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# Neoliberal urbanization: socio-spatial disparities of the urban periphery : the case of Ankara, Turkey

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► **To cite this version:**

Pinar Bilgic. Neoliberal urbanization: socio-spatial disparities of the urban periphery : the case of Ankara, Turkey. Architecture, space management. 2016. dumas-01399163

**HAL Id: dumas-01399163**

**<https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-01399163>**

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**Neoliberal urbanization:  
Socio-spatial disparities of the urban periphery -  
The case of Ankara, Turkey**

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**08<sup>th</sup> of September, 2016**

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*Nom et prénom de l'auteur:* **PINAR BILGIC** (Étudiant)

*Titre du projet de fin d'études:* **Neoliberal urbanization: Socio-spatial disparities of the urban periphery - The case of Ankara, Turkey**

*Date de soutenance:* **08<sup>th</sup> of September, 2016**

*Organisme d'affiliation:* **Institut d'Urbanisme de Grenoble - Université Pierre Mendès France**

*Organisme dans lequel l'alternance a été effectuée:*

*Directeur du projet de fin d'études:* **ADRIANA DIACONU**

*Collation:*

- *Nombre de pages:* 79
- *Nombre d'annexes:* 2
- *Nombre de références bibliographiques:* 65  
(*Tout type de documents sur tout type de support*)

*Mots-clés analytiques (entre 5 et 10):* neoliberal urbanization, legal-economic drivers, socio-spatial consequences, TOKİ, social housing.

*Mots-clés géographiques (les noms des lieux concernés):* Kusunlar, Ankara, Turkey, Ben-Gurion-Ring, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

*Résumé en Français et dans une langue étrangère de votre choix:*

This research aims at revealing the causal relationships of neoliberal urbanization and socio-spatial disparities of urban peripheries by exemplifying two lower income neighborhoods. The dwellers of the Kusunlar neighborhood, a social housing neighborhood situated at the urban periphery of Ankara, are mostly the former informal settlement dwellers and they represent the lower strata of the society. The dwellers of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, a social housing neighborhood situated at the urban periphery of Frankfurt am Main, are mostly constituted by people with immigration background. Although the two cases share several similarities such as being situated at the urban periphery, being areas where poverty is concentrated, suffering from physical isolation, and having bad reputations, they still represent two different development contexts. Therefore, they are neither compared nor contrasted. They are rather explained and described in terms of their context-specific legal-economic and socio-spatial dimensions. Without overlooking the discourse of global neoliberalization, their common outcomes are combined as a framework to draw policy-oriented conclusions.

Cette recherche vise à mettre en avant les relations de causalité de l'urbanisation néolibéraliste et des disparités socio-spatiales des périphéries urbaines, à travers l'exemple de deux quartiers à faible revenu. Les habitants du quartier Kusunlar, constitué de logements sociaux et situé à la périphérie urbaine d'Ankara, sont pour la plupart les habitants originels des installations informelles, et représentent la strate inférieure de la société. Les habitants du quartier Ben-Gurion-Ring, aussi constitué de logements sociaux et situé à la périphérie urbaine de Francfort-sur-le-Main, sont pour la plupart d'origine immigrante. Bien que les deux cas partagent des caractéristiques similaires, comme par exemple leur localisation, leur mauvaise réputation, leur concentration de pauvreté, ou la souffrance liée à leur isolation géographique, ils représentent tout de même deux cas différents de contexte de développement. Ainsi, ils ne seront ni comparés, ni mis en contraste. Ils seront au contraire expliqués et décrits, précisément en termes de leur contexte économique-légal, et socio-spatial. Sans négliger le discours de la néolibéralisation mondiale, leurs résultats communs seront combinés en tant que cadre de recherche pour tirer des conclusions axées sur les politiques de la ville.

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## **1. Introduction**

Neoliberal urbanization, as a dominant global trend, is highly perceivable as it usually assigns certain areas of a city to certain strata of the society. Dynamics that influence these occurrences are mostly triggered by neoliberal urban strategies which have the overall goal to extract value from the city (Weber, 2012). This makes housing in neoliberal context salient: the settlement choice at individual's level does not always happen willingly; it actually takes place as consequences of strategic political and economic intentions going on at institutional level in today's urbanizing areas.

Housing in urban transformation context is very much related to neoliberal urbanization since it increasingly concentrates poverty and wealth for the sake of highest and best use (Harvey, 2008) of the land. Although the degrees of intensities of housing-related urban transformation processes vary in different development contexts, they still take place through certain legal-economic drivers and have socio-spatial consequences.

Urbanization in Turkey is not an exception to this trend. In Turkey, a public administration directly tied to the central government called TOKİ (Turkish abbreviation for Mass Housing Administration) is responsible for meeting the increasing housing demand across the country for the lower income group and the urban poor, especially through social housing provision with its expanded authorities over land use, planning, and urban transformation.

TOKİ provides housing in two ways: first, the administration plans new social housing and urban transformation areas. Through tender processes, it assigns its private constructor partners who are in charge of implementation of these projects. Social housing projects are classified according to different target groups which are lower-middle income group, lower income group, urban poor, servitors, Romani people, disaster housing and agriculture village housing, among which lower-middle income group is the dominating target group of TOKİ social housing projects.

Since TOKİ does not have any share from public budget, it has to generate its own income in order to finance its social housing projects. Therefore, a second way of housing provision emerges: revenue-sharing projects. Similarly, through tender processes TOKİ assigns private constructor companies to implement these projects. But in this case TOKİ sells the public land it owns to private constructor companies and determines the revenue shares that TOKİ itself and the private partner get. The means and the rate of revenue sharing are

specific for each project. These projects are mostly luxury housing projects, targeted at middle to higher income groups, constituting 15% of overall TOKİ projects.

TOKİ provided 703,420 housing units in Turkey since its establishment in 1984 and 84,852 housing units in Ankara in particular, according to the numeric data received from TOKİ per e-mail (TOKİ, 2016b) (the data obtained from this document does not match with the latest data provided on TOKİ's website). TOKİ makes an income group classification for its implementations in each city in Turkey. The breakdown of the overall number of housing units provided according to the income groups reveal that 4.23% of TOKİ's overall housing provision in Turkey and 3.21% of that in Ankara is dedicated to urban poor.

However, the share of housing units provided through revenue-sharing projects is 15.20% in Turkey in general and 11.54% in Ankara in particular. The urban poor group is constituted by the citizens who are mostly former informal settlement dwellers whose properties were demolished under TOKİ's urban transformation projects and who moved into the new social houses provided by TOKİ. Still, the demand for social housing is higher and the demand for luxury housing is lower than provided (Yasar, 2009).

This research focuses on a housing project provided for the urban poor in Ankara, namely the Kusunlar neighborhood (see Figure 1), and explains it as a causal inquiry of the extent which neoliberal urbanization causes socio-spatial disparities in Ankara's urban periphery. The neighborhood is located outside of the belt highway, approximately 20 kilometers from the urban core, and developed for the urban poor and the lower income group (mainly for the former informal settlement dwellers), implemented by TOKİ.

TOKİ has provided second largest number of housing units in Ankara. However, according to the online information on TOKİ's webpage, the Kusunlar neighborhood is the only housing project for the urban poor in Ankara with its 3 projects and 4022 housing units in total. Due to the aforementioned characteristics of the neighborhood, this case study is analyzed through legal-economic drivers and socio-spatial consequences related to neoliberal urbanization.





Figure 1: Location of the Kusunlar neighborhood, Ankara.  
(Source: maps.google.com)

In addition, a social housing neighborhood at the urban periphery of Frankfurt am Main called Ben-Gurion-Ring (see Figure 2) is also included in this research to be described by the same means (analysis through legal-economic drivers and socio-spatial consequences) as the previous case. This neighborhood is populated by the underclass and mostly by people with immigration background. The neighborhood is forty years old with its cascading social and spatial challenges. It is located 20 kilometers from the urban core of Frankfurt am Main and socially and spatially isolated from its surroundings.



Figure 2: Location of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, Frankfurt am Main.  
(Source: maps.google.com)

Naturally, the both cases have their own particularities that have been evolving, depending on their own contexts. What makes these two cases complementary to each other is that, even though they have different pathways of their current challenges and dependencies on different contexts, together they constitute a holistic picture of global urban challenges as they can be both considered as spatial concentrations of poverty.

Inspired by Roy's statement: "[...] There is an urgency for urban studies and planning to move beyond the dichotomy of first world 'models' *for the rest of the world to learn from* and third world 'problems'" (italics added) (Roy, 2005:147), complementing these two cases serves for a better understanding of the drivers and the consequences of neoliberal urbanization, without overlooking its global character.

## **1.1. Background and theoretical framework**

Although many scholars refrain from giving a specific definition for neoliberalism, it is necessary for this research to be grounded on a theoretical framework about neoliberal urbanization, in order to explain and describe the case studies. In this section I explain the relevance of neoliberalization and neoliberal urbanization to urban challenges.

Neoliberalization, in a nutshell, means the process of regulatory restructuring towards free-market oriented capitalism. It emerged and spread in the 1970s as a response to the congestion and the failure of welfare policies and practices in terms of profit making.

Although since the global financial crisis of 2008 there goes on a different process which can be considered as post-neoliberalization, what explains the regulatory transformations of our time is still dominated by neoliberalization. In their article "After Neoliberalization?" Brenner, Peck, and Theodore conceptualize neoliberalization as (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010:2):

*"[...] regulatory change that have been unleashed across the global capitalist system since the 1970s: it prioritizes market-based, market-oriented or market-disciplinary responses to regulatory problems; it strives to intensify commodification in all realms of social life; and it often mobilizes speculative financial instruments to open up new arenas for capitalist profit-making [...]  
Neoliberalization represents a historically specific, unevenly developed, hybrid, patterned tendency of market-disciplinary regulatory restructuring."*

In their previous work "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism'," Brenner and Theodore make a distinction between neoliberal ideology and neoliberal reality (Brenner & Theodore, 2002:351):

*"On the one hand, while neoliberalism aspires to create a "utopia" of free markets liberated from all forms of state interference, it has in practice*

*entailed a dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all aspects of social life [...] On the other hand, whereas neoliberal ideology implies that self-regulating markets will generate an optimal allocation of investments and resources, neoliberal political practice has generated pervasive market failures, new forms of social polarization, and a dramatic intensification of uneven development at all spatial scales."*

This explains how hegemonic neoliberalization becomes through state impositions, which is contradicting to the ideology of being freed from state intervention in order to get the greatest profit for the free market. Although neoliberalization asserts that any state intervention causes negative impacts on economic activity and profit, it can only occur through state impositions, and these state impositions do not guarantee flawless success of free market and can cause failures.

Put in other words, neoliberal ideology assumes states and markets as opposed principles, although neoliberal practices can only be realized through state imposition. Neoliberalism is a global ideology and neoliberalization is a global process, but despite their global characters, identical market-favored global success cannot be assumed as the ideal and the process are both prone to failures due to contextual differences.

As the previous quotation by Brenner and Theodore implies, neoliberalization process occurs in various spatial scales, but the role of the cities is critical as cities are the laboratories of neoliberal policy experiments (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Capital flow and accumulation shape cities, as cities shape capital flow and accumulation in a reciprocal relationship (Harvey, 1989). In parallel to this idea, urban structure is where neoliberalization occurs (Brenner & Theodore, 2002:368):

*"Cities—including their sub-urban peripheries—have become increasingly important geographical targets and institutional laboratories for a variety of neoliberal policy experiments, [...] urban development corporations, public-private partnerships, [...] new strategies of social control, policing, and surveillance, and a host of other institutional modifications within the local and regional state apparatus [...] the overarching goal of such neoliberal urban policy experiments is to mobilize city space as an arena both for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices."*

The process is inseparable from marketization and commodification of cities and their contents including the land. As for marketization and commodification of land in urban areas through various strategies, the process emerges as neoliberal urbanization. When the connection of neoliberalization and urban transformation is considered, it is argued that neoliberalization "both exploits and produces socio-spatial difference" (Theodore, Peck, & Brenner, 2011).

For instance, neoliberal urban strategies include restructuring urban housing markets as a mechanism (Theodore et al., 2011) for value extraction from urban land, creation of rent gap, and lowering the risks for private sector. Restructuring urban housing markets, especially when it is initiated by public-private partnerships (PPPs), gives enough room for intervention in the land speculation and new opportunities for profit making for the elite. It can create spatial concentrations of poverty and wealth and legitimizes (increasingly) uneven distributions of revenue and services and marginalization as a societal form.

In the global North, these socio-spatial consequences take place in the form of gentrification of inner-city areas and urban transformation in social housing areas. In the global South, inner-city gentrification and urban transformation of informal neighborhoods also appear. However, due to informality in the global South, the impacts of these consequences are more intense.

## **1.2. Research context: Goal and scope**

The above string of ideas constitutes the theoretical framework of neoliberal urbanization. This theorization is particularly important for this research, not only because it draws on the difference between neoliberal ideology that assumes market rule without state intervention and neoliberal reality that actually uses public policy tools to impose the private market rule, but also because it indicates cities as where neoliberalization occurs, underlining the importance of context-dependence. However, in this research, I include and deal particularly with urbanization-oriented theoretical materials and case studies, as I deliberately exclude neoliberal economic policy.

The concept of "actually existing" neoliberalization and context-specific urban strategies and practices can be applied to TOKİ case and the role it plays in the housing market in main Turkish cities. In addition, the above explanation regards cities as laboratories of experiments, also stating that neoliberal urbanization is driven by legal and economic

urgencies, and is causing social and spatial disparities.

Since the 1980s, numerous academic studies have concluded that urban transformation in Ankara is occurring parallel with neoliberal priorities. This research argues that since the 1980s, due to legal and economic urgencies, neoliberal urban strategies have caused and still continue to engender social exclusion and spatial fragmentation, and it is designed to show how this urban trend has emerged and is progressing, with a focus on social housing in Ankara.

The research also attempts to show how similar this trend can be even in different development contexts and, therefore, it examines Frankfurt am Main, a global city from the global North context. Similarly, this case also exemplifies how this global trend takes place with a focus on social housing. The goal is to explain the intersection of the global discourse of neoliberal urbanization with the Turkish case. Similarly, the intersection of the same theoretical elements with the German case is to be described.

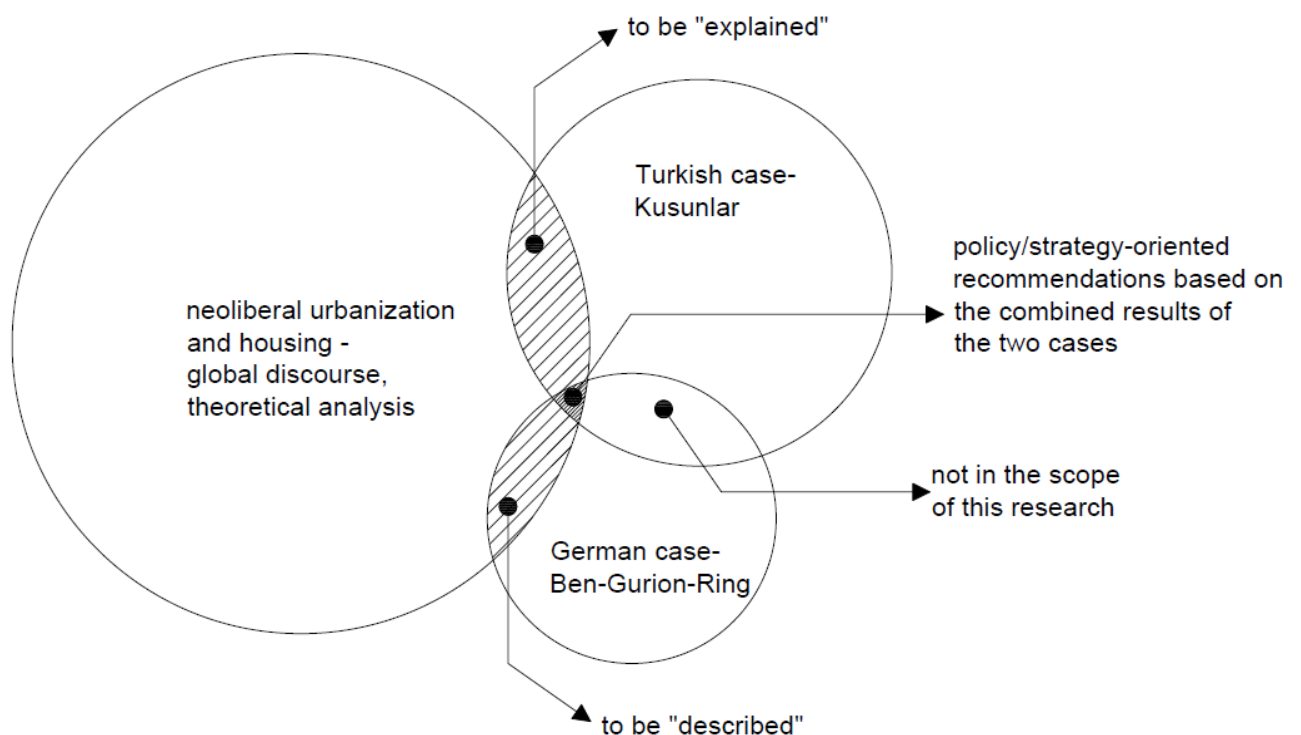


Figure 3: The scope of the research.

