

# **Abstract Spaces and Precarious Bodies**

The production of urban space in Sur, Diyarbakir

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## **Abstract**

This thesis interrogates the process of the production of urban space in Sur, Diyarbakir through counterinsurgent and neoliberal spatial practices by looking at its effects on the subjectivities of women who were forced to migrate from neighborhoods of the district between 2012 and 2017. This work contributes to the literature on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, and to critical geographies of space and critical theories of the body by first, adopting an epistemology of practice, and second, engaging with the relation between spatial practices at the macro and micro levels, and linking them to the production of female subjectivities. The first part deals with a number of macro spatial practices and representations of the space of Sur, which have led to the transformation of Sur into a concrete abstraction. The latter is then contextualized with the contradictions felt by those who lived this process. The second part builds on the previous one by exploring this contradiction, and investigating its effects on female subjectivities, connecting the production of abstract space with the production of the precarious subjectivities.

Finally, this thesis argues that the production of the space of Sur as an abstraction, at the macro level, has imposed a condition of individualised precarity, at the micro level, which unveils the alienating character of the State Mode of Production.

**Keywords:** Sur, Diyarbakir, Turkish Kurdistan, the production of space, practice, SMP, autogestion, precarity, the body, gender performance.

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### Abbreviations

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi- Justice and Development Party.

GMD: Diyarbakir Buyukshehir Belediyesi - Greater Municipality of Diyarbakir.

HADEP: Halkin Demokrasi Partisi – People’s Democracy Party.

HDP: Halkların Demokratik Partisi- People’s Democratic Party.

KCK: Komala Civaten Kurdistan – Kurdistan People’s Community.

PKK: Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan – Kurdistan Worker’s Party.

TOKI: Toplu Konut Idaresi Baskanligi –Mass Housing Administration of Turkey.

YDG-H: Yurtsever Devrimci Genclik Hareket – Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement.

## Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	8
Case study: Sur, Diyarbakir.....	9
Research Puzzle .....	15
Research Question.....	17
Plan of the Present Work.....	18
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	20
Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework.....	29
Chapter 4. Methodology and Methods.....	39
4.1. Research Design.....	40
4.2. Research Methods.....	41
4.3. Research Context and Personal Subjectivities.....	45
Chapter 5: The production of space.....	47
5.1. Urban Transformation: 2004-2015.....	47
5.2. Conflict .....	55
5.3. Urban Transformation: 2015-2018.....	64
5.4. Discussion and Conclusion.....	77
Chapter 6. The production of subjectivity.....	79
6.1. The space of the female body and the female body in space.....	79
6.2. Life outside of Sur.....	90
Discussion and conclusion.....	95

Conclusion.....	97
Bibliography.....	103
Annotations.....	113

## **Introduction**

The 1980's coup d'état marked the start of Turkey's transition to a neo-liberal urban regime through a rapid economic liberalization and planned urbanization during the 80's and 90's (Kuyucu and Unsal, 2009). In 2001, the housing market boomed, and urban governance radically shifted from a populist to a neo-liberal framework. A number of legislative changes, on the one hand, decentralized the government's control over urban plans by endowing greater powers to city and district municipalities. On the other, the new regulations monopolized the construction market on the hands of the Governmental Mass Housing Administration TOKI, which became the main pro-profit urban design tool of the state (Ali Devrim, 2016). Since then, large scale urban renewal projects have been implemented in cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, in the West, and Gaziantep or Diyarbakir in the South East, profiting urban developers, credit institutions, local and central state actors and the politically and stronger inhabitants of these areas, whose interests lie in the institutionalization of a neo-liberal urban regime (Yuksel, 2013 and Gambetti and Jongenden 2011). Although the rapid speed at which it occurred and the lack of regard for the population's opinion differentiate Turkey from other cases, this phenomenon is not so much characteristic of Turkey as it is of modernity.

Urban neoliberal policies continue to reproduce an urban structure in which the rich dominate space, and its uses, while the poor are trapped within it (Gambetti and Jonderden, 2011). In other words, a system in which those able to provoke large material spatial changes hold more *rights to the city* than its users. All across the globe it is possible to find examples of gentrification and urban transformation which homogenize cities, commodify cultural assets for the sake of capital, and push the urban poor to the outskirts and into precarious living conditions (Wolf and Mahaffey, 2016, Mazer and Rankin, 2011) This process reflects the fact that a dominant conception of space



has currently monopolized processes of urbanization and city planning, a conception which asserts that it is possible to fragment a city and calculate its value according to land prices. It also shows that the destructive character of gentrification is also productive of new particular subjectivities (Erman and Hatiboglu, 2017).

Having said that, what makes the neoliberal experience in Turkey characteristic, especially in the South Eastern Kurdish regions, is its development in tandem with a war economy in the context of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict (Yuksel, 2011). Thirty years of intermittent war have divided the country both along ethnic and class lines. The conflict dynamics, together with the geographically uneven socioeconomic development of Turkey, have further complicated processes of urban development of cities in Turkish Kurdistan (Yuksel, 2011). First, the fight over the right to the city, as the capacity to produce urban spaces is both an economic and a political matter which complicates the state-pro-Kurdish municipalities relations. Second, state led processes of urban transformation provoke the loss, and/or commodification of Kurdish cultural and historical heritage. The latter, in a background of long denial of Kurdish identity and assimilatory policies with nationalist interests, are often read, and rightfully so, as the continuation of the conflict through other means. Finally, the unequal distribution of vulnerabilities as a consequence of the conflict places the Kurdish urban poor in an even more vulnerable position to the processes of gentrification. This denial to the right to the city imposes social spaces which make categories such as class, ethnicity, and, particularly in the case of women, gender, intersect giving rise to new subjectivities and subject positions.

This work investigates how the process of urban transformation in the district of Sur, Diyarbakir, amid the resumption of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict in summer 2015, affected the subjectivities of women who were forcefully displaced from neighborhoods of the district as a

consequence. This case is particularly illustrative of the paradoxical dynamics and outcomes of the neoliberal experience in Turkish Kurdistan as for one, the dynamics of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict directly influenced that of urban transformation in Sur and vice-versa, and for the other, their combination gave rise to specific experiences of displacement and subjectivities.

### **Case Study: Sur, Diyarbakir**

Diyarbakir is one of the biggest Kurdish populated provinces in Turkey. Its administrative capital, a city carrying the same name, is considered the cultural capital of Turkish Kurdistan due to its rich history, location, and active socio-political life. The city, however, just like its surrounding Kurdish populated areas, has always been socioeconomically underdeveloped, suffered from economic stagnation, and has been subject of tight emergency rule until 2002 (Gambetti, 2009). The most distinctive feature of the city is the Diyarbakir Castle in the district of Sur, a 5800m long fortress consisting of two parts- the inner castle (Ickale), and the outer castle (Dis Kale) (figure 1). The part of Sur located within the outer castle but surrounded by the walls is called Surici, which, in Turkish, means “inside of Sur”. Four main gates connect Surici to the rest of the city. Namely, Dag Kapi in the north, Urfa Kapi in the west, Mardin Kapi in the South, and Yeni Kapi in the East (Dalkilic and Nabikoglu, 2012) (Figure 2).



Fig 1: Aerial picture of Surici. The top left walled area corresponds to Ickale (inner castle) while the rest of the district surrounded by the city wall is Dickale (outer castle).

Source: Akitera, 2016



Fig 2: İckale and Dickale divide Surici. In Dickale (outer castle) there are eighty-two bastions and four important gates.

Source: Printinterest

During the 1990's, thousands of people migrated from rural areas of Turkish Kurdistan to urban centers like Diyarbakir as a consequence of military operations and village depopulations in the context of the first escalation phase of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Only between 1990 and 1994, Diyarbakir's population increased dramatically - from 380,000 people to 1 million- and so did informal urbanization in the form of slum areas in Surici (Sala and Schechla, 2016).

On arrival to an already impoverished city with high levels of unemployment, migrants had to deal with a number of economic, housing, health and psychological problems, as well as adaptation to the urban life (Sala and Schechla, 2016). The central government was not willing to provide any compensation for their lost properties in the villages, or financial support to improve

their new living conditions (Commission on Human Rights Report, 2002, in Ricart and Schechla, 2016). With time, however, people of Surici, alienated from the central government structures and sometimes with support from the pro-Kurdish district and local municipalities, developed a number of informal neighborhood based socio-economic practices, and formed solidarity networks to deal with poverty and stigmatization.

### Urban Transformation-Conflict-Expropriation nexus

The PKK-Erdogan peace negotiations between 2012 and 2015 provided Diyarbakir with the sufficient stability for its neoliberal opening. Yet, the city, not counting with any industry, focused on the construction sector and the tourist economy (Yuksel, 2011). Soon, a Kurdish local entrepreneurial elite emerged deliniating new class divisions among the Kurdish population. In 2010, state led urban transformation plans for Surici met with the municipalities' interests of cultural commodification, and Surici became a target for a large gentrification plan.

However, peace did not last long and soon, the spillovers from the Syrian war affected the "solution process". In Syria, Rojava was taken under the control of the YPG forces in July 2014, meanwhile, in Turkey, political repression heightened. In August 2015, a number of city and district municipalities in Turkish Kurdistan, including Diyarbakir, made declarations of self-administration (Crisis Group, 2016). The PKK linked group YDG-H (Yurtsever Devrimci Genclik Hareket) entered those areas and barricaded them (Permanent People's Tribunal on Turkey and the Kurds, March 2018) to what the government responded with a row of curfews all along Turkish Kurdistan.

Between September 9, 2015 and June 10, 2016, six intermittent curfews were declared in neighborhoods of Sur, the longest one lasting up to 103 days. Armed clashes between the PKK



and the state, as well as military operations making use of heavy weaponry and lethal force devastated the area (Amnesty International, 2017).

In 2015, Surici's population was of 50,341 people, and the district was composed of 15 neighborhoods. Namely, Ali Pasa, Lale Bey, Cevat Pasa, Fati Pasa, Dabanoglu, Hasirli, Savas, Cemal Yilmaz, Melik Ahmet, Ziya Gokap, Suleyman Nazif, Abdal dede, Iskandar Pasa, Cami Nebi, and Cami Kebir (Figure 3 and 4).

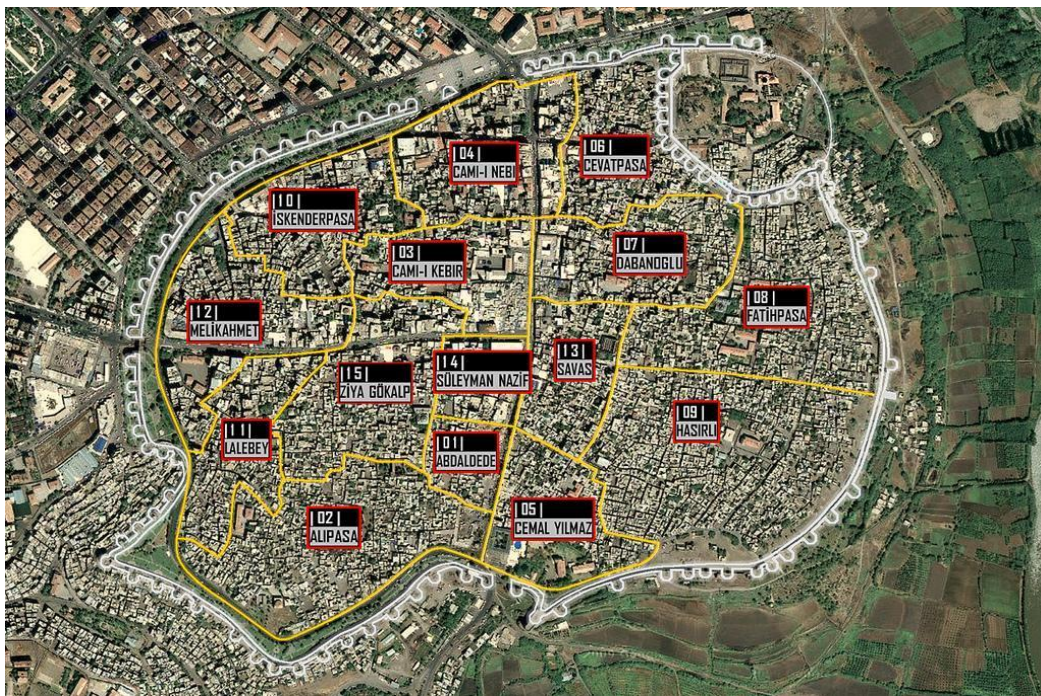


Fig 3: 15 Neighborhoods of Surici in 2015

Source: Flickr

POPULATION OF SURIÇİ REGION-2015	
Abdaldede	896
Ali Paşa	2,985
Cami Kebir	1,265
Cami Nebi	2,437
Cemal Yılmaz	2,104
Cevat Paşa	3,256
Dabanoğlu	3,705
Fatihpaşa	5,153
Hasırlı	5,696
İskenderpaşa	6,720
Lalebey	3,000
Melikahmet	6,793
Savaş	2,409
Süleyman Nazif	514
Ziya Gökalp	3,408
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50,341</b>

Fig 4: Population of Surici in 2015 per neighborhood

Source: Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality.

After the official ending of the conflict, on March 9, 2016, six neighborhoods had been virtually erased, and remained sealed to the public under a de facto curfew. The buildings that survived the siege started to be demolished under the pretext of cleaning the area. On March 21, the Council of Ministers decided to expropriate 6292 parcels (82%) out of 7714 parcels in Sur (Avci, Azizoglu, Karaman, and Soyukuya 2016). This way, the process of urban transformation of the district was lifted off the hands of the pro-Kurdish municipalities, whose majors had been arrested at the start of the conflict under terrorism charges and replaced by appointed trustees. Since 2015, urban renewal in Surici has been led by the state and TOKI.

### Displacement and gender

So far, 20.000 inhabitants have been forcefully displaced from their houses in Sur (Permanent People's Tribunal on Turkey and the Kurds, March 2018). Some people have moved within Surici or to other districts, where, in most cases, they live with relatives and friends as they are unable to pay rent, and financial compensation is deficient and often inaccessible.

Displacement, particularly in the case of women, has more than an economic layer. As they normally don't work and spend more time at home, all their social bonds used to revolve within their neighborhood communities in Sur. Life in displacement has meant both the destruction of a form of life and the emergence of a new one, as displacement reworks a number of categories such as gender, ethnicity, and class, which intersect and affect, as well as being affected by, women's daily practices and interactions.

### **Research Puzzle**

If space is understood in a relational way, that is, not as a container of material objects, a site where historical processes occur, or a "passive stage for social action" but instead, as "the medium, means and product" (Premat, 2009, p. 3) of all social action and historical processes, three propositions follow.

The first is that, as Henri Lefebvre enunciated, "(social) space is a social product" (1991, p.26). It is produced by people through interactions in their daily lives as well as by historical and political forces, constituting a continuum linking the global to the intimate and vice-versa.

Lefebvre claims that space is socially produced in three dialectically interconnected dimensions. Namely, (1) perceived materiality, (2) conceived ideas, and (3) lived everyday experiences. The *perceived* dimension relates to the physical material aspects of space and the



*spatial practices* which the latter allows and limits within. The *conceived* dimension corresponds to idealised *representations of space* and their abstract representation in maps and urbanization plans, or any other cartographic representation. Space becomes endowed with meaning in *spaces of representation*, that is, the *lived* dimension of space. To Lefebvre, experiencing space means creating symbolic attachments to its materiality.

The second proposition is that socially produced space, at any level, produces and reproduces particular socio-economic structures. Social space enframes people in particular subject positions (Lefebvre, 1991) which have codes of appropriate behaviour that agents might either follow or confront (Butler, 1989).

Although Lefebvre's spatial framework does not fix any specific balance of power between the three dimensions, initially, in the advent of capitalism, the symbolic dimension seems to have been sidestepped in processes of urban planning. In fact, Lefebvre claims that the lived has been conquered by dominant abstract conceptions of space which are expressed materially in urban spatial practices which fragment and homogenize urban spaces, turning cities and social relations into concrete abstractions.

The third proposition is that the body is both the product of, and precondition for, social action and concomitantly (social) space (Lefebvre, 1991). Butler's performative theory of subjectivity (1989, 2009) poses that there is no authentic gender identity or self. Instead, subjectivity is performed as it is produced and reproduced in daily practices. Place-specific dominant conceptions of gender dictate frameworks of appropriate gender conduct to which individuals, through practices, might comply and reify, or contest. A rejoining of Butler's theory of subjectivity with Lefebvre's relational approach to space would then state that subjectivities are constituted in space, through its experience and the performance of certain spatial practices, both

of which are affected by the dominant culturally-specific conceptions of adequate gender, class, and ethnic behavior. In sum, on the one hand, individuals are situated in particular social spaces and social positions which require certain gender, class, and ethnic performances. On the other, individuals have the capacity to create and shape their own social spaces and participate in the process of production of space, an activity which critical geographies of space have called place-making.

### Research Question

The case study of Sur raises an initial empirical contradiction, that is the fact that those living in a particular urban setting, while participating in its historical and cultural inscription, seem to hold no rights or influence upon its uses and modifications. As mentioned, urban transformation in combination with the conflict dynamics have led to gentrification and displacement. From a relational production of space perspective, the following theoretical contradiction arises: Although urban space is produced both at the macro and micro levels, macropolitical forces seem to have conquered everyday practices of place-making by denying space to people and thus, affecting their subjectivities and the practices which characterized them. As the case study points to, emptying the district from its history and its people threatens to reproduce socio-economic precarity in displacement, and produce new subjectivities of those displaced.

