewal Project focusing on Sakız Ağacı Avenue.

2. Affects in the Production of (Social) Space

Henry Lefebvre's dialectics of the production of space opened up a new era in the theoretical approaches to space. In 'The Production of Space', Lefebvre (1991)⁴ problematized 'how space serves and how the hegemony makes use of it'⁵ elaborating the concept of space beyond a mere container of things; as a social construct that is produced in its social dimensions rather than its mathematical/physical dimensions. These dialectically interrelated social dimensions were spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces.⁶ These spatial dialectics followed Lefebvre's 'Critique of Everyday Life'⁷ in which he pointed out the spread of alienation and exploitation in everyday life outside the work place. According to Lefebvre, capitalism reproduces itself in everyday life, and therefore everyday life constitutes the domain of revolution against the modes and dispositions of capitalism.

The dimensions of these spatial dialectics interrelate the complex powers of governing, representation, and everyday life. Spatial practice (perceived space) is "[t]he spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it."⁸ This dimension of the production of space is related to the 'abstract space' that constitute the codes, symbols, and plans which determine the physical features and governing rules of space. Representations of space are the conceived spaces that stand for "conceptualized space, the space

of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived.”⁹ Finally, representational space refers to the lived spaces of the experiences and encounters of subjects with the material and immaterial components of everyday life. In this very space, feelings, senses, and imaginations are produced and practiced, reifying the perceived and conceived spaces.¹⁰

Juhani Pallasmaa (2005) departs from this triad of Lefebvre and elaborates the dominance of the human sight over other human senses since the ancient Greeks in order to define lived space with its tactile nature. Criticizing the ‘ocularcentric paradigms’ of the ‘Western culture’, Pallasmaa suggests an aesthetical and ethical critique of the governance of senses through the dominance of sight that culminate in detachment in social relations.

The sterilized imagination of Tarlaşaşı in the Tarlaşaşı Urban Renewal Project which is employed as a justification of the displacement and reconstruction reifies this problem targeted by Pallasmaa’s critical reading of the relations between governance, space, and senses:

Instead of creating mere object of visual seduction, architecture relates, mediates and projects meanings. The ultimate meaning of building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and towards our own sense of self and being. Significant architecture makes us experience ourselves as complete embodied and spiritual beings. In fact, this is the great function of all meaningful art.¹¹

The imagination of Tarlaşaşı in the urban renewal project privileges the ‘visual seduction’ and the experience of consumption of space over the social and historical meanings. Hence, eradicating these meanings that are continuously in production, it recognizes and promotes the hierarchies in the senses, as well as the hierarchies of human bodies based on the perspective of surplus value extraction from the space.

Meanings in everyday social relations are produced through affective encounters with human beings and both tangible and intangible elements of space. This proposition relies on the Lefebvrian understanding of the production of space, as well as the recent ‘affective turn’ in the understanding of subject, contact, production, reproduction, and representation in several contemporary works from sociology and cultural studies to neurosciences that follow the 17th century philosopher Baruch

Spinoza's theory of affects. As Lefebvre escapes from the assumption of Cartesian space pointing out the social and immaterial dimensions of the physical environment revealing the relations of power and space, 'affects' call for a new understanding of the being that reaches beyond the assumptions of immaterial being (such as in Descartes) highlighting the power of and over the correlation of body and mind. Spinoza's theory problematizes the complexity in the relations of the mind and body referring to their coalescence as *affectus*, that is the sum of body and mind but also more than that with regards to thought and the act. Accordingly, as Michael Hardt – one of the prominent theoreticians of the concept of 'affective labour' – summarizes,

each time we consider the mind's power to think, we must try to recognize how the body's power to act corresponds to it—and the notion of correspondence here is importantly open and indefinite. ...The perspective of the affects, in short, forces us constantly to pose the problem of the relationship between mind and body with the assumption that their powers constantly correspond in some way... external ideas; and the body's power to act corresponds to its sensitivity to other bodies. The greater our power to be affected, he [Spinoza] posits, the greater our power to act.¹²

The affective turn is not only concerned with the construction of the corporeal and the mental self, but it also allows an opposition to the individualistic analysis of the psyche and the state of mind. Teresa Brennan (2004) points out that 'individualism is a historical and cultural product'¹³, and criticizes the pathologization of the affects in modern 'Western' thought and clinical psychology. Brennan's work reveals that affects are social, hence, the pathologized behaviours are actually not individual complications but constructed socially; their definitions change depending on the context of time and space. Indeed, Kathleen Steward's anthropological narrative about 'ordinary affects' addresses this transmission of affects in everyday life: "Ordinary affects are the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences."¹⁴ When a biker couple enter a café at a low ebb after having an accident, the atmosphere changes for the entire room; and when they start to speak about the incident, it triggers other people in the room and a sporadic conversation take place that involves the various affective responses of all the subjects in the room.¹⁵ Taking the role of social

hierarchies over affects into account, Steward propounds that “power is a thing of senses”, and the senses are actually responding to and/or with power in various ways.¹⁶ Considering this, a crucial question must be addressed: in what ways do the relations of power and affect respond to the economic, physical, and social impact of the spatial intervention of the urban transformation in Tarlabası?

