Translation: My neighbourhood, my square, my trees, my water, my soil, my house, my land, my forest, my village, my city, my park. DON'T TOUCH

Analysing the sustainability of Istanbul's Urban Transformation Projects: The Impact on *Gecekondu* Communities

Author: Sinan Turgut

Student Number: 6557201

Supervisor: Dr Femke Van Noorloos

2nd Reader: Dr Griet Steel

Sustainable Development- International Development

Utrecht University

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Abstract

For this study I carried out research looking into the social, economic and environmental sustainability of urban transformation projects of *gecekondu* communities ('squatter settlements') in Istanbul. In-depth interviews with open-ended questions were carried out with a range of stakeholders. These included academics within the field of urban transformation, activists involved in rights to the city and housing rights, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, a private urban transformation planner, local experts from all three of the main occupational chambers in Istanbul, and finally community leaders from different communities where urban transformation has taken place or is taking place. I approached this study using concepts of neoliberal urbanism and gentrification as these seemed to be the most important issues, and of course the sustainability assessment framework of urban transformation projects. The main focus of the results was on the social sustainability dimension as the biggest problems of gentrification, stakeholder participation, rights to the city were all social issues. Overall, the study concluded that neoliberal urbanism has played a significant role in shaping urban transformation projects and along with the dynamics of the political system within Turkey, UT projects have been unsuccessful in promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability for *gecekondu* communities.

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Contents

1. Introduction

As urbanisation escalates around the world, urban cities are becoming more and more densely populated and are struggling to accommodate the increasing population, with regards to energy supply, waste management and adequate housing. Dwellings, industries and business sectors have been expanding towards city boundaries causing occupation of agricultural lands and forests. These regions, the outskirts of cities, can be disadvantaged by a lack of infrastructure services, health and education facilities, and water and sanitation facilities. As the debate on climate change becomes more crucial, urbanisation has become a central problem around the world (Karakayaci, 2016). This is mainly due to the fact that urbanisation opens the path to increased commercialisation, deforestation and higher levels of pollution. Consumption levels also tend to be higher for those living in urban areas leading to greater resource degradation.

Currently more than half of the world's population live in urban areas and this is estimated to increase to 70% by 2050 (Leary & McCarthy, 2013). Urban living may offer benefits such as greater job opportunities and higher incomes but also comes with challenges, especially if it is at an unprecedented rate. Rapid urban growth can have impacts on climate change, politics, transport, infrastructure, employment, inequality just to name a few.

Urbanisation increased significantly in Turkey as industrialisation gained momentum after 1950. 1.5 million migrants arrived into urban areas between 1950-1960, half of which targeted the four largest cities. Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey by population with nearly a quarter of the country's whole population living there. Its current population is 15.5 million not including an estimated 1-3 million refugees from Syria and Central Asia. With a land area of 5343 square kilometres, it has a population density of 2,523 people per square kilometre. It is regarded as the country's economic, cultural, and historical heart, and forms one of the largest urban agglomerations in Europe and the fifth-largest city in the world by population within city limits. After the independence of Turkey in 1923, public factories were built at a rapid pace and the railroad networks were strengthened. In 1939, a French urban planner, Henry Prost, was asked to make a new urban plan for Istanbul. He designed a city with large boulevards full of cars with industry cluttered around the Golden Horn, the primary inlet of the Bosphorus (Ekümenopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir, 2012).

Until 1950, the Turkish economy was mainly based on agriculture and Istanbul had a population of only 983,000. Liberal reforms were introduced after the 1950 elections opening up the Turkish economy to global markets and thus industrialisation (Gonder, 2020). With the aid of the Marshall Funds, tram tracks were replaced by roads and the city was well on its way to becoming a car city. Migration of labourers into the city increased but factory and business owners did not provide their workers with housing. This led to the newcomers to build squatter settlements commonly referred to as *gecekondu*, which have been a crucial

component of the urban fabric of Istanbul and other major Turkish cities. *Gece* means 'night' and *kondu* 'landed', hence *gecekondu* translates as 'landed at night'. With the opening of the first bridge in Istanbul in 1973, the Bosphorus bridge, the *gecekondu* neighbourhoods flourished along the E-5 highway, which is essentially the road that is connecting the bridge to the rest of the city. Car traffic meanwhile had increased six fold in 15 years. The rapid increase in squatter developments was also partially due to the inadequacy of local and national administrations to meet the increasing demand for housing. Its usage denotes a bottom-up, spontaneous action as they were built mainly with community support and informal economy (Korkmaz & Balaban, 2020).

Despite emerging as a self-help solution, *gecekondu's* have been associated with unsafe and unhealthy living conditions as well as poverty and social segregation. Along with the added risk of an expected major earthquake, a growing urgency has developed for the transformation of these high-risk *gecekondu's* with the aim of increasing the resilience. As the Minister of Environment and Urbanisation states: "*6.5 million houses have to be renewed in order to clean our country from shed-like and illegal buildings and structures under the risk of disaster…We have started a transformation campaign in order to perform this project. The duty of the Ministry is to organise disaster risk mediated urban transformation.*" (Kurtulus, 2011)

Earthquakes in Turkey are the most significant types of hazards, which also initiate floods and landslides. More than 17,000 people lost their lives in the 1999 Izmit earthquake. In the most recent major earthquake in Van, in 2011, 604 people were killed, and 2260 buildings destroyed (Cabuk et al, 2013). There have been several other smaller earthquakes since. As countries shift from a "culture of reactive response and recovery from disasters to proactive risk reduction and safety defined with the tools of improving resilience" (UNISDR, 2009), Turkey has also taken the opportunity to use disaster risk as the main reason for UT projects by introducing the Law on the Regeneration of Areas under the Risk of Disasters, No. 6306. (Guzey, 2015). National and local governments began to develop these UT projects soon after the current AKP government came into power in 2002. In the last decade the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation, The Turkish Mass Housing Association (TOKI), and the Municipalities have come together forming an urban coalition with the goal of increasing the flow of finance to the housing sector, "particularly to large housing developments for the upper-income groups" (Kurtulus, 2011). However, there is no research showing that urban transformation during the last 20 years has been sustainable with regards to its social, environmental and economic implications, and so it is yet to be comprehensively assessed (Korkmaz & Balaban, 2020).

1.1 Problem Definition & Knowledge Gap

There has been a radical shift in the housing market in Turkey from a 'populist' to 'neo-liberal' stance, and large urban transformation (mentioned as UT here onwards) projects have been the main mechanism to implement this change. However, UT projects have been receiving a great amount of criticism from academics and civil organisations. They argue that the projects are a land parcel marketing strategy of the municipalities and TOKI, designed to benefit the new elite (Guzey, 2012; Kurtulus, 2006; Turkun 2011; Ulusoy, 2008). To make matters worse, there seems to be a single recipe of transformation which is poorly integrated into a planned urban development strategy as projects are more focused on individual building transformation. As Cabuk et al. (2013) state: "*Regeneration projects as well as the others in the country, are likely to be prepared only within the administratively designated local areas, ending up with the ignorance of an integrated planning approach and the relationships with the rest of the region or the city*". It has become a government-assisted tool for implementing physical restricting and gentrification in central city areas with high expectations of urban land rent (Guzey, 2015). Therefore, the problem is that UT projects are carried out with the sole priority of making profits and hence massively lack social, economic and environmental sustainability. In contrast it worsens these factors by creating a greater social divide, through gentrification, by hindering transportation links, and producing higher congestion within the area, to name a few (Korkmaz & Balaban, 2020). Thus, the knowledge gap that this research will aim to contribute towards is the lack of understanding of social, environmental and economic sustainability within UT projects in Istanbul, Turkey.