Through a relational reading of the work of Henri Lefebvre on the production of space in combination with Butler's performative theory of subjectivity, this work aims at shedding light on the empirical and theoretical complications described above by putting forward the research question of: How does the *production of urban space* in the district of Sur, Diyarbakir, through macro spatial practices of gentrification and counterinsurgency in the context of the Turkish-

Kurdish conflict, affect the *subjectivities* of women who were forcefully displaced from neighborhoods of the district between 2012 and 2017?

In order to answer this question, this work looks at the relations between:

First, the way the district of Sur has been materially constructed and reconstructed, through different means, since the start of the urban transformation process in 2010. This is investigated by asking the sub-question of: How have the macro-spatial practices of gentrification and counterinsurgency worked together to modify the urban textures of Sur?

Second, the way the district of Sur has been differentially conceived of by those who hold official power to regulate, and make large-scale changes in space (governmental local structures, the state, and governmental mass housing administration TOKI) and those who used to inhabit neighborhoods of the district. This is studied by asking the sub-questions of: A) Which representations of space underlie each of the abovementioned macro-spatial practices and what do they have in common? B) How do these representations of space at the macro-level clash with the everyday spaces of representation of the former inhabitants of Sur?

Third, the way women's spatial practices, and thus, women's subjectivities have been affected throughout this process. That is to say, what socio-spatial relations and networking processes characterize women's experience of Sur? and, how have these practices changed?

#### Plan of the present work

The first chapter of this thesis provides a review of the literature on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict in which this research is embedded.

The second chapter first outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework which will be used throughout the rest of the work, and then introduces the methodology and methods employed for data collection and analysis.

The third chapter analyses the macro spatial practices of gentrification and counterinsurgency and their inherent representations of space in the district of Sur, between 2010 and 2017, which then led to displacement, between 2012 and 2017. This part is ordered in a chronologic fashion and divided in three periods. Each of them highlight the contradictions which arose at the level of the everyday out of the production of *abstract space* at the macro level, through counterinsurgent and gentrification policies.

The fourth chapter focuses on how migration, as a consequence of the conflict and urban transformation, has affected the subjectivities of displaced women from Sur by looking at how their spatial practices have changed in their new residencies.

Finally, a conclusion brings the analysis of chapters three and four together investigating the relation between the process of the production of space at the macro level as abstract space, the experience of displacement, and the production of female subjectivities in displacement.

## **Literature Review**

The Turkish-Kurdish conflict has been widely explored from a variety of angles, from historical overviews of its dynamics (Barkey and Graham, 1998 and Kirci and Winrow, 2004) to in-depth analysis of particular aspects of the latter. Some of the topics scholarly work has engaged with are: nation building, (Jongerden, 2009), ethnicity and identity politics (Taspinar, 2005), conflict resolution (Ibrahim and Gurbey, 2000) the role, ideology, and tactics of the PKK (Yegen, 2016, Bozarslan, 2000, Jongerden and Akkaya, 2013), migration and displacement (Secor, 2004), Turkish authoritarianism (Esen and Gumuscu, 2015), and the challenges the conflict poses for Turkey's democratization (Sarigil and Karakoc, 2016). Most of this work recognises, implicitly or explicitly, the territorial character of the subject, the shifting geographies where it has historically taken place, as well as the demographic changes which has provoked. Still, while historical accounts are plenty, spatial analysis are notably missing from the literature (Gambetti and Jongerden, 2011). Furthermore, the literature has mainly represented the experiences of elites (Balci, 2017, Romano and Gurses, 2014), and few have taken into account women's experiences (Nilson, 2018).

### **Spatial perspectives**

Gambetti and Jongerden's (2011) anthology on spatial perspectives to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict is one of the few works which have systematically and explicitly dealt with the conflict dynamics in spatial terms. By collecting works from different spatial approaches, the volume aims at shifting the focus of scholarly work from an historical analysis to a spatial one. While historical accounts are necessary to denaturalize the process of modernization in Turkey, aimed at turning "the backward into the modern, the tribal into the state, Kurds into Turks" (p. 376), a spatial

perspective cannot be ignored as the Turkish-Kurdish conflict has always had an irrefutable spatial dimension. Some of the clearest examples being the settlement and resettlement practices of the 30's and 40's (Jongerden, 2009), the waves of migration from rural areas as a consequence of the 80's and 90's village depopulations, and the physical elimination of Kurdish expressions, language, and culture from the public space (Gambetti and Jongerden, 2011). Furthermore, the conflict has developed in tandem with the process of modernization of the Turkish Republic after its founding in 1923 (Jongerden 2009), and the more recent process of neoliberalization, since the late 90's; one affecting the other and vice-versa (Yuksel, 2011).

Some authors have considered the resettlement policies and forced demographic changes throughout the 1930's and 40's a part of the nation-building assimilatory strategies of the Turkish state (Besikci, 1979). Conversely, others have emphasized resettlement's destructive character for identity (Van Bruinessen, 1998).

Oktem (2004) proposed a discursive and spatial framework for an ethno-nationalist analysis, which he applied to the multicultural city of Salinurfa. The author intends to bring to the fore the inherent power of space and territoriality through the analysis of three spatial ethno-nationalist strategies acting in combination. Namely, "strategies of destruction and neglect of the other's heritage" (p.566) (the material destruction of historical heritage that eliminate minoritie's marks in space), the "strategies of dispossession and transfer of capital to indigenous/local elites" (p.566), and the "strategies of appropriating reconstruction" (p.566) (the inscription of nationalist symbols after destruction which erase the minoritie's traces in space).

Jongerden and Gambetti (2011) advocate for a social production of space perspective to the analysis of the conflict, as they claim, inspired by Lefebvre's work, that "social struggles are

also struggles over space” (p.381). The latter, in turn, affects identity formation, patterns of belonging, and social imaginaries.

Neoliberalism, in their view, has managed to rework the Kurdish question along class lines, creating separate spaces of stigmatization for the Kurdish urban poor who, after fleeing the villages moved to slum areas. Furthermore, as “land has become a scarce commodity” (p.384) which the state, governmental local institutions and the housing market aim to profit from, urban growth “follows class-based patterns that pit the urban poor against the emerging class of Kurdish entrepreneurs” (p.380).

### The neoliberal experience

Only a few scholars have contextualized the developments of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict with the neoliberal turn in Turkey, and only a handful of studies have investigated the developments of the construction market in Turkish Kurdistan.

From a production of space perspective operationalised through the notion of place-making, Gambetti (2009), explains how, throughout the 2000’s, the pro-Kurdish local municipalities and civil society groups managed to retake and broaden the urban space of Diyarbakir, challenging the state’s policies of cultural assimilation. In relation to the case of Sur, Gambetti states that the heritage protection and rehabilitation plans for Sur in the early 2000’s were a necessary process for urban decolonization since Sur contains historical heritage from various civilizations which had passed by the city, and took part on the building of the city walls.

Yuksel (2011) contextualizes Gambetti’s (2009) work in the light of the controversial outcomes of the urban policies of the same pro-Kurdish municipalities. The author, thinking along with Gambetti (2009), explains that in the 2000’s, the urban space of Diyarbakir became a

contested arena in which a variety of local actors attempted to “bypass and transform the destructive and assimilatory spatial practices of the state (...) through highlighting the monuments and traces of the multicultural history of the urban space” (Yuksel, 2011, p.454). In this vein, the municipality consistently furnished Diyarbakir “with a *modern* and *metropolitan* landscape” (p.447, emphasis in original) building bus stations, art and social centres, improving public transportation, etc. Simultaneously, the district of Sur, Diyarbakir’s main cultural asset, was immerse in a controversial process of urban regeneration which involved much more than the symbolic appropriation of the site. Yuksel writes a couple of years after Gambetti, and she is thus able to speak of the first developments of the renewal process. The author emphasizes that, the same legal framework which endowed the municipalities with greater control over urban public spaces also gave the central government, and TOKI, control over the management of cultural assets. Thus, in 2008, when the process of urban regeneration agreed between the municipalities and the government started to materialize, one of the first steps proposed was the evacuation and demolition of hundreds of houses in impoverished neighbourhoods of the district.

Yuksel concludes that the neoliberal experience in the Kurdish South East constitutes a different reappropriation of the urban space of Diyarbakir than the one explained in Gambetti’s essay. For the state still plays a role over the “localization of neoliberalism” (p.454), the modes of production of space, as well as its possible reappropriations. Furthermore, in cities like Diyarbakir, whose only economic asset is culture, “its meaning becomes a nexus of not only identifications and political mobilizations, but also class-based interests and capital accumulation strategies” (p.454).

The comparative ethnographic field research by Bayirbag (2007) in the Kurdish cities of Gaziantep and Diyarbakir looks at the processes of identity formation of Kurdish elites analogous



to the advent of the boom of the construction sector in the 2000's. Bayirbag investigates the links between state rescaling (the set of laws and regulations which endowed greater urbanization power to municipalities during the 90's) and the rise of *local agency*. His study shows that, in both cities, the nation-wide neoliberal opening allowed for the empowerment of an entrepreneurial Kurdish elite whose interests matched with the state's initiatives of promoting the construction sector with TOKI. As Gambetti and Jongerden (2011) as well as Yuksel (2011) explain, this rise of what Bayirbag calls *local agency* have in turn created class divisions between Kurdish people.

### Gentrification and Displacement

In terms of internal displacement, the vast majority of literature has focused on conflict led migration from rural to urban areas during the 70's, 80's, and 90's. For instance, Secor (2004) studies how Turkish citizenship practices and Kurdish identity practices coexist in a majoritarily Kurdish and migrant neighbourhood of Istanbul. While some scholars have looked at Kurdish migration as a forced urban insertion leading to assimilation into Turkish culture (Jongerden, 2009), others have looked at Kurdish urban settlements after the 70's as a key place for Kurdish identity formation and mobilization in response to state violence and assimilatory policies (Van Bruinessen, 1998).

One of the only studies written on the demographic changes in the South East of Turkey after the 2015 resumption of the conflict is Kucukkirca's (2018) essay on the meaning of home and homelessness for displaced women from Sur who left their neighborhoods during the conflict, and could not go back afterwards due to the district-wide expropriation decision. For analytical purposes, the author deals with the notion of home space in two separate realms, the public house and the private one. This is not because the two spheres are detached from each other but because

Kucucukkirka wants to investigate the particularities of both, and their relationship, in producing home space. As she states, “the home is built from economic, political and social domestic power relations, which cannot be interpreted independently of global inequalities” (Kucukkirca, 2018) In Sur, the public house refers to the neighbourhoods, their social dynamics, neighbourhood solidarity networks, etc. The private one refers to people’s individual houses. Kucucukkirka realized, through fieldwork, that displaced women, besides longing their personal private spaces, which were also contested gendered sites, they longed just as much for the public home of Sur, as they considered it an extension of their private homes, instead of a separate realm. In Sur, solidaric economic relations of collective production, exemplified in collective gardening, consisted an important element on women’s experience of the space of Sur, their memory formation, and their place attachment. Thus, the elimination of all the latter provoked feelings of homelessness at their new residencies because the public house had been lost.

Some studies focused on Western Turkey (Maessen, 2017, Kuyucu and Usal 2010, and Lelandais, 2014), resonate with the nature and scope of this work. First, the areas targeted for urban renewal in Western cities are generally populated by minority groups and migrants (Lelandais 2014). Second, these areas, although, as opposed to Sur, are not internationally recognized as historical heritage sites, do contain valuable urban textures that convey the multicultural history and character of Turkey, prior to its modernization and assimilation policies characteristic of the first years of the Republic. Third, both in the studies conducted in Istanbul (Kuyucu and Unsal, 2010) and Ankara (Erman and Hatiboglu, 2017), and the present case study under analysis, it is the urban poor living in slum neighborhoods who are being expelled from the center and allocated to the periphery without prior consultation. Finally, the spatial physical changes reflect, in all

cases, the same dominant conception of urban space, that of a product whose only value is its land price (Kuyucu and Unsal, 2010, Lelandais, 2014).

Erman and Hatiboglu (2017) study the effects of gentrification on rural migrant Kurdish women who used to live in squatted areas in Ankara. The latter were targeted for urban transformation, and their inhabitants were displaced to apartment blocks on the outskirts of the city. The author analyses how women “reproduce, challenge or negotiate patriarchy via their new roles and responsibilities” (p.2) in their new living spaces, and conclude that women’s subjectivities experienced changes with relocation as new roles and responsibilities arose. For instance, as the necessity to pay loans and mortgages arose, women, wishing to keep their new houses, started to work in and outside of the house challenging the dominant conservative family structure and gender roles.

While Erman and Hatiboglu’s work presents an image of women who adapted to the new living conditions and developed attachments for their new homes, Kucukkirk’a’s (2018) presents one of an impossibility to adapt due to the loss of the public home. However, Erman and Hatiboglu conducted their study years after displacement had occurred and Kucukkirk’a only a year later.

### Discussion and conclusion

As outlined above, although scholarship has thoroughly engaged with the Kurdish Question since the 60’s, it has neglected spatial analysis. Yet, authors have pointed out the necessity for a spatial turn within the literature, remarking the spatial dynamics of the conflict, the invisible agency of space to affect subjectivity and identity formation, as well as the role of the state and local governmental institutions in controlling, politically and economically, the uses and appearances of public spaces. Also, while studies on internal displacement during the 80’s and

90's are plenty, besides Kucukkirka's unpublished piece, works attending to post-2015 conflict-led migration are missing as well as a contextualization of the latter within the nation-wide neoliberalist turn in 2001 and the explosion of the construction market. As scholars have pointed out, there are differences between the neoliberal experience in the West of Turkey and the majoritarily Kurdish South East, as the latter has directly witnessed the conflict and its dynamics have intersected with the process of neoliberalization and, more recently, urbanization. Still, urban transformation and gentrification in Kurdish regions has remained understudied.

This work is situated within the body of academic literature on the recent spatial developments of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the literature on gentrification in Turkey in the new milenium. It contributes to the two by first contextualising the process of urban transformation in the district of Sur, Diyarbakir within the conflict dynamics, which took a turn in 2015 after the rupture of the peace-process. Second, by taking a relational spatial perspective, as it will be further explained in the methodology section, to study the connection between large scale material changes in urban spaces and the subjectivities of women, displaced as a consequence. As opposed to Gambetti's (2009) and Yuksel's (2011) work which solely focuses on the spatial practices at the local and national level, this research follows a methodology more akin to Kuccu's line of thought. As mentioned, the author separates the public and private houses in order to understand the relation between the two in shaping the meaning of home. This work analyses the production of space in Sur first, at the macro level, through urban transformation and gentrification policies and conflict, and then, the changes in displaced women's place-making techniques, as it understands the physical destruction of space as a productive force of new spaces and new subjectivities.

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, the case study of Sur is both representative of a larger process of urban commodification taking place nation and world-wide, and particularly illustrative of the conflicting dynamics and outcomes of the neoliberal experience in Turkish Kurdistan as the course of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict directly influenced that of urban transformation in Sur and vice-versa. Furthermore, the combination of the two produced context-specific experiences of migration which nevertheless resonate with gentrification-led experiences of displacement.

Yet, the relevance of this research is not limited to the production of knowledge in an area which, as mentioned, has remained understudied. As it will become clearer in the following methodology and theory sections, this study aims at contributing to a third wave of Lefebvre's writings through a relational reading of the author's theory of the production of space compatible with feminist epistemologies. In sum, at the theoretical level, it aims to provide room for discussion in relation to the role of practice, as epistemology, in order to connect the material and subjective aspects of space and their interrelation.

## **Theoretical framework**

The social production of space has become a common analytical framework among critical urban studies as it allows to investigate questions in relation to “how a space or place comes into existence and opens up questions about the political, economic and historical motives of its planning and development” unveiling the “manifest and latent ideologies that underlie this materiality” (Low, 2017p.34). The spatial turn in social sciences has reverberated across a number of schools of thought including these of urban history (King, 1980), gender studies (Hayden, 1981, 2002) political economy (Harvey, 2010, Smith, 1996), social production (Merrifield, 2002, Brenner and Elden, 2009), governmentality studies (Foucault and Rabinow, 1984, Mitchell, 1995, Castells, 1983), and post-structuralism (Soja, 1989). Most of these authors were influenced by Lefebvre’s seminal work *The Production of Space*, and Lefebvre’s spatial triad for the analysis of (social) space is implicit or explicit in their writings (Pierce and Martin, 2015).

This work takes Lefebvre’s spatial triad as analytical centrepiece. This section first, explains a number of conceptual definitions pertaining to Lefebvre’s work for the contextualization and operationalization of the triad. Then, it identifies the limitations of the chosen approach, and aims to their overcoming through its complementation with concepts derived from scholarship on critical geography and Butler’s notions of gender performativity, subjectivity and precarity.

### **(Social) Space**

Lefebvre conceptualizes space as the dialectical interplay between three inseparable dimensions. Namely, a *perceived* materiality which allows and restricts social *practices* in space, *conceived* immaterial and abstract *representations of space*, and finally, *spaces of representation*

in which meaning and symbolism are attached to material reality through its experience (Figure 5).