This affective turn in critical theory reveal the post-Fordist relations of production, consumption, and reproduction; relations between work, labour, identity, time, space, and affects with regards to the potential of affects that stands for ‘the power to act’. In this connection, the term ‘affective labour’ indicates the new modes of capitalist governance of work and everyday life that constructs a wider range of alienation after this economic transformation activating the potential of exploitation through affects.

In her inspiring public seminar titled “Affective Labour in the City”, Emma Dowling interpreted this new era of exploitation as *modus operandi* of capitalist extraction of value: “capitalism always seeks to externalize the cost of reproducing labour power.”¹⁷ She exemplified the body as an affective register in the Post-Fordist city, illustrating time, space, and labour dimensions of the power of affects in social relations and the spatial politics of affects from a commoning perspective in relation to the processes of dispossession. She defines affective labour as the labour that “harness affects like enthusiasm, inspiration, motivation, excitement.” According to Dowling, “affects opens a terrain of sense making, a corporeal mode of communications that connect bodies across the space of the city and organize social relation.” Departing from Pallasmaa’s critique of the dominance of sight over other senses, Dowling narrates the quotidian governing methods such as the recorded voices in public transport that continuously remind the passengers what to do; or the speed of escalators that adjust the human bodies to the speed of the city of London that is a centre of global financial transactions. This remark falls in place when one walks from the crowded Istiklal Avenue or Taksim Square to the inner parts of Tarlabası passing the Tarlabası Boulevard. In each part of this journey, the speed changes due to the traffic and the movement of people, and so does one’s mood. Moreover, the imaginations of new Tarlabası in the Renewal Project also ushers in a new experience of time and space. Instead of people spending time in front of their houses or shops, or dawdle down the streets, as they used to in pre-transformation spaces in Tarlabası, the representations of this Project depict people holding shopping bags

or briefcases walking on the streets that do not embody any distractions in the form of everyday social encounters other than the ones in venues like cafés, shops, etc., establishing sterilized encounters.

In the following parts of this article based on my field research in the area that surrounds the Tarlaşaşı Urban Renewal Project, I depart from these discussions to elaborate the representations of space that produce and reproduce affects, the responses of the inhabitants, and the hierarchies in Tarlaşaşı that reveal itself in affective forms during the transformation process. To contribute Pallasmaa's suggestion for an epistemology of affects, and Steward's approach to the space through affective narratives, I describe the hierarchies in the research field with its features that reach the senses beyond the dominance of sight. With that, I also point out the connotations of the post-Fordist configuration of affective relations to work, capital, and space, spotting the resistance to this social transformation.

3. Urban Transformation, Place Attachment and Affective Relations in Everyday Life

Since the migration to this area is related to the social ties, in Tarlaşaşı many streets and/or buildings constitute agglomerations based on ethnicity and/or place of origin. For example, Akkiraz Street (the first parallel street to Kalyoncu Kulluđu Avenue) is inhabited by Kurdish people that came from Mardin. On avenues like Sakız Ađacı, there is a diversity of ethnic identities among the inhabitants and shopkeepers; however, ethnic ties still play a role in social convergence on Sakız Ađacı. I never asked my informants anything directly about their own identities or their approach to the other identities in Tarlaşaşı. However, the narratives about their attachment to the place and the relations in the space were heavily related to the ethnical identities.

In interactions and interviews on the Sakız Ađacı Avenue those who moved to Tarlaşaşı before the 1980s related themselves to this place with nostalgia for the past. The former Greek residents were remembered longingly, especially by the artisans that learned their craft from their Greek employers. For example, both of the artisans from the two opposite ends of this part of the Avenue, cabinet maker D., and ironmonger N., came from Diyarbakır and took over their businesses from their Greek bosses. I first met D. while I was in conversation with his opposite neighbour on the street, and he excitedly offered to give an interview to tell the history

of this venue. They both started to narrate their memories of the avenue referring to the former Greek residents and their rituals, manners and customs. D. is Kurdish, lives in a far point of Anatolian side of the city, and has been working here since 1970. N. is an Assyrian from Sur, Diyarbakır, and has been living and working in his shop across the infamous for fifty years. They both were discontent by the situation in Tarlabası after the 1980s, especially after the dense migration of Kurdish people. Appraising the Roma community in the area that moved here beginning in the 1960s for keeping their rituals and at the same time having decent manners, they both were criticizing the Kurdish community that arrived after the 1980s for being uneducated, having too many children, and changing the mood in the area. Many years ago, D. even applied to Red Crescent for mobilizing them to educate the inhabitants about birth control, but there was no response. He mentioned that some of the Kurdish women in this Avenue were still illiterate. He shares the idea with the Turkish inhabitants that I interviewed that having too many children and poverty pushed people into crime, and the increasing rate of criminal activities was one of the crucial reasons for negative changes in the area. Inhabitants from Roma ethnicity also affirm the positive relationship between the diverse older inhabitants, and the reasons of the insecure condition stated by D.