1.2 Research relevance

Urbanisation in Turkey is ongoing at an unprecedented rate, with both rural-urban migrations within the country and migrants coming from other countries. Consequently, urban transformation has also gained momentum and is necessary to increase resilience against the earthquake that Istanbul awaits. However, from preliminary research it is evident that the UT projects are having dire negative implications on social, economic and environmental sustainability and it is debatable whether they currently do increase resilience against a potential disaster, and for whom. Istanbul has the largest population and the greatest population density in Turkey and in the whole region. Millions of people's lives are at risk from the earthquake and so it is important that UT is carried out with the correct principles with the aim to positively impact the environment, the economy and the social wellness of the communities living there. It is highly relevant to study what is being done wrong within the current projects and how can this be improved.

In this sense, UT is seen as a way to upgrade existing under-developed and declined places to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Teferi and

Newman, 2018; Opoku and Akotia, 2020). UT is seen to drive towards the progress of achieving a number of SGDs, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 2 (End Hunger), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) (Opoku, 2019; Opoku and Akotia, 2020) and SDG 11 (Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable.

Research aim & questions

Thus, the aim of the research is to investigate the social, economic and environmental sustainability of current and past UT projects in Istanbul. The research question formulated from this is:

Through the perspective of stakeholders, how has neoliberal urbanism shaped urban transformation, and to what extent has this impacted the sustainability of *gecekondu* communities in Istanbul, with an emphasis on social sustainability?

1. How has neoliberal urbanism shaped UT projects in Istanbul's *gecekondu's*?

2. To what extent is UT in Istanbul inclusive of the relevant* stakeholders?

3. Through the use of a sustainability assessment framework, in which ways do Istanbul's UT projects promote social, economic and environmental sustainability of *gecekondu* communities?

* derived through literature

2. Regional background

Turkey is a rapidly urbanising country whereby the urban population is estimated to reach 84% in 2050. Istanbul sits in between the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea, measuring 30-kilometres from North to South. For a long period of time, only the lower third of the city was inhabited whilst the top two thirds remained as natural areas. This is a large jump from 1950 where the urban population was only 24.8% in the country. Following the 1980 fascist coup, neoliberalism was introduced to Turkey and nearly all public investments were privatised (Ekümenopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir, 2012). Another wave of economic and political reforms was introduced promoting more migration. The population doubled from 2.7 million in 1980 to 5.4 million in 1985. (Ekümenopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir, 2012). As industrialisation grew, the city began to be increasingly populated and developed, thus expanding residential areas to the top two thirds of the city, resulting in rapidly reducing natural areas (Ekümenopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir, 2012). Figure 1 gives a visual understanding of how urbanisation has spread in the city between 1975 to 2010.

Turkey witnessed its most recent economic boom between the years 2000 and 2009 where population grew significantly from 8.8 million to 14 million people (Gonder, 2020).Turkey faces a major challenged in accommodating these populations and managing these densely populated cities and this is the reason why Istanbul has been chosen as the research location for this paper (Balaban, 2012).
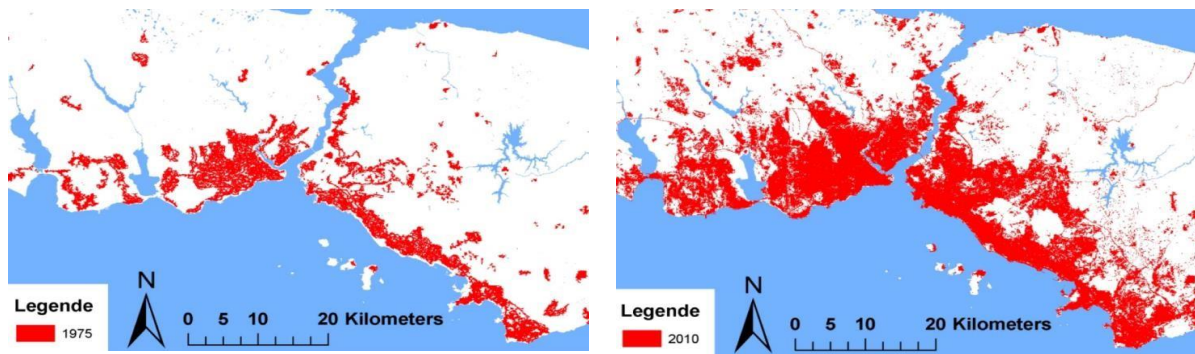
Figure 1: Map showing the increase in urban settlements in Istanbul for 1975 and 2010 (Gonder, 2020)

Gecekondu's began to form and appear in the 1940's when masses of people began to migrate to Istanbul with the introduction of new agricultural technologies and transport links (Guzey, 2006). At the time, industrialists and the government welcomed new migrants as it offered opportunities for cheap labour, however due to legal housing provisions in the country, they did not provide additional housing for the migrants. Hence, *gecekondu's* were built by the migrants on public or unoccupied land, as make-shift housing (Guzey, 2006). At first, these areas were met with a negative reaction by the government who chose to demolish the homes and instead create social housing. After however, the approach changed to attempted

acceptance of *gecekondu* neighbourhoods and legalising them through a series of amnesty laws. Despite legislation, *gecekondus* were still renowned for being problem neighbourhoods and not accepted as equal residents (Guzey, 2006).

This attitude continued through until the 1980s coup and privatisation wave, whereby *gecekondu's* had filled almost 50% of the urban space. Following these events, transformation of central areas became the norm whereby a primary concern of the local municipalities was join global urban competition to increase the potential of physical and aesthetic wealth of the city (Guzey, 2006). In order to gain profit, transforming run-down *Gecekondu* neighbourhoods in the cities' most appealing locations into high class, elite areas has been the biggest instrument, with cities racing to renew the urban neighbourhoods within their jurisdictions (Guzey, 2006; Dundar, 2002).

The Law on the Transformation of Areas Under the Risk of Disasters, No. 6306 was created and passed on 16/05/2012, and the Turkish government stated that *"transformation is now for increasing the resilience of societies to natural disasters within the scope of mitigation strategies"* (Turkun, 2011). Conveniently, areas that are most under disaster risk happen to be *gecekondu's*, and the government are renowned to use this law in their favour as an excuse to transform neighbourhoods that are visually unappealing for the city (Guzey, 2006). The evolution of the law 6306 is shown in Figure 2.

Year	Law #	Agenda
2005	5393	Municipalities needed authorization from city council for urban transformation
2010	5998	An amendment to the previous law permitted the municipality to consider any site that is under earthquake risk for urban transformation
2012	6306	This law allows municipality, TOKI (the Housing Development Administration of Turkey), and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism carry out renewal projects even outside the risk areas. It basically gives them the right to decide which areas come under disaster risk.

Figure 2:The evolution of Disaster Risk Law 6306 (The Disaster Before the Disaster: Building Resilience in Istanbul, 2021)

The state is the central authority in UT projects, which permits municipalities and the private sector, such as investors, developers, landowners and advisors, to be a part UT projects. The private sector are seen to be a beneficial stakeholder as they have ties with foreign capital, thus influencing Turkey's role in global markets (Guzey, 2006). The stakeholders who partake in planning UT projects tend to support the neoliberal agenda of increasing urban land rents and real estate development. The choice of stakeholders is shaped by institutional regulations,

the motivation to increase urban profits, and the support of ownership-based development plans (Turkun, 2011).