(Source: author)

The case studies are regarded as subsets of this global trend. The outcomes of the case study analyses are to be combined to introduce a general framework for policy-oriented recommendations to better utilize the urban potentials to overcome social exclusion and spatial fragmentation at the urban peripheries (see Figure 3).

## **2. Methodology and data**

In this chapter I introduce the research questions and the arguments upon which the research is designed in its entirety. In addition, I describe the methodology through which I seek to answer the research questions and to test the arguments. I also explain how and why its sequence is designed in this particular way. Following that, I describe the case studies, data collection, analysis, criteria for interpretation, and their spatial and temporal boundaries.

### **2.1. Research questions**

- Based on the findings from the Kusunlar neighborhood, how and why can we consider socio-spatial disparities in the urban structure of Ankara as direct side effects of neoliberal urbanization?
- What do the drivers and consequences of the two cases reveal about neoliberal urbanization? To what extent has neoliberal urbanization contributed to social exclusion and spatial fragmentation in both cases?
- What socio-spatial potentials do exist in both contexts? In what ways can the urban potentials be better utilized and bonds among socio-spatial disparities reestablished?

### **2.2. Arguments**

- Kusunlar case shows that neoliberal urbanization has contributed to social exclusion and spatial fragmentation in the urban structure of Ankara, and this is a direct socio-spatial side effect of neoliberal urban strategies.
- Both cases are influenced by the global urban trend in terms of its drivers and consequences, through similar dynamics and varying degrees of intensities.

- Despite the contextual differences, we can still introduce a general framework for better utilization of the urban potentials and reestablishing the bonds among socio-spatial disparities through policy-oriented recommendations.

- 

### **2.3. Research design and strategy**

The research first visits the existing body of relevant literature about neoliberal urbanization to illustrate the legal-economic drivers and socio-spatial consequences of it. These drivers and consequences form a basis for case studies to be discussed, in order to determine the impact of neoliberal urbanization on the current challenges of both case studies.

Since social housing in this research is employed as an analytical concept, theoretical literature review is also partially dedicated to the changes in housing both in the global North and global South contexts and what actually housing can reveal about neoliberal urbanization. Following that, case studies are conducted within the scope explained in Section 1.2. Finally, the results are combined to draw policy-oriented conclusions.

#### **2.3.1. Case studies**

Despite the obvious differences between the two cases, for instance the development contexts of which they are part, together they depict a more complete view on neoliberal urbanization with a focus on social housing at the urban scale.

Since I explain the causal links in contemporary real-life interventions in Ankara and describe the occurrence of real-life context which occurs in Frankfurt am Main, it is convenient as a strategy within this research to examine these as case studies (Yin, 2006). Also the research questions I seek to answer formulate the cases of Ankara and Frankfurt am Main to be analyzed in explanatory and descriptive manners respectively.

Linked with the first question that asks how and why neoliberal urbanization causes socio-spatial disparities in the urban periphery on Ankara, the Kusunlar case explains the causality between neoliberal urbanization and socio-spatial disparities, through examining social housing for the urban poor and demand and supply within the Turkish context.

Linked with the second question that asks what common characteristics of the Kusunlar and the Ben-Gurion-Ring cases reveal the causality which is examined through the previous question, the Ben-Gurion-Ring case describes a lower income group housing neighborhood based on the same framework of demand and supply within the German context.

These two cases are contextually different and they involve different urban policies and practices. Therefore, they are examined in different manners. They are neither compared nor contrasted. Their outcomes are rather combined to find out their common characteristics. These common characteristics constitute a framework in order to attempt to make policy-oriented recommendations for better utilizing the potentials of the urban areas to overcome the social exclusion and spatial fragmentation challenges of the urban periphery.

### **2.3.2. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation**

Secondary data is obtained through the relevant literature materials by theory review and archive review. Primary data is obtained through field observations and interviews (see Table 1). With this data collection structure at least three types of data sources are used and, therefore, data triangulation is formulated.

Since neoliberal urbanization, its drivers and its consequences are examined through housing for the underclass, relevant data on housing is analyzed for both cases. Several important similarities for the two case study neighborhoods, such as being social housing neighborhoods, involvement of PPPs, being populated by the urban poor and the lower income groups, being situated in the urban periphery, etc. construct a firm common ground for combining the analyses and policy advices based on these analyses.

The Kusunlar case is analyzed through document review, field observations, and interviews with representatives from TOKİ. The Ben-Gurion-Ring case is similarly analyzed through document review, field observations, and interviews with representatives from Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department and private constructor company.

The position of the expert civil servant in TOKİ who used to be in charge of the Kusunlar neighborhood has been suspended due to the current political situation in Turkey. Therefore, an interview with the expert of the project had to be cancelled.



Since it is challenging to combine the results from many different data sources in a coherent and a consistent way, a tool called "the Egan Wheel" (see Figure 4) is used.

Interviewee	Institution	Interview date	Interview mode
Ragna Körby	Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department	23rd of June, 2016	in person
Regina Eilers-Oesinghaus	Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department	23rd of June, 2016	in person
Marcus Schenk	GWH (Neighborhood Management)	04th of July, 2016	in person
Hülya Çayır	TOKİ	08th of August, 2016	e-mail
Yakup Demir	TOKİ (Neighborhood Administration)	23rd of August, 2016	in person

Table 1: Interviewees.  
(Source: author)



Figure 4: The Egan Wheel.  
(Source: Skills for Sustainable Development, Egan, 2004:19)

As the above diagram is known for its comprehensive components (Manzi, Lucas, Jones, & Allen, 2010), it is oftentimes used in academic works to decide if a neighborhood is socially sustainable or not. In this research, the components of this tool are also giving clues to reveal the common dimensions and possible intentions for improvement of the two case studies (see Appendix A for the detailed version).

The combination of the results of the two case analyses is formulated in Chapter 5 according to the following breakdown, including the "equity" component as suggested in the original document:

**Components of sustainable communities:**

---

<b>Social &amp; cultural</b>	Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities
<b>Governance</b>	Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
<b>Environmental</b>	Providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way
<b>Housing &amp; built environment</b>	A quality built and natural environment
<b>Transport &amp; connectivity</b>	Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services
<b>Economy</b>	A flourishing and diverse local economy
<b>Services</b>	A full range of appropriate, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services
<b>Equity</b>	Fair for everyone

---

Table 2: Components of sustainable communities.  
(Source: adapted from Skills for Sustainable Development, Egan, 2004)

**2.3.3. Spatial and temporal boundaries**

This research attempts to make inferences on a contemporary phenomenon occurring in two different development contexts. Therefore, it involves two case studies from the global South and the global North. Within the case study analyses, the evolutions of social housing

provision in respective countries referring to neoliberal urbanization are briefly described to give an overall picture of the contemporary condition.

Even if this research is not a historical study, a brief overview of housing policy tendencies in the last 70 years in the two countries helps to better understand today's social housing dynamics, legal-economic and socio-spatial aspects, which are at the core of the analysis.

For the Turkish case, the emergence of informal settlements during the 1950s is a critical turn. Because of that, the commentary of the contemporary housing provision strategies of the Turkish government is limited from the 1950s until today. Similarly, the critical point for the German social housing strategies is the aftermath of the Second World War. Therefore, the background commentary on contemporary housing provision strategies of the German government is limited from the 1950s onwards.

### **3. Literature review**

In this chapter, I review the existing literature. First section revisits the existing theoretical work to focus on legal, economic, social, and spatial dimensions of neoliberal urbanization. Following that, since both cases have a focus on housing-related neoliberal urban strategies and triggered transformations in urban areas of the global North and the global South are sorted out for a broader understanding of the current global trend, before going into the details of the case studies.

#### **3.1. Neoliberal urbanization: A global and local transformation project?**

Neoliberalization, as an economic ideology, appeared on the political scene during the late 1970s as a response to the declining economic profitability of traditional mass-production industries and dissolving of welfare policies in the aftermath of the crisis in 1973. As a response, European and North American states started taking steps towards extending market rule, competition, and commodification, while the UK and the USA were the frontrunners of this process with their right-wing governments. As the main neoliberal ideals employed throughout all sectors of society, state control over industries was deregulated, public services privatized, welfare programs were dissolved, international capital flow was enhanced, local competition was intensified, and the urban poor was increasingly

criminalized (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). These ideals also became the projects of global imposition of neoliberalization.

Today throughout the world, urban and regulatory system transformations are increasingly described within the neoliberal context. As Sager points out, neoliberalization is the "most useful concept available" (Sager, 2011:148) to analyze the bonds between economizing of social life and to understand the role of global urbanization.

However, the connection between cities and capital accumulation and capital flow has always been a salient two-way causal relationship since their inception. Cities have not only emerged and expanded over territories due to the spatial concentration, accumulation, and absorption of surplus capital, at the same time they have also shaped the capital flow (Harvey, 2008, Harvey, 1989).

Based on this causal relationship, it is reasonable to claim that neoliberalization is a socio-spatial transformation project, which creates and exploits uneven development in various socio-spatial scales (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2012). Depending on the context, this relationship between city and capital unfolds itself through various ways within and among cities around the world.

For a coherent analysis of the overarching relations between neoliberalization and urban transformation, it is useful to investigate the existing theorization by classifying legal, economic, social, and spatial dimensions. These dimensions formulate the basis for the criteria for the upcoming analyses of the case studies of this research.

### **3.1.1. Legal dimension**

As mentioned before in the discussion of "actually existing neoliberalism", the legal dimension is a means through which neoliberal urbanization realizes itself.

Global neoliberal doctrine creates a worldwide need for investment and urges cities to be competitive, oftentimes through commodification of local assets including the land. This competitive nature brings about PPPs in various forms, which have the common goal of getting urban transformation projects implemented. The role of the public side deviates from regulation and service provision towards privatization, securing profit for the private sector through undertaking their financial risks. In a short-termist, market-oriented, and competitive

vision, public administrations "have to demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit" (Sager, 2011:153), rather than a traditional managerial behavior.

Harvey defines urban entrepreneurialism as (Harvey, 2002:101):

*"[...] pattern of behavior within urban governance that mixes together state powers (local, metropolitan, regional, national, or supranational) and a wide array of organizational forms in civil society and private interests to form coalitions to promote or manage urban/regional development of some sort or other."*

Also through the formation of PPPs, urban entrepreneurialism can easily make room for speculation especially of the land values. It gives way to intentional implementations that make these speculative values to be extracted. Harvey argues, even the most progressive government would not be able to resist or to avoid this shift towards entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989), and that brings about increased disparities and causes overall urban impoverishment.

Complementarily, Jessop argues, public sector needs to be partnered with the private sector within the shift from government to governance, as to reduce the risks of failures that comes from supply-driven, rather than demand-driven, policies and implementations (Jessop, 2002).

Within this frame, public institutions undergo a process of restructuring, making room for flexible policy experiments in order to keep local markets "competitive enough" (Harvey, 2002:97) and legitimize "exceptionality" (Swyngedouw, Moulaert, & Arantxa, 2002:543), as they share relevant information, risks, and rewards with their private partners (Sager, 2011).

Restructuring of public institutions as neoliberal strategies is short-termist and profit-oriented, as restructuring tries to catch up with the constantly changing competitive conditions. It is arguable that urban transformations are employed in practice to keep up with these rapid changes.

### **3.1.2. Economic dimension**

Since the 1970s, neoliberalization as an economic ideology assumes zero institutional control for the optimum profit, but it actually realizes itself through public policies. It is

conceptualized within the global capitalist system as the prioritization of market-based, market-oriented and market-disciplinary responses to the declining profits. Here, market-domination refers to an intense and invasive commodification through opening new arenas for speculative profit-making, in all realms of social life (Brenner et al., 2010).

This intense and invasive commodification dominated by market hegemony is particularly important: due to the technological advancements in today's world, accelerated capital flow and greater capital accumulation constantly require new areas to be discovered and commoditized. And from an urban point of view, cities arguably have to permit these new forms of accelerated capital circulations (Swyngedouw et al., 2002) and absorb greater amounts of accumulated capital.

While these rapid interventions have challenging consequences on the urban realm in social and physical aspects, the profit is not for the net benefit of the society, but only for a privileged fragment. Harvey explains (2002:97):

*"The problem is to keep economic relations competitive enough while sustaining the individual and class monopoly privileges of private property that are the foundation of capitalism as a political-economic system."*

Due to the rapid changes at various spatial scales (local, regional, national, or transnational), there is always some sort of uncertainty and unreliability in the private real-estate market for extracting value from the city (Weber, 2012). Even in these uncertain circumstances, aforementioned privileged minority continues to look after its own interests, forming a legal-economic system that functions through and by the market.

Going along with the economic uncertainty aspect, regardless of their political orientation, most local governments are urged to adjust themselves by short-termist and profit-oriented restructuring in order to continue to be competitive and attractive for new investments. This short-termist and profit-oriented adjustment is necessary also for sustaining (market-oriented) economic growth and elite consumption (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009).

One of the most visible forms of urban transformation through which aforementioned short-termist and profit-oriented adjustment occurs is the gentrification process. Any middle-class reserve in a city can theoretically go through this process, since it creates not only room for land speculation, but also more importantly the rent gap: " [...] which is the gap between the

actual *capitalized* ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the *potential* ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use" (Smith, 1987). As its definition implies, the process is promising for market-oriented economic growth, elite consumption, and securing control over the most vulnerable populations, who are oftentimes prone to displacement due to the new, unaffordable condition.

### **3.1.3. Social dimension**

Restructuring in neoliberal context is not limited to institutional policies. It is also a social process in which hierarchies and relations are recreated (Springer, 2016). Marginalization and stigmatization are common social processes that occur through certain impositions of urban impoverishment. In addition to social exclusion, stigmatization also has a spatial reflection. In her article *Extracting Value from the City*, Weber (2012) argues that spatial stigmatization is a necessity for spatial revalorization and gives the example of how local governments strategically justify spatial interventions by stigmatizing properties that are to be demolished for the sake of urban transformation.

Urban transformation under neoliberal strategies occurs through a top-down manner and lacks an essential part: usually citizen (or in some cases also institutional) participation processes are ignored. Formal recognition of oppositions is seen as a threat during these processes. Formation of grassroots responses are occasional, and they rarely alter the course (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Furthermore, due to the formal recognition of its domination, private sector is more resilient to criticism, which makes it harder for the citizens to raise their concerns (Sager, 2011). A thought-provoking side effect could be that, this lack of communication might cause big investments to miss the opportunity to meet the actual needs of the citizens.

Improving the social conditions has a lower priority than profit-oriented goals. Sager (2011) and Aoki (2016) point out that the gap between the higher and the lower classes of the society is being intentionally bipolarized, and this triggers an increase in the number of the economically deprived people, especially in the developing countries. Similarly, the areas that carry profit potential are prioritized rather than the people and their actual needs (Roy, 2005).

As Peck et al. (2009) explain, the socially challenging outcomes of neoliberal approaches - including uneven economic stagnation, insecurity, and inequality- are spreading over larger

territories. Jessop (2002) explains the criticality of social inequality in terms of wages:

*"[...] labor markets become more flexible and downward pressure is placed on a social wage that is now considered as a cost of production rather than a means of redistribution and social cohesion."*

Finally, it is crucial to mention, as Harvey rightfully argues, the strategic attempt to promote a new urban lifestyle (2008) which is an intangible yet highly remarkable aspect of urban transformation. The city itself and the quality of urban life become commodities and, therefore, the lifestyles should be changed accordingly for the consumption of these commodities.

#### **3.1.4. Spatial dimension**

As mentioned previously, the most visible spatial aspect of neoliberalization is theorized by the natural state of neoliberalism that it both exploits and produces socio-spatial difference (Theodore et al., 2011, Peck et al., 2009).

Spatial fragmentation within and around urban areas is oftentimes specified as an outcome of neoliberal urbanization. A contributive conceptualization is provided by Swyngedouw et al. as they further develop their rent extraction argument by introducing "islands of wealth in an impoverished environment" (2002:567). According to this conceptualization, cities become an observable patchwork of increasingly diverse socio-economic patterns. Not surprisingly, as the inner-city areas become more profitable for urban transformation, this patchwork-like spatial structure might also take place in the form of suburbanization of poverty.

As for suburbanization, it is necessary to underline the importance of metropolitan regions as Harvey (2008) theorizes their formation. If a current situation of a city is not enough to absorb surplus capital, then metropolitan areas emerge around that city. As long as there is infrastructure and services provided, cities expand denser over larger territories. This is how American suburbanization emerged. Transportation and infrastructure facilities were provided not only within but also around the city, forming its metropolitan region and promoting suburban lifestyle. This was a spatial response that helped capital accumulation and flow problems.