D. mentioned his Kurdish identity only when he started to criticize the other Kurdish people in the area who, unlike him, moved here after the 1980's: "I am Kurdish too, but..." He was identifying himself more with Tarlabası and the heritage he took over from his Greek bosses and neighbours rather than his Kurdish identity.

Concerning the Kurdish identity, the number of their children and the lack of education are very common negative comments as well as comments that connect this identity to crime and terrorism. The mass migration of Kurds from South-eastern Turkey¹⁸ started in the 1980s after the military coup due to the violent conflict between the Turkish Army and the Kurdish Liberation Movement led by the Kurdish Workers Party. Migration from this area continued for years due to economic reasons and continuous state repression. Kinship ties play an important role in the migration of Kurdish people to Tarlabası.

South-eastern Turkey is one of the poorest regions in the country because of the conflict and the lack of industrial or agricultural economic activities. The primary language of people in this area is mostly different from Turkish; many people speak little or no Turkish. There is no public education available in these languages, and the language of education is

only Turkish, although the pupils starting the elementary school usually do not speak Turkish at all.¹⁹ After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the nation-state ideology strived to eliminate the minority identities in its unitary structure, and the Kurdish identity was not recognized at all. In Article No. 2932 of the constitution enacted in 1982, the use of any language other than Turkish was banned officially. This ban was lifted on 25 January 1991.

The first Kurdish institute in Turkey was founded in 1992 in Istanbul. However, the first department of Kurdology in a south-eastern city was opened in Van in 2012, after the Democratic Initiative policy of the government was declared in 2009. Besides, speaking Kurdish has been related to 'terrorism' and there have been several legal cases in which speaking Kurdish was considered terror propaganda.²⁰ One of the prominent demands of the Kurdish movement has been education in native languages.

Migrant Solidarity Kitchen, that is a communal place in the middle of the not yet gentrified part of Sakiz Ağacı Avenue was opened by activists of Migrant Solidarity Network in March 2012 to 'raise visibility of local migration issues' as 'a locus of solidarity and sharing against all sorts of borders that tear us apart'.²¹ The activists of the Kitchen started a children choir a couple of years ago. However, they realized that most of the children were not able to follow and/or repeat the lyrics since they didn't speak Turkish. Therefore, they started to give Turkish language in the Kitchen.

In my encounter with H., a 30-year-old woman, recognition of ethnic identity and Kurdish language appeared as one of the affective dimensions of the place attachment. She migrated to Tarlaşaşı directly from her village in Mardin nine years ago, and she has been living on Akkiraz Street since then. I first came across her on the Peşkirici Street when we both were shopping from a bakery. While I was smoking outside waiting for my order to be baked, she was already leaving the place, and noticed me because of my clothing.²² She asked me whether I was Kurdish explaining her curiosity with the colours of my clothes. Upon my first sentences about my research, she asked me whether the flats in the vicinity of the Project area would become more valuable in case the Project continues in the rest of the area too, since she bought a 50 m² flat in a street right next to the construction site. I responded with what I knew about the conditions of expropriation during the negotiations between the property owners and the Project holders and the threat of dispossession. She directly made a

commented on it with an insurgent tone: "All they want to do is actually just chasing the Kurds from here!" After hearing my comment that sounded more or less affirmative, she asked me whether I like stuffed mussels, and invited me to her house for the next day to give me some. Filling mussels is an informal economic activity that is very common in Tarlaşaşı, and it is organized within the community of the Kurdish migrants from Mardin.

Although we first met at the border of the Project area, and her house is only 250 meter away from the Project, as many other women in Akkiraz street, H. did not mention that she sensed the physical impact of urban transformation in the area yet. She enthusiastically hopes that her investment will gain value through the Project's impact, but on the other hand, she is also aware of the relation between the urban transformation and the governmental politics on her ethnic identity.

H. lives in a 2-room flat in second floor with her husband and her five children whose ages vary between 7 years and 6 months. Both rooms are smaller than 20 m² with no furniture other than a flat screen TV hanging on the wall, sheets on the floor and cushions, and there is no kitchen; instead, there is a benchtop that faces the exit door at the narrow entrance of the flat. It is a four-storey building, and her neighbours in other flats are relatives of her and her husband, since her husband is her cousin. The coalbunker of the building is used for filling mussels. She works there with her relatives/neighbours every day of the week from 7 am to 3 pm. Her husband is a worker. She complains about the precarious working conditions.

With the money she saved in the last 9 years filling mussels, she bought a house on Cukur Street, in the vicinity of the Project area in 2015 for 150 Turkish Liras. One of the first things that she told me when I visited her in her flat was that she wanted to have each of her children, and she even had to insist on having the last one: "With children time passes by quicker". She was very surprised that I did not have any children although I was a couple of years older than her. Her oldest children, a seven-year-old boy and a 6-year-old girl, can speak some Turkish, while the other two can speak only Kurdish. When I had a difficulty to understand the name of her middle son, she repeated it and proudly told that it is a guerrilla name.

Although she considers Tarlaşaşı as her final destination, her reference of place attachment is still Nusaybin, her home town in Mardin. She receives food packages from her family, and misses the special stove carved in rock benches in which they bake bread.