The construction industry has thrived since the introduction of UT projects and the creation of high-end neighbourhoods, and with this has been the introduction of more migrants. The Sultan Mehmet Bridge, for example, was built in 1988 also contributed to this increase in population as more *gecekondu's*, more shopping malls and more gated communities were constructed, at the cost of deforestation. TOKI along with local municipalities started the process of transferring vacated industrial estates, public schools, hospitals, and worker neighbourhoods to domestic and foreign capital. Workers, who had built the city, were forcibly pushed to the outskirts of the city isolating them from the rest of the population and their businesses (Ekümenopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir, 2012). Furthermore, historic buildings are also at risk of being disregarded and demolished, with the impact of irreversible cultural loss and damage (Adanalı, 2011).

3. <u>Theoretical framework</u>

3.1 Urban Transformation and Urbanisation

The urban population is growing rapidly by almost 73 million people per year, resulting in almost half of the world residing in cities. This is primarily due to urban areas being renowned for creating economic growth for many, a notion promoted by the fact that these areas are responsible for producing 70% of global gross product (Opoku and Akotia, 2020). Such urbanisation has resulted in the need to upgrade cities, which impact social, economic and environmental aspects of the quality of life of inhabitants (Roberts et al., 2016). Thus develops the concept of UT in order to create sustainable development in cities (Opoku and Akotia, 2020). Roberts et al. (2016) define UT as a

> "*Comprehensive and integrated vision and action which seeks to resolve urban problems and bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change or offers opportunities for improvement*".

Since the 1980s, transformation of urban quarters has become a major instrument of urban development policies. Due to the complexity of urban systems, UT must account for socio-economic and environmental issues as well as physical issues. The idea of UT has been reshaped over the years to a more holistic approach which pays attention to place-specific strategies (Guzey, 2006).

A crucial component of sustainable UT is the active effort to disrupt and prevent any dominating relationships of oppressors that shatter democracy, by integrating a range of actors (Miraftab, 2009). This is achieved through involving all stakeholders in urban planning as well as those living in the UT area to find solutions and ways to create a transformative space beneficial to all (Miraftab, 2009). To conceptualise a new transformed place, actors such as teachers, residents, chambers, planners, community activists and both the employed and unemployed should be considered and have the opportunity to participate in change (Miraftab, 2009). By involving such a range of stakeholders, a shared vision can be developed and advanced in creating an alternative future (Miraftab, 2009). Hence, UT is a multidisciplinary concept which must consult with actors in the fields of urban development, the government, economy, and local communities to name a few (Leary & McCarthy, 2013).

3.2 Neoliberal Urbanism and UT

However, in a realistic setting, UT can also take the form of a series of patchwork activities, under the guide of contributing to redevelopment and transformation (Steel et al. 2017). This is in the sense of acquiring land in small parts and upgrading its contents with the goal to appropriate land and grow value of such land (Steel et al., 2017). This often does not consider surrounding neighbourhoods and impacts of UT projects in such areas. Although the term gentrification is rarely used here in academic discourses, Steel et al. (2017) argue that urban redevelopment can entail aspects of gentrification through appropriating land and changing it to a point where the residents can no longer live there. This is through the displacement of groups, which tend to be the vulnerable, in order to create space for real estate infrastructure, which in turn increases the value of land and property. This can be to an extent where the lower class, or the urban poor, can no longer afford to live in the area. As such, UT and gentrification cannot be judged as separate entities (Steel et al., 2017). However, before moving to gentrification, it is first important to understand UT within the context of neoliberal urbanism as they have close ties with one another. David Harvey defines neoliberalism as

> *"a political-economic theory and rhetorical framework that rests on the notion that freedom, justice, and well-being are best guaranteed by a political economic system, undergirded by state power, that promotes private property, open markets, and free trade"* (Harvey, 1989).

In other words, neoliberal policies tend to entail the privatisation of public services and deregulation of markets. Neoliberal principles gained popularity during the 1980s and led to an increase in urbanisation, thus consolidating the neoliberal agenda. Vives Miro (2011) defines neoliberal urbanism as

> *"a form of urbanism subordinated to the dictates of capital, where urban powers attempt to position their cities in higher positions of the hierarchical global urban network in which competitiveness is the key"*

Consequently, literature often relates neoliberal urbanism to the exploitation and expansion of geographical and physical assets to gain greater economic benefits. These tend to be associated with global value chains and competition between various parties. As such, the shift towards neoliberal economic policies has led to a global pattern of increased public investments serving the interests of the private sector and high-status or authority figures (Kirkpatrick and Smith, 2011). Large-scale urban development projects now contribute a significant share to the new urban policy and neoliberal shift (Swyngedouw et al., 2002), as regional governments encourage and actively facilitate capital investment, moving from a "managerial" to "entrepreneurial" role (Harvey, 1989). This approach has steered the way to

more neoliberal, supply-oriented policies with the intention of attracting greater capital investment and accumulation.

Some argue that neoliberal urbanism should not be thought of solely as a collection of economic urban policies but rather a joint network of rationalities, from both the public and private sectors, to achieve hegemonic power (Miraftab, 2009; Brown, 2003). This argument is often used to justify the privatisation of basic needs such as water and housing. Such arguments and neoliberal policies promote and propound the thought that economic growth requires individual economic responsibility. Everyone must pay and be able to contribute towards their own basic needs, as opposed to being 'free-riders' (Miraftab, 2009). However, neoliberal urban policies often tend to ignore that not everyone is equal, and thus are not always fair (Harvey, 2003) because not everyone can afford to pay as much as their neighbour. In support of this, one's argument could follow that of Thomas Jefferson: *"There is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequal's".* This is due to the fact that by ignoring the differences between classes, the rich get richer and the poor grow poorer. The subsequent widening of class divisions results in less than equal opportunities for people of different classes, hence the 'unequal treatment' Jefferson refers to (Harvey, 2003). The privatisation of resources and basic needs leads to a distinct difference in quality of life as neoliberal policies often mean that the more one can afford, the better resources they can access to improve their socio-economic circumstances. Areas of a city then become more 'ghettoized', and slums or run-down neighbourhoods appear as the poor occupy areas with cheaper real estate while the rich migrate to upper-class, more expensive and centrally located areas (Harvey, 2003). Harvey (2003) recognises that freedom in markets and the privatisation of goods will always inevitably create a monopoly power based on economic hierarchy. In turn, he reaches the conclusion that the freer the market, the larger the monopoly power and the larger the inequalities there are between classes. Thus, this creates a relationship between neoliberal urban policies and their resulting negative impacts on the quality of life of the urban poor (Harvey, 2003). Consequently, literature has often characterised UT projects in neoliberal urban environments by their undemocratic intentions, more elite-driven interests, and their resulting impacts on different classes. This returns the focus back to a previously mentioned key concept in this study: Gentrification.