### 3.1.5. Drivers and consequences

Following is the extraction of drivers and consequences of neoliberal urbanization focusing on legal, economic, social, and spatial dimensions. The literature review in the classified dimensions showed that, legal and economic aspects and social and spatial aspects have a cause-and-effect relationship. As explained previously, by its nature, neoliberal urbanization is usually driven by legal and economic dimensions; whereas it usually has social and spatial consequences. Besides being a condensed summary of the literature review, the table below also serves as an analytical tool to analyze both case studies of this research:

Legal-economic drivers:		Socio-spatial consequences:	
Legal dimensions	Economic dimensions	Social dimensions	Spatial dimensions
- global pressure for local investment and competition	- market-based, market-oriented and market-disciplinary response	- exclusion and segregation	- revalorization of land
- institutional restructuring	- market-dominated profit-making	- marginalization and stigmatization	- displacement
- short-termist regulatory restructuring	- speculative commodification	- no room for participation	- territorial fragmentation
- (urban-suburban) policy experiments	- rapid and vast capital flow and accumulation	- increase in inequality and insecurity	- uneven infrastructure and service provision
- commodification of assets and land	- value extraction for highest and best use	- increase in criminality	- uneven geographical development within and among cities
- land value speculation	- rent gap	- monopolization and formation of a privileged fraction	- islands of wealth/poverty
- privatization	- economic growth/securing consumption even under uncertainty	- promoting individual consumerism	- suburbanization and isolation of poverty
- entrepreneurialism and PPPs	- prioritizing land/profit rather than people/actual needs	- creation of a new lifestyle/neoliberal individuals	- gentrification/slum demolition
- undertaking financial risks			- transformation in social housing neighborhoods
- supply-driven strategies and projects			

Table 3: A summary of drivers and consequences of neoliberal urbanization.

(Source: author)

As Parnell & Robinson (2012:596) rightfully remark, it is tricky to insist on aligning inferences from the global North to observations from the global South:

*"Theories that might work well for the global North—like [...] critiques of urban neoliberalism—are mobilized inappropriately to interpret contexts in which the associated processes are less important, where they can be understood only alongside other drivers of change, or where they do not apply at all."*

It should be kept in mind that, regardless of geographical location, neoliberal urbanization processes are nonlinear and unique as they occur through context-dependent drivers and unfold into context-dependent consequences. Therefore, with the creation of the above table, I take a step back from overly-detailed global North analyses to a causal extraction of legal-economic drivers and socio-spatial consequences, instead of forcing an alignment of the global North inferences with the global South observations which would most likely end up in misinterpretation of the cases in the global South.

### **3.2. Neoliberal urbanization and housing**

*"[...] For some people, all housing is affordable, no matter how expensive it is; for others, no housing is affordable unless it is free." (Stone, 2006:153)*

Neoliberal strategies highlighted free market mechanisms as they were assumed to succeed in adequate housing provision for the underclass populations. However, arguably, neoliberal urbanization system did not function for the advantage of the lower strata of the society. In occasional cases where the poor's situation was improved, this was due to strong governmental support (Sandhu & Korzeniewski, 2004).

Neoliberal urban strategies promote home ownership in various forms depending on the context. This is very much related to previously mentioned creation and promotion of the new urban lifestyle. It can usually be in the form of "individual consumerism," for instance, when home ownership is promoted by political and economic actors of the process and by mechanisms such as cheap rental availability or a promised home ownership at some point in the future. Lower income households can usually be convinced for e.g. displacement, who thus becomes today's client for the sake of becoming future's potential home owner, and who thus undertakes the housing provision responsibility for himself.

To some extent, this might make way for governments to free themselves from the responsibility of housing provision for the underclass populations, as financial partnerships with the private sector are established. This pushes the urban poor into a system that they have to pay -even small amounts- for indefinite periods in order to officially become the owners of the houses they live in. As a neoliberal individual, the poor is pushed into a system of debt, in which the private sector (through the partnership with the public sector) becomes the claimant.

Neoliberal urban transformations regarding housing take place in the global cities of the global North and in the megacities of the global South by targeting two coarse strata of the society: the new middle class and the underclass populations. Following subsections (3.2.1. and 3.2.2.) speak about (i) gentrification and transformation of social housing neighborhoods in the global North and (ii) transformation of informal neighborhoods and emergence of social housing in the global South. Although Turkey has never been colonized, the major tendencies of the formerly-colonized developing countries are mostly relevant for the Turkish case.

### **3.2.1. Housing in the global North**

In the global North, gentrification of the inner-city areas are supplied for and consequently demanded by the new middle class. The transformation related to the urban poor goes on at the social housing neighborhoods, which are the former working class settlements and occupied today mostly by the populations with immigration background and lower income groups. Below subsections briefly explain these two forms of urban transformation in the global North context.

#### ***Gentrification***

Gentrification is an older concept and, therefore, it is neither a direct side-effect of neoliberal urbanization nor particular to the global North. However, it aligns well with neoliberal urban strategies and this process can well be employed as a neoliberal instrument within the global North context.

But what actually triggers gentrification today? Firstly, it is partially due to the industry that moved from the European cities to the global South. Formerly industrial European cities do not have this function anymore; instead service (tertiary) sector rises and dominates. Here

emerges the new middle class with a lifestyle based on culture and culture consumption, who work mostly in the service sector. As the new middle class occupies urban centers, prefers and demands the city life, unlike the suburban life of the 1980s as the previous generation did, the lower strata of the society is pushed away from central areas of the city, resulting in displacement of the urban poor.

Secondly, the change is also due to the rent gap. Because of the initial low demand, caused by the bad condition and low value of the buildings, people with lower income settle in the cheap urban core. In his article in which he relates the rent gap and gentrification, Smith (1987:462) defines gentrification as: "transformation of inner-city working-class and other neighborhoods to middle-and upper-middle-class residential, recreational, and other uses, as a means by which the rent gap can be closed, wholly or partially."

However, the gap between the potential value and the current use value of the land is usually very high in the urban cores. To fill the rent gap and make profit, local governments partner with the private sector through many privileges such as tax exemption and they renovate or demolish the building stock in bad condition and transform them into luxury buildings.

This planned gentrification increases the real estate values: the neighborhood becomes unaffordable for the initial lower income dwellers as it attracts the new middle class. In her book in which she explores an urban transformation project of TOKI from the perspective of neoliberal urbanization, Erman (2016:26) describes such a process as "middle-classification," as the underclass population is either displaced or forced to adapt the new urban lifestyle.

### ***Transformation of social housing neighborhoods***

Social housing was home to industrial workers for a long time. After the industry moved to the global South, social housing stock in the post-industrial global North cities lost their function of being publicly provided cheap rental housing. The physical maintenance of old worker housing stocks became a financial burden on the local governments.

At that point, worker's housing stocks started quickly to be privatized as they were being sold to private sector partially or totally. Cheap rental housing provision was not the duty only of the public institutions; instead the PPPs took over this responsibility. Private investors had the chance to re-design and re-develop these neighborhoods to make the social housing stocks more profitable estates. Involvement of the private sector with its initial investment on the maintenance of the buildings consequently increased the values and the prices reached

a point higher than what a social housing neighborhood was supposed to offer. Though the provision and betterment of the infrastructure and services through the involvement of the private investments improved the physical environment, increase in the rents became a problem for the residents with lower income.

Today, the residents of these neighborhoods are mostly the underclass populations including people with immigration background, people without income, etc. Since these neighborhoods have the tendency to be stigmatized due to the social strata living there, the strategy in European cities is usually to promote these neighborhoods as well-maintained cheap rental housing and to attract the new middle class there, also because of social inclusion concerns.

However, attracting the middle class to these neighborhoods is not a quick remedy for marginalization and stigmatization problems. The process is an open ground for social changes where the marginalized populations are strategic and intentional subjects of social transformation towards the creation of neoliberal individuals. Strategies which might put the poor in debt such as promoting home ownership through decades-long rental programs, "offer-to-buy schemes" for sitting tenants (Sager, 2011:174) are implemented in many countries regardless of the income group, for the sake of involving all the society in the transformative process.

### **3.2.2. Housing in the global South**

Although informal settlements are not particular to the global South, urban transformation regarding housing is more aggressive than the ones in the global North, since the concern of formality is lower in the global South (Erman, 2016).

Urban poor who live in the informal neighborhoods of the global South cities are being marginalized and criminalized. These informal neighborhoods are subject to urban transformation usually through slum demolition policies and practices since they are declared as dangerous, unsafe, unhealthy places that are to be demolished. As inner-city areas under occupation of slums are being transformed, urban poor is being displaced and relocated at the urban periphery in social housing neighborhoods, and the inner-city lands freed from slum occupation are being transformed for profitable elite consumption projects. Below subsections briefly explain these two forms of urban transformation in the global South context.

### **Transformation of informal neighborhoods**

Informal settlements have usually been regarded as undesirable places to live in and dangerous places to keep away from, centers of crime and threat to people's health.

Oftentimes equalized with *slums*, informal settlements have been subject to demolition. As Gilbert argues in his article "The Return of the Slum: Does Language Matter?", in some cases informal settlements are demolished behind the discourse that demolition is "in order to 'help' the people," but removing them "has rarely helped the residents, and as often as not assistance was never the principal aim" (2007:699).

Supporters of demolition idea included global social and financial players such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. Being critical on their global project "Cities Without Slums" and their attempt to perform on world-scale slum demolition task, Gilbert (2007) claims that the reason why these worldwide organizations have to convince their donators and financial masters is to keep their funding safe.

As long as the informal settlement land is attributed an economic value, urban poor and their land become a subject of neoliberal urban processes. Oftentimes as the initial step of severe urban transformation processes in the global South, informal settlement demolition can simply be legitimized since these areas "seem to be the exception to planning, lying outside its realm of control" (Roy, 2005:155). In addition, informal settlements are where the informal sector emerges. Although lacking official recognition turns informal sector activities into administrative challenges in informal settlements, they are most of the time demand-driven activities serving the urban poor as a sort of economic dynamism. Demolition of informal settlements therefore means destruction of this economic network and livelihoods.

Informal settlement dweller, as Gilbert describes, "is thought to be someone who deserves to live there" (2007:703), as a result of marginalization and stigmatization. Yet, as general housing standards rise, any settlement that does not meet the new standards will be condemned to be categorized as slum, stigmatized (Gilbert, 2007), speculated on land values, and involved in neoliberal urban transformation strategies. Opportunities to lessen the challenge lie, however, in cohesive *in-situ* investments and fair formalization processes towards owner occupancy, not in demolition and displacement.

### **Emergence of social housing neighborhoods**

According to Harvey (2008), informal settlement dwellers, who have financial insecurities and

difficulties, can be easily convinced not to oppose urban transformation programs. This bargaining, which might exploit a desperate situation, aims at persuading the informal settlement dwellers to trade for low cash payment or to be replaced to social housing neighborhood in return.

In addition to that, neoliberal system promotes home ownership and attempts to put pressure on individuals for an economically successful life. Therefore, even the urban poor living in the informal settlements can become a client, e.g. through mortgage mechanisms, of social housing programs, which are the strategies and implementations of PPPs.

Still, neoliberal system might not promise social housing for everyone; the system is still based on inequality (Erman, 2016). For instance, in some cases, some informal settlement dwellers can apply for an *in-situ* renewal of their informal property, but then they must have proofs such that they have lived there for certain years, in order to claim rights. In other cases, some dwellers have rights to social housing units, but some other dwellers end up homeless by the end of the process if cheap accommodation is not available.

Furthermore, the ones who settled in the social housing neighborhoods start to spend too much on housing, not only due to the rental payment systems but also due to their increased expenses such as commuting (for the cases where the new neighborhood is away from the urban core), heating, electricity, and other maintenance costs depending on the provided physical quality (which is most of the time observed to be low). Gilbert (2007) describes this as a conflict between improving the physical quality of housing (getting rid of slums and erecting social housing neighborhoods elsewhere) and improving the housing conditions of the poor people. He adds that heavily subsidizing the poor eased this problem in the global North.

When former informal settlement dwellers move into the new social housing dwellings, they reconstitute a social structure. According to Erman (2016), there are important positive outcomes when marginalized groups start to live together. For instance, they naturally form a sense of community, through helping and understanding each other. Although their former neighborhoods are seen as centers of criminalization and disease, the people living there trust each other.

However, this does not necessarily mean that social housing neighborhoods are freed from marginalization, stigmatization, and similar *othering* behaviors. In relevant cases, this is also

due to the location of the social housing neighborhood: when it is located far from the urban core, inevitable physical isolation and spatial fragmentation contribute to even more severe stigmatization. Providing a poor family an apartment in the social housing neighborhood does not automatically solve *their* problems. Poverty does not go away; it is only re-placed from urban core and re-concentrated at the urban periphery. As a result, former informal settlement dweller is still poor and stigmatized, and has additional difficulties with rent payment, commuting long distances, losing sense of belonging, etc., as new challenges.

#### **4. Lower income neighborhoods: case study analyses**

In this section, based on the cornerstones of the theory of neoliberal urbanization, I conduct the case study analyses by following the same flow for the both cases. I first give place-specific contextual background on neoliberal urbanization and housing followed by the analysis of the case neighborhood. After that, I interpret the analysis by using the tool introduced in Section 3.1.5., which connects the drivers and the consequences of neoliberal urbanization and leads to testing the first and the second arguments and answering the first and the second research questions.

##### **4.1. Case Study 1 - Kusunlar neighborhood, Ankara**

This section is dedicated to the first case study. I first give background information on neoliberal urbanization and housing in Turkey and Ankara. Following that, I analyze the case study neighborhood in the second subsection. In the third subsection, I focus on explaining the causal links between neoliberal urbanization and disparities of the urban periphery by referring to the legal-economic drivers and socio-spatial consequences. I conclude by summarizing the findings of the Kusunlar case.

###### **4.1.1. Background: Neoliberal urbanization and housing in Turkey and Ankara**

###### ***Neoliberal urbanization in Turkey***

In the beginning of 1980s, Turkey transitioned the overall economic policy from inward-oriented model towards global development strategies and started to follow the recipes of global financial players such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. During



that time, local governments initiated debt mechanisms in order to provide infrastructure and services, given the fact that the fragments of bigger cities became centers of attention for both national and international investors as the revenue share from urban investments considerably increased.

Early neoliberal urbanization phase of the 1980s kick-started some major urban changes (Bal, 2011): decentralization of industry from urban to rural and re-functioning towards the service sector, zoning of agricultural and forest lands for development, tourism investments, establishment of TOKİ in 1984 and other steps towards social housing provision, transformation of informal settlements, big-scale urban projects including numerous shopping malls and gated communities, as well as social housing and informal settlement transformation, which receive a closer look within this case study. Maturation of this first period took approximately 20 years and it is followed by the accelerated neoliberal urbanization phase by the beginning of 2000s (Bal, 2011:133).

The accelerated phase is where privatization has gained momentum and capital accumulation has become "visible" in urban areas (Bal, 2011:137), through numerous big scale urban investments (see Section 3.1.). Privatization here refers not only to the downsizing of public sector, but also to the selling off of publicly-owned land. During that phase, the role of main Turkish cities has become particularly vital in financial terms. This is made possible through direct state interventions in the form of legal regulations. The government attempted to have a general law for urban transformation, but these efforts confronted a strong social backlash. However, in 2010, an alteration on the municipality law was legalized which expanded municipal authority and paved the way for quicker urban transformation-related decision-making. This alteration also helped capital to rule over larger urban terrains with higher rent potentials, raising concerns about speculations and arbitrary decisions (Bal, 2011:141).

In addition, it is also necessary to mention the leading role the construction sector has in Turkey. This sector has repeatedly been employed as a strengthener of the economy during times of crisis. This approach has eventually had transformative impacts at the national scale and become a discourse that is utilized by politicians to motivate the society towards change through construction and consumption-led development. Construction sector has been a political and economic instrument for social and spatial transformation.

### **Housing in Turkey**

Although different countries have different housing provision priorities and strategies, it has internationally been accepted as a principle public duty to provide adequate housing to enable equity in accessing housing for all income groups, and to implement a variety of options which support meeting the need for healthy living spaces (Alkan & Uğurlar, 2015).

Related to that, the 57<sup>th</sup> article of the Turkish Constitutional Law declares that: "*the state takes precautions to meet the housing need by a planning approach that takes the characteristics of cities and their environmental circumstances into consideration, and supports mass housing enterprises*" (italics own translation). Despite this article, the performance of the Turkish state has been criticized due to its policies and practices, which aggravated urban problems (Eşkinat, 2012).

In Turkey, starting from the early 1950s, housing shortage in cities emerged due to the massive domestic migration from rural to urban areas as the agricultural structure in the countryside changed. The simultaneous rapid increase in population growth also triggered housing shortage.

Arguably, the state was either not able to or was not willing to respond to this sudden and massive demand and, therefore, informal settlements emerged and mushroomed in urban cores and peripheries. As a self-response mechanism, migrant newcomers built their own *gecekondu* (Turkish word for slum, literally means *built overnight*) neighborhoods within and around urban areas (see Figure 5), devoid of any legal recognition. In search of solidarity, support, and sense of belonging, migrants from the same region of the country clustered close to each other (Erman, 2009; Güzey & Aksoy, 2014). In this way, these neighborhoods grew rapidly and denser over larger territories.



Figure 5: An example of *gecekondu* neighborhoods - Ankara.