Her mother-in-law – and her aunt at the same time – was staying with her for a short while since she had to see a doctor in Istanbul. Since her mother-in-law did not speak any Turkish and I did not speak Kurdish so much, we communicated through gestures and H.'s translation. When H. told me that I finally had to learn Kurdish, I answered embarrassed: 'I am working on it, I hope I will speak it soon'. As soon as H translated my answer, her mother in law raised her two hands as if she was praying, and passionately cried out: "Inshallah! (Hopefully)". Me speaking Kurdish would be a sign of the social change beyond the perception of Kurds by the Turks. They both were surprized that I wasn't uncomfortable with them being Kurdish, nor with their criticism of the state. H.'s mother-in-law hugged and kissed me on the cheeks every once a while. In the meantime, asked me simple questions about the quotidian practices of 'Turks', such as the frequency of black tea consumption, and making remarks about me being Turkish in a rather friendly manner. When I clumsily sat on the floor to wait for the dinner to be served, she implied that Turks were not used to sit on the floor like Kurds did. Her imagination of the 'Turk' was not only related to codes of cultural differences, but also to an assumption of the difference in socio-economic classes of Turks and Kurds; hence, I must have been a member of upper classes, maybe also because of the way I looked with my 'modern' clothing which was different than hers. It was surprizing for her to hear that major part of my family used to sit on the floor and that this changed with the younger generations. However, while my family members changed their everyday practices mostly due to finding stable jobs in state institutions, structural challenges for majority of Kurdish people that reside in Tarlabası amount to the precarious and informal economic activities.

Similarly, the opposite neighbour of D., a Kurdish migrant from Siirt on the rather diverse Sakiz Ağacı Street, welcomed me as a 'Turkish' woman. Unlike H., she was excusing herself for her Turkish since Kurdish was her native language, instead of expecting me to learn Kurdish. She is in her 50s and lives in a flat two buildings away from the Migrant Solidarity Kitchen. She initially lived in the recently closed part of this Avenue for seven years, and then moved to her present flat twenty years ago. Drinking black tea in front of her house, sitting in the street and watching the street are important parts of her everyday routine and a source of joy for her. When we were chatting, D. approached and referred to her as 'the Sultan of this Avenue' for she was spending most of her time outside her house and had an extensive knowledge about the avenue due to her interactions

with people around her through her self-confident gestures. She welcomed this attribution enthusiastically, though mentioning the conflict between her and her husband about her sitting in the street.

Like D., she approached the change in the Avenue in terms of the manners of the inhabitants. She agreed that the education level of Kurdish youth and their involvement with criminal activities – prominently drug dealing – were the most important problems in terms of this change. Each time her neighbour's young son threw garbage from the second floor balcony, she repeated ironically: "See? It is civilization!" Besides her criticism to such 'uncivilized' behaviours in the area, she was very cautious about the representation of this place. When D. offered me to give an interview about the history of Tarlabası, she warned him jokingly about not talking negatively about the area. Just like H, she and her daughter were witty and self-confident but never hostile to me during our chats, and they never spared their anger and criticism for the Turkish state. However, living in a rather diverse location and hearing the criticism about the Kurds in the area, this rather elderly woman was sighingly affirming the criticism of the Kurds mentioned by her neighbour D., and she was less affirmative about the Kurdish liberation movement.

Different from the cabinet maker, and the ironmonger, she was not referring to any nostalgia. Her attachment to Tarlabası was due to the livelihood, having neighbours and her daughters around her, enjoying the street during the day with its 'beauty'. She pointed at the colourful flower patterned blanket hanging on the tightrope between to opposite windows.²³ "Do you see how beautiful it is?"

She has four children. The oldest one, 22-year-old daughter Z., got married to a man who used to live in a district almost 20 km away from Tarlabası requiring that they had to move to Tarlabası. She now resides in a flat opposite to her mother's house. She told me that it was impossible for her to live somewhere else than this avenue due to her social ties with relatives and other neighbours, as well as the joy she has from the beauty of this avenue.

She also bought a flat – the flat in which she currently lives – a couple of years ago with the money she could save lining cloth buttons at home. Although someone offered to pay 500 Turkish Lira to buy her flat recently, she decided not to sell it, expecting that the value would rise soon with regards to the impact of the Project that is just a hundred meters away from her flat. She also told of other cases like that around her flat. Being displaced and dispossessed in case that the Project extends to the rest of the

Avenue was not a possibility she was aware of, although her neighbours in the upper part of the Avenue had to leave recently due to expropriation.

The central location of the area allows women who suffer intense domestic repression to develop economic activities around or inside their houses, though the precarity of working conditions were mentioned with fear of economic deprivation. Alongside the domestic labour of women, these economic activities are crucial for households in terms of holding on to the city. The possibility of being chased from this area is a threat in terms of losing the every-day social setting that allows them to produce networks of empowerment through social and economic relations.

However, not all of the actors in the area have the chance to hold on to the city due to their legal status and the prejudice about their identities. Since 2011, the area receives refugees from Syria who usually stay here for short terms. Other inhabitants, regardless of their identity, mention their suspicion about people from Syria.