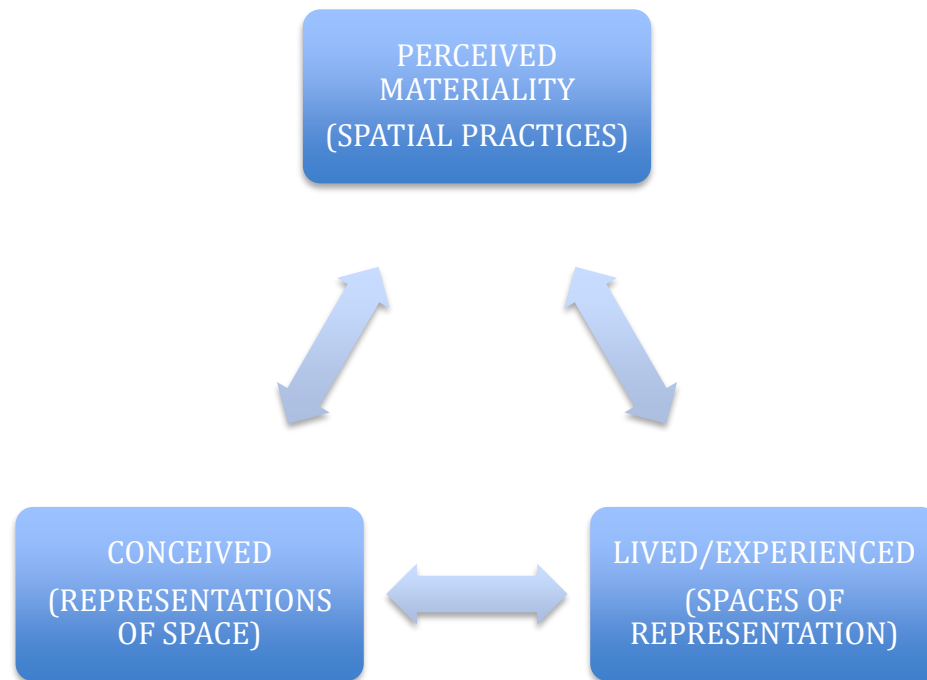


Fig. 5: The (social) production of Space

However, Lefebvre's primary concern was not an ontological quest to understand the nature of (social) space in as much as it was to unveil the processes of alienation and abstraction characteristic of the production of space in modernity. Both notions, that of alienation and abstraction, he borrowed from Marx, and enlarged them<sup>i</sup>. Lefebvre resuscitates the notion of *abstraction* to speak of the space of Capitalism, as its reach, in modernity, has been extended beyond the factory to the everyday lives of people, through space. Abstractions are "abstract expressions of social, human relations" (Charnock, 2010, p.1285) which "materialize, intervene as entities in social life and history, and end up by dominating instead of being dominated" <sup>ii</sup>(p.1285).

Lefebvre speaks of abstractions when referring to the scientific rationality which developed alongside the axis of modernity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and conceived reality as quantifiable, knowable, geometric and homogenous, dissecting reality (time and space) and expressing it in the form of abstract representations such as grids, maps, roads, and schedules, which, in the paradigm of global capitalism needed to be extended outside of the national borders. Lefebvre considers these representations abstractions because they tend to the endless fragmentation of a supposedly homogenous whole into individual quantifiable units. These abstractions, although initially imaginary and immaterial, through their material production and use, become concrete and naturalised among their users concealing the arts of their creation and making them seem natural, as if they had always existed.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the dynamics of the state and these of capitalism have been tangled in a dialectical relation giving rise to a particular logic of domination, what Lefebvre (1991) refers to as the SMP (State's Mode of Production). In modernity, space has become the loci and means for the expansion of state power and capitalism. Thus, the SMP works towards the stabilization and reproduction of capitalist social and economic relations through the production, management, and reproduction of spaces for capital accumulation and exchange. The SMP attends to the abovementioned technocratic rationality, and tends to the production and reproduction of space, and thus social relations, as *concrete abstractions*.

Urban planning is based on the modernist idea of development, and thus intends to eliminate the pre-modern irrational ordering of space (for instance, unplanned urbanization and slum areas) with rational orderings of space (large scale urbanization projects). It is through urban



planning that not only goods but also space, and social relations are simplified into abstract cartographic spatial representations (Lefebvre, 1991).

As representations, they capture its abstract form but not its content, reducing the second to the first, and alienating one from the other. In other words, conceptions of space according to such rationalities do not, and cannot, account for the lived/symbolic dimension of space because they cannot quantify meaning, as meaning is something qualitative. Once such representations of space are developed in practice, for instance, through spatial practices of urbanization, scientific representations acquire a concrete materiality which in turn affect social practice, and so both become *concrete abstractions*.

Lefebvre describes this process as the “conquered of the lived by the conceived” (Wilson 2013, p.369), which refers to the violent “articulation between the SMP and space” (p.369) through which, the capitalist state achieves political domination and control over growth and the imposition of a particular spatial order according to, and legitimised by, modernist scientific rationalities. Abstract space “is not only produced by the forces and relations of production and property; it is also a political product, a product of administrative and repressive controls, a product of relations of domination and strategies decided at the summit of the state” (Lefebvre, 1980/2009, p. 214 in Wilson, 2013). Abstract space “negates all differences, those that come from nature and history as well as those that come from the body, ages, sexes, and ethnicities” (Lefebvre, 1979, p. 290). Furthermore, abstract space is self-referential and masks the contradictions inherent to its very process of production through the imposition of a seemingly coherent ordering of space, which is then justified and legitimized by the modernist scientific rationalities which conceived it without accounting for the lived experience of space, and those who lived it. Lefebvre considers the neglect of the lived dimension of space one of the main strategies of the SMP, as, according to the author,

it is in the experience of space that contradictions arise, and that there is to be found the necessary revolutionary potential to unmask the logics of the SMP, and wither away with the state and Capitalism.

In contrast with the logics of the SMP are practices of *autogestion*, grassroots mechanisms of radical democracy and collective decision-making which are “born spontaneously out of the void in social life that it is created by the state” (Lefebvre, 1976 p.120 in Brenner and Elden, 2009, p. 16). Autogestion<sup>iii</sup> is a form of political participation which “refuses to accept passively the conditions of existence, of life, or of survival, each time such a group forces itself not only to understand but to master its own conditions of existence” (Lefebvre, 2009, p. 135). For it to be effective, autogestion must be a highly diversified practice that concerns business as well as territorial units, cities and regions.

#### The space of the body and the body in space

Surprisingly, while Lefebvre’s spatial triad has been largely quoted, his theory of the body has rarely been considered (Simonsen, 2005).

“There is a history of space. The lived gives rise to spaces of representations, imagined, beginning with the body and symbolized by it. The conceived, the distant, gives rise to representations of space, established from objective, practical, and scientific elements” (229).”In seeking to understand the three moments of social space, it may help to consider the body. All the more as the relationship to space of a ‘subject’ who is a member of a group or society implies his relationship to his own body and viceversa” (1991, p.40).

Inasmuch as there is a history of space, there is a parallel one of the body, as the body is an essential element of the production of space being both the precondition for, and product of, spatial/social

practice. Furthermore, historical conceptions of the body and space cannot be detached from each other as they develop synchronically in a wider political context (Lefebvre, 1991a). The body both *is* space, and *has* its own space (Simonsen, 2005). From a relational production of space perspective, on the one hand, the body has a particular materiality and positioning within the order of things, it is an object, while simultaneously it is a subject that is embodied in space and contributes to its historical changes<sup>iv</sup>.

The body is the precondition for practice in all three dimensions of the production of space. Bodies perceive, conceive, and live space, they embody it and also produce it with every action.

The production of space in modernity, as a concrete abstraction, homogenizes and fragments space; in Gregory's words, it decorporealizes it (Gregory, 1994). The space of the body is homogeneized and fragmented, and the body in space is subjected to a similar process of drainage "of all content by mechanisms of language, signs and abstractions" (Simonsen, 2005, p. 4) by which the qualitative and symbolic value and the lived dimension of space are conquered by abstract representations of space and the body.

The body "is immediately subject to the determinants of that space... the spatial body's material character derives from space, from the energy that is deployed and put to use there" (Lefebvre, 1991a, p.195 in Simonsen, 2005, p.5). Yet, Lefebvre points at the impossibility of the total erasure of the lived body inasmuch as the impossibility of the SMP to conquer and intercept absolutely all experiences of social space. As mentioned before, individuals can be alienated from the state and the spatial practices of the SMP, yet still take part on the production of space through reclaiming their right to space in the practice of autogestion in their everyday lives.

Although Lefebvre considered the role of the body in the process of the production of social space and social class, and vice-versa, the author did not account for subjectivity, a notion which

remains implicit throughout his work. Another shortcoming, this study aims to overcome is that Lefebvre emphasized the social production, reproduction, and embodiment of social class through the expansion of abstract space. Yet, he did not look at how gender intersected into the equation. In the case study of Surici, women negotiate their subjectivities along the axis of class as much as gender. Thus, this work enlarges Lefebvre's conceptual framework by intersecting the notions of subjectivity, gender performativity, and precarity derived from Butler's work.

### Subjectivity and Precarity

Theories of subjectivity emerged at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a response to scientific rationality through the hands of thinkers like Foucault and Derrida from the post-structuralist school, Lacan and Freud from a psychoanalytical perspective, Geertz from the anthropological tradition, and Sussure and Deleuze from semiotics, among others (Donku, 2017). Their propositions, although diverse, all had in common a rejection to the notion of the subject as a rational being whose actions can be calculated for being embedded into a society operating like a machine abiding to certain rational rules. Feminist thinkers like Butler and Kristeva, although very much influenced by these authors claimed that, the notion of subjectivity which named authors had proposed did not consider subjects as agents capable of political action, and thus, they put forward non-essentialist conceptualizations of subjectivity in order to speak of gender identity (Donku, 2017).

Butler's theory of subjectivity posits that there is no such a thing as an authentic gendered self, the latter instead, is performative. Gender, is not an identity but a cultural attribute which, through repetition and ritualization becomes inscribed in the self, giving the impression to be a fixed and natural category. Every performance has an audience that interacts with the actor. Thus,

appropriate gender performances, those abiding to gender roles and norms of gendered behavior are accepted by the audience (Butler, 1988). Contrarily, gender performances which do not conform with gender roles are punished and unrecognized, and the bodies of those who do not conform are vulnerable to discrimination (Butler, 2009) and precarity. Just as gendered bodies are produced through practices from conceptions that dictate what is an acceptable gender performance, gendered spaces arise in a similar fashion (Low, 2006).

Butler defines precarity in opposition to precariousness, the latter being a universal condition of human interdependence and vulnerability while the former referring to a politically induced condition of extreme vulnerability as a consequence of the unequal distribution of rights among the population (Butler, 2009, 2012).

Precarity<sup>v</sup> “affects the marginalized, poor, and disenfranchised people who are exposed to economic injury, violence, and forced migration”, and encapsulates a number of “conditions that threaten life in ways that appear to be outside of one’s control” (Butler, 2009, p.i).

### Limitations

Lefebvre’s tripartite analytical framework, as well as his writings on autogestion and the body are particularly useful to the analysis of the present case study at work, which investigates the relation between large scale material changes and the production of new female subjectivities as a consequence.

First, the author’s dialectics sublates and problematizes the agent-structure debate by focusing on the interaction of agents and structures in the process of the production of (social) space. Lefebvre, unlike de Certeau (1988), does not assume an existing antagonistic relation between the institutions that regulate space and its users, and he does not conceptualize inhabitants

in and of space weak and caught in the grid of discipline. As the previously presented literature on Kurdish studies has shown, this is the case of the relation between the pro-Kurdish municipalities and the inhabitants of Sur. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Sur had developed their own techniques of autogestion in the neighborhood which allowed them to participate in the production of space before migration and avoid the logics of the SMP as well as deal with precarity, sometimes with the support of the local authorities.

Second, the ontologically hybrid nature of the tripartite production of space (perceived materiality, conceived immaterial ideas, and lived experiences) allows for a common analytical framework to study the relation between the material production of space in Surici, and its logics, and the production of new female subjectivities in displacement.

However, Lefebvre's framework has its limitations too. First, categorising the *lived* dimension as the *representational spaces* of *the everyday* and "the clandestine or underground side of social life" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33) from which practices of autogestion might arise provokes a certain degree of confusion since, the production of space itself, according to the author, does not only relate to its symbolic experience but to the dialectic interaction all three dimensions. Furthermore, as it will become clear throughout this work, not all spatial practices which oppose the dominant production of space fit under Lefebvre's category of autogestion. Thus, this work makes use of the notion of place-making<sup>vi</sup> in order to speak of practices conducted in Surici prior to displacement, including these of autogestion.

Secondly, as mentioned, Lefebvre did not explicitly deal with subjectivity, and thus writings from Butler on subjectivity and precarity are useful for the operationalization of the research puzzle as they do not conceive female subjectivities or precarious subjectivities to be fixed to the individual but rather, performed.

Finally, Lefebvre's ontologically hybrid framework of the tripartite production of space poses a number of methodological challenges for its operationalization, which will be dealt with in the forthcoming section.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods**

To Lefebvre, space is the realm which encompasses, and thus, allows us to speak, historically, of processes of alienation and abstraction which are inherent to modern capitalist societies (Wilson, 2013) and reproduce class inequalities. In other words, the medium to analyse the social relations that a specific mode of production works to establish. Thus, space, in Lefebvre's work, is not an ontological unit but an analytical one. The question the author delves into in *The Production of Space* is not 'what is (social) space?' But rather 'how is (social) space produced?' For his analytic triadic framework already assumes that social space is not a fixed unit, but a relational concept which is in constant change because the three dimensions which form it (perceived materiality, conceived abstractions, and lived experiences) are dialectically interconnected. Thus, it is through the study of the production of space, as a social process, that the process of the production of social relations, and thus, subjectivities can be known.

However, Lefebvre does not provide any explicit epistemology and simply reiterates that the three spatial dimensions (perceived materiality, conceived abstractions and live experiences) must be looked at in combination. Thus, I propose a relational reading of Lefebvre's work which unveils an all encompassing implicit epistemology of practice to the understanding of the process of the social production of space, in concordance with his ontologically hybrid methodological framework.

For one, a relational approach is appropriate to this thesis as it conducts a spatial analysis in which the object of analysis is not space itself but the transformation of social relations and thus, individual and collective subjectivities, through spatial change. This study interprets the material production of space and the production of social relations as mutually constitutive, equating spatial



practice with social practice as “social space is not a *socialised* space” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.190) for in the absence of social relationships cannot be constituted.

For the other, a relational take on space and thus, social relations, allows for the study of subjectivity as a performative spatial practice, and to consistently place Lefebvre’s spatial triad (1991), and his work on the body (1991a), together with notions of subjectivity, gender performance, and precarity derived from feminist theory (Butler, 1988, 2009).

#### 4.1. Research design

Ontologically, this study is neither structuralist nor individualist. As mentioned, it is instead relational as it claims that the production of space and that of social relations, thus, subjectivity, relies on the interaction between agents (micro-level) and structures (macro-level). The object of study at stake here is this relation in particular.

Thus, applying a relational reading of the production of space to the present case study entails an investigation of the relations between macro-spatial changes and its effects on individual female subjectivities. In order to do so, both phenomena need to be studied first, separately, in order to understand their case-specific logics, and then in combination in order answer the research question.

Yet, it is important to keep in mind that the distinction between the macro and the micro is not a scientific ontological one, but instead an analytical distinction which, for the sake of clarity, this study keeps consistent throughout. This is not to say that any of these analytical concepts are fixed independent units or levels of analysis, or even the only ones at play. Contrarily, they have layers in between, are permeable, and influence each other. The macro level encompasses the spatial practices and representations of space of the Turkish government and the Diyarbakir and

Sur municipalities, as these are actors whose actions provoke large scale spatial changes. The micro level refers to the experiences of space and spatial change, as well as the place-making practices of women who used to live in neighborhoods from Sur.

The connection between the two analytical categories is to be found in an all-encompassing epistemology of practice, as both these phenomena (large scale material changes in Sur and changes in the subjectivities of women) are expressed through practices, urbanization and counter insurgent practices at the macro level, and place-making techniques at the level of the everyday.

#### 4.2. Research method

The character of this research is largely qualitative and inductive, drawing from empirical observations to theory, and using a number of research techniques for the collection of empirical data. Most of the data has been collected through ethnographic fieldwork conducted while working as an independent researcher at the Diyarbakir Association of Social and Political Research (DISA) between March and June 2018 in the city of Diyarbakir, Turkey.

The research techniques used have been in-depth interviews, participant observation, photographic data collection, and the study of a number of non-scholarly reports written in relation to the case-study.

##### The macro level

In order to understand the dynamics of the macro-spatial changes in Sur, I first consulted a number of reports dealing with the case of Sur, both in English and Turkish (XXXX). Not obtaining enough information, particularly in relation to the expropriation process, I decided to conduct in depth content-based interviews with a number of experts on the topic, who were

selected through non-probability sample techniques according to their expertise and participation in the political process of urban transformation.

#### Content-based interviews: structure and analysis

I conducted in-depth interviews with Muzaffer Ozdemir, lawyer following the expropriation case of the district of Sur, and Merthan Anlik, ex president of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Architects, which helped me to conform a time-line of events and answer the sub-questions in relation to the production of space at the macro-level. In addition, I conducted interviews with the neighborhood representatives of Cevatpasa, Alipasa, and Savas neighborhoods as they are known and trusted by many neighbours, and most of them have been in the position for a long time and thus know well their neighborhoods and its problems. The latter contributed to the already mentioned timeline, and worked as gatekeepers through which I got in touch with some displaced women.