3.3 Gentrification

Gentrification is a key concept in this research and defines the process of demographic change in which neighbourhoods which predominantly hold older, low income and working-class residents face an influx of middle and upper-class, highly educated individuals (Rigolon and Németh, 2019; Smith, 1998; Marcuse, 1985). Gentrification theory provides a way to develop the understanding of development between classes, and how dispossession fits into this. This supports Deutsche's (1996) statement on gentrification which claims it is "the residential

component of urban redevelopment" (Rigolon and Németh, 2019). Globally, there have been capitalist developments for reshaping urban cities; gentrification theory provides a tool to understand how this is also a process of growing the socio-spatial inequalities in society. López-Morales (2015) argues that many scholars have wrongly claimed that gentrification is only an economic force; rather he states that it is fundamentally a political conflict. His article goes further to state that gentrification is one of the most significant, socially unjust processes affecting cities in recent times, and thus the theory helps force scholars to confront and discuss the impacts of neoliberal policies so as to mitigate consequences. One argument in favour of gentrification is the pursuit of better, higher use of land by the more affluent sectors in society through increasing rent prices, despite these tending to benefit only middle and upper-class divisions (López-Morales, 2015). A large impact of such gentrification is the social impact on society through the loss of space for social reproduction and the forced displacement of existing multi-generation residents and lower-class groups within society (Rigolon and Németh, 2019). Literature indicates that displacement through increasing rent prices is evident in both the global south and the global north. However, in the global north it is also common to see displacement through forced evictions (Chapple and Zuk, 2016; Kennedy and Leonard, 2001). Such change in demographics also impacts local businesses, culture, social networking and neighbourhood dynamics, all of which are also displaced in the process of gentrification (Rigolon and Németh, 2019; DeVerteuil, 2012).

Such processes of displacement, local community loss and demographic change begin to exist once the economy and economic benefits are prioritised higher than any other value to decision-makers for UT (López-Morales, 2015). Such decisions can impact human welfare, safety and access to basic necessities such as housing, water and opportunities. Negative impacts are often more harmful to the underprivileged, the urban poor and less educated, lower income people, people of colour and politically marginalised communities (Harvey, 2008; Rigolon and Németh, 2019). As a result, scholars, activists, community leaders and city planners are persistently pursuing different forms of resistance to negate the harmful consequences of gentrification (Rigolon and Németh, 2019).

Explanations and literature on gentrification often focus on supply versus demand arguments (Guzey, 2006; Blasius et al., 2016). The demand side focus revolves around consumption-oriented, individual consumer perspectives. This side argues that wealthy, well-educated middle and upper-class people move in to neighbourhoods which house lower-income working-class residents, and thereby drive up prices of homes (Guzey, 2006; Zapatka and Beck, 2020; Ley, 1996; Zukin, 1989). This point of view suggests it is the people (the 'gentrifiers') who move into the area that are causing the change in social class, or the demographic change if you will, in areas of development. The other side of the argument is the supply perspective. This view argues that that the driving force of the displacement of lower-class citizens is in the actions of estate agents, property investors and profit-oriented organisations increasing rent gaps and property values. (Guzey, 2006). Scholars such as Smith

(2002) thus argue that gentrification is not due to the demand of gentrifiers, but rather because of the developers who are creating the supply for the gentrifiers to later move into.

Here it seems reasonable to question under what guise are developers creating these more expensive neighbourhoods and on what grounds are they displacing residents and increasing rent prices. Smith (2002) contends that the driving mechanisms of gentrification is actually transformation policies. Sassen (1991) identifies that up until the 1970's, the term gentrification was more renowned for rehabilitating low-income, rundown or decaying housing to transform them into improved areas (Guzey, 2006). However, in the 1980's it became evident that this was part of a broader plan. Smith (2002) argues that this was the beginning of a series of strategies, incorporating private organisations to improve the city's urban appearance, under the name of transformation. It was seen that gentrification was emerging as a noticeable spatial element of transformation in attempts to gain status in the global urban competition between capital cities (Smith, 2002). In fact, as Guzey (2006) points out, the competition between cities revolves much around global capital, such that cities are restructuring and rearranging to secure monetary advantages over their supposed competitors.

For this reason, scholars argue that transformation mostly follows the 'supply' side of the argument with gentrification being a bi-product of 'selling cities' to change the status of the city to be high profile and prestigious (Smith, 2002; Beauregard,1991; Guzey, 2006). With the development of improved properties with upgraded access in central locations comes the increase in property values, so much so that the current residents are unable to afford living there, and thus the arrival of new middle- and upper- class immigrants and the creation of gentrified areas (Beauregard,1991). This also comes hand in hand with the increase in private investments, subsidies and development on public land in order to improve the political, economic and social welfare of urban space. Hence by the late 1990's, gentrification became the result of public planning using both public and private capital (Smith, 2002).

This can be seen as a positive, and sometimes necessary, movement for many communities that have been deteriorating over the years to bring in greater capital to the area. However, as Smith (2002) states, developers and economic institutions have now seen the potential of low-income neighbourhoods and hence these have become more like "systemic targets". Hence, one can argue that large scale UT projects may benefit and raise the economic status of a city, but this is often at the expense of the lower-class residents in the city. Interestingly, despite UT resulting in gentrification through the displacement of the urban poor and the working class, it is largely ignored and considered a "dirty word" amongst politicians, developers and investors. Rather the financial benefits and incentive of property and land capital is the focus, despite this predominantly benefitting the higher classes, with gentrification often seen as an unfortunate or unprecedented but necessary outcome of UT (Guzey, 2006; Atkinson, 2001).

3.4 Rights to the city

This brings in the concept of one's right to the city and how UT impacts this. Dworkins' argument explains that the existence of rights is specifically to prevent the democratic majority passing legislation that is discriminatory to minorities or unjust to anyone (Attoh, 2011). Much of the literature of rights to the city is derived through the work of Henri Lefebvre. A key aspect of Lefebvre's work is that he argues the right to the city is a consequence of the labour and daily activities of people who work and live in the city (Lefebvre, 1991). According to Lefebvre, the right to the city hence entails a number of significant aspects for inhabitants including the right to live and reside in the city, and the right to feel unalienated within the city's urban life (Attoh, 2011; Lefebvre, 1991).

Many other scholars have added and provided alternatives to what the right to the city actually entails. Some say that the right to the city means a socio-economic right, which includes a right to natural resources (Phillips and Gilbert, 2005) and to housing (Marcuse, 2008). Others state that it is a right to define space (Gibson, 2005) or a right to design space (Van Deusan, 2005). Further literature has mentioned that the right to the city involves the ability to stand against police brutality and state overreach (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009). In other words, a right to the city also means political autonomy and choice. A particularly interesting and unique definition by Harvey (2003) is that the right to the city is not simply the right to access pre-existing structures, but also the right to adjust and change the city to how one likes it. This means that within the right to the city is the right to be a part of decision-making surrounding changes and to be able to impact and change the city in one's favour. It is clear through the numerous contributions of how the right to a city is defined, that there are conflicts and distinctions between scholars, and that there is yet to be a clear definition of what it means. One could argue that as a result of differences in definition, it is easier for ones' rights to the city to be exploited. Harvey (2003) argues that global capitalism and urban life could have been very different if the UN declaration's clauses on the derivative rights of labour were strictly enforced. These clauses included the right to organise, reasonable living standards and job security. Furthermore, Miraftab (2009) debates that developing the right to the city to improve social inclusion in cities would entail:

- · Liberty, freedom and the benefit of the city life for all
- · Transparency, equity and efficiency in city administrations
- · Participation and respect in local democratic decision making
- · Recognition of diversity in economic, social and cultural life
- · Reducing poverty, social exclusion and urban violence.

This is in accord with what Lefebvre and other scholars have said with regards to the right to live and reside, the right to feel unalienated, the right to define and design, and the right to stand against state overreach.

Attoh (2011) takes the debate further by discussing what kind of right is the right to the city. He argues that it is important to not only acknowledge the existence of different types of rights, but also that the varying understanding of rights as we have discussed are not necessarily commensurable. Nevertheless, the right to the city gives us the ability to form connections between *"the rights to housing, rights against police abuse, rights to public participation in urban design, rights against established properly laws, and the rights to a communal good"*.