(Source: Topal, Çelik, & Yalman, 2014)

*Gecekondu* neighborhoods emerged as a short-term relief; whereas the state failed to respond to migration waves. One of the main reasons that the state overlooked the spread of *gecekondu* is that, prior to many elections; some *gecekondu* dwellers were granted amnesties and given property deeds as they were seen as potential voters. That was a *de facto* recognition of *gecekondu* neighborhoods making them morally acceptable and making their dwellers invest on the improvement of their property, eventually resulted in infrastructure and services provision to some imprecise extent.

Therefore, in the aftermath of given property deeds through amnesties, *gecekondu* construction accelerated. Contradictory circumstances, such as *gecekondu* dwellers without property deeds having access to municipal services, appeared as bizarre combinations of formal and informal structures (Kılıç, 2012). Satirically, a *gecekondu* neighborhood became "a *social* housing project with Turkish peculiarities" (own translation - emphasis mine) (as cited in: Kılıç, 2012:44).

Instead of favoring the difficult conditions of the *gecekondu* population and increasing their quality of life; amnesties rather helped permanently commercializing these neighborhoods within the real estate markets for the sake of urban rent and caused unfavorable conditions for the people living there (Topal et al., 2014, Chamber of Civil Engineers, 2009). For instance, dwellers without property deeds have been relocated within urban transformation projects; whereas dwellers with property deeds have been approached by public institutions

in order to negotiate on potential solutions after the demolition.

When we look at the more recent picture of housing in Turkish context, we see a mismatch of housing demand and supply. As it appears that the demand is driven through supply, housing provision accelerates faster than the increase in the household number (see Table 4).

years	overall population	increase in population compared to previous year	increase in household compared to previous year	number of occupancy permits for residential buildings	number of housing units with residential occupancy permits
2007	70 586 256	-	-	56 739	11 317
2008	71 517 100	930 844	251 579	64 094	356 358
2009	72 561 312	1 044 212	282 219	80 765	468 134
2010	73 722 988	1 161 676	313 966	70 767	428 045
2011	74 724 269	1 001 281	270 616	85 836	554 485
2012	75 627 384	903 115	244 085	82 805	554 179
2013	76 667 864	1 040 480	281 211	101 889	718 258
2014	77 695 904	1 028 040	277 849	104 114	764 789

Table 4: Mismatch of population increase and housing supply in Turkey in general.

(Source: Alkan & Uğurlar, 2015:45)

Above table shows that, for instance, in 2014 overall urban population in Turkey increased around one million, which equals to 277,849 households. But the number of housing units supplied in the same year is 764,789, around 2.75 times more than the actual need. Furthermore, many scholars (Topal et al., 2014, Chamber of Civil Engineers, 2009, Balamir, 2010, Kılıç, 2012, Yasar, 2009) point out that the excessive supply is not meeting the need of the urban poor and the lower income populations, they rather aim at the upper strata of the society, given the fact that housing demand is not decreasing. In other words, creating an excessive housing stock does not necessarily mean that a homogeneous housing provision is achieved.

As Balamir (2010) explains, the assumption behind creating an excessive housing stock for the upper income group and simultaneously demolishing *gecekondu* neighborhoods of the lower income group is that, as the upper income group moves out from their old apartments, this stock becomes available for the lower income group. However, in the absence of

supportive regulations, as in the case of Turkey, this assumption cannot be verified.

Put in other words, prioritizing housing supply for the upper income group is criticized as it is an unsustainable approach and it contributes to the unmet housing demand of the lower income group. All in all, it is frequently argued that the state has played an active role in increasing the demand for consumption-based strategies in housing sector and counter-balanced this approach by appearing on the supply-side through TOKİ.

In addition, TOKİ is an actor that contributes in the process of excessive housing stock production and being criticized due to its deviation from its principal responsibility which is housing provision for the poor.

### ***The rise and function of TOKİ***

According to the online information on TOKİ's webpage (TOKİ, 2015), urbanization rate in Turkey is 78% and urban population is 60 million, expected to be 71 million by 2023. Because of that, the state prepared an Emergency Action Plan and delegated TOKİ with many authorities as it has overtaken critical tasks and real estate properties of abolished public institutions such as National Land Office, Land Bank, Housing Secretariat, Department of Dwelling Affairs, Project Implementation Unit, and some others. By 2004, TOKİ was subordinated directly under Prime Ministry. With these legal regulations, TOKİ had increased authorities and responsibilities as it has become the central decision-making mechanism, with the principal responsibility of preventing informal settlements by providing housing for the urban poor (TOKİ, 2015).

TOKİ has produced 43,145 housing units during its first 19 years, from its establishment in 1984 until the regulation period of 2002, the currently ruling political party, Justice and Development Party (JDP) came into power. Since that turning point, TOKİ's housing production accelerated massively. Today, according to the latest online data available (TOKİ, 2016a), TOKİ has produced 730,408 housing units in total in Turkey, of which 14.88% is realized by fund raising by revenue sharing method, while the remainder (85.12%) is classified as social housing. However, Sönmez (2011a) explains that although the share of fund raising by revenue sharing (luxury) projects is less than 15% in Turkey in general, their share in total project investments is higher than 50%.

According to TOKİ's Housing Provision Guide, in which application prerequisites and processes of housing projects are explained (TOKİ, 2010), TOKİ does not have any share

from the public budget but owns land as a result of the aforementioned legal re-regulations which empowered TOKİ. Therefore, in order to be able to finance its social housing projects, TOKİ generates its income through land sales to private sector for private development projects, and the revenue is shared between TOKİ and its private partner by project-specific ratios.

Leading in housing sector with a business volume of 28% (Coşkun, 2013), TOKİ produced 9.1% of the overall housing units between 2002 and 2012 in Turkey in general (see Figure 6):

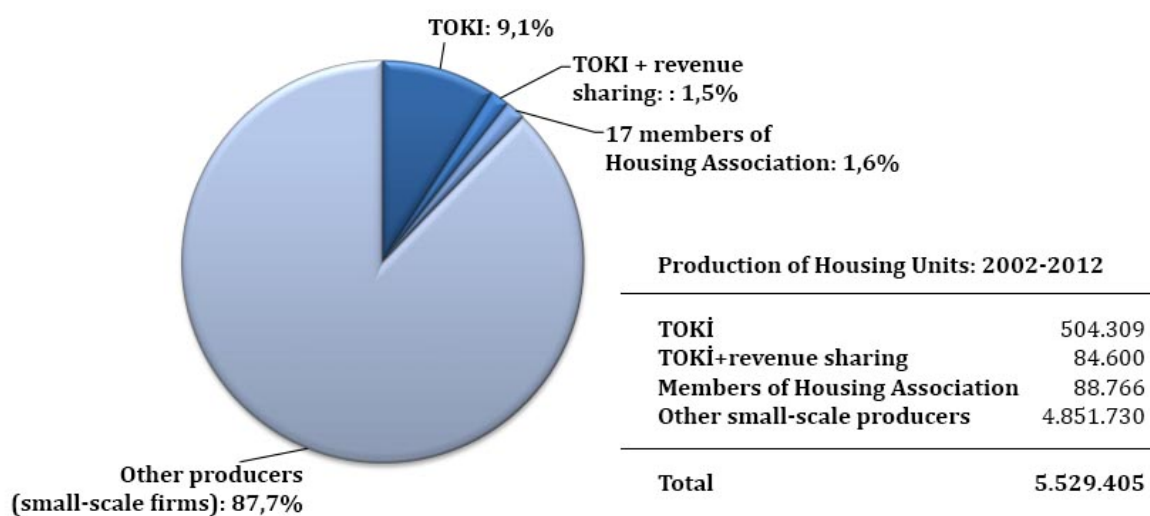


Figure 6: Breakdown of number of housing units produced in Turkey from 2002 to 2012. (Source: translated and derived from Housing Developers and Investors Association, 2013)

In short, as Topal et al. (2014) point out, TOKİ has become the centralized and dominant public actor taking over responsibilities and expanded authorities from former housing provision-related public institutions. However, this central accumulation of public decision-making power has been criticized in many aspects. For instance, Eşkinat (2012) argues that, TOKİ was restructured as a response to the necessities of the global economy, and now serves neoliberal urbanization by transferring the land to private ownership in a controlled manner. TOKİ gained power as many other public fields have been privatized.

A related discussion is about the conflict between TOKİ and local governments: TOKİ is authorized to make land use plans including the transformation of *gecekondu* neighborhoods. Regardless of causing displacement or being an *in-situ* transformation, TOKİ's *gecekondu* transformation priorities are often in conflict with long-term plans of local governments. Although *gecekondu* transformation processes are initiated by the local

governments, TOKİ's urgencies cause sudden changes and costly challenges in the local land use plans, mainly resulting from the unforeseen infrastructure and service provision costs for the new or transformed neighborhoods.

In addition, business monopoly formation becomes observable as TOKİ partners with the private sector. As Harvey explains in his article "The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and the Commodification of Culture," in the cases where PPPs are formulated in order to extract urban rent, the competition makes monopolization inevitable (Harvey, 2002). Monopolization makes some companies stronger than others, resulting in more political impact in favor of the stronger ones, which eventually causes unhealthy and misbalanced market conditions. As TOKİ is mostly freed from public inspection and data availability is relatively low, it is not easy to track financial relationships. Yet, a study shows that 42% of the overall TOKİ investment (13.5 billion Turkish Liras, which amounts to ~4 billion Euros) is shared only by 30 private companies (Sönmez, 2011b) (see Table 5):

Companies	business volume (million Turkish liras)	Number of projects	Companies	business volume (million Turkish liras)	Number of projects
1. Metal Yapı	1251	1	17. Artaş	273	1
2. Varyap İnş.	953	5	18. Konaş Ltd.	269	5
3. Aşçıoğlu	915	3	19. Can İnş.	266	3
4. Ağaoğlu	773	3	20. Yenisarp	263	3
5. Mesa	747	3	21. Mustafa Ekşi	255	3
6. Kuzu	724	20	22. Seç Yapı Ltd.	245	20
7. Emlak Paz.	673	6	23. Gap İnş. Ltd.	237	6
8. Ilgın İnş.	667	10	24. Koçoğlu	232	10
9. Öz-Kar İnş.	666	16	25. Mutlu	224	16
10. Eryapı	628	23	26. Kom Yapı	214	23
11. Siyah Kalem	602	11	27. Ali Acar	208	11
12. Türkerler AŞ	365	7	28. Makro İnş.	205	7
13. Soyak Grubu	333	7	29. Mehmet Çelik	204	7
14. Teknik Yapı	318	2	30. İz-taş	199	2
15. YDA İnş. Ltd.	315	5			
16. Erkut AŞ	302	13			
			<b>Total share of Top-30</b>	<b>13525</b>	<b>135</b>

Table 5: TOKİ's private partners with business volume higher than ~60 million Euros.

(Source: Translated and derived from Sönmez, 2011)

It is observable that in Turkey housing became a complicated challenge that has to be dealt with, initially due to the massive domestic migration waves and population growth since the 1950s and to the weak responses of the state. Global neoliberal pressures from the 1980s onwards further complicated the housing problem for the urban poor. TOKİ, as a response in the form of a centralized public administrative body, is recently being criticized for deviating from its original principle (which is the task of meeting the housing needs of the urban poor through social housing projects) and having shifted focus (on housing provision for the upper

classes of the society, backed up with the flexibility given by the legal restructuring). Apparently, TOKİ will continuously be criticized, as it raises concerns because of its profit-oriented private business-like position in the system (Yılmaz, 2010).

As Eşkinat (2012) remarks, wider criticism towards TOKİ includes concerns about monopolization, future risks of destabilizing the housing provision market, being partnered with private companies that are known for being tied to the ruling political party, providing low quality housing for the poor, being responsible for and having authorized financial credits (Yılmaz, 2010) and possessing limitless rights over policy and practice as well as its legal and economic privileges. Above all, TOKİ is exempt from public inspection even though it is involved in big-scale financial activities (Eşkinat, 2012).

### ***Housing and TOKİ in Ankara***

Ankara, the capital city of Republic of Turkey since 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 1923, is home to 4.6 million urban and 5.2 million metropolitan population. The city and its metropolitan area are under constant transformation due to Ankara's locational proximity to the rural lands of Anatolia. This explains the main reason the city continuously receives domestic migration. Moreover, the transformation of the city is also due to the urgencies resulting from efforts for creating a competitive global city.

During the last two decades, the relationship among urban land, housing, and financial markets appeared as a central neoliberal tendency, giving the state a role in creation of urban rent in Ankara (Topal et al., 2014). Following a similar path as Istanbul, Ankara has also been going through major urban transformation resulting from restructuring of local governance, implementation of big-scale projects, changes in real-estate dynamics, and dominance of service sector (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008), in relation with the emergence of the new middle class.

As mentioned above, Ankara got its share from major urban changes of successive waves of rural to urban migration. In the absence of a governmental strategy for housing provision, land speculation peaked from the 1950s until the 1970s. Following that, suburbanization started towards the western peripheries, given the fact that middle and upper classes were willing to leave the urban core in the period of 1970-80. At the same time, *gecekondus* were being commoditized through amnesties and merged into the speculative real estate system. From 2004 onwards, TOKİ, in cooperation with Ankara Metropolitan Municipality and the district municipalities, has been involved in a major urban transformation process of an area



which equals approximately to 14% of the overall metropolitan area of Ankara (Batuman, 2013).

There are three main methods of urban transformation in Ankara: (i) development of undeveloped land on the urban periphery, (ii) renewal of urban core and historic sites, and (iii) transformation of *gecekondu* neighborhoods which were formerly situated at the urban periphery but now remain central due to suburbanization.

As Davis (2006:30) describes in his book "Planet of Slums," the third method makes the urban periphery a "time-specific" term, meaning that "today's urban edge, abutting fields, forest, or desert, may tomorrow become part of a dense metropolitan core," which is also relevant to Ankara.

In many cases of the third method, there have been conflicts as the *gecekondu* dwellers resisted evacuation. In occasional cases, they demanded participation in decision-making and achieved more advantageous negotiations. In rare cases, they succeeded in cancellation of transformation projects through the court (Batuman, 2013). Despite exceptional cases, transformation of *gecekondu* neighborhoods has not produced solutions for the urban poor in Ankara, but produced options for middle and upper income groups (Güzey, 2009).

Another important topic to be discussed is how the discourse of criminality represents itself in areas populated by the underclass in Ankara. According to Sabah Newspaper (a daily Turkish newspaper with high circulation), in 2011, 30% of Turkey's informal settlements were located in Ankara, as 70% of the population in Ankara was living in those settlements (Sabah Newspaper, 2011). Four years prior to that, same newspaper reported former TOKİ President Erdoğan Bayraktar's statements (Sabah Newspaper, 2007) (own translation):

*"[gecekondu is] one of the most important 2 or 3 problems that Turkey faces. But Turkey cannot speak of development without solving its gecekondu problem. It is known that gecekondu areas, deprived areas are the bases of terrorism, drug trafficking, resistance against the state, psychological negativity, lack of education, and health problems. Turkey should completely free itself from informal buildings [...]"*

It is true for Ankara that some deprived informal neighborhoods attracted criminality.

However, not everyone living in those neighborhoods were involved in criminal activities, there were also people living there solely because of their poverty. However, *gecekondu* dwellers were collectively labeled as criminals (Erman 2007, as cited in Güzey & Aksoy, 2014). Consequently, the ones without any criminal activity wished to escape from the neighborhood; whereas the ones who remained there struggled in finding jobs and friends, and committed criminal behavior (Erman 2007 as cited in Güzey & Aksoy, 2014).

*Gecekondu* transformation through TOKİ was legitimized as the law numbered 5793 passed in 2008, stating that TOKİ is entitled to prepare, supervise, and make amendments on land use and development plans concerning *gecekondu* transformation areas, on all the land TOKİ owns or the land that is assigned as mass housing area.

According to Alkan & Uğurlar (2015), what shaped housing in Ankara is rather the provision for the upper classes than the necessities of the lower classes. In this regard, the city is fragmented with clear cuts by different income levels, which is an indicator of an uneven rent distribution.