Without my asking, the elderly woman from Sakiz Ağacı Street pointed at the children in front of us that were Dom from Syria. After expressing her pity for them explaining me that nobody is willing to employ them or rent out flats to them, she criticized them for not being hygienic, and for having many children even after they escaped from their country of origin. She told that at the beginning 'they' (the inhabitants that are not from Syria, including herself) helped them with material support. She points at the bare feet of these children:

People continuously give them shoes, but they either wear it once or twice, or don't wear it at all. Wouldn't you wear shoes if you had a pair? Maybe they sell them immediately, or it may also be their culture; maybe they are not used to wear shoes and feel more comfortable without them, both in summer and winter times.

Since I cannot speak either Kurdish or Arabic, and since they were hesitant to communicate with me in the short periods of time that I spent in Tarlabası, I could not have a conversation with adults from Syria other than some gestures and few words during our encounters. However, many children from Syria spoke Turkish; and they were excited about our interactions. An encounter that I experienced in winter reveals the lack of the consideration of the consequences of harsh discrimination, precarious legal status²⁴, high level of economic deprivation, and the inner hierarchies among the refugees that these people face in Istanbul.

In January, I met two 10-year-old girls in a street next to Istiklal Avenue whom I had known from my visits to the Migrant Solidarity Kitchen. It was freezing cold, and one of them had only slippers and no socks on her feet, while the other one was wearing worn-out sneakers. When we were chatting sitting on a table outside a café, a man approached us, and gave me some money convincing me to buy boots for the girl with sleepers. She already had a certain pair of boots in her mind, and fortunately its cost was exactly the amount of the money that the man gave us. She was both excited about her new boots, and concerned that her mother might be angry with her for having them. She was not sure whether she had to bring them home or hide them somewhere. They also started to worry about the time that they spent without begging, in fear of their families. When I tried to compensate their time, they did not want to accept my offer, since they were embarrassed of receiving money from a 'friend'. When one of them asked me for buying ice cream, the other one warned her: "Hush! Don't be nasty". She started to tell me their lives before they left Syria.

They were already neighbours in Aleppo. Her father had a shop and a car back then. After the bombings, they lost everything and escaped from war, and could not bring anything with them. They had been in Istanbul for almost 4 years, and still had not either a specific address or economic means, other than what they earn from begging. Unfortunately, when I tried to find them in Tarlabası after one month, they had left the area. I could not observe whether she could keep wearing her new boots.

This case of boots and the question about the children that wear no shoes show a path that recalls the case of sitting on the floor and its connotations. The reference to the bare-foot children from Syria indicate that among those who are othered by the majority themselves too, the relations between the enclosures of identities and economic hierarchies continue to generate otherness based on the essentialisation of economic behaviour as culture and the representations of those who don't comply with the identities formulated by the state ideologies.

4. Othering, Affect and the Discourse

The hegemonic discourse of the identities outside the Turk, and the physical impact of the Project are responded by affective remarks by the informants that live in the yet non-gentrified area that surrounds the

Project. Although these impacts were experienced collectively, the affects were still tied with the relations to the 'Other' and/or consideration of self-identity as 'the other' with reference to concepts like hygiene, 'civilization', educational level, and assumptions over culture and tradition. For instance, the insinuation made by my informant to the behaviours of neighbours as 'uncivilized' recalls the frequent reference of discrimination against minorities. Alongside the explicitly and commonly mentioned affects like anger, resentment, insecurity, and fear, the affects that are not successfully directed at the hegemonic powers during everyday encounters to position the 'Self' in the social setting merge into the totalizing power discourse that constructs the 'Others' which leads to an affective disintegration.

In the last two years, the attendance of inhabitants to Migrant Solidarity Kitchen weakened besides children. Deniz Şensöz, an activist from the Kitchen, observed that the prejudice of inhabitants against the increasing number of Syrian migrants that attend the activities of the Kitchen was one of the reasons. However, she also added that the violent acts and prejudice of the neighbours of the Kitchen against the children and the Kitchen was eased through the attempts of the activists to have friendly conversations with them. According to her, greeting the neighbours with a smile was also effective in some cases. However, the neighbours were not very well informed about the activities of the Kitchen as a community centre focused on the consequences of migration, and inhabitants that I interviewed considered it merely as a group that cared only for children.

Being an inhabitant for a longer time in the area constitutes a hierarchic dimension of place attachment and relations with others. For instance, common codes of antiziganism are openly mentioned about the Dom people that migrated recently, while the Roma community is perceived rather positively for being older inhabitants who adjusted to the area. However, other common codes of othering of Roma identity, such as entertaining oneself and the others in almost every occasion, and having colourful traditions are still present in the narratives of non-Roma inhabitants. These assumptions are present also in the justification of urban transformation by the government that 'offers' a 'corrective treatment' to the Roma identity²⁵.

There is a observable tendency of former inhabitants to show discontent about the newcomers outside the urban transformation project area. Positive personal experiences with the 'Others' do not necessarily amount to a overreaching positive approach to the entire identity, and is limited to a consideration of exceptions. For example, the only SubSaharan African

immigrant on Sakız Ağacı Street who has established his very small scale junk dealing business is accepted by the other inhabitants and called with a Turkish name instead of his own name as an indicator of his acceptance, while the prejudice about other immigrants from the same region as drug-dealers and unreliable 'Others' remains.