The post-apartheid regime in South Africa is a good example to better understand rights to the city within the context of neoliberalism. When the apartheid regime came to an end in 1996, political and economic liberation was achieved. However, this did not necessarily mean that all citizens gained their rights to the city. Despite been granted political citizenship, Black South Africans, who had been socially and economically oppressed for decades, became fee-paying customers of public and private providers for basic needs and services (Miraftab, 2009). By ignoring the differences in backgrounds that Black South Africans had come from pre-apartheid liberation, this neoliberal process shows how citizens can be included symbolically by giving everyone equal rights to be citizens and a part of the decision-making processes but in actual fact excluded citizens materially. Black South Africans who were once excluded due to their race, were then excluded due to their inability to afford housing and water and thus still being evicted, albeit the focus changing from racial discrimination to economic gain as a whole (Miraftab, 2009). Miraftab's (2009) article quotes one resident who campaigns to not be evicted from their home saying they are defending their right to basic needs including shelter and water, and generally their right to the city. She quotes Robert Wilcox stating that the battle is against:

> "[The] privatization of these basic rights, which leads to [the] dehumanisation of the poor and of those who cannot afford them" (Miraftab, 2009)

3.5 Sustainable UT Framework

There are several different sustainability assessment frameworks that can be used to examine the sustainability of UT projects. Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) assessed the sustainability performance of the largest North Ankara UT project and before doing so, assessed the most common indicator-based sustainability frameworks. This included the frameworks of Hemphill et al. (2004), Laprise, Lufkin, and Rey (2015), Larsson (2012) and Couch and Dennemann (2000). They decided that the most appropriate was Couch and Dennemann's

(2000) Sustainability Assessment Framework which they then chose to adapt to better suit their research in Ankara, Turkey. Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) adapted framework is presented in Figure 3 below. Their research was based on qualitative and quantitative information which was gathered through interviews with key actors in UT, surveys with the users and beneficiaries of UT and finally, researcher observations. These methods are highly suitable for contexts where data availability and collection are problematic, as it is in Turkey and has worsened by the COVID pandemic. With this framework the sustainability performance of a project was classified first by broad dimensions of social, economic and environmental sustainability (Column 1). These then were broken down into 8 themes including participation of stakeholders, land use and buildings, economy and jobs, transportation, environmental pollution, energy use, waste management, and open spaces and wildlife (Column 2). Finally, 20 indicators were created which fit into the themes (Column 3) which is what Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) surveys and interviews revolved around.

Dimensions		Indicators	Data and Information Sources [a]
Social	Participation of Stakeholders	Encourage decision-making and action-taking at the local level	S, I, RO
		Community involvement in developing the project	S, I, RO
		Under-represented groups are taken into account sufficiently	S, I, RO
	Land Use and Buildings	Amenities/services are provided locally	S, I, RO
		Low capacitated residents are provided with improved access	S, I, RO
		Building are reused or conserved	I, RO
Economic	Economy and Jobs	Increased chances for employment	S, I, RO
		Improved environmental awareness of local businesses	S, I, RO
		Support local employment by creating new jobs around the project site	I, RO
Environmental	Transportation	Walking &cycling are encouraged	S, I, RO
		Public transport use is encouraged	S, I, RO
		Private car use and traffic is discouraged	S, I, RO
	Environmental Pollution	Reduced levels of noise, air and water pollution	I, RO
	Energy Use	Maximization of efficiency in energy use	S, I, RO
		Renewable energy generation and use	I, RO
	Waste Management	Reduced waste generation	I, RO
		Encourage recycling, reuse and/or repair	S, I, RO
	Open Spaces and Wildlife	Increase the sum of green space per capita	S, I, RO
		Supporting connection with the city's green axis created	I, RO
		Support the use of open spaces for public c interest	S, I, RO

[a] Data and Information Sources: S: Surveys with users, I: Interviews with actors who acted role in planning process, RO: Researcher's Observation.
Source: Based on Couch and Dennemann (2000).

Figure 3: Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) adapted framework, originally taken from Couch and Dennemann (2000)

Social Sustainability

In the social dimension, Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) found participation and equity, in decision-making and in the implementation processes of UT, to be key features within their study. The authors observed that there were formal agreements in place from 2007, which ensured the rights-owners would be able to partake in decision-making processes. However, it was found that this tended to be unilateral with the municipality simply sharing information rather than interacting and considering the community's views in the project. Hence, the project was considered to have low social sustainability in this aspect as survey respondents felt their expectations and demands had been disregarded (Korkmaz and Balaban, 2020)

Another key aspect which prominently stood out in Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) study is the lack of honest communication and respect for deadlines the investors and municipality are said to have had. One example given in their research from the Ankara project is that a major central promise made to the people was that the project would be completed within 3 years. This, however, ended up taking almost 8 years and the extreme delay resulted in several problems in the everyday lives of the rights-holders, a point emphasized through the duration of data collection in Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) study.

Further key aspects of the social sustainability dimension assessed in Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) study are the use of land, and how accessibility and the inhabitants changed with the UT project. The majority of survey respondents in the Ankara study found they were still able to access their needs everyday around the project. Interestingly, the researchers observed that there were many shops that were empty which they deduced is due to the fact that settlers and immigrants had yet to move into the area. This also resulted in some shops being closed down as there were not enough customers in the area (Korkmaz and Balaban, 2020). To conclude the results of the social sustainability dimension, Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) stated that that due to the aforementioned reasons and more, the UT project barely contributed to social sustainability in the area.

Economic Sustainability

In terms of economic sustainability, Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) state that it is essential for UT projects to contribute to local economic growth, in both the area of the project as well as in nearby towns. A primary aspect of this should be employment prospects throughout the UT project, in the initial planning stages, during the implementation and in the long-term once the project has been completed. A particular focus should be on the welfare of minority or excluded social groups such as the youth and women (Korkmaz and Balaban, 2020). Another significant aspect of economic sustainability is the reduction in costs and increased savings of the communities impacted by the UT projects. A major way in which UT projects can contribute to this is through providing accommodation to people who are employed around the UT area so as to decrease travel needs and costs; this also can contribute to environmental sustainability by decreasing transport use, hence decreasing carbon emissions (Korkmaz and Balaban, 2020).

In the Ankara project, Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) found that there were few job opportunities for locals with only a few people from surrounding neighbourhoods employed. Another noteworthy point from their research is that there were no explicit policies in place to support or encourage women to partake in the business aspect of the project (Korkmaz and Balaban, 2020). These are both particularly encouraged for economic sustainability.

Environmental Sustainability

Considerations for environmental sustainability include pollution reduction, encouragement of energy consumption reduction and the use of sustainable and renewable energy sources, organised transportation, and efficient waste management. Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) argue that UT must specifically contribute to some, if not all, of these aspects in the city surrounding the project. In the results of their study, Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) found that the Ankara UT project fell short in considering access by public transport and less-energy consuming modes of travel. In fact, they found that post-project completion, public transport and pedestrian walkways were disorganised, and services were rare and irregular with a bus to the city centre occurring only once every 45 minutes. These observations were also confirmed by interviewees and survey respondents in the study (Korkmaz and Balaban 2020). Such outcomes instead promote the use of private individual cars, rather than more sustainable modes of transport. As well as the obvious increase in pollution through carbon emissions this results in, it also intensifies issues such as parking and congestion in the city. Hence, Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) found there was very little consideration and thought towards reducing pollution in the city.