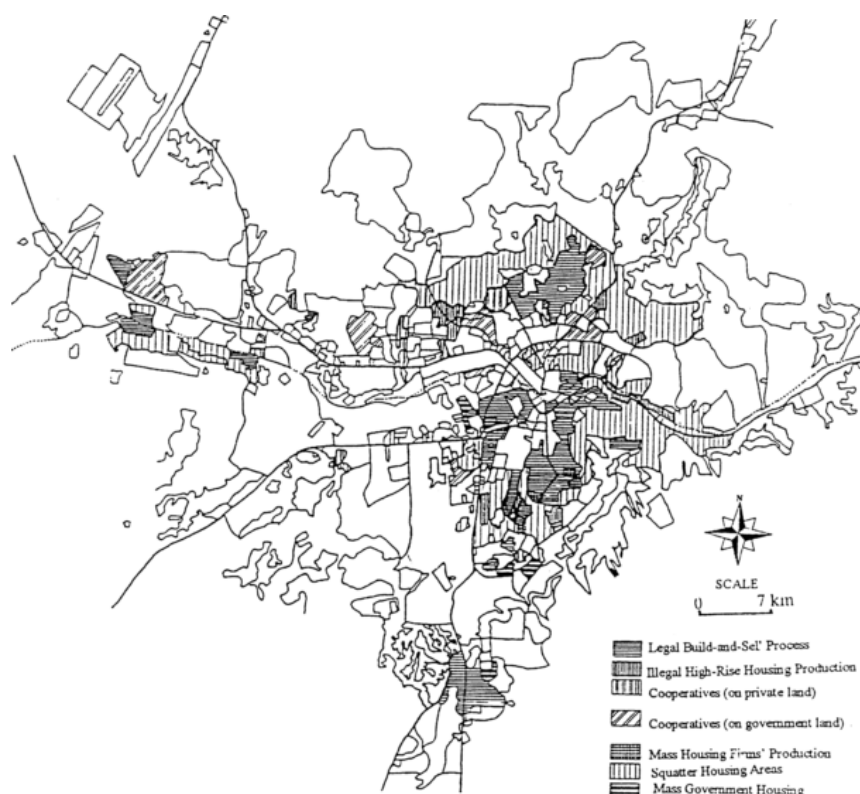


Figure 7: Map of informal settlement areas in Ankara, 1985.

(Source: Dündar, 2001)

TOKİ's housing provision activities in Ankara show that there are various classifications, language confusions, and different numeric figures on different data sources. For instance, the housing projects are classified as:

<b>Breakdown of TOKİ housing projects in Ankara (number of units) Excel sheet received on 04.05.2016</b>	<b>Breakdown of TOKİ housing projects in Ankara (number of units) (www.toki.gov.tr/illere-gore-projeler) accessed on 06.08.2016</b>
Low-middle and middle income (38.571)	Infrastructure and social infrastructure (1.854)
Lower income (6.544) <sup>1</sup>	Housing and social infrastructure (31.090)
Urban poor (2.720) <sup>1</sup>	Urban poor (1.176) <sup>2</sup>
Servitor dwellings (295) <sup>1</sup>	Public services building (84)
Migrant dwellings (24) <sup>1</sup>	Housing implementation of the administration (22.903)
Gecekondu transformation (26.171)	Urban transformation (18.629) <sup>3</sup>
Fund raising by revenue sharing (9.790) <sup>4</sup>	Fund raising by revenue sharing (4.916) <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total: 84.852</b>	<b>Total:81.474</b>

<sup>1</sup>: Components of social housing. <sup>2</sup>: According to the website, the Kusunlar neighborhood is the only project in this classification. <sup>3</sup>: Urban transformation refers to *gecekondu* transformation. <sup>4</sup>: Luxury housing.

Table 6: Breakdown of TOKİ housing projects in Ankara.  
(Source: TOKİ, 2016b, www.toki.gov.tr/illere-gore-projeler)

Although it is predictable that the information on the website might not be updated for a while, data and language mismatch is making it harder to track the progress of the implementations. Putting an emphasis on that, I prefer to continue with the data received via e-mail for the upcoming analyses, as it is more likely to be up-to-date and it provides more detailed information. Figure 8, for instance, is derived from the aforementioned dataset. It

shows the relative distributions of the information on Table 6, comparing the average values of Ankara and Turkey:

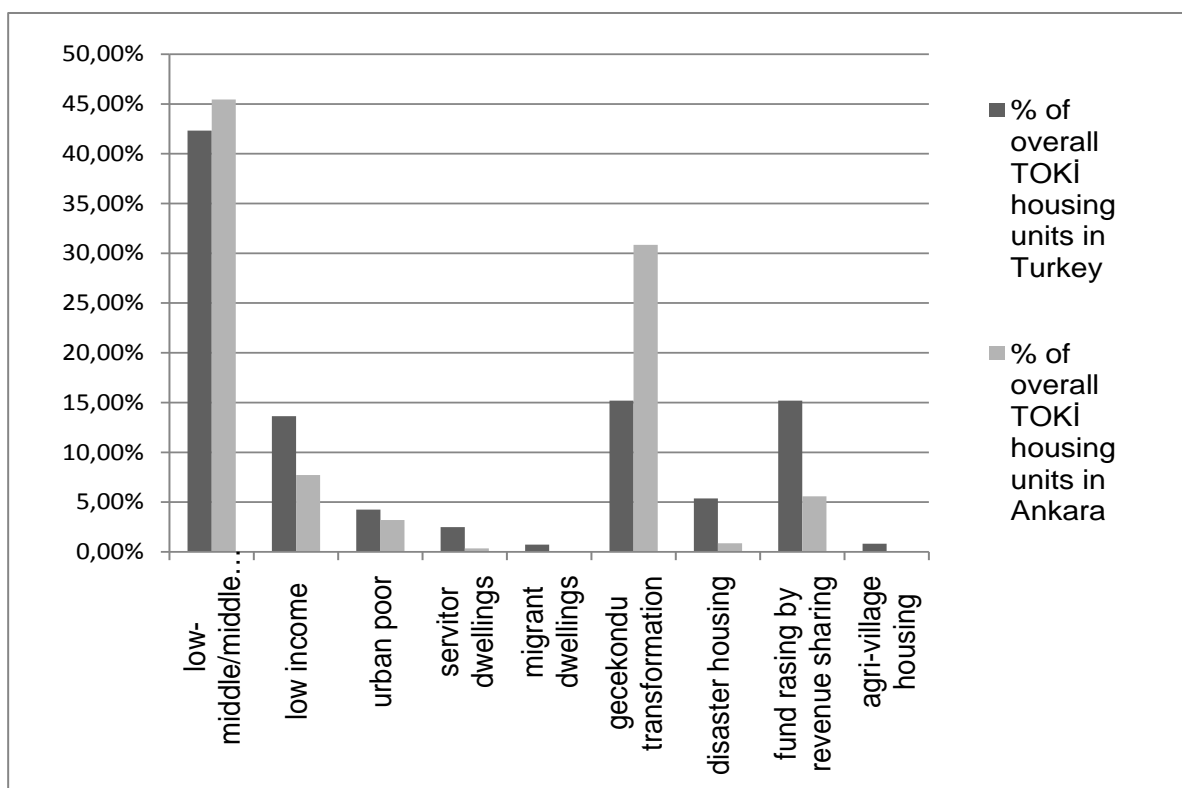


Figure 8: Housing units provided by TOKİ, Ankara and averages for Turkey in comparison. (Source: TOKİ, 2016b)

It appears that *gecekondu* transformation projects in Ankara are twice as common as the average in Turkey, which implies a relatively high amount of *gecekondu*s in Ankara. In addition, the share of fund raising by revenue sharing projects is relatively lower, but the subcomponents of social housing (lower income, urban poor, servitor dwellings, migrant dwellings) are also lower than the average values of Turkey.

The following analyses exemplify a social housing neighborhood developed by TOKİ in Ankara. The social housing dwellings in the Kusunlar neighborhood are built for the lower income group, urban poor, and former *gecekondu* dwellers without property deeds.

#### 4.1.2. Analysis of the case study neighborhood: Kusunlar

The Kusunlar neighborhood lies approximately 22 kilometers south-east of the urban core of

Ankara. It takes around 1 hour and 15 minutes to reach the neighborhood from the city center by using public transportation. Buses run approximately once per hour.

The Kusunlar neighborhood covers a total area of approximately 90.3 hectares. The land, which is owned by TOKİ in its entirety, appeared on the master plans and land use plans as "afforestation land". In 2008, the area was assigned as "housing development area". Followed by another alteration in 2009, the limitation of population density had to be cancelled, as a housing development of 4,022 units (refers to a population of around 13,000) was not foreseen during the initial planning phase of the area (Savran, 2014).

There are three TOKİ projects in the Kusunlar neighborhood which are also administered by TOKİ. First one is the urban (*gecekondu*) transformation project that TOKİ implemented in cooperation with Ankara Metropolitan Municipality and the district municipality (Municipality of Mamak, 2015). "New Mamak Urban Transformation Project" covers *gecekondu* transformation in an area of 700 hectares, which means 14 *gecekondu* neighborhoods and 13,400 *gecekondus* in total, and was announced to public as "the biggest urban transformation of the world" (Municipality of Mamak, 2015). In this project, the dwellings are assigned to the former *gecekondu* dwellers who did not claim property deeds of their *gecekondus*. There are 27 blocks with 11 to 13 storeys and 1,374 dwellings in total (interview with Çayır, interview with Demir).

Second project is the first stage of TOKİ's social housing project in the area. This project targets urban poor and lower income group, who claims their financial situation in order to be eligible for application. There are 42 low-rise (4-storey) blocks and 1,176 dwellings. There were 7,598 applicants for 1,176 dwellings and TOKİ drew lots in order to assign the beneficiaries.

Third project is the next stage of the social housing project. In addition to urban poor and lower income group, this project targets former *gecekondu* dwellers without property deeds and additional social infrastructure for the neighborhood, as well. There are 60 blocks of 4 to 6-storeys and 1,472 dwellings in total. Social infrastructure includes a secondary education and an elementary school, middle school and high school, kindergarten, a religious facility, and a health facility. There is also a commercial building and a socio-cultural center, but they are not utilized (interview with Demir).



Figure 9: A view of the Kusunlar neighborhood.  
(Source: author, 23.08.2016)

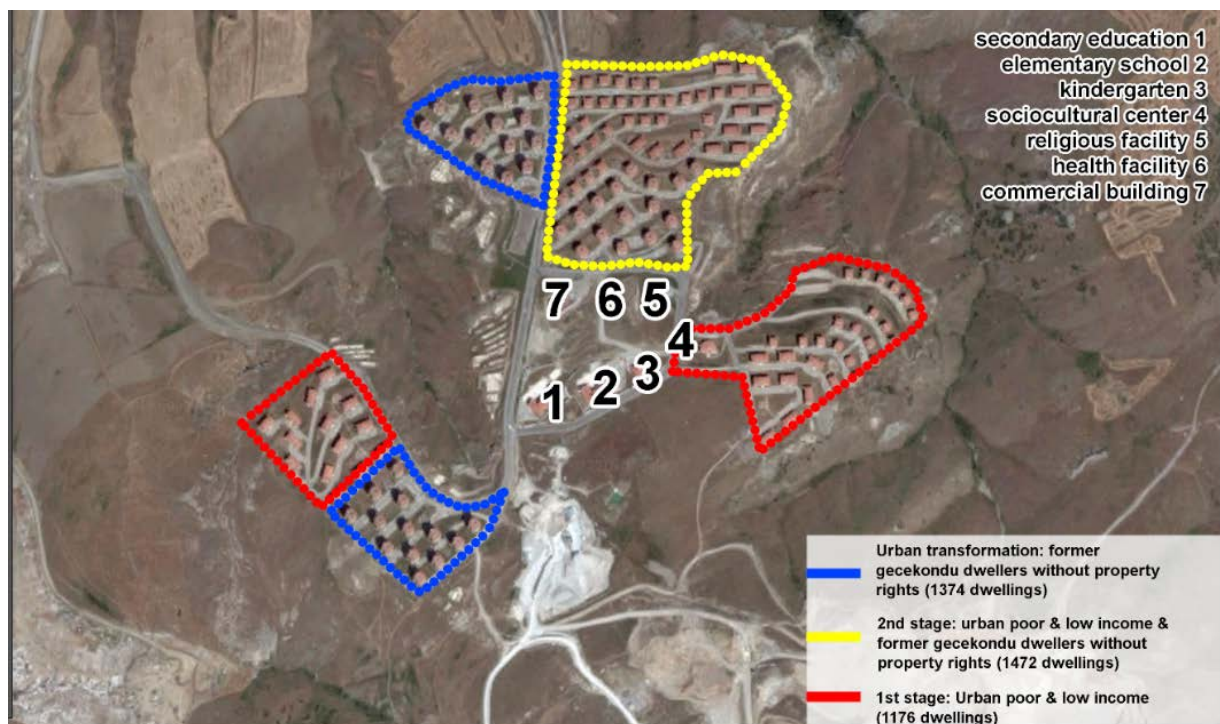


Figure 10: TOKI projects in the Kusunlar neighborhood.  
(Source: derived from Savran, 2014)

TOKI has published a document called "Housing Provision Guide" that informs applicants for eligibility for the projected dwellings. According to this document, in order to be eligible for the dwellings for the urban poor, the applicant has to prove that there is no household income apart from the government supports for the unemployed citizens. TOKI does not ask for a down payment on the dwelling for the urban poor projects (TOKI, 2010).

For instance, in the first stage project in Kusunlar, monthly payment of the urban poor

dwelling is 100 Turkish Liras (approximately 30 Euros), to be completed in 270 months, which equals to 22 years and 6 months (Aslan & Güzey, 2015). The amount of monthly payment is increased twice per year, according to the increase in the civil servant salary increase. However, this is a very long debt period, especially when the obligation of not handing over, selling off, or renting the dwelling until completion of payments is considered. Otherwise TOKİ cancels the contract (TOKİ, 2010).

In a research which focuses on the Kusunlar neighborhood, a sample group is specified from the urban poor population of the first stage project. According to the collected data, 69% of the urban poor group is constituted by the former *gecekondu* dwellers with property deeds. 77% of the sample population does not have a permanent job. In addition, 69% of the sample group does not have any social security. In terms of education, 14% has not been schooled and 62% only had elementary school education (Savran, 2014). The collected data depicts the fact that the majority of the dwellers are highly uneducated and confronted with employment and social security problems.

The same research reports that some of the former *gecekondu* dwellers without property deeds were displaced from their previous neighborhood without their consent. However, for some others, it was a relief to the extent that the constant threat of evacuation was finally over (Savran, 2014).

According to the documents, field trip, and interviews, the main problems of the neighborhood can be explained as follows:

*Spatial fragmentation:* The Kusunlar neighborhood is surrounded by empty fields and quarries in a radius of approximately 6 kilometers, which makes the neighborhood totally detached from human habitation and gives an impression of being deserted. Still, there is a great expectation that the surrounding area will soon be developed and the neighborhood will therefore be not detached anymore (interview with Demir), raising concerns about the urban planning strategy.

*Transportation:* In the beginning, there were major transportation infrastructure and service problems. Even though today there is a bus line serving the neighborhood more frequently, the area is situated significantly far from business and commercial zones of Ankara. However, the neighborhood is developed *for* the urban poor and lower income groups, who need to settle closer to jobs and job opportunities the most.

*Two-fold segregation and social problems:* The residents face a two-fold segregation: first, they live far from the city because of their income levels. Second, they are placed in different housing blocks in the neighborhood, with respect to their income level or situation of being urban poor, lower income group, or former *gecekondu* dweller without property deeds, which might create an internal segregation. There is also an immediate necessity for sports areas and a functioning place in the neighborhood that could help people come together and (see Figure 11) (interview with Demir).

*Safety and security:* The isolated spatial situation of the neighborhood also triggers the feeling of being unsafe. It is reported that 51% of the residents consider the neighborhood as unsafe, and an additional 11% as very unsafe (Savran, 2014). The most common security problem appears to be burglary. The closest security unit being situated 16 kilometers (20 minutes) away from the neighborhood which further entrenches safety and security concerns (interview with Demir and Savran, 2014). Demir also reports that last year two suicide bombers have been caught in the neighborhood and underlines the urgency for an additional security unit that is situated closer to the neighborhood (interview with Demir).

*Infrastructure:* As reported on the online news, some blocks in the Kusunlar neighborhood were delivered to the beneficiaries without proper electricity, water, and heating systems. The beneficiaries could not move in to the flats under those circumstances, they paid the monthly amounts nevertheless (Haberler News Portal, 2015). There are still frequent problems in heating systems, road infrastructure, and health services (Hürriyet Newspaper, 2015).

*Physical and structural quality:* A common critique on the TOKİ social housing constructions is the quantity-over-quality approach: the aim has been to produce the maximum number of dwellings with minimum amount of financial resources. However, low quality materials cause future maintenance costs and instead of meeting the need for social housing, there emerges an invisible housing demand (Chamber of Civil Engineers, 2009). For instance, urban transformation project in the Kusunlar neighborhood had to be renovated soon after the construction was completed (interview with Çayır).

*Adaptation and monthly payments:* Adapting to living in apartment blocks appears to be a challenge for the former *gecekondu* dwellers. They naturally want to continue their habits, for instance, the way they used to hang and dry their laundry in *gecekondu* neighborhoods (see Figure 12), which is not desired by the administration as it is not an *accepted* behavior in



apartment life. Residents of the neighborhood attempt to grow their own vegetables as they used to do; apparently the administration turns a blind eye on that (interview with Demir). In addition, the monthly payments sometimes overstrain the lower income households, and some of them try to return their dwellings to TOKİ, causing a drop in the occupancy rate in the overall housing units to 80% (interview with Demir).



Figure 11 (left): Social infrastructure building in the Kusunlar neighborhood is not in use.

(Source: author, 23.08.2016)

Figure 12 (right): Entrance of the Kusunlar neighborhood - bus stop and laundry on façades.