Among the actors in the production of Tarlabası, only the Tarlabası 360 Project has a privilege as a 'new comer'. When I visited the marketing office of the Project in the Tarlabası Boulevard across the closed part of Sakız Ağacı Avenue, I was informed that it was expected that the inhabitants that still live in the not yet gentrified surrounding area would either adjust to the new setting, or leave the area.

There are still everyday day social ties based on trust in the non-gentrified area. Shopping on credit to pay later (*veresiye*), supporting the disadvantaged neighbours or new comers, and the involvement of activists can be considered among these remaining relations of trust, although these are also under threat of the transformation.

5. "Isn't street public space?"

Sakız Ağacı Avenue used to be a long channel of vehicular and pedestrian traffic between northern and southern Tarlabası, connecting the two sides and opening directly to Tarlabası Boulevard and İstiklal Avenue. For the inhabitants of Sakız Ağacı Avenue, it had a severe impact when the part of the avenue leading to Tarlabası Boulevard was closed to public for the 'security' in the construction of the Project area (Figure 3). The grocery market around the corner of the Migrant Solidarity Kitchen, around hundred metres away from the border of the Project area, went bankrupt, and other businesses in and around the avenue lost a substantial amount of their regular income. The Project blocked the direct access to the Boulevard, and therefore people had to walk a long way through the hilly streets to get to the other side. Another consequence of the closed street was the intensification of criminal activities and prostitution around this border between the Project and the avenue. In every conversation I had with the inhabitants, this was one of the first complaints about the Project. In addition, buildings such as the church in the Project Area, and the evicted neighbours were part of their losses. It had an impact on the aesthetic and social dimensions of their everyday life which manifested as part of the motives of their attachment to this place.

Although, 'the ruins suit the spirit of street art' as an artist from the Tarlaşaı Street Art Festival claimed, this scene and its consequences didn't suit the 'spirit' of the space that was produced by the collective labour of the inhabitants. Actually, Firat's criticism about the festival (ironically titled "Art in Tarlaşaı: It can be seen until it is demolished") was already expostulating this support of the festival for the consequences of the Project, disregarding the enclosures and exclusion of the people from the public. Indeed, most of the buildings that were used for the festival were totally demolished in 2015, and before that already closed to public when the area was fenced in.

The ironmonger at the northern end of the Avenue told me that he applied to the municipality about the closed part of the Avenue demanding that it should be opened to the public. According to him, the street could not be considered as part of the construction site; there would be many other ways to fence the construction of the buildings. However, his petition was not taken seriously, and he lost his hope about getting their street back.

When I asked about whether there would be a chance that the inhabitants could get mobilized against this situation, he answered hopelessly, mentioning that now everybody feared doing anything about it, since all their attempts were unsuccessful so far. Other inhabitants also answered my question hopelessly. The 'Sultan of the Avenue' told me that she had no courage to do anything about the construction, although workers continued to work day and night, making a lot of noise. The power the state-construction company collaboration held over the inhabitants manifested itself also in terms of these affective responses, such as desperation, fear, and insecurity.

The ironmonger asked me straight: "Isn't street public space; how can be public space closed to public?"

Actually, this question also indicates the neoliberal enclosures of the public space and all other commons. Governance of public space in the neoliberal era adds the policies of value extraction from commons through public-private partnerships, such as the Project in Tarlaşaı, to the state control over human beings through public space. Before the fencing of the Project area, Tarlaşaı used to be shelter to protestors to escape from the police during the demonstrations around Taksim square and İstiklal Avenue. Now, it is not only closed to this connection, but it is also considered to be the property of the Project.

The theorization of commons from a commoning perspective deals with these enclosures of the resources of life: public spaces, ecological

resources, and all other resources of life that are produced and reproduced collectively through the labour of people in everyday life. Following Garret Hardin's (1968) assumption that commons had to be governed against their exploitation (uncontrolled overuse) by human beings as public, capitalist assemblages of state-market collaboration developed strategies of surplus value extraction from commons, such as the privatization of Amazon rainforests within the body of World Bank on the ground of preservation (Federici, 2011).

Firat (2011) reminds us that Karl Marx theorized the enclosure of commons under the primitive accumulation in relation to the fencing of the land in England in the 18th century, and the new forms of capitalist enclosures in the neoliberal era produces wealth through the privatization of commons. In Turkey, governmental policies of "accumulation by dispossession" has been the governmental policy since the crisis in 2001, and enclosures of urban commons such as the urban transformation projects and privatization of public properties demonstrate the hierarchies of the values attributed to different people through this dispossession and displacement.

Peter Linebaugh (2013) points out the relation between the action and the threat of losing urban commons, and signalizes that commons are invisible until they are enclosed. Likewise, with reference to Silvia Federici (2004) who elaborates the modes of resistance against capitalist enclosures through the commonality of everyday practices of women, Firat indicates that enclosures of the commons make the commons visible and conduce to evoke the existing social relations based on commons as well as new practices of commoning. Here, commoning stands for producing and reclaiming the commons collectively as users and inhabitants of the space against the hegemony of enclosures.