#### The micro level

Then, the findings were contextualised with the results of in-depth problem-centered interviews with displaced women from Sur, and participant observation. The combination of the two allowed me to understand how their everyday place-making practices have changed in their new residences, and how their subjectivities had been affected as a consequence.

I conducted interviews with eleven women, aged between 23 and 75 years old, who had been displaced from their residencies in different neighborhoods of the district of Sur between 2012 and 2017, either as a direct consequence of the conflict, or due to the expropriation process

prior and after the conflict. All of them had lived in Sur for a number of years and some of them their whole life.

Seven participants used to live in one of the six neighborhoods of Sur that underwent the 103 days long curfew, and after its ending could not go back. Out of the seven, four moved outside of Sur and three within the district into other neighbourhoods. Three women were displaced from their houses in Ali Pasa due to the expropriation process. One of them in 2012, and moved outside of Sur, and two of them in 2016, and currently live in a tent in the same neighbourhood. Also, I interviewed one woman who was displaced from Hazreti Suleyman in 2012, and moved outside of the district.

#### Problem-centered interviews: structure and analysis

Female participants for problem-centered interviews were selected through a snow-ball sampling technique. Some of them I met while walking around the streets of Surici when conducting participant observation, and others through personal connections, or through the hand of neighborhood representatives.

I met each woman twice. During the first meeting, I introduced myself and my project, and I asked for their consent to participate and record the interviews. During the second meeting, I visited their houses and conducted the interviews with the help of a Turkish/Kurdish-English female translator. After the interviews, I transcribed the recording, again with the help of a translator, in order to make sure that the life translation did not miss any point, and look for adequate translations to certain figures of speech used by the participants.

Each interview with women was biographical and problem centered. Problem centered interviews (PCI) aim at finding the relation between the present narration of life and the process

of story-telling (Scheibelhofer, 2008). I decided to use this model because my aim is to understand how particular biographical events affected the participant's subjectivity. In order to understand change, one must understand how women experienced life in Surici, how they experienced displacement, and how they experience their current living conditions now. As this research takes practice as the connection link between material change and subjectivity, PCI proved to be a great interviewing method as it combines free narration of life stories (practices) with a focus on particular events (conflict, expropriation and displacement). Thus, it allowed me to identify which events women considered worth telling, which practices defined them, as well as what aspects of the latter they emphasize and in which ways. I encouraged participants to explain themselves freely and with minimal interruptions. Sometimes, I asked them to select old pictures from Sur and asked them to explain the activities taking place in them. Sometimes, women couldn't provide pictures as they had been lost during moving, or had been damaged in the conflict. Then, I asked them to tell me a story which happened in Sur, or one of their first memories.

Following this scheme, interviews have been analysed by topic and narration, looking for the connections between the present narration of the past, the expectations for the future and the process of storytelling. First, in order to understand how women lived the process of displacement (conflict or expropriation-led), the most salient topics of each interview were selected and contrasted with the time-line of events composed previously with the data from the in-depth interviews with experts and non-academic reports (Amnesty International, 2017, Crisi Group, 2016, Permanent People's Tribunal on Turkey and the Kurds March, 2018, Gabb, 2016). Second, in order to understand how women's subjectivities changed, I analysed and compared their daily practices before and after displacement. Finally, when I arrived to the point of data saturation, I

gathered all the evidence and contrasted it with the sensitizing concepts used in the theoretical framework.

#### Participant observation and photographic data collection

Participant and site observation also played a big role in this research. Although more than half of the district is inaccessible, the other half is still alive and people are still going on with their daily businesses. Thus, this gave me first hand information about the forms of autogestion practiced in Sur, and also be witness of the level of destruction in Sur.

Additionally, I spent more time with women than just the length of the interview, sometimes having coffee or tea, greeting them in the street in Sur, or going to their houses for dinner during Ramadan. Thus, I engaged into a number of informal conversations which provided me with a clearer idea of the day to day problems they face and the family and household structure and women's positionality within.

The collection of pictures from Sur was also used as a data collection technique which brings the reader to a closer understanding of the magnitude of the changes which are still visible in Sur. In addition, as the district changes rapidly, these pictures can be used in other studies which keep on tracking its evolution.

#### 4.3. Research context and personal subjectivity

A mention to the context of this research needs to be made. In the aftermath of the July 2016 coup d'Etat in Turkey and the subsequent declaration of the state of emergency, which, at the time of conducting fieldwork was still upheld, numerous NGO's and women platforms had been closed by decree, and some of their members arrested (KJA, 2016). Furthermore, the level of

militarization on the streets which remained since the end of the conflict in Sur, and the persecution of political activists in Turkey after the coup, has made not only research, but in general living in Turkey, and particularly in the Kurdish South East, harder. Thus, the first problem I encountered was one of access to the research site itself. Due to the heightened security situation in the South East, it was hard to find any international organization working in the area and willing to conduct any in depth research on Sur in particular. This, to start with, it need to be pointed as particularly problematic because it hinders academic and non-academic investigations on the case of Sur, and further isolates Turkey.

Being embedded within DISA not only helped me familiarising with the political context and dealing with the security situation in Diyarbakir, but also provided me access to valuable gatekeepers like the neighborhood representatives and other informants. Nevertheless, the sensitivity of the topic forced me to be cautious at all times as foreigners are regarded as potential secret agents and treated as such when stopped by police on the street.

Finally, in terms of interacting with displaced women, the fact that I am a female researcher not only facilitated but in fact, made possible our interaction, helped by a female translator, as women would not feel comfortable speaking to men about their family issues.

## **Chapter 5: The Production of Space**

The first part of this work analyzes a number of *spatial practices and representations of space* in the district of Sur between 2004 and 2018 at the macro level. Subsequently, the latter are contextualized with their effects on the *spaces of representation* of the inhabitants of the district, highlighting the multiple contradictions which the production of abstract space, through conflict and neoliberalist policies, laid bare at the level of the everyday.

This part is organized in a chronologic fashion and divided in three sections. Lefebvre's spatial triad is set to work as the overarching theoretical guideline, and complemented with other concepts taken from his lifelong work production.

The first section deals with the urban transformation of Sur between 2004 and 2015, highlighting the contradictions the involvement of the local pro-Kurdish local authorities in the production of abstract space. The second, focuses on the lived dimension of the curfews in Surici. The third, looks at the continuation of war by other means, interrogating the logics behind the expropriation process in the aftermath of the conflict.



### **5. 1 Urban Transformation: 2004-2015**

In 1988, Surici, the fortress, and the Hevsel Gardens were included into the Diyarbakir Urban Conservation Area (Soyukaya, 2017). Three years later, the Site Management Plan aimed at turning the Inner Fortress (Ickale), in the neighborhood of Cevatpasa, into a touristic and cultural site composed of a museum and an open archaeological site. During the 1999-2004 cease-fire, the Law on Greater Municipality endowed the GDM with greater powers for city planning (Ozturk, 2013). The latter activated the building sector, and all of a sudden, areas outside of the city were turned into luxurious residential areas and gated communities. Neo-liberal policies and new alliances with business circles started to appear in the agenda of the GMD while leaving aside the interests of low income groups. Such practices stood in contrast with those of the first pro-Kurdish municipal period, between 1999 and 2004. Through social policies, pro-Kurdish HADEP had managed to retake public urban spaces, stand in between the state and civil society, and integrate migrants coming from rural areas into the urban lifestyle (Ozturk, 2013). The first municipal period seemed to be on the trajectory towards what Lefebvre termed autogestion (2009). For one, it unveiled a number of contradictions inherent to the nation-state, imagined as a homogenous Turkish community<sup>vii</sup>, by triggering them with their presence in government. For the other, under the slogan of "we will manage ourselves and our city on our own" (Ozturk, 2013) HADEP took back the means of production of the urban space of Diyarbakir by claiming their right to difference and self-management.

On the contrary, the following municipal period of Osman Baydemir (2004-2014) was marked with conflicts between the Kurdish movement and the state, and the Kurdish movement and the municipalities (Ozturk, 2013). Understandably so, as a new Kurdish middle class and local business circle, whose interests and representations of the urban space of Diyarbakir seemed to

match with these of the state and clash with these of the lower classes, had arisen. Consequently, a new contradiction started to arise at the level of the everyday as the notion of autogestion was understood differently by the different classes of Kurdish society, and there seemed to be a division between those who got a share with the state in terms of economic growth and spatial ordering, and those who lived within that spatial ordering.

### From Autogestion to co-gestion

Between 2004 and 2008 no new social spaces were opened by the Diyarbakir municipality. In 2008, a number of urban practices in the benefit of disadvantaged groups were retaken, and the Sur Municipality kept on fostering social and cultural policies until 2015 (Ozturk, 2013).<sup>viii</sup> In 2008, Governmental Mass Housing Administration TOKI and the Diyarbakir governorship launched an urban transformation project to demolish 596 houses in Ali Pasa-Lalebey and Cevatpasa-Fatihpasa neighbourhoods of Sur (Ickale), and then relocate those displaced to the Colguzeli mass housing area built by TOKI, an hour by public transport away from Sur, and the center of the city. Two years later, in 2010, the GDM and the Sur municipality started to partake in the planning of named project.

As Diyarbakir has always been economically underdeveloped, counting with no industry and without investors interested in the area for it being too unstable due to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, historical heritage and the construction market are the only assets of Diyarbakir. By partaking in the urban transformation plan for Surici, the GDM intended to foster local economy through tourism, generate employment, and stimulate inter-local business competition (Ozturk, 2013). This way, the GDM would to obtain a certain degree of economic independence from the central government, and the international recognition of the Inner castle as a historical site. Yet, as the Sur

and Diyarbakir municipalities did not count with enough funds for the project, they started to collaborate with TOKI<sup>ix</sup>.

### From land to branded territory

In 2002, Recep Tahip Erdogan became the president of Turkey in representation of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Between 2002 and 2008, fourteen new legal regulations increased the reach of TOKI's activities and funding<sup>x</sup> which gave the latter the monopoly of Turkey's housing sector, and integrated it within the AKP's neoliberal national policies. In fact, "housing has emerged as one of the policy tools for the governments used for stimulating the economy" (Devrim, 2016, p.320), and TOKI has become the administrative authority of spatial representations and spatial practices operating nationally and internationally, in rural and urban settings, and providing all kinds of housing from luxurious apartments to affordable ones (Devrim, 2016). The scale and speed of urban transformation in Turkey in the 2000's<sup>xi</sup>, has been unprecedented. This spatial practice of transforming land into urban territory is carried out, on the one hand, through neoliberal policies and modifications in the legal framework. On the other, by introducing the state right in the core of the housing market endowing it direct control over the production of urban territory (Serin, 2016).

The involvement of both the Sur municipality and the GMD in the project has been one of the most polemic decisions of the second and third pro-Kurdish municipal periods as it radically clashed with the initial pro-Kurdish party's practices of autogestion<sup>xii</sup>, if that is to be understood as a grassroots practice of radical democracy and collective decision-making that "is born spontaneously out of the void in social life that is created by the state" (Lefebvre, 1976 p.20 in Brenner and Elden, 2009).

As Lefebvre warned in de l'Etat (2009)<sup>xiii</sup>, autogestion can easily degenerate into co-gestion, or co-management. Autogestion is a practice, a process, and a strategy, and as such it needs to keep itself constantly in check. The notion is not to be taken as a formula that runs smooth once applied. On the contrary, contradictions and conflicts might arise, and those ought to be dealt with through practices that focus on bottom-up decision making that prevent "the monopolization of the world by institutions that transform it into fiction (...) the strategy must concretize autogestion and extend it to all levels and sectors" (2009, p. 135). What LeFebvre means with institutions that transform it (the world) into fiction is the tendency of the SMP to make abstractions of the world, which commodify it and homogenize it, eliminating maximal, or produced differences and substituting them for *induced* or *minimal* differences<sup>xiv</sup> (Wilson,2013).

Autogestion, as the show of maximal difference and heterogeneity which fleshed out the main contradiction of the Nation-State as culturally and ethnically heterogenous during the first municipal period, turned into co-gestion. First, because the municipalities started to collaborate with the state in the urban transformation of Surici, which promised quick economic growth, without considering social issues. Second, the Kurdish municipality became assimilated into the SMP. The initial contradiction which the previous municipal period had unveiled through the practice of autogestion, met with a new contradiction: the representations of space of the pro-Kurdish municipalities were conquering the lived spaces of the Kurdish lower classes, and clashing against their expectations grounded on the spatial practices of the first municipal period. Third, the municipality started to believe that what it is good for the government of the municipality, must be good for its people regardless of their class differences. This way, the lived dimension of space at the everyday level was conquered by the conceived dimension at the macro level which then

was made tangible through the spatial practices of urban transformation in 2012, when the first evictions started in Ickale and Ali Pasa and Lalebey areas.

In 2012, the 1990 urban conservation plan was revised and an inventory of monumental buildings and houses was prepared by an external company. In October of the same year, the Turkish Minister of Cabinet declared Surici to be an “area under hazard risk”, including the district into a list of areas to undergo urban renewal, and in 2013 an urgent expropriation decision was taken for Ali Pasa and Lalebey. This process was not transparent however, as only once the protocols were signed by the parties involved, the municipality brought the issue to public discussion. However, the representations of space in the urban transformation plans, and the spatial practices carried out for their implementation were met with dissent by ecology associations, lawyers, architects and neighbors<sup>xv</sup>.

#### First evictions: Hazreti Suleyman and Ali Pasa-Lalebey

Between 2011 and 2013, house owners in the parts of Ali Pasa and Lale Bey that were to be expropriated, and those living in Hazreti Suleyman, were offered an amount of money as compensation for their house, or a house at the mass housing area in Colguzeli (Anlik, May 2018, interview). Some people wanted to leave their houses although some others did not. In fact, many of those who accepted the house were not able to pay, later on, for the living conditions in Colguzeli<sup>xvi</sup>. Since the partial eviction from Hazreti Suleyman in 2012, Hatice has lived in a TOKI house at the 500 evleri neighborhood, next to Colguzeli.

*It said that we had three months to move and then we'll be kicked out. Before that, there were rumors but nothing concrete (...). Our house didn't have any damage or anything, it was a fine house, my father built it with his own hands. I didn't understand why we had to move, anyways.*

*(...) So after the letters came, they organized a lottery for houses in this area (...) It is not that they put pressure directly on us but, I mean, they told us that they were going to demolish the whole area (...) We won and we got this house, then TOKI bought our house for 80.000 TL. As we were three big families living there we split the money, so in the end, it was not much (...) We are still paying for this house and we'll be paying for fifteen years more. Every six months, they rise the interest. (Hatice, Personal interview)*

Contrary to the government's representation of the space of Surici as risky, old and damaged, Hatice mentions that her house did not have any visible damages and thus could not understand why her family was nevertheless forced to leave it. Hatice's confusion at the time of the eviction fleshes out the dialectical interplay between *spaces of representation* at the micro level and macro-spatial practices, and the contradictions which arise out of the latter. Namely, in 2012, it became clear that those who inhabit and *live* space in Surici, paradoxically, do no longer have the right, or the access, to the means of production of named space as they did before. While some accepted leaving, others decided to deal with this contradiction by opposing the municipalities' decision by resisting and staying. Some people "took the money and stayed, some people didn't take the money (...) Then, demolitions started but as not everybody had moved out, only one side of the neighborhood was demolished in the end" (Hatice, Personal Interview).

In Ali Pasa, the first letters of eviction came around the same time, Elena, who moved to Colguzeli in 2012, after living for 40 years in Ali Pasa, explained that one morning some people came to her door and said that they had to move out. If they wanted, they could participate in a lottery to get adjudicated a house from TOKI. She said that she accepted the deal because she was already very old, and the house was too much work to clean and take care of by herself. Although

she did not mind leaving as much as Hatice, she did point out that leaving or staying was never an option<sup>xvii</sup>.

### The process stops

The participation of the pro-Kurdish municipalities lacked of political support within the party (HDP)<sup>xviii</sup>, and evictions stopped in 2014 when the newly elected co-majors of the GDM, Gulden Kusanak and Firat Anli retreated, unilaterally, from the Urban Transformation protocol.

July 2015, UNESCO declared the City Walls as well as the Hevsel Gardens next to it World Heritage Site, and Surici, remained as a buffer between the two, also enjoying protection. However, in August of the same year, the resumption of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict unchained a row of curfews that swepted the district and provoked striking demographic and morphologic changes in it.

## **5.2. Conflict**

After the Turkish-Kurdish ceasefire broke, nineteen municipalities in Turkish Kurdistan made declarations of autonomy, including Diyarbakir. The declarations counted with the support of the KCK (Komala Civaten Kurdistan- Kurdistan People's Community) who had made a call out for self-administration in August 2015. Subsequently, the YDG-H (Yurtsever Devrimci Genclik Hareket – Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement), generally known as 'the youth', entered Surici, dug trenches and built barricades, and started patrolling neighborhoods at night, particularly in the west part of the district (Permanent People's Tribunal on Turkey and the Kurds March, 2018)

The government responded with an offensive to the district. Between September 6. 2015 until March 9 2016, six intermittent round the clock curfews were declared in six neighborhoods of Sur (Cevat Pasa, Dabanoglu, Fatih Pasa, Hasirli, Cemal Yilmaz, and Savas) and one in Ziya Gokalp, Suleyman Nafiz, Abdaldede, Lalebey and Alipasa, between January 27 and February 3. Nevertheless, when curfews were declared in one neighborhood, the whole district was affected. All entrances to Sur were closed with police barricades and checkpoints, and the neighborhoods next to those under curfew were also affected by shelling and bomb explosions. While the first curfews in the six neighborhoods lasted only a few days, the last one was upheld for 103 days. After its official ending, a de facto curfew was kept, and the area has remained closed to the public with concrete police barricades until the present date. The curfews were implemented as part of the "necessary decisions and measures to safeguard peace and security within provincial borders" (International Crisis Group, 2016, p. 4) as a counterinsurgency strategy in response to a threat to the national unity of the country<sup>xix</sup>. Furthermore, it is questionable whether the use of force from the part of the Turkish state was a necessary measure (International Crisis Group, 2016), or rather



a strategic decision to teach a lesson to the Kurdish movement, break apart an area loyal to it, to then turn it into a commodity and exploit it as such, as the following section will illustrate. Media access to curfew areas was restricted, and the distinction between civilians and militants was complicated, as the Turkish government had targeted the whole district, and in particular six neighborhoods, as containers of terrorist cells. A number of violations to Human Rights were registered along with countless damages to property, and the destruction of the historical textures of the district. Overall, the conflict caused huge waves of migration, deaths of civilians, injuries and psychological trauma (Amnesty International, 2017). In addition, curfews were declared with little notice in advance, which made it harder for inhabitants to leave the district on time.