(Source: author, 23.08.2016)

*Place attachment:* In addition to the challenges emerging from leaving one lifestyle behind and trying to adapt to another, former *gecekondu* dwellers are facing the loss of their previous neighborhoods. These places are marginalized and stigmatized by the majority of society, however, former *gecekondu* dwellers have spent so much time and effort to build their homes and neighborhoods, which they have localized relationships with. They have deepened sense of belonging and place attachment (Erman, 2009). Demolition of their homes and neighborhoods usually has more negative impacts than expected.

#### 4.1.3. Legal-economic drivers, socio-spatial consequences

In the light of global dynamics and neoliberal urbanization in the Turkish context, it can be claimed for the Kusunlar neighborhood that legal and economic dimensions cluster as the *drivers* of the process; whereas the *consequences* appear as social and spatial dimensions.

Since the 1980s, neoliberal urbanization in Turkey has realized itself through the *drivers* of legal and economic system. Institutional restructuring has accelerated and favored

privatization of public institutions and public land, the shift from managerial to entrepreneurial administration, and the formation of PPPs. During the 2000s, TOKİ gained more centralized power as a decision-making mechanism; whereas other public institutions have been subject to downsizing and/or privatization. However, as discussed in the previous subsections, TOKİ's empowered position has intensified a market-oriented and market-dominated profit-making.

Arguably, new position of TOKİ and its private partners has formulated the monopolization of a privileged fraction. This has probably changed many dynamics and influenced the creation of rent gap mainly because of the massive *gecekondu* transformation projects in the inner-city areas. Furthermore, the construction sector has been employed as the engine of the economy even during the times of economic uncertainty or crisis. Intervention in the *gecekondu* neighborhoods has necessitated the provision of social housing, which on the one hand, opened the inner-city *gecekondu* lands and properties for value speculation, and revalorized vast lands at the urban peripheries on the other.

It can also be argued that although TOKİ and construction sector are actively producing buildings, the supply still does not address and meet the actual demand. In the Kusunlar case, for instance, sudden and short-termist regulatory changes in the form of policy experiments have assigned the land as housing development area, however, the priority has been to demolish the *gecekondu* neighborhoods in Mamak district, not to provide social housing for the ones who have been in need. It is also important to remark that the Kusunlar neighborhood has been created as a part of a greater whole (*gecekondu* transformation) which is promoted by the local government as the biggest urban transformation of the world, not missing the chance of referring to a local-global competitive discourse.

Social and spatial characteristics of the Kusunlar neighborhood illustrate the *consequences* of the aforementioned *drivers*. Since profit-making through land is prioritized by the privileged groups of the society rather than people and their actual needs, underclass populations have been relocated, and isolated at the urban periphery of Ankara. This spatial detachment emerges as suburbanization of poverty, and it has cascading social outcomes such as triggering marginalization, stigmatization, and criminalization of the neighborhood.

The *gecekondu* transformation process is mainly managed by public and private actors and it rarely involves participation practices of individuals or civil society organizations. Instead, some beneficiaries with property deeds are often obliged to negotiate on the limited options

given by the local governments; whereas the others without property deeds have to move into the social housing neighborhoods in the absence of any other alternative. As in the example of the Kusunlar case, depending on the income situation (lower income, urban poor or former *gecekondu* dweller without property deed), and the beneficiaries are given different blocks even within the neighborhood. Therefore, inequality appears not only between the upper income groups and lower income groups, but also within the lower income groups.

Uneven development within the city expanding over its peripheries causes infrastructure problems. In the beginning, the residents of the neighborhood did not have access to basic infrastructure and services, and this can still be problematic every once in a while. Another challenge is the obligation to adapt to a new lifestyle as the former *gecekondu* dwellers, beneficiaries, now become apartment dwellers. In addition, the responsibility of economic security of the lower income and urban poor household is not totally undertaken by the state, as the beneficiary now has to generate the necessary income to be able to pay the monthly dues of the new dwelling which he will officially own approximately in 20 years.

As a result of the emergence of similar problems in the social housing neighborhoods, TOKİ has suspended housing projects for the urban poor (which can be seen as a legal-economic consequence on this occasion) after reaching the number of 35,000 dwellings in Turkey in general. As in the example of first stage project of Kusunlar, these projects were utilized as a solution for the informal neighborhoods in the inner-city areas; however, they rather brought about other unforeseen social problems (interview with Demir). In addition, the new action plan Ministry of Development has released for the 2015-2018 period states that options for balancing the quantity of social housing projects and fund raising by revenue sharing projects and options for *in-situ* transformation for the *gecekondu* areas will be taken into consideration (Ministry of Development, 2015).

#### **4.1.4. Conclusions**

The Kusunlar neighborhood explains how legal-economic drivers of the neoliberal urbanization agenda might lead to spatial isolation and concentration of poverty at the urban peripheries. Although spatial fragmentation can usually be understood as a local problem for the neighborhood itself, it causes many other social problems beyond neighborhood scale as it limits the access to work, threatens safety and security, limits participation and community inclusion, and might lack physical quality of built and natural environment.

According to the extraction of the drivers and the consequences of neoliberal urbanization as

summarized in Section 3.1.5., development process of the Kusunlar neighborhood aligns with the legal and economic dimensions in its entirety. However, in terms of social and spatial dimensions, there are few elements that are either too early to interpret or do not align with the current situation. For instance, although there are clues of social engineering in terms of promotion of individual consumerism by leaving the responsibility of housing to the urban poor, it is still not directly interpretable and generalizable from what is known for the Kusunlar case. In addition, theoretical literature puts an emphasis on the transformation of social housing neighborhoods as a spatial consequence of neoliberal urbanization. However, the Kusunlar neighborhood is a social housing neighborhood which is still in its initial formation phase, and it might or might not be subject to transformation in the future.

Thus, based on the findings from the Kusunlar neighborhood, the first research question can be answered by confirming the first argument: social exclusion and spatial fragmentation in the urban structure of Ankara are directly triggered and caused by legal and economic drivers of neoliberal urbanization, since the characteristics of the case aligns entirely with the causal dimensions (legal-economic, socio-spatial) of neoliberal urbanization.

Nevertheless, the creation of neoliberal individual (as a social dimension) and transformation of social housing neighborhoods (as a spatial dimension), can only be confirmed or denied in the future. Although it can be inferred that the socio-spatial disparities of the Kusunlar neighborhood are directly linked to legal-economic drivers of neoliberal urbanization, based on the data and the analyses, it is still not possible to claim that these consequences can *only* appear under neoliberal urban conditions.

## **4.2. Case Study 2 Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, Frankfurt am Main**

This section is dedicated to the second case study. I first give background information on neoliberal urbanization and housing in Germany and Frankfurt am Main. Following that, I analyze the case study neighborhood. In the third subsection, I focus on describing the causal links between neoliberal urbanization and disparities of the urban periphery by using the summary of legal-economic drivers and socio-spatial consequences on Table 3. Finally, I summarize the findings of the Ben-Gurion-Ring case.

#### 4.2.1. Background: Neoliberal urbanization and housing in Germany and Frankfurt am Main

##### **Neoliberalization and neoliberal urbanization**

From the 1950s onwards, Germany had to cope with the massive destruction after the Second World War. This destruction was naturally not only in physical terms (see Figure 13, example of Frankfurt am Main, see Figure 14, percentages of physical destruction in German cities). Also fast and stable economic and social responses were necessary. Under these circumstances, what the state needed was a *customized* neoliberalization which would create and maintain a free market structure. According to this social market economy approach (*soziale Marktwirtschaft* in German), the state formed the basis of free market legitimization by preventing monopolization, privatization of public services, welfare distribution, minimum wage implementations and regulatory judicial system and played a balancing role between capitalism and socialism (Kılıç, 2012).



Figure 13: Frankfurt am Main - old city aerial photo, 1944.

(Source: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luftangriffe\\_auf\\_Frankfurt\\_am\\_Main](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luftangriffe_auf_Frankfurt_am_Main))

Starting from the early 1970s, deindustrialization impacted the urban dynamics in various ways as the service sector started to rise in Germany. It was expressed as a spatial reflection of the increasing social gap and tension between high-skill service sector employment and low-skill industrial employment (mainly of the immigrants). In the aftermath of the oil crisis of 1973, economic inequality increased within a process catalyzed by globalization. Government revenue dropped significantly as the spending increased and income decreased and the change in the dynamics became visible in big cities in terms of spatial concentration of different social groups.



Figure 14: Percentages of physical destruction (dark hatches) after WWII in Germany. (Source: accessed through Kofner, 2011)

Neoliberalization impacted continental Europe even though it has not been as dominant as it has been in the UK or the USA. By the end of 1980s, German urban governance underwent accelerated restructuring, which has the greatest transformative impact on Frankfurt am Main's urban governance of today: a shift occurred from national state to city/region, linking city/regions to the network and marketplace of global cities (Keil, 2011). However, this shift inevitably triggers uneven growth, which not only re-characterizes cities but also brings about intense social struggles over (national) territories - as in the case of Germany.

High-rise buildings, cultural built environment investments (e.g. museums), new master planning, regional economic domination, and airport extension appeared in Frankfurt am Main's neoliberal urbanization phase (of the formation of a world-city) from the end of 1970s to the end of 1980s. However, in the 1990s, after a rapid shift from being a national economic center to a global center of financial and service industries, Frankfurt am Main planned and implemented regional-scale projects that rearrange city's relationships with its surrounding region.

More recently, Frankfurt am Main and its metropolitan region turned its attention inwards, as

it is depoliticized and problematic issues have been technically sectoralized, while still being a global city/region. Today, Frankfurt am Main's municipal and regional politics "[...] entails a view of regimes having the power *to* rather than the power *over*" (italics original) (Keil, 2011:2496). Furthermore, this subjective interpretation of neoliberal urbanization and urban governance is argued to be the reason why Frankfurt am Main and its metropolitan region was relatively immune to the negative impacts of the financial crisis of 2008 (Keil, 2011, Schipper, 2014), similar to many other global banking centers.

Nevertheless, Frankfurt am Main is Germany's most globalized city and a leading continental banking center. Its intensified neoliberalization should be understood from a perspective not only of accelerated capital accumulation and flow but also of a subjective and *customized* approach of neoliberalization, going along with the aforementioned argument of turning inwards. Schipper (2014) argues that Frankfurt am Main and its metropolitan region created and reinforced uneven geographical development of the assets (e.g. knowledge production, which has global demand) and, therefore, has stayed relatively immune to the crisis. According to his argument, this crisis-driven economic growth model "cannot exist without less competitive and highly indebted countries" (Schipper, 2014:237), and being immune to the crisis through such a way actually deepened the dominance of neoliberalization.

Eventually, *customized* neoliberalization in Frankfurt am Main and its metropolitan region had spatial reflections such as gentrification and rent increase; whereas since 1990 social housing stock has been halved and the social housing company has shifted its focus from social housing provision to profit-making housing for higher income groups (Schipper, 2014).

### ***Social housing***

During the first half of twentieth century, pre-war social housing in Germany intentionally designed for and addressed to the low-middle class (industrial worker class) (Droste & Knorr-Siedow, 2007). In the aftermath of Second World War, housing was a necessity for everyone and public sector had to develop strategies. In Germany (and other developed countries, England, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the USA, as well) the state took the initiative for a strict spatial planning including (social) housing provision as a supply-driven intervention (Alkan & Uğurlar, 2015).

From the mid-1970s on, urban governance had a tendency from socially inclusive towards socially exclusive measures, under global pressures of location competition and place-marketing. Eventually, in the last couple of decades, new forms of spatial management have

caused the emergence of prosperity enclaves "within the urban agglomerations surrounded by islands of poverty" (Eick, 2006:1). This new form of management aims at eliminating (in)security and (dis)order, which stems from growing unemployment and poverty, specifically for the higher income groups. Therefore, measures to manage (in)security and (dis)order were integrated into domestic security policies and triggered the formation of private security services, in the form of police-private partnerships (eventually authorized to replace state police) in order to sustain control over so-called *undesirables* (homeless, drug addicts, asylum-seekers) situated in the neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. During the early phase of neoliberal urbanization, neighborhoods of concentrated poverty were gone somewhat unnoticed. During the more intense phase, however, these neighborhoods, including the social housing neighborhoods, were included in public programs addressing criminality. All these led the way towards former social housing estates to become a market segment for private security companies (Eick, 2006).

Since the 1980s, social housing areas consequently became isolated as social and spatial fragments. In addition, the better-educated East-Germans (more than 20% of the overall former East Germany population) migrated to the West Germany. Because of that, social housing provision was challenged not only due to the rapid shrinking of the East German cities with empty housing stocks, but also to the sudden influx to the limited housing stocks in the West. Another important challenge is the legally and socially marginalized population with immigration background being situated in social housing neighborhoods (since finding a flat through free market elsewhere is becoming increasingly unaffordable).

An approach that contributed to the increased segregation during the 1990s was that, the rents of social dwellings were increased on purpose, in order to attract people with higher income to these neighborhoods. However, increased rents caused lower income dwellers to look for alternatives in the private market, in which in some cases the prices were more acceptable (Droste & Knorr-Siedow, 2007). At the same time, public sector started to reduce its influence on supply.

Approximately 20% of the overall population in Germany is calculated to be eligible at entry for access to social housing since there are formal and *de facto* income limits. However, availability is lower than 20% (Kath, 2007). In the social housing neighborhoods where the most vulnerable live, responsibility lies with municipality, but the private sector is increasingly involved. Most of the social housing is occupied by the elderly with lower income and people with various ethnicities.



Today, social housing in Germany is market-based and privatization occurs in a very selective manner: private investors pick better-quality dwellings to sell at higher prices (Droste & Knorr-Siedow, 2007). In addition, local governments are willing to sell off the social housing stock (and make public and semi-public spaces such as streets, pedestrian zones etc. available to private investors as well) due to their maintenance costs (decreasing the share of the social rental housing in Germany in 2008 to 5% of the overall dwellings). The diminishing role of the public sector in provision of social housing caused arbitrary changes in the market, especially when neoliberal urbanization (triggering location competition) is considered. Another important drawback could be that the more the social housing market is privatized, the harder to employ social housing as a social improvement tool.

### ***Socially Integrative City***

Because of the raising concerns about social exclusion and spatial fragmentation in the bigger cities reinforced by globalization and neoliberal urbanization and the necessity to take an administrative action to refrain from the dangers of socio-spatial disparities, Germany's public institutions introduced a national-scale and space-based response program in 1999 called "Socially Integrative City (SIC)" (*Soziale Stadt* in German).

Seven years after its establishment, in 2006, SIC identified 300 neighborhoods and covered two million residents in overall Germany, with an annual spending of 300 million Euros (Eick, 2006). This is a generic neighborhood-based social integration program that targets deprived neighborhoods where urban development problems have concentrated. This mechanism also aims at stimulating and supporting spatial potentials and capacities of social housing neighborhoods with special needs.

Given the fact that social housing becomes a bigger challenge in the bigger cities, the aforementioned SIC program was employed for the betterment of the circumstances in these neighborhoods where the *undesirables* live. According to this program, the neighborhood improvement objectives base essentially upon crossing institutional boundaries and better utilizing the site-specific financial/non-financial potentials and capacities. The specificities of the program are determined based on the specificities of the neighborhood in order to meet the actual needs. As a precaution, SIC programs generally aim at an overall integration with the urban context and leave room for citizen and institutional participation. In addition, the program organizes itself *in-situ*, meaning that representatives (local government employees or external persons as neighborhood managers) of the SIC program are always reachable.

One of the main challenges concerning social housing neighborhoods in big cities in Germany is immigration. According to Löhner (2003), immigration occurs in three types: (i) new middle class "winners of globalization" freely deciding on where to live, suburban or inner-city lifestyle, (ii) depending on that, involuntary displacement of poorer households, and (iii) newcomers to Germany clustering in social housing neighborhoods, where potentially a network of their ethnicity already exists, pushing the limits of existing social housing stock. These challenges concerning immigration are also taken into consideration within SIC programs.