Although, between 2009 and 2012, inhabitants protested the urban transformation process that excludes them from the new imagination of Tarlaabaşı, governance of affects through the state repression for this enclosure seems to aggrieve the people in their everyday life, instilling these hierarchies based on economic level and identities. However, we must not forget that affective response of the people in the city against the enclosure of Gezi Park as a shopping mall in 2013 paved the way for a collective action of resistance.

One evening, on our way to Taksim from Tarlaabaşı with Emy Eddie Fidelis, an activist of the Migrant Solidarity Network and an immigrant from Nigeria who has been living in Tarlaabaşı for 8 years, we received

racist and sexist insults, and witnessed the racist comments about and violence against the migrants from Syria who were begging on the street. Fidelis reproached this everyday setting of discrimination and violence with reference to the advertisement campaign of Efes Pilsen.²⁶ “They say there is life on the street! On the contrary! Especially on the street life is not possible!”

Although this remark is accurate in terms of the hierarchies in experiencing the space, as Lefebvre registered in his dialectics of the production of space, streets are also the very space to reclaim the life and to struggle against the hegemony of the capitalist interventions. Indeed, as Dowling called to mind in her seminar, protest in public space reorganizes and transforms the relationship between people as an affective experience against the hegemonic powers that generate capitalist enclosures and hierarchies based on identities.

6. Governance of (In)security

On 14th March 2010, Prime Minister Erdoğan mentioned his discontent about the Roma people living in tents and shacks referring to their lifestyle as something to be corrected through urban transformation. On 6th April 2013, in his speech for the ceremony of urban transformation destructions in Gaziosmanpaşa, he associated the urban transformation area with terror. Finally, the billboards that conceal the ruins in Tarlaşaşı advertise that Tarlaşaşı will be a secure place after the transformation.

Although Tarlaşaşı was stigmatized as an insecure place generating fear both inside and outside the area, actually the inhabitants that were targeted by this discourse and the hierarchies in the area were the most vulnerable actors of the production of this space. Shortly after Sakız Ağacı Avenue was partially closed to the public in summer 2014, on 2nd September 2014, Ouadilou Lezl Gail, a transnational migrant from Congo, and then two transgender women, Çağla Joker on 22nd April 2014, and Corti Emel on 18th October 2014 were murdered in Tarlaşaşı in hate crimes, too. Moreover, Festus Okey, a football player from Nigeria was murdered by a police officer directly in the notorious Police Station located on the Tarlaşaşı Boulevard.

Discourse of security and the practices of police in Tarlaşaşı recall Michel Foucault’s conceptualization of the new modes of hegemony as ‘biopower’ that amounted to the governance of the population

through discourse and control over human bodies. Indeed, the discourse and practices of security function for nothing but the enforcement of the transformation beyond the Project area breeding further social disintegration. In the meanwhile, the Project benefits from the imagination that the entire Tarlabası has been under the exploitation of outcasts who cause insecurity and deprivation themselves.

There are specific relations of repression, corruption and struggle between the inhabitants of Tarlabası and the police forces. Immigrants from Sub-Saharan African countries are continuously suffering the stress of random police controls even in cases that there are no entanglements in terms of their residence permit and/or they are not involved with any criminalized activities. As I noticed from the behaviour of the begging children that migrated from Syria, seeing the police officers even in the intense crowd of the streets from a large distance causes them to get into a panic. Finally, on 10th May 2016, just before the International Humanitarian Summit on 23rd and 24th of May, around 5 am in the morning, police raided the houses of people from Syria in Tarlabası, and brought them forcefully to the camp in Osmaniye, although they had no legal grounds to do so.²⁷ The visibility of the conditions of these people was obviously a concern of the state in terms of the affects they could create in the participants of the upcoming event.

The conflict between police and the Kurdish youth that supports Rojava and Kurdish liberation movement is more visible since there are continuously demonstrations organized spontaneously by these young people against the state violence against Kurds. Especially since the summer of 2015, there have been clashes between the police and these people because of the curfews in South-eastern Turkey. Although the demonstrations are dissolved due to the intense use of pepper gas and other means of repression, this mobilization continues as the curfew politics do. However, these clashes are neither reported in media nor felt by the people outside the area in spite of the pepper gas that becomes 'invisible' for the senses of people in the surrounding crowd.

Despite the repression and the stigma about the insecurity and criminality in the neighbourhoods, Tarlabası used to be the safe haven for the protestors in the surrounding after the police attacks until the Avenue was detached from the Boulevard. According to the inhabitants, the closed part of Avenue constitutes further insecurity due to the intensification of criminal activities around the construction site. Sakiz Ağacı Avenue seems to suffer from these conditions remarkably. Hence, there is also

the continuous and visible tension between drug dealers and police, and between the small time criminals and the other inhabitants around this area. Inhabitants complain about the criminality on the one hand, while on the other hand, they mention that police don't respond their calls for help, and instead, there are some shady relations between the police forces and the criminality.

H. answered my question about the further possibilities of struggle against the unlawful practices of transformation highlighting the fear and desperation among the inhabitants evoked by this injustice: To whom shall we trust?