The magnitude of use of force justified to eliminate terrorist cells, at times seemed to have made life stop at the district, as people spent days inside their houses, not daring to even look through the windows. At other times, however, it made it go very quick, as people saw their lives pass in front of their eyes, and become alienated from themselves as they had no power to take care of their own safety, or that of their families. The Marxist notion of alienation, as the separation between the producer from the means of production is appropriated and expanded by Lefebvre, who placed it in spatial terms. As illustrated in the previous section, the inhabitants of Surici were separated from the means of production of space when the autogestion practices of the municipality turned into co-gestion and the state, through TOKI, took control of the space of Sur. This section takes the notion of alienation, and develops it a step further, speaking of alienation as the separation of life from the means to sustain itself<sup>xx</sup> and become precarious (Butler 2009). As it became apparent during the curfews, the state did nothing to protect the neighbors of Surici from the conflict. In fact, by doing nothing, the state made people vulnerable to precarity and proved its sovereignty.

## The lived experience of the conflict

The longest curfew was declared on December 2, 2015, after Tahir Elci, head of the Diyarbakir Bar association and human rights lawyer, was shot in front of the four legged minaret while giving a speech (International Crisis Group, 2016). His death, and the location where it happened have become a landmark in the timeline of the conflict<sup>xxi</sup>. For many of the woman I spoke to, it signaled as the point of no return in the conflict. Furthermore, the location of the ancient minaret is currently one of the few entry points to the fenced conflict area (figure 6, 7, 8 and 9).



Fig 6: Tahir Elci doing a speech at the Four Legged minaret before being shot.

Source: Sputnik Turkey



Fig 7: Four legged minaret after conflict, 2016.

Source: Twitter



Fig 8: Four legged minaret after conflict, 2018

Source: Picture taken by the author



Fig 9: Fence and entrance to the demolished areas by the Four Legged minaret, May 2018.

Source: photo taken by the author

As mentioned, during the conflict, water and electricity had been cut out and food provision was limited. People could not leave their houses, and after leaving the district, there was no possibility to return. However, The use of force against civilians that were caught up in the conflict was indiscriminate, and the lack of medical assistance made people try to leave the district in the midst of the shelling (Personal Interviews).

Lucill is 34 years old, married, and mother of four children. They used to live in Hasirli, where they stayed during the conflict for about a month, until the special forces came to take them out. As her house was located between a PKK enclave and the Turkish military, there were shootings coming from all sides and often, shelling hitting her windows. For a whole day rockets were being thrown over her house. At one point, she took one of her young kids and showed it to the security forces. She asked them to stop shooting because there was a family inside the house and not militants. "How can they be your children? How can you be a family You stayed here for so long, that cannot be true", they answered, she said, and the shelling continued.

In my conversation with Lucill, I discovered that the Turkish government had used chemical weapons in the district. Lucill used to live in front of a school where her children studied. The school was bombed and partially burned, and a couple of days later, her twelve year old daughter went inside with a neighbor. Her daughter fell down and ran back home saying that her arms were burning.

*When I looked, I could not see anything, no marks, no nothing (...) but she kept on saying, mum! it's burning! it's burning! Then, the skin of her arms and her behind started to peel off and fall. I was in shock, I didn't know what to do, I couldn't do anything. I put some water over it and then we made our way to the hospital.*

Sinem, who is 74 years old and used to live in the same neighborhood as Lucill with all her family, explained that one day she needed to go to the hospital because she had tension problems however, the Turkish military prevented her from doing so<sup>xxii</sup>.

#### No need to explain

*I do not need to explain anything to my children, they've lived this just like us. They were hungry and thirsty and we were all afraid that we will die. I don't know exactly when we managed to get out but it probably did not take so long, otherwise we would be dead by now.*

The lived experience of the conflict, has left many open wounds. Many women still experience post-traumatic symptoms such as physical reactions to "sudden noises, inability to sleep, frequent nightmares, sleeping in hallways or bathtubs, and avoiding windows" (Gaab, 2016, p.11). Panic attacks, anxiety, anger restrain difficulties, and feelings of shame for not being able to protect their children are also common symptoms experienced by women. (Gaab, 2016). Also,

months after the curfews, women who still live in Sur have their belongings collected and ready in case there is another curfew and they have to leave.

### Leaving Surici

The six intermittent curfews targeted an area where 21,693 people lived, displacing 5,497 families (Fig. 9). None of the women I spoke to considered the decision of leaving their houses to be a choice. Yet, they did so because they were afraid for their children, were taken by military, or had run out of food. The moment of leaving was often hurried and unexpected<sup>xxiii</sup>. Also, people expected to be able to return once the conflict was over.

POPULATION OF 6 PROHIBITED NEIGHBORHOODS	
Cemal Yılmaz	2,104
Cevat Paşa	3,256
Dabanoğlu	3,705
Fatihpaşa	5,153
Hasırlı	5,696
Savaş	2,409
TOTAL	22,323

Fig. 9: Population in the 6 neighborhoods under long curfew in 2015

Source: Diyarbakir Municipality

Lucill explains that they *left without thinking because we left in a hurry (...), Lara knows very well, if it wouldn't have been for her help we would be sleeping in the street (...)* we left with a backpack and nothing else (...) of course we thought we would go back, otherwise we would have taken more things.

After leaving Sur, some people had to sleep in parks or in the street as they found no other place to go and most people moved into several houses before they were able to find an affordable long lasting solution.

### Contradictions

During the conflict, a number of contradictions arose at the level of the lived as people's spaces of representation had been seemingly been conquered by the dominant conceived representations of space, and then materialized in counterinsurgent spatial practices, exemplified in the indiscriminate violence and destruction during the curfews.

An example of these contradictions is Lucill's perplexity when she showed her child to the soldiers and asked them to stop shooting at their house, because they were a family and not militants, yet the shelling did not stopped because they did not believe them. To the soldiers, Sur was, a foreign neighborhood with narrow streets and low houses, barricades, and potential terrorists nests. To them, if a curfew is declared in an area, it means that everyone who is in there must be a terrorist or otherwise she or he would have left the district. Why would anyone bear the conflict otherwise? For people like Lucill, or any other woman I spoke to, the neighborhood never ceased to mean home, so the question that they were asking was why would they abandon it? Why had the war come there if they lived in peace? Why are not only militants but people being targeted? Why the Kurdish-Turkish conflict is not solved in parliament?

After all, the neighbor's notion of autogestion and the ways of performing the latter, as it will be further elaborated in the second part of this work, in practice, was not exactly the same as that of the politicians, as the previous chapter has highlighted, or that of the PKK. The PKK's means of achieving autogestion through the declaration of self-government, positioned the district

as a place of direct resistance and opposition to the Turkish Government. Digging trenches and ditches, organizing night patrols and starting to prepare for the offensive from the military was passively allowed by most neighbors and directly supported by some. However, none of the woman I spoke to expected the conflict to reach such an extent, I am not aware whether the PKK, or those speaking from Qandil, expected it, and waged the pros and cons of taking neighborhoods as a battlefields having seen what the Turkish State is capable of, as seen in the history of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. What I am sure of is that none of the women I spoke to, if informed beforehand of the possible reach of the conflict, would have agreed to directly oppose the Turkish state at home. In the end, it was the neighbors of the district that found themselves caught up between the state and the guerrilla, sometimes literally as their houses were between the enclaves of both.

To conclude, the conception of the space of Sur as a container of terrorists, just like the abstraction of Sur as a malleable homogeneity in the 2012 Urban Transformation Plan, disregarded the lived dimension of the district, and the people who experienced it. Furthermore, it gave supremacy to the dominant conceived abstraction of it. In this case, the Turkish government was the strongest party with greater power over the means of production of space. Thus, its spatial practices of domination through counterinsurgent military means made the abstraction concrete at two levels, that of space which was virtually erased and that of the body which was made vulnerable to precarity and alienation.



### **5.3. Urban transformation: 2016-2018**

This section interrogates the spatial practice of expropriation, demolition, and rebuilding Surici after conflict, focusing on the three main areas which have been affected between 2016 until the time of writing (August 2018). Namely, the six neighborhoods under long curfew (Hasirli, Savas, Cemal Yilmaz, Cevat Pasa, and Dabanoglu), Hazreti Suleyman, and Ali Pasa and Lalebey neighborhoods. Then, it complements it with how these spatial practices were lived by those affected by them.

On March 21, the Council of Ministers announced an urgent order of expropriation for the whole of Surici, considering it a risky area, and 6292 out of 7714 parcels in Surici were turned into public property. The remaining 18% of the parcels was already owned by TOKI and the Treasury (Soyukaya, 2017). Two days later, the Conservation Board of Cultural Assets declared that “the removal of debris obstructing street ways may be allowed under the supervision of the experts of the museum directorate” (Soyukaya, 2017, p.3). Yet, aerial photographs from April 2016 (Figure 10 and 11) show that state institutions were not following the aforementioned decision<sup>xxiv</sup>. By August 16, 20 hectares had been turned into flatland and 1519 buildings, out of which, 89 were registered monumental buildings had been demolished (Soyukaya, 2017) (Figure 12).



Fig.10: Aerial photographs of the six neighborhoods under long curfew before the conflict.

Source: Diyarbakir Municipality



Fig. 11: Aerial photographs of the six neighborhoods under long curfew April 2016

Source: Diyarbakir municipality



Fig. 12: Aerial photographs of the six neighborhoods under long curfew, August 2016

Source: Satellite image (in Soyukaya, 2017)

In December 2016, a second revision of the 1990 Urban conservation plan was drafted by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization<sup>xxv</sup>, without consulting the Diyarbakir municipality, whose co-majors, had been dismissed by decree in September 2016, and replaced by appointed trustees (Stockholm Center for Freedom, January 2018). Without any transparent plans in relation to how the expropriated property will be used, demolition works in the areas corresponding to the six neighborhoods under long curfew have continued until the present date. Furthermore, areas under the urban transformation plans of 2012, from which the Diyarbakir municipality had retreated in 2014, were retaken, and urban reordering continued in Hazreti Suleyman and Ali Pasa

and Lalebey. Hazreti Suleyman, which remained closed during the conflict was reopen in 2017, once it had been turned into a park (Figure 13a and 13b), thus residents were unable to return. Most of the Alipasa and Lalebey neighborhoods were forcefully evicted and demolished in Summer 2017, and building of ‘traditional Diyarbakir houses’ (Figure 14 and 15) started.



Fig. 13a: Hazreti Suleyman Park

Source: Picture taken by the author





Fig. 13a: Hazreti Suleyman Park  
Source: Picture taken by the author



Fig 14: Picture after the demolition in Ali Pasa  
Source: Picture taken by the author



Fig 15: New “traditional Diyarbakir houses” in Alipasa and Lalebey area.

Source: Picture taken by the author

*What was mentioned about the plan was that they were going to build traditional Diyarbakir houses with a basement and two-storey houses. The traditional Diyarbakir houses are built with basalt stones but what they are doing is just painting concrete walls (...) Probably those who buy them turn them into cafes or shops. The expropriation is for public interest but the house which is expropriated is sold to a person, is not public interest*

If after renovation, the expropriated parcels end up in private hands, be it for residential or trade uses, there is clearly no public benefit for it, turning expropriation of private property for public good into the commodification of public property. Thus, on April 2016, suits against the expropriation decision were filed. Merthan Anlik, ex-president of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Architects, explains how little hope there was for the cases (Personal Interview)<sup>xxvi</sup>. After the July 2016 coup d’Etat, the nation wide State of Emergency which followed and Turkey’s derogation from the European Convention of Human Rights, put most judges under arrest, and made more than unlikely rulings against the government (Personal Interview).

After the conflicts ended, the governorship made a list with all the names of house owners in the neighborhoods under the long curfew, and contacted them to conduct a damage assessment. Only then, people were able to obtain permission to enter the area and see their houses. Those whose house was still standing found it, often, completely destroyed and could not take much from it. Livia, who used to live in Hasirli and, after changing houses two times, is now living in Ofis mentioned that:

*Except the two carpets we are sitting on, there was nothing left in the house (...) I had some big pans which I had bought for the dowry of my daughter, the police or the guards, I don't know who, they used them as toilets. Also, they threw all the old photographs we had from Sur. I found them all spread on the floor. They had stepped on them. I saw the marks of their footprints everywhere. We took the photographs that we could save and bring them to the next house, and then to the next house, and then here... this is all we have left.*

However, others like Miriam, who lived in Hancepek, in Hasirli neighborhood, explain that there was so little left from the neighborhood to be found that they could not even recognize their own house. Lucill, who lived in Hasirli too mentioned:

*We went to Surici, and then police brought us to the neighborhood and then to our house and the house wasn't there. It was an empty field (...) The police was with us, their task was to write reports about the damages like furniture damages and other things. When I saw that the house was not there anymore I lost myself, I almost fell down (...) I was crying so much that I couldn't say a word to these policemen (...) but anyway they couldn't write anything, they wrote, there is nothing, there is no house.*

Currently, the space corresponding to the six neighborhoods under long curfew is still blocked by concrete police barricades. Almost all buildings have been demolished and concrete plans for the area have not been made public yet.

### Hazreti Suleyman

Hazreti Suleyman, in Ickale, part of Cevat Pasa neighborhood remained closed during the long curfew. When it open to the public in 2017, what used to be a half evicted slum area had become a beautiful park. As mentioned in the first section, Ickale had been target of urban transformation since the 2000's as the municipalities wished to turn the inner fortress into an open air museum for it has many historical buildings (Soyukaya, 2017).

When the park opened, one of the historical buildings had been de-registered and demolished (figures 13a and 13b), and no slums were there either. Although the park was presented as a successful example of the expropriation, women who used to live in Hazreti Suleyman explained that, when they look at it, they can only see their houses who used to stand there (Personal Interview). Others who did not live in Hazreti Suleyman also point out that they felt strange visiting the park for the first time because they felt the lack of meaning and history.

*If you ask me, it looks very beautiful, for Hazreti Suleyman is very good (...) you can go there during the day or the evening and sit. If you ask about history (...) sure, most buildings were old and damaged but they had a historical meaning that could tell you about the life in the place. Each of them had a meaning. Now, all the history of the place is gone.*

Those who *lived* the old Hazreti Suleyman feel that the new has supraceded the old by force, although its appearance is “beautiful”, the symbolic bonds which attached them to the “old and damaged” have been erased materially. Simultaneously, those who did not live or visit the old



Hazretti Suleyman do not feel at cross-roads when asked what they think of the park and just answer that it is a nice park.

#### Ali Pasa and Lalebey

On April 12, 2017, the governor of Diyarbakir announced the continuation of the evictions and demolition of the neighborhoods of Lale Bey and Ali Pasa which had started already in 2012.

Residents were given less than a month to move out, and the news were communicated through announcements made from the mosque and armored vehicles, and eviction notes hanging from bakery windows (pic16) saying that houses had to be empty by May 1. However, due to negative reactions from neighbors, the eviction was postponed until the end of the month. Two weeks after the first note, a second notification (figure 17) announced that electricity and water will be cut on May 19, and two days later demolition works will start. People who moved out voluntarily would receive 500 TL, and their children will be provided a shuttle service from the new residency to school.

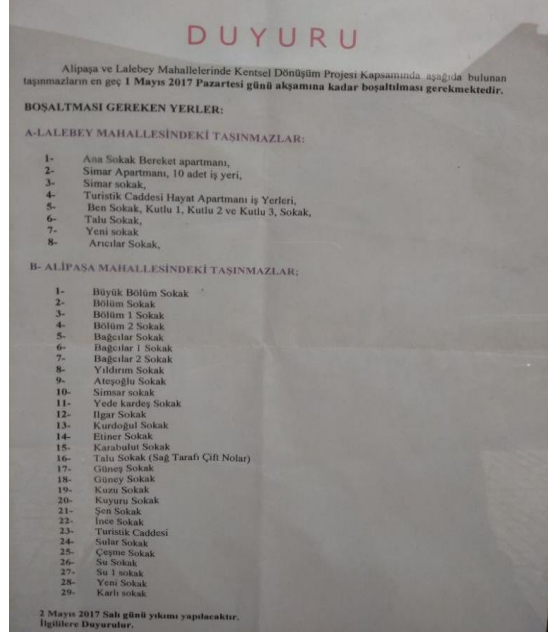


Fig 16: Demolition announcement listing the streets which will be demolished and requesting people to empty their houses by March 1, 2017 in the evening as the next day the demolition will start.