Furthermore, the researchers also found that there was no sustainable waste collection or management, nor recycling of materials or rubbish in the transformed area (Korkmaz and Balaban, 2020). It was also observed that there was no separation of different types of wastes, rather all waste was collected together by the municipality.

4. <u>Research Methods</u>

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology for how this thesis was carried out. The structure is as follows: initial project stages, data collection and finally, interview coding and analysis. The methodology is principally "*the scientific procedures followed, and tools employed in answering the research question*" (Babbie and Mouten, 2002). Therefore, this chapter details the processes involved in finding the answers to the research questions and sub-questions formulated in this study. A location-specific case study approach was followed with data collected from stakeholders involved in UT projects in Istanbul, Turkey. The purpose for using a case study approach, as expressed by Creswell (2007), is that it can provide a "*multi-perspective and multi-sectoral analysis*". This is due to the fact that several stakeholders and viewpoints can be considered whilst simultaneously being able to analyse the relationship between such stakeholders (Odili, 2018).

4.2 Initial Stages

A proposal outlining the project, with proposed research questions and method was submitted before data collection could begin. This entailed a literature review and the need to research and develop networks to contact for interviews in Istanbul. Once the proposal was approved, the interview guide was be developed.

4.3 Data Collection

This study adopted a qualitative data collection approach as the central means for information as it aimed at finding perspectives and opinions of stakeholders of different backgrounds. This could not have been gathered through quantitative data as extensively (Reja et al., 2003). The type of qualitative data collected was chosen to be semi-structured interviews consisting of a series of open-ended questions. Interviews of this nature are suitable for experts and professionals because they are familiar with organised meetings and expect efficient use of their time due to busy schedules (Bernard, 2011).

Questions were formed within a written interview guide which was followed through each of the interviews. This can be found in Appendix 3. The benefits of creating and using an interview guide is that the responses provide a basis for qualitative data which can be compared, and data collection can be easily replicated within different environments in the future (Bernard, 2011). The interview guide consisted of a number of open-ended questions with probes to gather further information or follow-up on responses where needed. This was deemed most fitting for this study as interviewees have the opportunity to speak freely and can express their opinion, without the issue of being limited or influenced by the researcher's outlook (Reja et al., 2003). Moreover, open ended questions can result in new data to add to

literature from unanticipated and spontaneous responses of participants, and the reduction in bias which is more likely to occur using closed questions (Reja et al., 2003).

The interview guide was created through using the results of Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) Ankara sustainability framework, which can be found in Appendix 1, as well as other literature on sustainable UT. The questions differed slightly between different stakeholders, as for example community leaders were asked more specific questions in regards to their neighbourhoods, but in general questions focused on concepts including:

- Social, environmental and economic sustainability
- Stakeholder participation of *gecekondu* communities
- Problems in achieving sustainable UT
- Details about UT projects within a particular neighbourhood

Interviewees were specifically chosen, through purposive sampling, and revolved around people who play a role in or have expertise in local UT projects in Istanbul, as direct knowledge was essential to understand UT projects in the location (Babbie and Mouton, 2002; Kothari, 2004). To gather as much of a holistic view as possible of the UT projects in Istanbul, a diverse group of stakeholders were formed through literature (Hawkins et al., 2013). The academics in this research were university lecturers, who at the same time are activists, covering the fields of urban planning, spatial planning, civil rights and urban transformation. Some participants were referred to by networks built through this project, which aided in building and expanding knowledge of the local areas for the researcher. Interviews were scheduled in advance via email or phone call. In total, this study consisted of 16 interviews which averaged one hour long each.

Table 1 presents the interviewees identifying them by their initials, their organisation, their position in their work and the stakeholder group they belong to. For this results of this study, the stakeholders are cited as: (Initials, Stakeholder).

Table 1: A table to show the interview details of those who took part in this study

Interviewee	Organisation	Position	Stakeholder
1. CU	Kent Gelisim UT Company	CEO	Private UT Planner
2. AG	Istanbul Metropolitan Council	Assistant Manager for UT & Urban Planning Department	Municipality
3. MH	Chamber of Survey and Cadastre Engineers in Istanbul	Head	Local expert
4. AA	Chamber of Urban Planners in Istanbul	Head	Local expert
5. EK	Chamber of Engineers and Architects in Istanbul	Head	Local expert
6. ID	Chamber of Engineers and Architects in Istanbul	Member	Local expert
7. CB	Istanbul Bilgi University, Kent Hareketi	Lecturer, Head	Academic & Activist

8. CS	*Istanbul University, Kent Hareketi*	*Professor*	*Academic & Activist*
9. EK	*Mimar Sinan University*	*Lecturer*	*Academic*
10. EY	*Gulsuyu-Gulensu*	*Member*	*Local community activist*
11. FO	*Sulukule*	*Member*	*Local community activist*
12. OK	***Tozkoparan*** *Kultur ve Dayanisma Dernegi*	*Head*	*Community leader*
13. YD	***Gulsuyu-Gulensu*** *Yasam ve Dayanisma Merkezi*	*Head*	*Community leader*
14. AK	***Basibuyuk*** *Mah Dogayi ve Cevreyi Koruma ve Yasatma Dernegi*	*Head*	*Community leader*
15. KA	***Yildiztabya*** *Kentsel Donusum Dayanisma Dernegi*	*Head*	*Community leader*
16. RS	***Kirazlitepe*** *Kentsel Donusum Imar ve Guzellestirme Dernegi*	*Head*	*Community leader*

Table 2 shows the stakeholder groups alone, with the number of interviews from each category .

Table 2:

Table showing the stakeholders interviewed in this study and the number of people from each group

Stakeholder	Number of Inteerviews
Community Leader	5
Local Expert	4
Local Community Activist	2
Academic & Activist	2
Academic	1
Private UT Planner	1
Municipality	1

The original plan for data collection was to travel to Turkey and carry out interviews face-to-face, however with the current global COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, this was impossible. Rather, this research design changed, and interviews were carried out online via Zoom. Interviews were all in Turkish and this was the first language of all persons involved. These were all recorded with the permission of the participants, before being transcribed and translated verbatim. This contributes to ensuring that the meanings of any terms and explanations in the responses from participants are understood the same way throughout the study, in any translations and analysis.

As well as interviews, data collection in this study also consisted of an in-depth literature review of key concepts and theories that were concerned in this study. Moreover, to provide a more genuine understanding of the results, research was conducted into the historical and political context of Turkey's UT projects.

4.4 Interview Coding and Analysis

To process the extensive amount of data, the programme Nvivo was used to code the interviews. Nvivo was chosen to be the most suitable programme to use as it creates an easier interpretation environment of the data by categorising citations and narrowing down information to gain a deeper understanding of each concept by efficiently managing data (McNiff, 2016). Nvivo was particularly useful in this study as it allowed for analysing themes holistically by seeing it from multiple perspectives of the stakeholders at the same time.

All 16 interviews were uploaded, summing up to approximately 70 pages of data, before being coded according to the sustainability dimensions and indicators extracted from Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) sustainability assessment framework, applied to Ankara's UT projects. Additional themes were created through the initiative of the researcher from topics mentioned often in interviews, this was also influenced by themes commonly argued in literature. As a result of this, coding and analysing became an iterative process of reflecting on different perspectives from stakeholders and critically analysing the relevance in scientific literature, and this research in terms of what this meant for the sustainability of local communities in *gecekondu's*. Table 3 shows the re-made sustainability framework taken from Korkmaz and Balaban (2020), with the final column edited to show the stakeholders who belong each indicator, meaning these ones supported or did not support it's respective statement. Themes and Indicator column have been left in this chapter as these have been further expanded, compared to Korkmaz and Balaban's (2020) version, from the results of this study.