In Lieu of Conclusion

Although the Project area is under construction, the legal process against the Project is not finalized yet. Nevertheless, there are further plans for the transformation of the rest of Tarlaşaşı. The discursive and practical force of governance of affects turns people against each other through the hierarchies and divisions. While the project attributes an imagination based on the privilege of eye to trigger an enthusiasm (such as the representation on the billboards that conceal the ruins, exile of the migrants from Syria, aestheticisation of ruins through festivals), it creates affects like hope/desperation, fear and insecurity in the rest of the area that is not gentrified yet, and govern the construction of self and the other through the hierarchies among the actors of the space.

Along with the fear due to this conditions, for those who could own a property, hope is a way to hold onto the area. However, Ulus Baker (2001) draws the attention to 'hope' as a grieving affect in Spinoza's *Ethica*. Accordingly, human beings oscillate between fear and hope when they neither surrender to the hegemony nor produce their own modes of power themselves.

Nevertheless, there are still practices of resistance and solidarity networks based on everyday social relations and other social ties; and Tarlaşaşı is still the shelter for disadvantaged people. Therefore, a new direction of resistance and struggle against the power of the state-market collaboration requires the creation of a communality through the political implications of the affects rather than politics of integration and representation.



Figure 1 is prepared by the author.



Figure 2 (from the personal archive of the author)



Figure 3 (from the personal archive of the author)

NOTES

- 1 In Turkey, there is no official status of refugee; refugees from Syria is officially defined as 'guests'.
- 2 See Kuyucu, T; Ünsal, Ö, "Urban Transformation as State-led Property Transfer: An Analysis of Two Cases of Urban Renewal in Istanbul", *Urban Studies Vol 47* No 7, 2010
- 3 Ezgi Sönmez, interviewed by Songül Bakar, "Tired soul of Tarlabaşı cheered up!", 24.09.2012, İHaber, in Turkish. Retrieved from <http://ihaber.istanbul.edu.tr/kultur-sanat/tarlabasinin-yorgun-ruhu-senlendi-h535.html>, last time visited on 15.04.2013.
- 4 Originally published in 1974 as *La production de l'espace*, Paris: Anthropos.
- 5 Lefebvre, 1991, p. 11.
- 6 Michel Foucault also ascertained the power relations intrinsic to the concept of space. See Foucault, M., & Gordon, C., *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Pantheon Books, New York, 1980.
- 7 Critique of Everyday Life was originally published as three volumes in 1947, 1961 and 1981 by L'Arche in Paris.
- 8 Lefebvre, 1991, p.38.
- 9 ibid.
- 10 For an in-depth interpretation of Lefebvre's dialectics of the production of space, see also Elden, S., *Understanding Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, Continuum, London; 2004; and Watkins, C., "Representations of Space, Spatial Practices and Spaces of Representation: An Application of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad", *Culture and Organization*, No.11, 2005, pp: 209-220.
- 11 Pallasmaa, 2005, p.11.
- 12 Hardt, 2007, p.X
- 13 Brennan, 2004, p.2.
- 14 Steward, 2007, p.2.
- 15 ibid, p.11.
- 16 ibid, p.84.
- 17 Emma Dowling, "Affective Labour in the City", From Dispossession to Commoning Conference, organized by D. Özkan and G. Baykal, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 14 May 2016, Seminar. Voice record of the seminar is available at <https://soundcloud.com/user-687715306/emma-dowling-affective-labour-in-the-city-from-dispossession-to-commoning-14-may-2016>.
- 18 The Kurdish region in south eastern Turkey is called 'Bakur' (north) by Kurdish community for being the north of entire Kurdistan region.
- 19 'On the way to school' (2009, dir. O. Eskiköy and Ö. Doğan), a movie based on true events and accounts of actual people, pictures a newly graduate

elementary school teacher dealing with this situation during compulsory duty in a Kurdish village in south eastern Turkey.

20 In May 2016, Pınar Çetinkaya, a university student in Adnan Menderes University was expelled from the public dormitory in Nazilli for making terror propaganda only because she talked Kurdish on the phone with her family.

21 <http://gocmendayanisma.org/tarlabasi-gdmutfagi/>

22 Our first encounter was on 3rd May 2016.

23 Our first encounter was on 2th May 2016.

24 The legal status of refugees from Syria in Turkey is ambiguous although the regulations promised them rights in terms of education, health, work, and housing. For a detailed analysis of the entanglements in these regulations, see Özden, S. Syrian refugees in Turkey, Migration Policy Centre; MPC Research Report; 2013/05.

25 For an investigation of relations between the urban transformation projects and the concept of ‘corrective treatment’ of the Roma due to their life style, see Onbaşı, F.G., “What went wrong with the Romany Opening in Turkey?”, *Human Security in Turkey: Challenges for the 21st Century*. A. Özerdem, F. Özerdem (Eds.), Routledge. London, 2013.

26 Efes Pilsen is a beer brand in Turkey. The title of the campaign was “There is life on the street!”. This title was used also as the name of a TV Show.

27 One month later, these migrants were later released from the camp in Osmaniye on condition that they turn back to the cities that they were initially registered.

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