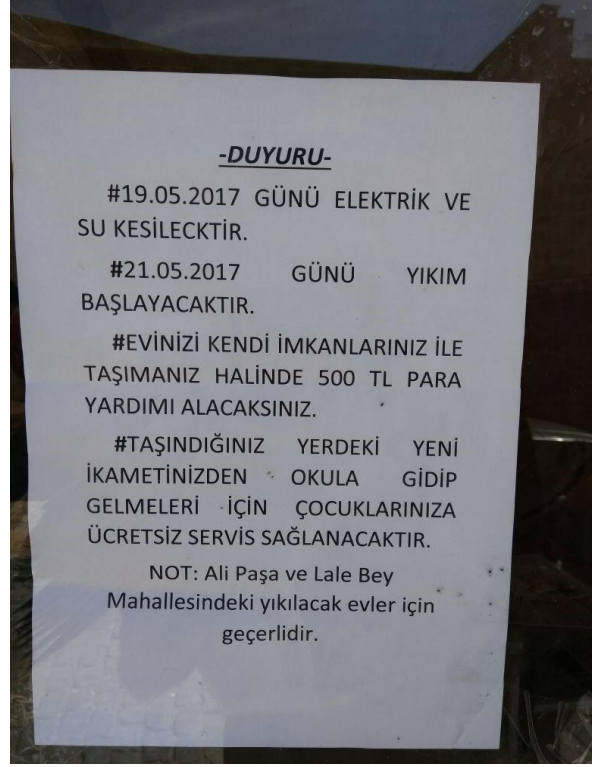


Fig. 17: Second eviction announcement in Ali Pasa

Despite the constant police harassment, many people resisted and stayed in their houses. *The police came here every day(...) the last day, the governor (...) said that no matter if people are still in, they will demolish the houses anyways (...) We were in the six floor and the machine started hitting the house(...) This is how the state is, if they want something, they take it* (Cadif, personal interview).

Cadif lives with her husband and four daughters in a tent in Ali Pasa located right at the same spot where her house used to stand. They were evicted in the Summer of 2017 and as they

had nowhere to go, after sleeping on the street for some days, they bought a tent from a Syrian family who lived around the corner.

Some people point out that the difference between 2012 and 2017 was that in the first wave of expropriations, evictions were not so violent, and it was the municipality carrying it out, a party which people trusted. However, in 2017 “it was the state saying either you give it or we take it by force, this is already mine, this has been expropriated (...) When people filed a law suit, the state entered the neighborhood with demolition teams” (Neighborhood baker, personal interview).

Currently, a fence has been placed between the remaining streets of Ali Pasa and Lalebey neighborhoods and the already demolished areas blocking access and sight to the construction works taking place there (figure 16 and 16a), and no one knows exactly what are the concrete plans are for the area.



Figure 16: Construction works behind the fence in AliPasa.

Source: Picture taken by the author

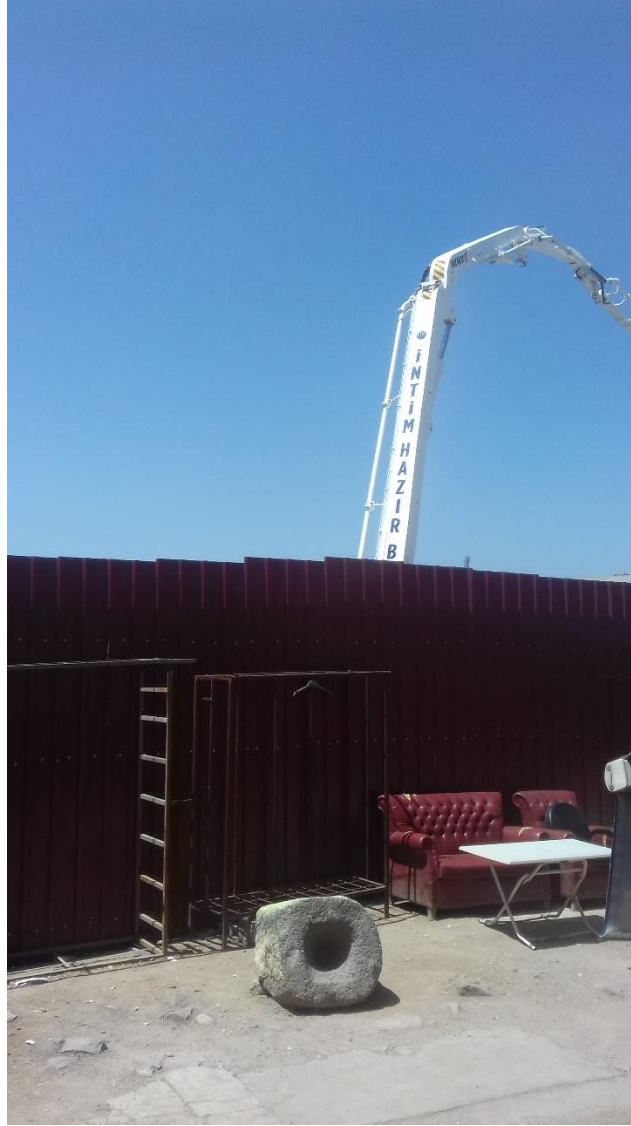


Fig 16a: Fence at Alipasa facing the tent where Cadif lives and the still standing houses

Source: Picture Taken by the author

#### **5.4 Discussion and Conclusion**

As the chapter has outlined, since 2010, a number of macro political, social and economic spatial practices in the form of counterinsurgency practices and neoliberal policies have worked to transform the district of Surici into a concrete abstraction dominated by urban branded territory. This process, as experienced by residents, arises a number of contradictions which have unveiled the deep disregard for the lived dimension of space in neoliberal Turkey.

First, between 2010 and 2014, the degeneration of the pro-Kurdish municipalities' urban practices from autogestion to co-gestion with their participation in the Urban Transformation plan put forward by the central government and Real Estate TOKI. The Diyarbakir and Sur municipalities started to conceive certain parts of the district of Sur as commodities, and this was made explicit through the evictions in Hazreti Suleyman and Ali Pasa-Lalebey area. People's testimonies of evictions unveil the contradiction between the production of space at the macro level, and that at the micro level, between the conception of space through the eyes of the SMP, and the everyday lived experienced of the neighborhoods.

Second, between 2015 and 2016, representations of the space of Sur by the Turkish State conceived the district as a container of terrorist cells, and thus, treated it as such. The youths of the PKK, conceived as a site of resistance to the latter. However, the people of Sur found themselves caught up in a conflict which transformed their living spaces into battlefields without expecting it, and were forced to migrate. Again, the conceived at the macro level managed to impose itself to the everyday lived experience.

Finally, between 2016 until the time of writing, the state took complete control over the representations of space of Surici, and demonstrated it through the spatial practice of expropriation, which made the temporary forced migration from neighborhoods of the district permanent.

In sum, neoliberal policies made tangible in spatial practices of demolition, eviction and expropriation, which were directly aimed at transforming living spaces into capitalist spaces of accumulation and exchange have made of Sur a concrete abstraction. The conflict needs to be considered a part of this process as it has facilitated the physical transformation of the district. This process has unveiled a number of contradictions at the dimension of the lived space. As it has been pointed out, the latter touch upon the realization that, it is not only that the Turkish state went in and ‘conquered the neighborhoods and the houses’ (Cadif, interview, Mary 2018). The issue expands to the fact that representations of space by those in power to provoke large scale changes in its surface have conquered the lived dimension of those who lived in such space. As a consequence, people feel precarious and alienated both from the means of production of space and the means to sustain themselves. The latter points at the continuities between urban transformation in Surici, through counterinsurgent practices and neoliberal policies, as a process of urban homogeneisation and social engineering. As it will be elaborated in the next chapter, which focuses particularly on women experiences of displacement, forceful migration has not only erased the history of a district and its people. Furthermore, it has fragmented a community which used to work together as a social body, taking control over the means of production of space and practicing autogestion. This, has pointed out the connections between the production of space as an abstraction, at the macro level, and the production of subjectivities as precarious at the micro level.

## **Chapter 6: The production of Subjectivity**

The second part of this work builds on the previous one by looking at the continuities between the production of space as a concrete abstraction, at the macro level, and the production of precarious female subjectivities at the micro level. Following an epistemology of practice, it investigates how the experienced material spatial changes of the space of Sur, and the experience of migration, gave rise to new subjectivities in displacement.

As much as the analysis of the production of space of Sur required an historical reading, so does the analysis of the female body to the understanding of how female subjectivities are produced. This chapter will first, study how subjectivity, understood as a gendered and class related performative spatial practice, was negotiated by women in their everyday place-making practices in Sur. Then, it will analyze how named place-making and autogestion practices changed in displacement in order to understand what kind of new subjectivities are produced as a consequence.

### **6.1. The space of the Female body and the female body in space**

To LeFebvre, every body *is* space, and *has* its own space, meaning that, on the one hand, the body has a particular materiality and positioning within the order of things, it is an object, while simultaneously it is a subject that is embodied in space and contributes to its historical changes. This starting point positions the body as “the vehicle for perception and the object perceived, as the body in-the-world, which ‘knows’ itself by virtue of its active relation to this world” (Simonsen, 2005, p.9). As the famous quote of Simon de Bevoir enunciates, "one is not born but rather becomes a woman", there is no identity, or self, prior to practice. Instead, female subjectivities are negotiated through practice. Subjectivities are inscribed in the female body



through bodily practices in the production of space (Low, 2006). These bodily practices work to create gender binary spaces, where certain bodies and certain performances, based on representations of the body, are judged upon. In Surici, there are female spaces like the household, and male spaces like the tea garden. There are typically female roles like taking care of the house and children and male roles like working. However, altogether with the category of women, women from Surici are marked with the category of ethnic Kurds which has placed them in a number of vulnerable positions to migration and poverty. This section studies how migrant, poor and women subjectivities used to be negotiated through place-making and autogestion practices in Sur.

#### Womanhood: early marriage, domestic violence, and economic dependence

Since the AKP was elected for government, the rate of woman murdered by their husbands has increased in a 1400%. Furthermore, policies that "legitimize rape and sexual harassment under the guise of the marriage of the perpetrator and the victim, forcing children into marriage, and (...) making divorce harder" (KJA, 2016 p.10) keep on being implemented in order to empower the family institution and domestic gender roles (KJA, 2016). In fact, many of the women I spoke to speak of domestic violence as an unlucky trait of married life which one cannot fight in the open, and even less through formal legal institutions. Divorce is not only hard to get but also socially unacceptable. Sarah, from Lice, explained that once she got married her father became a step father to her. After marriage, she separated from her family and rented a house in the Savas neighbourhood and had to "adapt to the married life".

*Some things make you happy and some other don't but for your children you accept everything, you get used to everything (...) sometimes it can be intolerable but you should not say anything,*

*for your children (...) Today, for instance, if I get divorced, where am I gonna go? I cannot go back to my father, I have nowhere to go.*

Cases of domestic violence in Sur used to be tackled by members of the pro-Kurdish party who worked at a number of women centers established in the neighbourhood by the municipality. As women have no trust on formal justice methods, they preferred to speak to members of the party. However, after the declaration of State of Emergency in July 2016, all party related women centers were closed leaving no other option for women to go to.

All women I spoke to married at a very early age, most of them through arranged marriages, and soon after had children. Cadif is 60 years old. She was born in Ali Pasa, and currently lives with three of her daughters and her husband in a tent in the neighbourhood, as their house was demolished in Summer 2017. Their tent is placed right at the spot where their house and the little shop they used to own stood, and it is right next to the fence which separates the demolished parts of Ali Pasa from the two streets which are waiting for demolition. Cadif married when she was fifteen as a way to solve an inter-family conflict and since then she has been victim of domestic violence.

*At the time, it was the normal age to get married. My mother and my husband are relatives, in fact. My uncle, the brother of my mother, killed the son of his aunt (...) instead of killing someone else in the family, they married me to pay the price. They forced me, they gave me to him, I was crying a lot, I remember. At the time there was nothing like consent (....) We've suffered a lot but thanks to the party we are OK now. Women from the party were coming to people's houses and saying 'if your husband beats you, you should come and tell us'. They used to have a center in the neighborhood, people used to go there and if women made complaints about their husbands they used to go to the houses to speak with them and warn them (...) I went there a couple of times but*

*I didn't tell the whole story because they would kill him otherwise (...) We've suffered a lot. I've been tortured a lot. The party made him change, the last years has not been as bad as before. He is afraid of the party more than of the government (...) One time, I went to the police headquarters to open a case and they called him there. The police said that this was a family issue and that we could get to an understanding with each other. Another time, I asked the police about women shelters, they answered me that they were dirty places and that instead, I should go back home with my husband. Even the day Eliana was born he beat me, we had to feed her with mashed rice because I was in such a bad health condition that I had no milk for her.*

Cadif's story reflects how the dominant conception of the female body is based on the idea of marriage as an untouchable bond which relegates the woman to the household where she is supposed to perform a number of appropriate housewife practices of rearing children, cleaning and taking care of the house. Another aspect of marriage is economic dependence, as in almost all cases, it is men who work and bring money to the household. Cadif mentioned that she does not know the difference between 5 and 10TL because she cannot go by herself to buy anything, or leave the house for long unaccompanied.

Sometimes, women used work before getting married, or after marriage but only in seasonal work accompanied by the whole family. Sarah explains that when she got married she stopped working and started to take care of children, as that became her new responsibility. Only one of the women I spoke to, Sinem, worked regularly selling scarfs and underwear around villages in the province of Diyarbakir. Her husband had been previously married to her sister and had two children, when her sister died, Sinem's was forced by her family to marry him and take care of his children. As her husband was constantly sick and died at a very young age, she described her situation as "being a woman and a man at the same time" because she had to fulfill the traditionally

female role of taking care of the household and children, and the male roles of working to bring money to the house.

#### Place-Making: the negotiation of female subjectivity

Cadif explained that, when she got married they moved into a house in Ali Pasa with only one floor and a back garden, then the owner of the house decided to demolish it and build a six store building instead. The whole family worked in the construction, and the men in the family were the nightwatchers to protect it from thieves. Then, they bought the first floor and turned one of the rooms into a shop to get some extra income for the house. The shop was Cadif's way of escaping the house, where she felt trapped by her husband and the expectations to perform the role of the wife amid domestic violence. Cadif and her daughters spent most of the time at the shop while her husband was working outside, always in different and generally low paid jobs. They used to sell sugary apples, cotton sugar and other sweets. Also, Cadif used to spend long hours at the shop knitting, making crochet for scarfs, and floral ornaments for decoration. At night, she would use a candle, as they paid the electricity collectively in the building. Knitting became a way of dealing with her experiences, and carve her own place within the violence from her husband and that from the state.

*If I am not doing anything, or focusing on anything, I start thinking about everything that has happened, the violence, also losing the house... and I start to cry and get very sad. This is why I do this work. I count how many times I need to turn the needle, tell the numbers to myself and only think of this. When I am sitting still I keep on remembering all what I have suffered, then I start to get sour and out of breath. It happens often, and I need to deal with it. You can put it into words,*

*you can try and explain it but when you feel it yourself, it is when you know it better. If you speak it out loud, it seems as if it passes, but it doesn't.*

Cadif emphasizes the embodied dimension of her experiences, how she loses breath when she remembers them, and how hard is to explain an experience fully only with words. The gestural performance of knitting as a rhythmic activity helps her coping with the lived dimension of her own embodied experience of the household. At the same time, the gesture is embedded into an appropriate performance of womanhood, and performed at a traditionally woman space, the private home. In another conversation, Cadif explained that sometimes she would hide one of the scarfs she made under her pillow to then sell it and use the money for her children, as she said that her husband would not spend enough of what he earned on them. Both of these practices take place in the intimacy of the household, which for Cadif was both the place where she could feel free, and the place where she was oppressed. Although her place-making practices did not threaten the logics behind the system of gender oppression, as Lefebvre (1991) calls it, maximal difference, apparent compliance with the dominant gender roles allowed Cadif to produce and experience a space of her own, and thus renegotiate her own female subjectivity. At the shop, her gender identity was not synonym of a passive and docile body but instead a body who stops being alienated from its form and its work, as she was able to produce her own scarfs and ornaments, and behave comfortably with her daughters. In fact, when her husband threatened to burn the tent if police comes to evict, the first thing that Cadif did was to put these scarfs and ornaments at a friend's house, as she feels that they represent her more than anything else (Personal Interview).

#### Turkish-Kurdistan: a history of migration and poverty

Already in the 1960's, the district of Sur received the first waves of rural migrants from the surrounding Kurdish South Eastern provinces, who were seeking for work in the city (Yuksel,

p.449). However, unemployment in Diyarbakir was high as the city, as well as the whole South Eastern region has always been economically underdeveloped due to the conflict. Two decades later, during the 80's and 90's, thousands of rural migrants moved to Diyarbakir as a consequence of village raids, burnings, and depopulation in the context of the first escalation phase of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Migrants established themselves in the district of Sur, often building gecekondus (slums). However, resettlement was again accompanied with poverty, precarious living conditions, unemployment, police harassment and discrimination, as well as difficulties to adapt to the urban life (Habitat International Coalition, 2016). Currently, ethnic Kurds, as well as other minorities, are being internally displaced from urban settings due to the government's counterinsurgent practices and urbanization. Migration has been an experience which has come to define many ethnic Kurd's subjectivities as it had always been present in their lives, either because they themselves experienced it or because someone in their family or among their friends did.