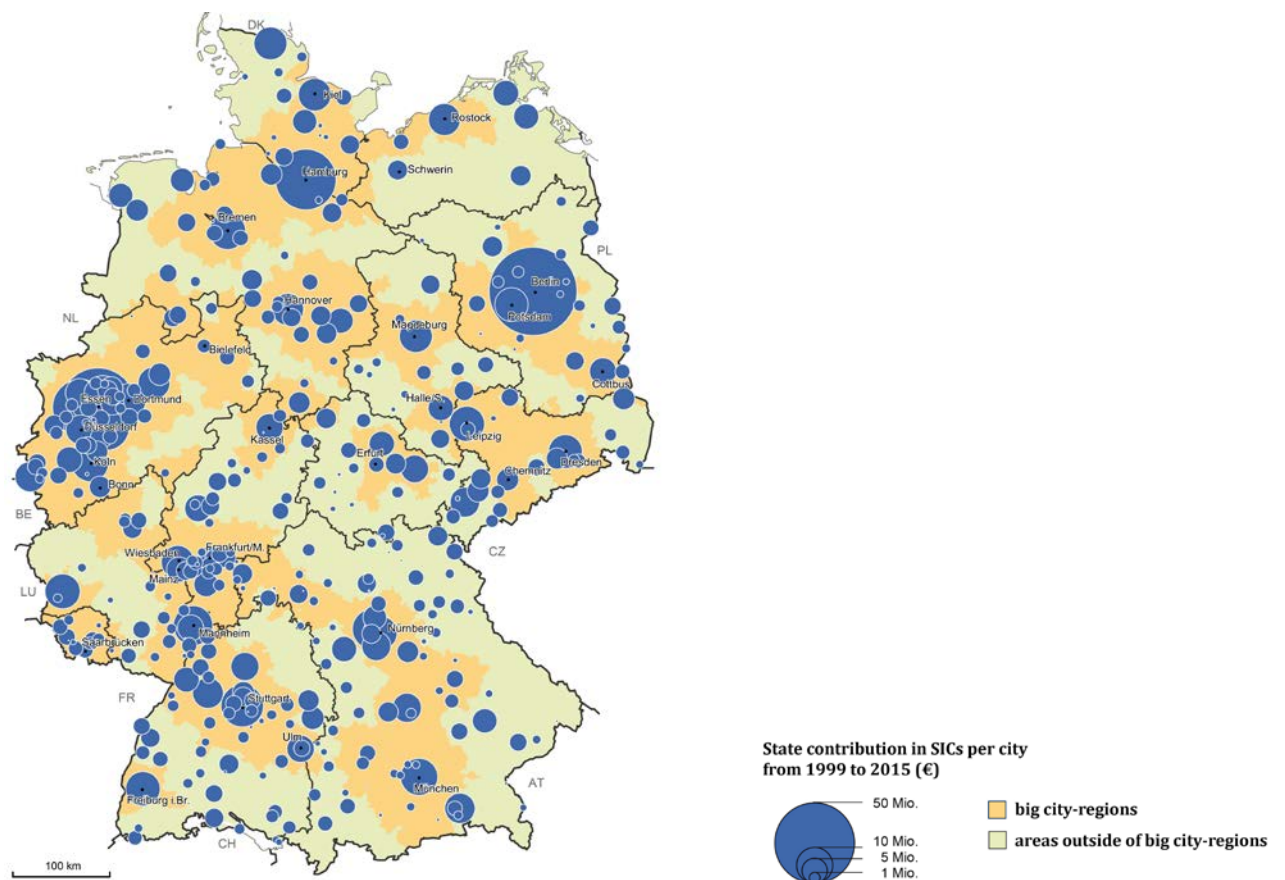


Figure 15: Geographical distribution of SICs and government contributions.

(Source: BMUB, 2015)

In addition to aforementioned characteristics, SIC programs target areas with deprived economies where unemployment has risen due to the loss of jobs in the coal and steel industries and the ports (Berlin, Hamburg, Ruhr area, Frankfurt am Main). Above figure shows the geographical distribution of SIC programs and government contributions in overall Germany (see Figure 15).

#### **4.2.2. Analysis of the case study neighborhood: Ben-Gurion-Ring**

The Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood lies approximately 20 kilometers north of the Frankfurt am Main city center. From the central train station, it takes 40-45 minutes to Ben-Gurion-Ring with frequently running subway lines; however, it is necessary to change to buses to reach the area. Ben-Gurion-Ring covers an area of 31 hectares and lies at the intersection of two administrative quarters, Bonames in the south and Nieder-Eschbach in the north. Bonames, with its 6,300 inhabitants, is relatively an old quarter and has its roots in the time of the Roman occupation. Nieder-Eschbach, with its 11,500 inhabitants, is a commercial quarter with furniture and hardware stores. These quarters became parts of Frankfurt am Main in the 1920s and 1970s, respectively.

An architectural competition for the design of the neighborhood was announced in 1972 due to the necessity of affordable housing (interview with Körby). The trade union-owned housing association Neue Heimat won the architectural competition and the construction was started in by mid-1970s in line with the development plan. However, Neue Heimat had to quit the sector after financial scandals in the mid 1980s (interview with Eilers-Oesinghaus and Körby, Droste & Knorr-Siedow, 2007).

Today, there are 4,400 people living in 1,900 dwellings. Although the laws and regulations for getting assigned for a social housing unit are constantly changing, all of the dwellings in Ben-Gurion-Ring are rental housing units and they are almost full (interview with Körby). In addition to housing units, there are markets, meeting hall, 3 office buildings and 4 car parking buildings. Most of the properties are owned by the private developer GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH; whereas the open green space is publicly owned and maintained.

According to Schenk (neighborhood manager, representing GWH in Ben-Gurion-Ring), the number of people living in the neighborhood can still be considered low to medium compared to other social mass housing examples from other countries constructed during the same era and due to similar urgencies in the global North. There are 46 nationalities in Ben-Gurion-Ring, which is also typical for these neighborhoods. Some of the older dwellers in Ben-Gurion-Ring are the ones who first moved in there in the 1970s. Unlike the next generation, they prefer to live in where they once settled due to their strong sense of belonging. In the 1980s, the new neighbors started to move in with various ethnicities and religions. However, instead of creating a cohesively integrated community, they only clustered with the groups of

their own, and this type of influx entrenched the stigmatization in the 1990s.

Nowadays, the portrait of the dwellers are constituted by the ones who live there since the 1970s, the ones who moved in the 1980s, and the latest group with families living there for the last 20 years, who are the ones with a wider perspective for social change (interview with Schenk).

Available demographic data of 2013 shows that (see Appendix B) unemployment rate in Ben-Gurion-Ring is 16.6%, which is twice as much the unemployment of Frankfurt am Main. In addition, receivers of unemployment support counts up to 28.8%, which depicts the extent of poverty in the neighborhood. 52.7% of the Ben-Gurion-Ring dwellers have immigration background. The ratio of the population younger than 18 years is 22.2%; whereas that of the population older than 65 years is 14.4% (Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department, 2016).



Figure 16 (left): A view from the open spaces, Ben-Gurion-Ring.

(Source: GWH, n.d.)

Figure 17 (right): A historic photo, Ben-Gurion-Ring.

(Source: Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department, 2016)

According to the project description document that was prepared by the City Planning Department of Frankfurt am Main, the main problems of the neighborhood are as follows (Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department, 2016):

*Overstrained neighborhood:* Heterogeneity of the population causes a clash and a conflict of different cultures and generations. The neighborhood is overstrained due to the problems such as unemployment, inability to work, violence, addiction, being in debt, etc.

*Internal & external image:* The neighborhood had a negative image as soon as it was built on a rural land in 1970s. It was not planned as an organic extension to the city, but rather as the urbanization through density (*Urbanität durch Dichte* in German) trend and constructed upon an empty space villagers used to visit for recreation. The rejection continues as the neighborhood has been announced as "the most dangerous neighborhood in Frankfurt am Main" due to the formation of the youth gangs during the 1970s and 1980s. Until today, residents of the area are having hard times finding jobs as they are not proud of their postal code (interview with Körby, interview with Schenk), as the stigma of insecurity is generalized on overall population. In contrast, the youth takes up the role of a "ghetto dweller" and acts according to a vandalistic image.

*Need for intercultural integration:* The percentage of Islam is 40%. A conservative Muslim group has its headquarters in the neighborhood. Although there are 46 ethnicities in the neighborhood, people tend to cluster only with their own ethnic or religious groups and, therefore, the potential of a stronger intercultural exchange is not well utilized. They live *next to each other* instead of *with each other*.

*Spatial isolation and monotony:* The neighborhood is situated at the urban periphery of Frankfurt am Main. The appearance of the buildings is expressed as "provokingly boring" and the open spaces are too empty. The physical connectivity of the overall neighborhood is problematic as the street Ben-Gurion-Ring distinctively separates the neighborhood from its surroundings. Although the open spaces inside are pedestrian friendly, it is hard to have a sense of orientation due to the monotony of the area. There are no open spaces for sports or rooms for further education.

*Growth pressure:* As Frankfurt am Main continuously receives new residents, population increase eventually causes increase in overall rent. Because of that, private partners are looking for financial gain by internally densifying the area.

*Backlog of modernization:* The physical structure and the appearance of the buildings require renovation for a long time. In 10 years, all the façades are expected to be renovated. However, private partners are only making minor cosmetic changes. In addition, all the flats are the same and no different options can be provided for the dwellers.

*Infrastructure and social equipment:* The neighborhood lacks meeting and socializing places. The amount and variety of the daily supply shops are very limited. A day care center is

planned to be built. Also the existing infrastructure of the neighborhood was not planned for a future expansion, which raises concerns about the future proper functioning of the current infrastructure under the load of new buildings and users.

*Security in the public spaces:* Even though there are park-like structures, the borders of the neighborhood are not well maintained. The open spaces look neglected and too dark. So, ground floor flats are not preferred (if all the ground floor flats were in use, the dwellers living there would be the observers of the open spaces). The open spaces give the subjective feeling of not being safe, although the criminal records do not reveal extraordinary statistics. But every once in a while there are violent incidents in addition to public drug trafficking. Through cooperation of several actors and programs, there has been a fractional improvement in safety and security.



Figure 18 (left): Appearance of majority of the buildings in Ben-Gurion-Ring.

(Source: Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department, 2016)

Figure 19 (right): Spaces of socialization in Ben-Gurion-Ring.

(Source: author, 22.06.2016)



Figure 20: Construction started at the north-west side of Ben-Gurion -Ring.

(Source: author, 22.06.2016)

Since October 2015, Ben-Gurion-Ring is involved in the SIC program. The program is expected to help achieving better physical and social integration within and around the neighborhood in 10 years. Federal Republic of Germany, the State of Hesse, and the City of Frankfurt am Main constitute the multi-level public side. A new development plan (*Bebauungsplan* in German, *B-Plan* in short) is being prepared for the neighborhood by the City Planning Department. The new plan includes construction of new housing blocks offering flats of different sizes targeted at attracting different social groups, as well as new shops, pharmacy, kindergarten, elementary school, high school, youth center, and offices (see Figure 20). Within this program, necessary renovation is also being planned and projected.

Highway at the west side, partially-surrounding commercial zone at the north side, and organically-grown town structure of Bonames in the south are the spatial barriers causing physical isolation together with the street (Ben-Gurion-Ring) itself. Within the concept of the project, aforementioned physical barriers are addressed. Unused car park buildings are needed to be converted to living spaces of 2, 3, or 4-room housing units. Moreover, re-functioning of the empty housing or office units at the west side is also being considered. These units are empty and not preferable due to the highway noise.

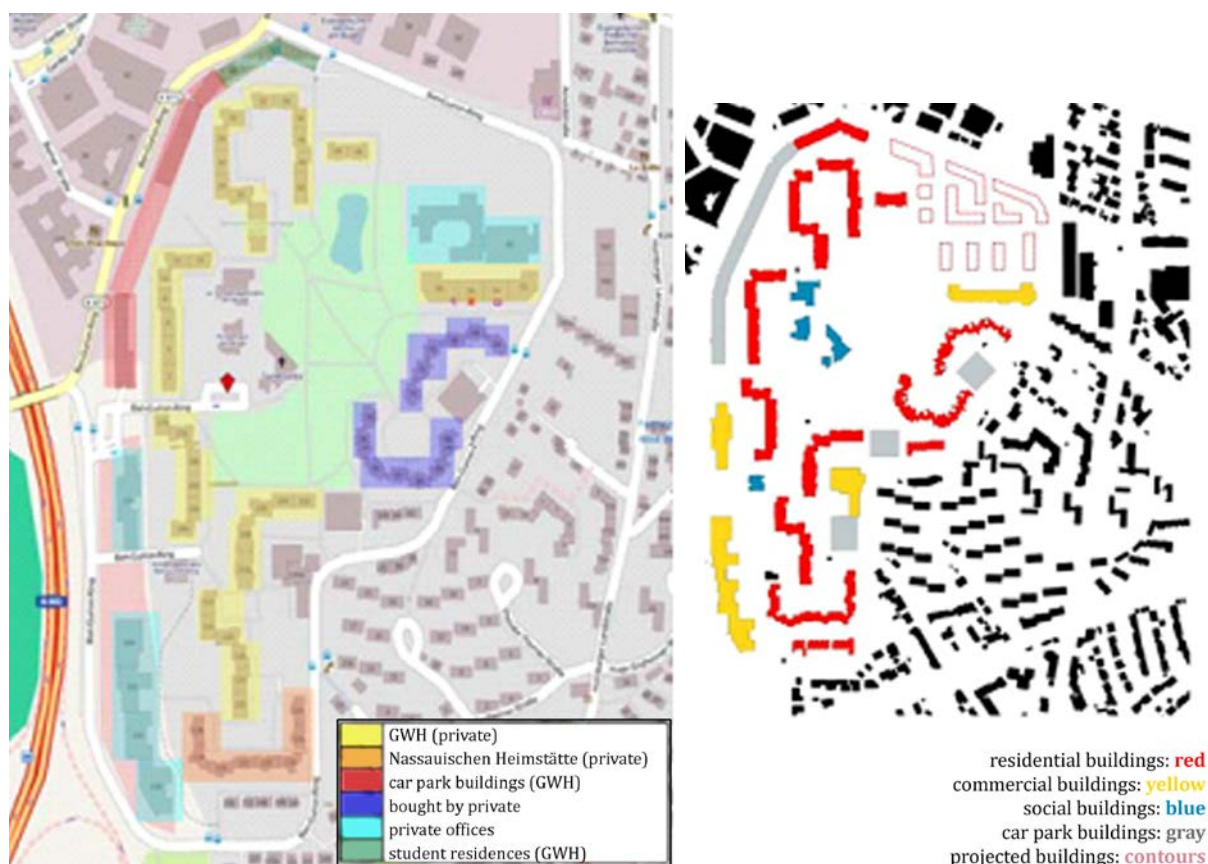


Figure 21: Ownership (left) and function (right) of the buildings in Ben-Gurion-Ring.

(Source: Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department, 2016)

In addition to construction and renovation works, SIC in Ben-Gurion-Ring also involves the rearrangement of the ownership. According to the ongoing planning, 70% of the estate is owned by the private developer GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH. 15% is owned by another private developer (Nassausche Heimstädte). The remaining 15% is assigned for owner occupancy, which is regarded and promoted as a more sustainable way of housing provision (see Figure 21).

GWH is willing to own more property for a better and centralized management. However, City Planning Department has second thoughts about this demand, not only because the current phase of the project needs more consideration and integration but also because ownership can become a catalyst of conflicts and power struggles (interview with Eilers-Oesinghaus). "If you own, you influence," says Schenk and estimates the current share of influence as around 60% for the private and 40% for the public sector.

An external strategy addresses the current affordable housing demand in Frankfurt am Main, which is approximately for 30,000 flats. According to Schenk, in terms of providing an optimal



environment that would bring a balanced social heterogeneity in Ben-Gurion-Ring, the scarcity of housing in Frankfurt am Main is promising. The people who are looking for flats in Frankfurt am Main are expected to be interested in finding any affordable flat (interview with Schenk).

An internal strategy, which is also highlighted in SIC programs in general, is face-to-face dialogue with the individuals. The office of GWH in Ben-Gurion-Ring mediates between the individuals living there and related public administration such as the City Planning Department or Housing Office and contributes to better information exchange (interview with Körby, interview with Schenk).

There is no further networking with Nieder-Eschbach and Bonames quarters, since Ben-Gurion-Ring residents are lacking acceptance, which is reinforced by the negative image of Ben-Gurion-Ring, leading to stigmatization. People living inside the neighborhood and people living in the adjacent neighborhoods were asked their opinions about the SIC program and it appears that current dwellers are concerned about any kind of change. They think any intervention, such as attracting more people, will only bring more problems (interview with Schenk). However, as Löhr (2003) explains, SIC involvement in neighborhoods like Ben-Gurion-Ring does not leave the willingness of the people to chance. The program puts forward the importance of a shared responsibility: improving the built environment should go together with the social improvement at the individual's scale, inviting the individual for being open to self and community improvement.

#### **4.2.3. Legal-economic drivers, socio-spatial consequences**

Similar to the previous case, in the light of global dynamics and neoliberal urbanization in the German context, it can be claimed for the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood that legal and economic dimensions cluster as the *drivers* of the process; whereas the *consequences* appear as social and spatial aspects.

The current situation in Ben-Gurion-Ring is *driven* by legal and economic dimensions which are to some extent directly tied to global competitive character of Frankfurt am Main. As mentioned before, public institutions in Germany in general and in Frankfurt am Main in particular had undergone intense structural reshaping that contributed to today's economic strength of Frankfurt am Main and its metropolitan region. Although this institutional restructuring entrenched entrepreneurial governance with its own particularities for Frankfurt

am Main city/region, it has contributed to massive privatization and provided an environment for the formation of PPPs. Still, the short-termist character of these formations appears to be at the private side. Instead, the public side recently aims at long term policies and practices. In addition, urban policies do not seem to be as experimental as it used to be in the 1980s. The lessons learnt from that period favor strategies that are less risky or already proven to be successful to some extent, e.g. SICs.