Table 3: Skeleton of Sustainability Assessment Framework to be filled in results

Dimensions	Themes	Indicators	Stakeholder mentions	
			✓	✗
Social				
Economic				
Environmental				

4.5 Limitations

As with any research, this study also had its limitations and obstacles. The biggest one of course was the COVID pandemic which is still ongoing. Originally, I had planned to travel to Turkey and carry out the research there doing interviews face to face, as well as carrying out surveys with local communities. This changed when in February 2020 when the situation in Turkey had worsened and they temporarily closed their borders to European countries. I had to then adapt my research accordingly and conduct interviews via Zoom. It was however not easy getting in touch with all the interviewees as everyone had very busy schedules and also originally did not seem to take it as seriously because it was not in person. Online communication culture in Turkey is not as developed as for example European countries so people were more sceptical about carrying out interviews over Zoom. Nevertheless, with some delays I managed to get all my interviews done. Not being able to travel to Turkey also meant that I could not carry out interviews or surveys with communities themselves, but rather the community leaders. However, I would argue that this was not a massive problem since the community associations represented a majority of the individual neighbourhoods. A final limitation was that despite conducting an interview with the municipality, I was not able to get an interview with any government officials. This could be due to the authoritarian nature of the government and hence its unwillingness to speak about sensitive issues.

5. Results & Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, reflects and analyses the data collected from interviews. In the first section, I talk about the key aspects of UT in Istanbul touching upon neoliberal urbanism, disaster risk, urban planning, environmental standards and stakeholder involvement before diving deeper into these. I then go onto talking about gentrification, how that has led to demographic change, and issues regarding the rights to the city. In the final section of this chapter I bring back the sustainability assessment framework that was formulated in the literature review, and use this framework to assess the sustainability of UT projects in Istanbul, incorporating the social, economic and environmental impacts collected from the interviews. I end with the most important aspect gathered from the data collection, stakeholder involvement, by analysing the connections between the problems mentioned throughout this section and the stakeholders which was excluded from the UT projects.
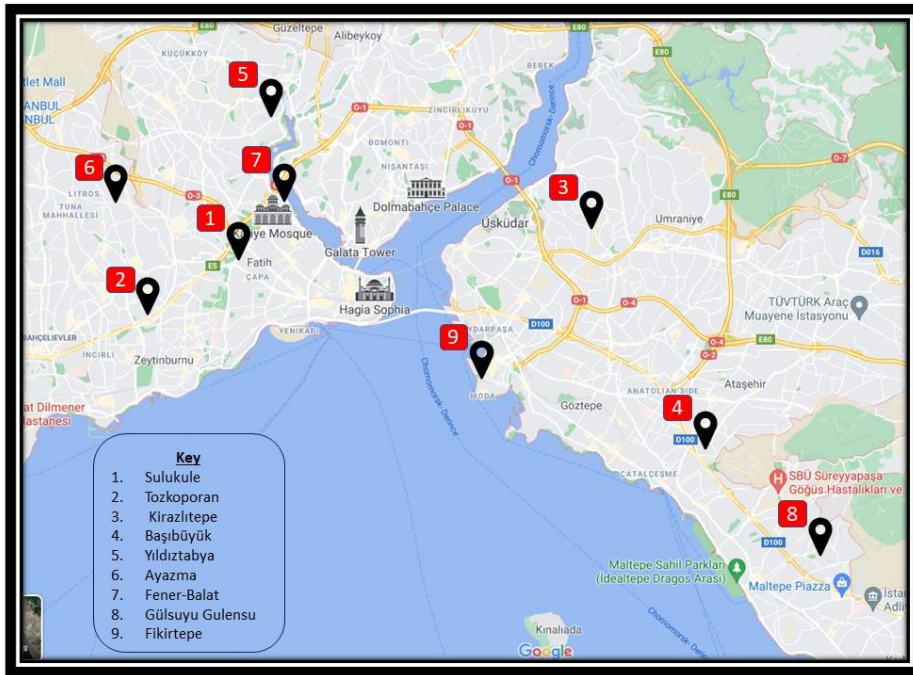

Figure 4: Map to show the Gecekondu neighbourhoods mentioned throughout the interviews

Throughout this study, several *gecekondu* neighbourhoods were specifically mentioned numerous times:
1. Sulukule
2. Tozkoparan
3. Kirazlitepe
4. Basibuyuk
5. Yildiztabya

26

6. Ayazma
7. Fener-Balat
8. Gulsuyu-Gulensu
9. Fikirtepe

These areas have been mapped out and pinpointed on Figure 4. All areas were specifically mentioned multiple times as areas which have been, or are in the process of, UT. A common theme for all these neighbourhoods identified by the stakeholders interviewed in this study is that these are areas which were transformed due to being at high risk in the event of a disaster. However, the majority of participants (Community leaders, Activists, Academics and Local Experts) further stated that these areas were not in fact identified as high-risk areas in studies at all. Rather, the aforementioned stakeholders asserted these neighbourhoods all overlapped in either being renowned for having a minorities or working-class citizens as main inhabitants, and/or as being aesthetically appealing areas which could be sold for high real estate prices. For example, Sulukule which is No.1 on the map, is renowned for being a 'Romani' or gypsy neighbourhood. Likewise, Ayazma (No.6) is incredibly popular for Kurdish people, and Gulsuyu-Gulensu (No.8) for Alevi's, all of which are minority groups in Turkey. Also, Tozkoporan (No.2) is a very popular neighbourhood throughout the interviews and is known to be a neighbourhood with many green areas, way above the average in Turkey. Similarly, Kirazkatepe (No.3) has high altitude and is a popular spot for good landscapes of the Bosphorus Sea. Hence, as indicated, a common argument for many of the stakeholders in this study (Community leaders, Activists, Academics and Local Experts), is that these areas are unified in housing the working-class and minority groups of the city, and as such are considered less in the grand scheme of UT outcomes. These stakeholders further argue that these areas are transformed under the guise of protecting its citizens in the event of an earthquake but are in actual fact chosen to be transformed for their high real estate properties. This is with the aim of enticing higher-class citizens to move in so as to transform the area in to a global, high-status city

5.2 Urban Transformation in Istanbul

From the data collected in this study, it is of no doubt that interviewees are in agreement that Istanbul's *gecekondu's* are in need of (sustainable) UT. This is needed not only to mitigate the risks of the upcoming expected earthquake, but also to revitalise debilitated neighbourhoods and communities; "*The city needs to be renewed and be made more resilient in every aspect, not just the earthquake*" (C.B., academic). This view was also shared by other stakeholder groups including local experts, such as the head of the Chamber of Survey and Cadastre Engineers (CSCE):

> "*UT is necessary because the majority of homes in Istanbul are not earthquake-resistant, they are in poor quality with insufficient road connections and no green*

areas. There are also difficulties in access to hospitals and schools." (M.H., local expert)

It is interesting to highlight at this stage that both stakeholder groups mention that disaster risk is just one of the reasons why UT is necessary, in addition to improving the current infrastructure and access to basic facilities. However, some interviewees recognized that not all buildings are in need of demolition, but rather can be strengthened to increase earthquake resilience as they are only single or double storeys. "*The gecekondu's which have many floors are definitely at risk and need to be transformed but those that are only single or double floored can be strengthened of course"* (C.B., academic). This suggests that those *gecekondu's* with more than two floors are at a much higher risk compared to those with two or less floors.