Sarah is thirty years old, mother of two children, and taking care of two other ones from her husband's former wife. She was born and raised in Lice, and her mother tongue is Zazaki. When she was twelve, Lice was burned by the Turkish military, and her family migrated to Adana, where they lived for two years. However, her grandmother "didn't want to live in a foreign house, and she wanted to return because she was homesick. She said that she wanted to die in her own land", and so they returned to Lice. Shortly after, a soldier was killed, and the Turkish government started to burn people's houses again.

*The Special Units were in Lice, soldiers were torturing people, or threatening them or even killing them (...) it happened to my uncle...It was too much pressure for us (...) So we had to move again. Everyone did, there was no one left in Lice, no one remained.*

The second time that Lice was burned, they came to Diyarbakir and lived in an old overcrowded house in Sur for a year and then went back. In Lice, they lived in barracks which had been built as emergency measure to locate displaced people from earthquake in the 80's. Sarah explains that she did not want to go back to Lice because they were afraid, and everytime they went back to Lice they had to live in a different house, as the previous one had been burned. However, their father forced them, and as he is the head of the family, his decisions count for all of them.

When Sarah lived the Turkish-Kurdish conflict again, and was forced to leave her house in Savas neighborhood, she regretted having moved from Lice to Sur, instead of to some non-Kurdish province in Turkey, as she saw the same chain of events unfolding again. However, she like her grandmother was homesick when they moved outside of Sur because,

*one can only live where she is used to (...) Even when I left my house during the curfew (...), I used to come to Sur every day, I was begging the policemen to let me see my house, to let me in (...). Leaving Sur, like Lice, it was not a choice. We stayed in for two months (...) at some point we run out of food and had to move.*

As mentioned, many people in Surici lived in poverty and did not count with stable jobs. Sinem was born in Nussaybin and, after marriage, migrated with her husband to Diyarbakir as they could not find work in the village. Her daughter Livia, who used to live just a street away from her, in Hasirli neighbourhood, migrated with her husband and her first son from Diyarbakir to Nussaybin because her husband was unable to find any work there. After two years, they came back to Sur and rented a house in Hasirli until they could buy one for themselves.

*My husband could find some temporary jobs here and there (...) he was the supervisor at the fields where people do seasonal work. We saved some money and I sold some jewelry and other things I had, and this way we managed to buy a house for ourselves. We lived in that house for thirty years. It was a big house and it had a garden. I myself made it. I broke the stones, brought nice soil, I had grapes and flowers and pomegranates, also olive trees and fig trees and we also had a well.*

Many women worked on their gardens, and many men worked to build their houses by themselves. All of them mentioned the labor and effort involved in first, working to save money to get some land where to build a house or a house to renovate, and then building it. All of them emphasized that the houses and the gardens, had been built “with their own hands”. The women with whom I spoke, place greater value on things that one builds with one’s own hands instead of buying them effortlessly. In fact, building a house for oneself is one of the prime examples of place-making. Building is a practice which is generally done by the family and/or the neighbourhood collectively. This practice, is lived intensely and it is well embedded in one’s own memories. Furthermore, in the process, bonds are created with one’s space, as well as the people who take part in building. Finally, it allows practitioners to materially modify the neighbourhood according to their needs.

#### Place-making: neighbourhood networks and autogestion practices

Miriam, who used to live in Hasirli too, explained that first, they moved to Baglar for a year as the rent was comparable to that of Sur. However, they decided to move out because they did not feel comfortable there. When I asked her about the differences between Sur and Baglar she said:



*“They look similar, true (...) but in Baglar we didn’t know the neighborhood nor the neighbors. My daughters are grownups and I didn’t feel safe when they were out (...) the narrow streets, which look like those in Sur, didn’t feel safe, I felt uncomfortable with the idea of them walking there on their own. There were many kids, and some of them were bullies. We were new there, so we felt uncomfortable.*

Miriam points out the fact that, although both neighborhoods look physically alike, the narrow streets of one felt like home while these of the other one felt unsafe. The streets of Sur had been lived and experienced, whereas the ones from Baglar were unknown to them. Also, the social dynamics in both neighborhoods were different, and the close relations with the neighborhoods were lacking.

When I asked Livia, Sinem’s daughter who now lives in Ofis, to tell me a memory from Sur she said:

*We used to wash the streets together (...) we worked in the garden together. We used to buy 15 or 20 kg of vegetables, aubergines or peppers mostly, and dry them on the roof to then make dolmas together, also tomato and pepper paste (...) We also made pickles(...). We used to come together with other neighbors and make pilav with sehre. It was like a festival with the whole neighborhood, really, we sat and talked for hours. I miss this the most. The neighbors were very good to each other. We used to buy firewood together. Sometimes one neighbor would buy a lot and then split the costs. In general, we helped each other a lot. When we meet each other on the street we always hug each other deeply because we miss each other.*

The social dynamics which both Miriam and Livia describe, illustrate a collective way of living and sharing the space of the neighborhood, in other words, of appropriating the means over the production of space in a way that allowed them to deal with the difficult economic conditions

which many people lived for being Kurdish migrants and part of the lower classes. In conversation with Lucill, I asked her to describe her house, she said that the garden was her favourite part.

*There was a fig tree, an olive tree, and an almond tree, we also planted some tomatoes, aubergines. We loved it, one day I got twenty small ducks, another day I got ten chickens(...) we had a Turkey and a dog. We loved feeding them and growing them (...) I built the house with my nails, I took care of it, day and night, I put so much effort on it! Every tree I planted with my hands.*

She pointed out the aspect of building one's house with one's own hands, as they bought it in bad condition to then renovate it. For this, they did not need to pay rent, which minimize their expenses. A part of their food was coming from the garden, and their income was coming from her husband's work and a little shop which they opened next to the house, from where they used to sell chocolate and sweets. Water and electricity was *kacak* (stolen), which is a very common practice in Surici, as people cannot pay for it in many cases. Lucill expressed many times how good their life used to be while they were still living in Hasirli because "no one was bothering us, no one was telling us what to do or what not to do, where to go, anything!" (Personal Interview). She felt independent, and the owner of her labor at the garden, and the production of space in what she considered her home. Also, she felt part of the community, as she knew the neighbors and felt safe entrusting the care of her children to them. She explained that, although at the beginning the neighbors were suspicious of her and her family because they are Dom, with time, and through living together in the same neighborhood "as a family", they started trusting each other, and sharing time together.

Those who, like Lucill, could not pay electricity or water would connect the two illegally. Someone from the neighborhood would come and do it for a very cheap price. If one could not pay rent one month, they would not ask for a credit to a bank but instead, ask their good friends

and neighbors for some money. Although after moving out of Surici many of the personal connections with the neighbors were broken, all woman I spoke to, mentioned neighborhood solidarity as the main source of aid. Particularly after aid organizations, like the Rojava Organization, that used to offer food aid, were closed by decree by the Turkish government in 2016 after the declaration of State of Emergency.

## **6.2. Life outside of Sur**

After expropriation, the government opened a bank account at Ziraat Bank for all house owners in Surici. An amount of money corresponding to the estimated value of the expropriated house was deposited in it, and people were given three options. The first option was to accept the money, the second, to accept a TOKI house in the outskirts of the city, and the third one was to buy one of the houses which are in being built in Surici. Yet, as all women interviewed voiced, all of these options are problematic.

First, the value of the expropriated houses in Surici has been underestimated. The expropriated house prices, proposed by a panel of experts under supervision of the Ministry of Urbanism, are around 50% under the houses' real value (Musafer, Personal Interview). Cases, particularly in Ali Pasa and Lalebey, which have attempted to fight in court these price estimations have ended up in ambiguous rulings. For instance, Cadif was offered 41,000TL for her house in Ali Pasa, which was demolished in Summer 2017. She opened a case demanding a higher compensation but the court ruled that against her and the house was devalued to 38,000TL (Cadif, Personal Interview).

The second option, a TOKI house in the outskirts, is accompanied with other economic problems too. To start with, the house is not for free of charge or even sold for its real price. The

estimated value of the expropriated house in Surici is deducted from the prime value of the TOKI house. As not many people from Suri might be able to pay for the rest of the new house ad hoc, TOKI offers a loan to the new resident. This way, TOKI ends up profiting from the process of expropriation through credit interests, while the forcefully displaced person ends up tied to a lifelong mortgage (Neighbor of Ali Pasa, Personal Interview). The testimony of Hatice<sup>xxvii</sup> who accepted a TOKI house in exchange for hers during the 2012 evictions of the area of Hazreti Suleyman, illustrates this point. Furthermore, it is not only that she has difficulties paying the loan to TOKI and she cannot sell the TOKI house where she lives because she did not finish paying for it. Life in the outskirts, in her case 500 evleri neighborhood, is more expensive than in Surici. ‘Life in Sur was almost for free, one could say, but here every step you take costs money’ said Hatice. Also, TOKI neighborhoods are very far away from the center, and many women, after living Surici wish to keep on going back and forth to the district to do grocery shopping and visit relatives and friends. Altogether with the physical distance, transportation costs are another boundary that keeps people of lower classes in the periphery and blocks them from the center.

If neighbors want to stay in Sur, people are offered to buy a flat at one the houses to be built in Surici. However, the price the m2 is sold to them is about 2,300 TL more expensive than the m2 value bought from them. Even with the compensation for a house is of an average of 60,000TL (Merthan Anlik, Personal Interview) deducted from the price of a new house, people who used to live in Surici will never be able to pay for the remaining amount.

In sum, none of these options are viable for any of the woman I spoke to. Most of them decided to take the money that was given for their houses if they were owners, and find another house to rent by themselves as the money the government bought their houses for is not enough for buying a new house. The government offered a monthly 1000TL rent aid to people, and most

of them accepted it. However, aid stopped in some cases after half a year, or a year, without any explanation. In the case of Livia, rent aid was cut in the moment she accepted to sell her house to the government.

*The government used to give us 1000TL a month as rent aid. Then, one day they called me to sign the paper that will give them my house and we'll get some money for it. Since I signed this paper they cut the rent aid. They gave me 172.000TL for my house when its real value is about 300.000TL. It was a very big house, it had eight rooms and a garden....anyhow, I signed the paper thinking that maybe I could buy a house with that money but when I came home my brother said 'Why did you sign this paper? You should ask for a house because TOKI also gives houses to people and for the money they gave you, you cannot buy a house'. So they took the money from the account where they had put it and now there is no news from the TOKI house, the money isn't there, and we got no rent aid.*

Besides the rent aid, the government offered to pay damage compensation for the furniture and other belongings destroyed during the conflict. For this, people were called to conduct damage assessments of their houses. Lucill, who was unable to find any traces from her house in Hasirli explained that they were offered 5,000TL for furniture but they rejected it.

*You could fill a truck with all what we had and the truck wouldn't be able to take it. We even managed to buy an air conditioner for the living room. They wanted to give us 5,000TL. I said, you can take this 5,000TL and keep it, thank you. I cannot take it. I won't take it. They said, oh yeh, maybe we could pay a bit more for the airco. I said no, take it (...) if it were you, would you take it? Think about it. Your house, these are things we've collected for twenty years, what is there? Everything. There were four rooms filled with our stuff. If you were me, would you take it? 5,000TL, the air conditioner was 4,000TL. From the state we get 1.000TL a month to get by. My*

*husband works here and there, where there is work he works but nothing fixed. He doesn't have a permanent job or anything. It is Diyarbakir, there are no jobs here. Diyarbakir is done finished.*

### Individualized Precarity

The rupture of informal neighborhood solidarity networks, and the impossibility to carry out practices of autogestion at the new residencies, has led to feelings of frustration and isolation. *The other day I bought a small goose and I started growing it in the balcony. After some days I realized that all the neighbors were angry at me. They were saying 'what is this? What are you doing with this in your balcony?'. I got rid of the goose in the end (...) In Sur we were taking care of the animals and we really enjoyed spending time there. At least we were not stressed over there, here we are stressed. We are not used to this, we cannot get used to living in an apartment house. All day and all night we are inside. We cannot see anybody, we don't leave the house.*

As opposed to her time in, Surici, Lucill now spends most of her day inside the house. Her new residency in Sumerpark has no garden, and she cannot put her chairs outside her front door because, in Summerpark, it is not a common practice and would be frowned upon. Furthermore, she doesn't go out because there is no neighbors to spend time with, or animals to feed. In general, she feels frustrated for not being able to lead life as she wants to, and used to, which makes her feel as if she were in prison.

*I feel like I am living my life in a prison cell. I don't like it. I cannot feel comfortable here, not at all. I cannot even walk comfortably in this area (...) Also, the warmth of the old relationships is not here. In Sur, all day and night we were together at the entrance of our houses. Sometimes eating together, making tea... but now nothing is left from that. Now we sometimes meet in Summerpark cause some of them live around here but it is not the same, no one knows where no*

*one lives (...) With the neighbors here it is just 'how are you?' and that's it, people don't go to people's houses. Actually, not even my family comes here because I cannot feel comfortable here. The neighbors downstairs say we are too loud.*

The feeling of being at home as if in a prison cell comes from living in a house that she feels she cannot leave as there is nothing of her interest outside. The neighborhood life in Sumerpark is not what Lucill understands as neighborhood life, and thus, she feels estranged from the neighbourhood and the neighbours. Here it is possible to see the connection between the notion of precarity and that of alienation. Every time Lucill speaks of her home she does not speak of material objects in the house but about neighborhood practices in relation to the home like visiting neighbors, washing streets, or sitting outside. Embodying one's home and taking the neighborhood as an extension of the latter means that if the neighborhood life is gone, so is the form of life of the body.

*We loved Sur. Sur was everything for us, it was our life, our dreams, our thoughts and memories because it was the place we grew up and were born. But they took, it, and they destroyed, and then they demolished.*

The everyday spatial practices which gave meaning and birth to the home as a symbolic space in Sur are gone. The spatial practices which are made possible at the new houses seem to attempt to mold the collective body of women from Sur, into an individual body. As illustrated, in Sur, gender, class, and ethnicity intersected in the production of the precarious body, and precarity as subjectivity was negotiated through a number of place-making techniques and autogestion practices which allowed for its reconfiguration. In Sur, women used to experience precarity but, as Lucill expresses, before, 'at least we were able to deal with our lives and our things but now it is not like that anymore'. When people had economic problems in Surici, people resorted to means

such as opening a small shop by their house, saving by growing their own food themselves, or asking family and friends. If confronted with domestic violence, as mentioned, a number of centers in the district welcomed women and helped them negotiate their female subjectivities.

Whereas before, precarity was condition of vulnerability to which women from Sur were exposed collectively, currently, women are left on their own to deal with it, as the neighbourhood networks have been broken, and thus, all place-making techniques and autogestion practices are impossible to perform in the new residencies.

### **6.3. Discussion and conclusion**

Inasmuch as the production of space at the macro level cannot be separated from the same at the micro level, the representations of the female, impoverished and migrant body at the macro level cannot be detached from its reverberance at the home space in everyday spatial practices. Kucukkirka (2018) pointed at the permeability of the public and the private spheres when speaking of the home space in Sur. As illustrated, for women in Sur, being at home meant negotiating the precarious subjectivities which the categories of *Kurdish migrant*, *poor*, and *married woman*, had induced in them. These categories have been induced and upheld, on the one hand, through a number of macro political processes such as the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the economic underdevelopment of Kurdish regions, or legislation which made divorce virtually impossible. On the other hand, through unwritten social codes like the social stigmatization of divorce, the idea of the family as an untouchable bond, or gender roles that place married women at home taking care of children. As a consequence, women in Sur lived with violence and oppression from a number of sovereignties which they often felt unable to directly challenge. Yet, through place-making and



autogestion practices, women had become able to negotiate their own positionality and expressions of subjectivity within the imposed (social) space in Sur.

However, the urban transformation process started in 2012, the curfews between 2015 and 2016, and the subsequent expropriation of the whole district, altered the already unequal distribution of vulnerabilities among the population in Diyarbakir. Currently, the politically induced condition of precarity has taken a new shape for displaced women from Sur, what I called *individualized precarity*. Displaced people have not been offered any viable option for resettlement. In fact, life in the new residences has further immersed people into poverty and debt, as now some of them have to pay loans to TOKI, as well as rent and other expenses which they used not to pay for in Sur. In addition, people have been pushed to the periphery of the city and have been isolated, disrupting neighbourhood solidarity networks. Finally, women can no longer perform the practices of place-making and autogestion which allowed them to deal with precarity in Sur, and are unable to feel at home at their new residencies. On the contrary, they feel alienated from themselves and their surroundings as they feel unable to take control of their own lives and their family as they feel unable to keep their bodies alive, not only in the biological sense but also in the social one.

In sum, the destruction of Sur has been in turn productive of particular precarious female subjectivities. Living in displacement, outside of Surici, is forcing women to become homogenous with their surroundings, that is, to assimilate and mold to an individual urban lifestyle, as the (social) space of Sur has been fragmented both at the material and symbolic levels. In turn, this individual lifestyle suppresses women's ability to deal with precarity.

## **Conclusion**

This work has looked at the relation between the production of space as a concrete abstraction and the production of the precarious female subjectivities. Between 2012 and 2017, neoliberal and counterinsurgent government spatial practices in Sur, Diyarbakir, have led to what Lefebvre called a *concrete abstraction*. Through spatial reorderings according to the logics of the SMP, areas of Surici which have been target of curfews and urban transformation have been fragmented and homogenized. As a corollary, the subjectivities of women who inhabited those spaces have suffered an analogous transformation leading to what I termed *individualised precarity*. This analysis has led to ask a number of questions in relation to first, the links between the production of urban space at the macro level, and that at the micro level, tackled in chapter five. Second, the continuities between space as a social product and subjectivity as a politically induced condition of vulnerability which is performative. Finally, the role of place-making and autogestion practices for the experience of social space, as elaborated in chapter six.