However, gentrification still appears as a powerful trend which realizes itself through commodification of urban assets, land value speculation, and creation of rent gap. Value extraction for the highest and best use can be considered as the main factor of this trend. Even applied for a social housing neighborhood which is situated at the urban periphery, land values are speculated believing that in the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood potentially increases land and property values by the involvement of the new middle class, which might also be considered as gentrification of a social housing neighborhood. All in all, improvements in Ben-Gurion-Ring appear to be a necessity that stems partially from the reputation of the neighborhood and also from the urgency to provide housing for the new middle class. Therefore, it can be claimed that improving Ben-Gurion-Ring is a demand-driven practice, which still is a market-based and market-oriented response.

Social and spatial characteristics of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood illustrate the natural *consequences* of the aforementioned *drivers*. Being situated at the urban periphery and being home to ethnical and religious minorities, the neighborhood is regarded as a ghetto since the 1990s, legitimizing social exclusion, marginalization, stigmatization, and even criminalization. According to the available data, the neighborhood has a high concentration of suburbanized poverty, which further complicates the physical isolation problem and turns the neighborhood into an island of poverty.

From the private side, attracting the new middle class into the neighborhood appears to be an automatic solution for the *othering* problem. However, in that case, inequality within the neighborhood also increases which might bring about other social side effects. Although there are visible attempts to ensure participation, it might not go further than informative or consultative level as long as the revalorization of land and properties is prioritized rather than the social vulnerabilities of the neighborhood.

#### **4.2.4. Conclusions**

Provided several decades ago for the industrial workers, social housing neighborhoods today in the global North are where social problems accumulate. The Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood exemplifies the current phenomenon of social housing in the global North. Similar to the previous case, the area can be considered as a spatial concentration of poverty which suffers from image and reputation problems related to safety and security concerns. In the absence of physical quality of built environment, public and commercial services, and utilities, the neighborhood is now involved in an urban improvement program.

According to the extraction of the drivers and the consequences of neoliberal urbanization as summarized in Section 3.1.5., development process of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood has a principal alignment to the legal and economic dimensions. However, the transformation of the process cannot be regarded as a short-termist and supply-driven initiative, which appears as common characteristics of neoliberal urbanization, as there has been a critical demand for transformation in the neighborhood in terms of criminality image and the overall housing demand in Frankfurt am Main.

Furthermore, regarding social and spatial dimensions, neoliberal urbanization in the German context does not speak of uneven infrastructure and service provision. There are also attempts to provide participative relations among actors and beneficiaries at informative/consultative levels. As for relocation, the German context does not exemplify massive displacement cases; normally it occurs within the process of gentrification.

Even though the majority of the legal-economic drivers and the socio-spatial consequences are relevant for the German case, the way which social and spatial disparities occur is relatively milder, when the Turkish case is considered. Therefore, based on the findings from the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, the second argument can be confirmed by answering the second research question: although different development contexts experience social exclusion and spatial fragmentation with different degrees of intensities, they are nevertheless driven by similar dynamics. The varying degrees of intensities in terms of socio-spatial consequences of the two cases depict that neoliberal urbanization occurs as a highly time and context-specific process and it continues to disintegrate social classes and to increase economic, social, and spatial gaps among them.

## **5. Discussions**

Although I designed and conducted the research rigorously and I employed useful analytical tools (e.g. drivers and consequences of neoliberal urbanization, the Egan wheel) for coherent and comprehensive interpretations, I am aware of the limitations of the research which, to some extent, stem from the imperfect knowledge of the German language that limited the access to more detailed information. In addition, the data acquired for the Turkish case frequently lacked consistency, especially when different data sources were involved, resulting in time management constraints.

In this chapter, I discuss the common characteristics of the Turkish and the German case with respect to their legal-economic and socio-spatial dimensions of neoliberal urbanization and then test the third argument. Following that, I answer the third research question by identifying strategies to better utilize the urban potentials.

### **5.1. Discussions of methods and combining the results**

Academic literature has a consensus that neoliberal urbanization is a highly spatiotemporal and a contemporary phenomenon even though the ideal of neoliberalism altered its path since the last global financial crisis in 2008. Many studies about neoliberal urbanization have a narrowed focus either on the global North or on the global South though they refrain from suggesting ways to constitute a common ground, despite the strong expression of and the consensus on the *globality* of neoliberal urbanization.

Therefore, taking a step back and having a broader perspective by extracting the most relevant and frequent legal, economic, social, and spatial dimensions from the global literature has served as an incredibly enabling tool for this study to indicate the degrees of intensities of neoliberal urbanization through two case studies that represent different development contexts. Based on this tool, it is observable that the two cases together signal some common dimensions even though for some instances they show different degrees of intensities.

In terms of legal dimensions, the both cases exemplify urban regulatory restructuring and strategic experimentation driven by global and local pressures, commodification and speculation of land and its value, privatization, entrepreneurial governance, and the formation of PPPs, assigning financial risks either to the individuals or to the public sector.

Going along with that, economic dimensions such as being speculative, being market-based and profit-oriented, prioritizing land and profit (rather than the actual social and spatial necessities) and securing consumption, extracting the highest value and creating rent gap, are observable in the both cases.

Regarding social and spatial consequences, the two cases intersect as they both depict social exclusion and stigmatization, increase in economic inequality (also the formation of a privileged fraction in the social structure) and insecurity and in criminality. Although citizen participation is tried to be achieved in some ways in the both cases, the process might not lead to a level that citizens actually make the decisions; leaving the participation dimension still as a challenge. As for spatial consequences, dimensions such as land revalorization, territorial fragmentation that leads the formation of islands of poverty and suburbanization of poverty, displacement (in the case of gentrification or slum demolition), and uneven geographical development appear as common elements of the both cases.

Analyzing the legal-economic and socio-spatial dimensions of the two cases helps revealing the common elements; whereas analyzing the components of the sustainable communities for the both cases can be considered as the cornerstones of a general framework of policy-oriented approaches as they help figuring out the common intentions for improvement. In other words, the two cases share certain dimensions of neoliberal urbanization as specified, which can be reflected on the components of sustainable communities. One of the main arguments of this research, which claims that despite the contextual differences a general framework for strategies to reestablish the bonds among socio-spatial disparities of the urban peripheries can be introduced, is therefore confirmed. Naturally, the foundation of this confirmation stems from taking an analytical position that stands between the *global* and the *global North-global South*.

## **5.2. A commentary on the urban potentials**

This section answers the third research question based on the previous section and attempts to point out the policy-oriented means towards improving the disparities of the urban peripheries with a focus on minimizing social exclusion and spatial fragmentation. Despite the contextual differences, there are socio-spatial potentials that could be utilized for social inclusion and spatial cohesion. If realized properly, below strategies can help better utilization of the urban potentials and, therefore, can improve the conditions of the urban structure in

general and conditions of the social housing neighborhoods in particular.

*Social & cultural:* The residents in the Kusunlar neighborhood have been detached from their former living spaces and they now have adaptation and socialization problems. The residents in the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood are overstrained due to intercultural integration problems in the extreme. Formation of islands of wealth and/or poverty triggers polarization in the society. In the neighborhoods where the income levels are low, ensuring safety and security becomes a great challenge. Both neighborhoods face safety and security issues as one of the primary problems. Therefore, they are both in immediate need of utilizing the potential of becoming vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities. In the urban structures, concentration of poverty and/or wealth should clearly be refrained. The residents should be provided areas to come together and get to know each other. Strategies to foster internal and external cultural integration should not be laid aside.

*Governance:* The main problem regarding governance is ensuring participation and community inclusion. Level of participation in the Kusunlar neighborhood is limited. In Ben-Gurion-Ring, through intermediary units (i.e. neighborhood management) there is relatively a greater potential for more effective participation. To improve this, PPPs should utilize their power to prioritize leaving enough time and resources to listen to people and their actual needs, rather than rushing into implementation. This approach should not be considered as loss of time; instead it can save time in the future. In addition, in order not to overlook the importance of the local power, governance strategies can be balanced as local as possible and as central as necessary.

*Environmental:* Ensuring an environmentally friendly atmosphere appears as a tremendous backlog when it is not taken into consideration at the initial phase and both neighborhoods confront problems about that. The Kusunlar neighborhood lacks better maintained open and green spaces for people to live in an environmentally friendly way, and basic infrastructure problems are frequent. In the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, the existing infrastructure raises concerns about potential breakdowns for the densified future use. Securing the provision and maintenance of proper green open spaces, operation and maintenance of supply and disposal infrastructure, and recycling opportunities are crucial.

*Housing & built environment:* The Kusunlar case urgently needs diverse, adaptable, and good quality dwellings as well as better maintenance of and greenery in its open spaces. Similarly, blocks in the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood also need urgent renovation (which is

already in the scope of the SIC project). Natural and built environment should not be neglected and necessary renovation should be immediately dealt with, in order to contribute to the sense of belonging and taking responsibility of place. For the lower income groups, it is extremely important to offer a variety of options for access to affordable housing or other options such as housing subsidies.

*Transport & connectivity:* Public transportation services and linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services is the main spatial problem of the Kusunlar neighborhood, as it is physically isolated and detached. Although transport facilities are not as problematic in the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, isolation due to its spatial structure, inevitably strengthens spatial fragmentation. Residents of the lower income or social housing neighborhoods are the ones who need to live closer to the job areas the most, when equity in income distribution is considered. *In-situ* transformation approaches appear to be the most convenient attempt. However, in the cases where there is no alternative other than re-location of the lower income groups, the overall connectivity of the urban structure should be sustained.

*Economy:* The local economic activities of the both neighborhoods need improvement. The image and the reputation of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood limit the potential progress towards a flourishing and diverse local economy. Physical isolation of the Kusunlar neighborhood disconnects the neighborhood from areas where the main economic activity occurs. Internally, there is not much local opportunity for economic activities. The importance of local economic activity should not be overlooked. Job and training opportunities for the lower income groups, also for the women and youth should be prioritized in order to prevent future economic failures. Economic activities should not be limited to the local scale; they should also be linked into the wider economy.

*Services:* Local education facilities need improvement for the both cases. So far, the schools in the Kusunlar neighborhood could not employ teachers for long periods. It is pressing in both neighborhoods to improve commercial and utility services. Adequate public, commercial, and voluntary utilities should be provided. Education, healthcare, and other social and cultural equipments should serve continuously. Moreover, service providers should aim at long-term benefits, instead of immediate profit-orientation.

*Equity:* Apart from being socially excluded and spatially fragmented, internal social exclusion in the Kusunlar neighborhood might deteriorate as the residents are living in separate blocks depending on their income levels. In addition, residents of the Ben-Gurion-Ring

neighborhood tend to cluster and network only with groups of their own ethnicity or belief, which potentially causes an internal segregation, too. Both neighborhoods need a fair distribution of quality, maintenance, accessibility, and adaptability. Creating spatial fragmentation has negative results beyond causing public transportation and infrastructure problems. Better approaches could be to densify through diversifying and to diversify through densifying.

## **6. Conclusive remarks**

This research speaks of the causal relationships of neoliberal urbanization and social exclusion and spatial fragmentation at the urban peripheries by analyzing two lower income neighborhoods. Both neighborhoods exemplify social housing neighborhoods from two different development contexts. In developing countries, as in the example of the Turkish case, social housing projects are widely produced to re-locate the urban poor and lower income groups who frequently represent the informal settlement dwellers. In developed countries, as the German case illustrates, today's social housing neighborhoods have a history that roots back in the industrial era. These neighborhoods were then home to the worker class. Now, urban poor and lower income groups, who frequently represent the population with immigration background, populate these neighborhoods. The dwellers of the Kusunlar neighborhood, a social housing neighborhood situated at the urban periphery of Ankara, are mostly the former informal settlement dwellers and they represent the lower strata of the society. The dwellers of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, a social housing neighborhood situated at the urban periphery of Frankfurt am Main, are mostly constituted by people with immigration background.

The primary objective of this research was to show that, neoliberal urbanization is a process that has great influences on social exclusion and spatial fragmentation, regardless of the development context. Nevertheless, the research takes into consideration the fact that neoliberal urbanization occurs differently in different development contexts, rather than focusing solely on the similarities. The two cases share several similarities such as being situated at the urban periphery, being areas where poverty is concentrated, suffering from physical isolation, and having bad reputations; whereas they still represent two different development contexts. Therefore, they are neither compared nor contrasted. They are rather explained and described in terms of their context-specific legal-economic and socio-spatial dimensions. Without overlooking the discourse of *globality* of neoliberal urbanization, their



common characteristics are introduced as a general framework for urban strategies (policies and practices) for improvement.

Many studies conclude that neoliberal urbanization is a global process that occurs due to some legal-economic drivers and has socio-spatial consequences, although they most frequently analyze either the global North or the global South. Also, applying the specific indicators for the global North to the global South could result in various misinterpretations. For this research, it was necessary to take a perspective that stands between the *global* and the *global North/South* in order to be able to clearly analyze the dynamics of drivers and consequences of neoliberal urbanization.

One of the most pivotal attempts of this research is that, by employing two case studies from two development contexts, it depicts a complete frame of today's urbanization dynamics, which promise regulation and improvement in the urban structure but result in socio-spatial disparities and deterioration due to the dominance of profit-oriented practices of a privileged stratum of the society regarding urban land.

Furthermore, the research showed, some aspects of one case study can be relevant for the other. Most importantly, it showed that as in the example of the Ben-Gurion-Ring neighborhood, there are decades-long persistent challenges and constant efforts for improvement in the social housing neighborhoods since the initial phase. At some point in the future, today's arising problems, in a new social housing neighborhood as Kusunlar, can aggressively cascade socially and spatially.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the earlier the Kusunlar neighborhood is involved in a social integration program, the more likely that preventive measures to eliminate social exclusion and spatial fragmentation could be effective. Without including the integrative potentials that can, to some extent, enable social inclusion and territorial cohesion in the current urban agendas, disparities in the urban peripheries will be unmanageably entrenched.

## **7. Appendix**

### **Appendix A: Components and Subcomponents of Sustainable Communities**

A COMMON SUB-COMPONENT across all components is:

- All provision and/or activity to be high quality, well-designed and maintained, safe, accessible, adaptable, environmentally and cost-effectively provided

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL** – Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities

- A sense of community identity and belonging
- Tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs
- Friendly, co-operative and helpful behavior in neighborhoods
- Opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities
- Low levels of crime and anti-social behavior with visible, effective and community-friendly policing
- All people are socially included and have similar life opportunities

**GOVERNANCE** – Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

- Strategic, visionary, representative, accountable governance systems that enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organizations
- Strong, informed and effective leadership and partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)
- Strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector (e.g. resident's associations, neighborhood watch)
- A sense of civic values, responsibility and pride
- Continuous improvement through effective delivery, monitoring and feedback at all levels

**ENVIRONMENTAL** – Providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way

- Efficient use of resources now and in the future in the built environment and service provision (e.g. energy efficiency, land, water resources, flood defense, waste minimization etc)
- Living in a way that minimizes the negative environmental impact and enhances the positive impact (e.g. recycling, walking, cycling)
- Protecting and improving natural resources and biodiversity (e.g. air quality, noise, water quality)
- Having due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions

#### HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – A quality built and natural environment

- Creating a sense of place (e.g. a place with a positive ‘feeling’ for people, and local distinctiveness)
- Well-maintained, local, user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people
- Sufficient range, diversity and affordability of housing within a balanced housing market
- A high quality, well-designed built environment of appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout that complements the distinctive local character of the community
- High quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible and adaptable buildings

#### TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY – Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services

- Transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities
- Facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling
- Accessible and appropriate local parking facilities
- Widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access

#### ECONOMY – A flourishing and diverse local economy

- A wide range of jobs and training opportunities
- Sufficient land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change
- Dynamic job and business creation
- A strong business community with links into the wider economy

#### SERVICES – A full range of appropriate, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services

- Well-educated people from well-performing local schools, further and higher education and training for lifelong learning
- High quality, local health care and social services
- Provision of range of accessible, affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (e.g. retail, food, commercial, utilities)
- Service providers who think and act long term and beyond their own immediate geographical and interest boundaries

(Source: Egan, Skills for Sustainable Development, 2004)

## **Appendix B: Demographic Information on Ben-Gurion-Ring, Frankfurt am Main**

<b>Measurement:</b>	<b>City/District/Neighborhood</b>	<b>2013 %</b>
<b>Unemployment</b>	Frankfurt am Main	8,8
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	9,9
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	16,6
<b>Unemployment between ages 15 and 65</b>	Frankfurt am Main	5,2
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	5,6
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	9,0
<b>Population receiving unemployment money</b>	Frankfurt am Main	10,2
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	12,6
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	24,1
<b>Population receiving unemployment money, younger than 65 years old</b>	Frankfurt am Main	12,1
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	15,6
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	28,2
<b>Population without German citizenship</b>	Frankfurt am Main	26,8
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	20,3
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	25,4
<b>Population with immigration background</b>	Frankfurt am Main	21,8
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	29,7
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	52,7
<b>Population below 18 years old</b>	Frankfurt am Main	16,0
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	17,3
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	22,2
<b>Population above 65 years old</b>	Frankfurt am Main	16,2
	Bonames and Nieder-Eschbach	19,1
	Ben-Gurion-Ring	14,4

(Source: Frankfurt am Main City Planning Department, 2016)

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