The spatial practices of the state, the Sur municipality and the Diyarbakir municipality between 2012 and 2017 have rendered visible that the production of space is both multidimensional -at the level of the perceived, conceived, and lived- and takes place, simultaneously, at different scales at the same time, the macro, as in formal politics, and the micro, daily life. This scheme pointing at the interconnection between dimensions and scale, is visible in the contradictions which arose at the level of the everyday in the three different time periods outlined in chapter five.

The participation of the pro-Kurdish municipalities in the evictions of Hazreti Suleyman, and Ali Pasa and Lalebey area in 2012, fleshed out the transition from autogestion to co-gestion.

This provoked a contradiction at the level of the everyday, people could not understand how a pro-Kurdish municipality could take on neoliberal policies which had detrimental effects on the people who they claimed to represent, that is, the victims of the Kurdish-Turkish conflict in the 90's and the lower classes. Later on, during the conflict phase, between 2015 and 2016, people of Surici could not understand how and why their neighborhoods had become battlefields, they felt alienated from their home space and their own lives, as they could not take control of the means for their own subsistence. In 2016, after the order of expropriation of Surici, those who lived in the six neighborhoods under the longest lasting curfew and those in Hazreti Suleyman, were unable to return to their houses. In 2017, evictions started in Ali Pasa and Lalebey, followed by demolition works and the construction of "traditional Diyarbakir houses" inaccessible to those who traditionally lived in Diyarbakir. During this period, people felt unable to recognize their neighborhoods and unable to claim them back. In contrast with the 2012 evictions, resistance under State of Emergency, which makes law no point of reference, was not a choice. For example, people from Ali Pasa and Lalebey who stayed in their houses until the very last moment, were violently evicted anyways.

During the first phase, the municipalities and the state conceived the space of Surici as a commodity, be it for the sake of the economic independence of Turkish Kurdistan or for that of the increase of wealth of real estate. During the second phase, the state conceived Sur as a container of terrorist cells, while the PKK did as a locus for armed resistance to the latter. Finally, during the third phase, Sur was conceived as an economic asset and a place where to create history. All of this conceptions of urban space at the macro level, followed by spatial practices according to the SMP, disregarded the experience of space at the micro level. Thus, at the macro level, Surici was conceptualized as an abstraction which became concrete and tangible, through the

aforementioned spatial practices. The latter have led to what Surici looks like today, half a wasteland with a couple of apartment buildings closed off by concrete barricades and fences, next to which people live. These changes unveil the conquest of the lived by the conceived, and have been the catalyst of contradictions at the level of the lived experience of space at the micro level, as the people who felt a part of the space of Sur, have been disregarded for its production.

The production of space as a concrete abstraction, a homogenizing and fragmentary force, has affected both space and people. As the lived dimension of Surici is being erased, space becomes homogeneous and ahistorical, as the example of Hazreti Suleyman has shown, and displaced women pointed out, it is a beautiful park but its lived history is lost. Space is being fragmented, as its qualitative value has been replaced by its quantitative commodification. Homes are no longer homes, they have been reduced to m<sup>2</sup> that have been assigned a market price.

Testimonies of women retelling stories of the home, refer not only to a private space but rather to a form of living the space of the neighborhood with their neighbors. This brings us to the question on the continuities between the experience of space and subjectivity. As women considered their homes, that is, their neighborhoods, an extension of their own bodies, migration has meant alienation from both of the latter. This process is what I called the *individualization of precarity*. Before migration, precarity had a collective component which allowed women to negotiate the categories of *woman*, *Kurdish migrant*, and *poor* in a number of collective ways. As chapter six has outlined, female subjectivities cannot be reduced to the performance of their inscribed gender identities, for the categories of class and ethnicity intersected with these too. Life histories of women from Sur unveil the presence of a number of sovereignties which have tried to allocate them to particular social spaces, and affected their experiences of Sur. Women are subjected to alienation both in the production of space at the macro level, and at the micro level.

For instance, domestic violence, economic dependency and family structure among others examples add up to their experiences of migration to and from Sur, and stigmatization for being Kurdish and poor. Simultaneously, women in Sur found their ways to carve their own spaces and practice spatial and gender performances of resilience in individual and collective ways through place-making and self-management, or in Lefebvre's terms autogestion. Place-making practices, although did not confront directly the patriarchal, nationalist and class based system of oppression, allowed women to live within it. Furthermore, place-making practices endowed women's dwelling spaces with meaning because they experienced and inhabited such spaces in ways that placed them as agents in the process of the production of space. Thus, they became symbolically attached to them.

After migration, economic difficulties, trauma, and the rupture of neighborhood solidarity networks left women alone and isolated. The place-making practices and tactics of autogestion which positioned them as agents in Surici are no longer possible at their new residencies and neighborhoods. Some of these practices were: building one's own house, growing food in one's garden, cooking and eating with the whole neighborhood, not paying for water or electricity, spending time outside sitting on their doorsteps, making a little shop by one's house to collect extra income for the house, etc. Women, who spent most of their time at home, that is in the neighbourhood, feel "like in jail" at their new residencies, and out of place in their new neighborhoods, as they feel they cannot make *theirs* the space they inhabit and there is no possibility to resist displacement but the false hope of getting one's neighbourhood back.

Having said that, within the condition of precarity as well as within that of individualised precarity, there is an element of resilience. Women might not be able to directly resist the dominant mode of production of (social) space at the macro-level and reclaim their houses. However, for as

long as women experience (social) space, they will find ways to negotiate their own *female, poor, and Kurdish migrant* subjectivities, and find the cracks within the system of oppression where to develop and perform new place-making practices, both in individual and collective ways. The discussion on resilience, however, falls beyond the scope of this thesis, and will need to be dealt with separately as it involves the analysis of the existing layers of the production of space within the micro level. Such research can provide NGO's guidelines for action aimed at facilitating context-specific women empowerment in the region. As mentioned, there is a number of sovereignties influencing women's subjectivities at the micro-level. In fact, the discussion on the production of (social) space and precarious subjectivities is not as simple as it has been outlined here for the sake of analytical clarity, as it is impossible to reduce women to the micro, and formal institutions to the macro. Analytic tools shall not be taken as fixed units outside of the analysis. Both macro and micro, as well as the in-betweens in the macro and the micro, are scales in which bodies, as the precondition for social action intervene in, and are affected by the production of space. As this work has shown, the perceived (spatial/bodily practice), the conceived (representations of space/body) and the lived (spatial/bodily representations) interact in constant contradiction with each other and have led to an abstract social space, and individualised the already precarious female subjectivities.

This research has aimed to contribute to spatial perspectives within the literature on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict by looking at its recent developments in tandem with practices of neoliberal urbanization. As mentioned, the Turkish-Kurdish conflict has changed locations, from the rural to the urban. Furthermore, the neo-liberalist turn in Turkey has provided the state with new techniques for the continuation of war by other means. Yet, there is a lack of studies that explicitly acknowledge the role of space in the conflict, and contextualize it with the current

neoliberal paradigm. Thus, I echo Gambetti and Jongerden's claim (2011) by advocating further in-depth spatial research, not only in Diyarbakir but also in other Kurdish regions of Turkey, such as Hassankeyf or Dersim, where large infrastructure projects keep on being developed destroying natural resources and cultural heritage, as well as displacing its inhabitants.

Another topic which deserves attention yet also fall outside of the scope of this research, is the feelings of belonging and affiliation of displaced people from Sur to the Kurdish movement, and to the pro-Kurdish party. Before the conflict, Sur was one of the strongholds of the movement. However, after the first evictions in 2012, and later on, when the Turkish-Kurdish conflict directly erupted in Sur, people felt attacked by the state and disprotected from the movement. Furthermore, the kind of isolation that women felt in displacement was also a form of political isolation as neither the pro-Kurdish party or the Kurdish movement is currently able to provide help to the people they claim to represent. Such research would be able to paint a realistic picture of Kurdish society as heterogenous, and not necessarily linked to an organization or a political party.

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## Annotations

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<sup>i</sup> Marx defined alienation as the strangement of workers from the means of production, their humanity and nature (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, 1952). Lefebvre (1991) enlarged the notion to encompass economic and political alienation, understood as the estrangement of oneself from the state. To Lefebvre, alienation is a kind of abstraction. Marx used the concept when speaking of abstract labor, referring to work which is “in general stripped of all qualitative difference and reduced to quantitative measure of socially necessary labor time (Wilson, 2013, p.266)

<sup>ii</sup> Currency, for instance, is an abstraction, as it transforms the qualitative value of any good into its Exchange quantitative value, transforming goods into commodities. While initially a tool, currency manages to take control of the system that places value into things, becoming the dominant framework of reference.

<sup>iii</sup> Its revolutionary potential relays on people’s realization that they are able to self-organize and manage their lives without the state and state related institutions (Lefebvre, 2009). This realization emerges out of the unveiling of the contradictions between the *modus operandi* of the capitalist state, which as mentioned before, aims at homogenizing and fragmenting society (Lefebvre, 2009) imposing the rhythm of consumption onto the everyday life rhythms of people (Lefebvre, 1991a). Likewise, Lefebvre warns that the expansive reach of the SMP, able to conquer all social spaces, is also able to conquer spaces and relations of autogestion, turning the latter into co-gestion, as it becomes aligned with the SMP.

<sup>iv</sup> Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception follows the same line as Lefebvre’s considering perception to be a bodily practice which leads to an experience, instead of an individual inner interpretation of the outside world. This starting point positions the body as “the vehicle for perception and the object perceived, as the body in-the-world, which ‘knows’ itself by virtue of its active relation to this world” (Simonsen, 2005, p.9).

<sup>v</sup> Butler’s notion of precarity corresponds to a sense of alienation, in Lefebvre’s terms, as it entails the loss of control over one’s life as a consequence of extreme vulnerability to harm for being isolated from institutions of care.

<sup>vi</sup> Place-making is defined as the “set of social, political and material processes by which people interactively create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live. Place-making is an inherently networked process, constituted by the socio-spatial relationships that link individuals together through a common place-frame” (Pierce, Martin & Murphy, 2011, p.1)

<sup>vii</sup> The consistent yet contested presence of pro-Kurdish parties at the municipalities for the past twenty years, and in the National Assembly from 2015 onwards, has kept the myth of the nation-state unveiled

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(Watts, 2010). Their presence in formal politics, and their authority over the administration of spatial practices in pro-Kurdish municipalities has showed that Turkey is not an ethnic, linguistic, cultural or ideological homogeneous entity.

<sup>viii</sup> The mayor of Sur, Abdullah Demirbas, focused on building communal spaces like neighborhood houses, condolence houses, education support houses, women centers, cooperatives and bazaars, art and culture centres, or a clothes bank (Ozturk, 2013).

<sup>ix</sup> *TOKI - which is affiliated to the ministry of urbanization and environment- and the municipality signed a protocol of urban transformation in Ali Pasa and Lalebey. This protocol was integrated into the Ickale project from the municipality. Their plan was to expropriate the gecekondu areas (in Ickale) to then renovate the place (...) but the budget of the municipality was not enough to do that. So, for Ickale the deal was that TOKI would do the expropriations on behalf of the municipality and the latter would do the renovation works after. In return, the municipality would give political support to TOKI to expropriate and demolish Ali Pasa and Lalebey neighbourhoods. Of course, the municipality would conduct the cleaning works after demolition, and clean up the debris* (Muzaffer, May 2018, Personal Interview).

<sup>x</sup> In 2002, the Real Estate Bank's funds were transferred to TOKI. With the 2003 Mass Housing Law TOKI's functions were expanded to "granting individual and mass housing credits, granting credits for projects intended for improvement of rural architecture, transformation of squatter areas, preservation and restoration of historical and regional architecture..." etc (Devrim, 2016, p. 321). In 2004, all the duties and authorities of the urban land office were allocated to TOKI, altogether with 64.5 million of squared meters of land, which made the housing corporation one of the biggest urban land owners, and able to decide upon construction prices.

<sup>xii</sup> *Somehow, the local government and the state found some mutual interests. The urban transformation is, in fact, an ideological issue. It does not matter which municipality is involved in this. It is a wrong practice. The projects of the municipality were in parallel to the state's urban policies not only in regards to Surici but the entire city.... The construction sector is the main actor in economic development. Some participants of society happen to benefit from it so they pick it as a quick-fix. The Kurdish municipalities, instead of thinking of other solutions opted for the quick fix and did as the other municipalities have done. Most people started investing in construction sector and Diyarbakir became integrated in Turkey's neoliberal policies line. They tried to bring the city into this chaotic processes by rentals from the construction sector and the tourism sector. So this is what happened, since money is included all ethical concerns are left out* (Merthan, May 2018, Personal Interview).

<sup>xiii</sup> For more information see de l'Etat (Lefebvre, 2009).

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<sup>xiv</sup> The first, are differences which run against the mode of production of the state and threaten it, as the practice of autogestion does, whereas the second, are differences which are produced within the logics of the state and do not threaten its apparatus nor the functioning of the capitalist system (Wilson, 2013).

<sup>xv</sup> *Through our approval, they tried to legitimate the protocol. We all objected to this protocol but our struggle was for nothing because the protocols were already signed (...) The municipality told the residents that the urban transformation there was something good. This decision, when considered that it comes from a Kurdish municipality with a socialist party program seems quite problematic. The involvement of the municipality in this process is not mentioned in many places but one way or the other, everybody knows about it (...) Why did the municipality get involved in this plan? Because TOKI said "we have no political power but you have political power, we cannot convince people to leave their homes. If you support us, we will evict the slums". In the beginning the municipality attempted to do that but as the NGO's heard about it and reacted, the citizens did not leave their homes. The citizen said 'you are fooling us, we are not going anywhere' (Muzaffer, May 2018, Interview).*

<sup>xvi</sup> *The money was not enough, and the house that was offered was not free of charge. Before TOKI built apartment buildings in Colguzeli the area was totally empty and there was no infrastructure, the building of which was charged to those who moved there. Each person had to pay 1500TL for it. People are still paying for the flats and on top of that there are other costs which they didn't have in Sur like water or electricity. Now people are still in debt and cannot even sell their houses as they are not yet their own (Neighborhood representative, May 2018, Personal Interview)*

<sup>xvii</sup> *We had to participate (in the lottery), everyone had to participate because they were going to demolish there. The people who didn't want to give their houses didn't participate but they were forced to leave too in the end (...) I mean, they had already decided to demolish the whole area, so this means that the area will be demolished.... after they have decided it there is no way back, they demolish... so this is why people left, and as you see, they have demolished anyway no matter what (Selma, Personal Interview).*

<sup>xviii</sup> In fact, as Muzaffer lawyer and member of DBP, mentions, the party and the municipality are to a certain degree disconnected, as the party has no political power over the decisions of the municipalities, although does have some informal influence.

<sup>xix</sup> Pro-Kurdish parties alleged that the curfews did not count with any legal basis as no practice of implementation is included in the law without a declaration of State of Emergency.

<sup>xx</sup> This reading of alienation comes close to Agamben's notion of bare life, a life excluded from its form (1998). That is to say, a human which does not count with citizen rights. A human for whom Human Rights do not count as the pertinent nation-state does not recognize her as a citizen, and thus, it does not protect her from harm.

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<sup>xxi</sup> *Nobody knew that the conflict would come here. After Tahir Elci was shot they declared the curfew for a few days and a few days after they removed it for a few days and then, when they declared it for the last time it just went on forever. Everybody got stuck inside. Before the events happened, there were ditches and trenches on the street, the PKK started to prepare. Of course everybody knew of it but no one said anything. The youths were working at night, we didn't talk to them, actually. They would work during the night and by the day they'd be gone (Sarah, March 2018, interview)*

<sup>xxii</sup> *As I cannot walk very well, my grandson was carrying me on his shoulders. We had put a white cloth on a stick not to be shot at. After some steps a soldier came, he took me off my child's shoulders and started to beat him (Miriam, Personal Interview)*

<sup>xxiii</sup> *When we left there we had nothing, not a thing. We could not even gather all our clothes on a suitcase, there was no time. When they declared the curfew for the second time they said that there was going to be a bomb explosion here. So everyone ran and left (Miriam, Personal Interview)*

<sup>xxiv</sup> No technical assessments of the remaining structures were being made, and no permissions were obtained for demolition. Soyukaya (2017) points out that the demolition was in fact, in violation with the 2012 Urban Conservation Plan, and the World Heritage Management Plan.

<sup>xxv</sup> The drafted plan was revised by the Diyarbakir Chamber of Architects and Engineers of Turkey (TMMOB), and the latter pointed at no less than seventeen different violations to urban conservation laws. Nonetheless,

<sup>xxvi</sup> *I am not saying that they were good judges, or that they would rule against the government but after the chaotic period in jurisdiction which followed the coup and the State of Emergency... To put it bluntly, there is no longer any judicial authority that will give a ruling against the government. So we lost our hopes. Sur was a tragedy in all aspects. Everybody felt in this way. We could not find any grassroots or any political bases to support our petitions or suits (...) the period after the 15<sup>th</sup> of July was definitely a dark phase for NGO's and political parties (Musafer, Personal Interview)*

<sup>xxvii</sup> For more information look at chapter five, p. 46