> *"So, high-rise buildings and plazas were built around our neighbourhood and they continue to be built. They are trying to show people how to build flats, convince them, and create the perception that there are no other alternatives. But we know that our buildings can be strengthened on site and made earthquake resistant without a transformation."* (Y.D., community leader)

Interestingly, having understood the local context, it is evident that demolition is the go-to when transforming *gecekondu's*. This is in spite of the fact that single and double floored *gecekondu's* are found to be at significantly less risk of damage during an earthquake. This suggests that identifying the differences between *gecekondu's* and analysing their strength in the event of an earthquake is not on the governments agenda. In fact, they want to make the public believe that there is no other alternative to transformation projects. This comes as no surprise since the government themselves seem to have their own understanding of UT, which according to the academics, local experts and community leaders is to "*demolish existing buildings and replace them with more, multi-storey structures"* (K.A., community leader). A number of interviewees made comparisons between Turkey and other European countries stating that "*Terminologically, the equivalent of UT in our country and its equivalent in Europe are very different from each other"* (E.K., academic). E.K. from Mimar Sinan University continued to explain that UT "*is looked at from the point of view to quickly demolish and make new buildings. This is not urban transformation. Building renovation is just one aspect of urban transformation…it is actually a multi-dimensional transformation"* (E.K., academic). This is further supported by C.U., a private UT project planner:

> *"UT is not just about demolishing a building and renovating it. It is about eliminating the problems regarding old and depleted infrastructure, lack of green spaces, and poor transportation links."* (C.U., private UT planner)

This can be linked to what was said previously regarding the necessity of UT, namely that it is more than just building earthquake resistant homes but also about improving other existing

infrastructure and general urban planning. It seems that when UT is approached from the lens of disaster risk, all other aspects are disregarded and the projects turn out to be individual building renovation. This will be touched upon further in the Urban Planning section.

Despite growing popular opposition to UT projects in Istanbul, it is important to realise that *"people are opposed not to urban transformation, but to the way in which it is carried out"* (O.K., community leader). This is due to the negative impacts, such as gentrification, social exclusion, loss of jobs and loss of neighbourhood culture to name a few, that come about with these projects posing a threat on the livelihoods on *gecekondu* communities. As a local expert from the Chamber of Engineers and Architects (CEA) states:

> *"First of all, the biological structure of that region should be determined, and the social, economic and demographic structure of the inhabitants should be examined. Expectations should be considered, taking into account environmental factors, where residential, commercial enterprises and where social and educational buildings should be built. Macro-scale plans should be made and then construction should be made accordingly. **This is not the case in Turkey.**"* (I.D., local expert)

As this local expert highlights, there are a number of measures that experts recommend to be carried out during UT, however, these are seemingly disregarded. This was also supported by other stakeholders including the academics, community leaders and activists. This would mean that projects are undertaken without an understanding of the local context, and with a top-down approach, indicating that local communities are not a priority. In fact, even when there is dialogue between communities and investors, interviewees claimed that in most cases, investors failed to deliver their promises to the *gecekondu* communities. This would indicate that investors raise expectations purely for the purpose of continuing with the project without any resistance from *gecekondu* communities. C.B from Istanbul University explains that *gecekondu* communities believe that there will be a positive outcome from the UT projects. This stems from the fact that the investors approach these communities at the start of these projects promising them "new modern homes" (C.B., academic) creating high hopes amongst residents.

> *"For example, the Romanis in Sulukule believed [the investors], and in both Sulukule and Ayazma, the tenants were completely excluded from the rest of the project. After these projects and other projects such as Tarlabasi, people realised what was going on and they no longer believed the fake promises made by the government."* (C.B., academic)

> *"When the Disaster Risk law first came out, there was a great expectation in the public opinion. Expectations were not met even though 10 years has passed."* (A.A., local expert)

Throughout this study there are many examples mentioned by interviewees where investors do not fulfil their promises, or aspects of UT projects are left only at the planning stage. This could be because UT in Istanbul is profit-oriented and not carried out to serve *gecekondu* communities as stated by the leader of the Basibuyuk community, *"I don't think these projects are planned for the benefit of people, [TOKI] think about how to earn the most money and how to get the most number of flats"* (A.K., community leader). Hence these projects are expanding the real-estate industry by demolishing existing *gecekondu's* and replacing them with high-rise luxurious apartments to be sold for profit.

> *"Bagdat Street can be given as an example. The 3/4-storey buildings there were demolished and replaced by more than 10/15-storey buildings."* (E.K., academic)

> *"The government's main concern is how it can profit from these projects. Far from shelter and housing rights issues, its main goal is to gentrify city centres by pushing the working-class people away from their homes, and only focusing on profitable transformation projects is the state's primary target."* (M.H., local expert)

As a result, *"there is no transformation project in Istanbul to be taken as an example"* (E.Y., local community activist). In other words, the impacts of these projects create such dire consequences (primarily gentrification) for *gecekondu* communities and the city as whole, that there has not been a single project to date where the benefits have outweighed the drawbacks.

To sustain the government's profit-oriented goals, they have paved the way for private investors to take charge and benefit from UT projects. This is done through a purposeful lack of government involvement and policies favouring investors:

> *"In UT, the lack of a large-scale development plan, the absence of a housing policy, the absence of plan guarantees, frequent changes in plans, and their materialization in politics creates a barrier for sustainable UT. There should be a policy for sustainability, a strategy should be developed for this and legal arrangements should be made."* (C.U., private UT planner)

This view was also shared amongst academics, community leaders and local experts within the study and hence shows that there is a common agreement that the government authorities do have a role to play but are misusing their power. They are placing profit over people and creating more problems than solving them. The head of CSCE, M.H, says that the government should be advocating *"liveable dwellings by considering the cultural, social and economic rights of the people living in the region. Any profit made from UT projects should be transferred to projects such as hospitals and schools for those living in the area, but the state*

does not want to do this" (M.H., local expert). These UT practices that are being witnessed in Istanbul are essentially a form of neoliberal urbanism which is discussed further in the following section.

5.2.1 Neoliberal Urbanism within the context of UT

"[UT] is completely shaped by the dynamics of the market itself" (A.A., local expert) was a common opinion shared amongst the vast majority of the interviewees. The head of the Chamber of Urban Planners (CUP) continues by saying that despite UT projects being *"intended to build earthquake-resistant spaces and residences, it mostly looks at how much profit that region will bring, in terms of economic gains"* (A.A., local expert). Barring the Istanbul Metropolitan Council (IMC), this was a key finding that was supported by all other stakeholders:

> *"The way to be involved in the world market is to build global cities. The firms that will build them, the investors, are becoming the strongest class"* (C.S., Academic)

This suggests that neoliberal urbanism plays a substantial role in UT projects and that the primary goal is to build marketable global cities. In other words, the investors, whether this be TOKI, the government or other private investors, are those profiting from the transformation of urban areas whilst *gecekondu* communities experience detrimental impacts on their livelihoods. This is further supported by the head of the Chamber of Engineers and Architects (CEA) stating that *"[the government] use city space to impose their power, to segregate the city, and to create an atmosphere of tension"* (E.K., local expert), and as such this deepens the divide between the bourgeoisie and working class. A social state would recognise the city space for all those living within the city to benefit from. Therefore, any form of transformation projects or other projects that make use of city space should be carried out to benefit those communities who live there, both socially and economically. E.Y. from the Gulsuyu neighbourhood also talks about how this is not the case in Istanbul:

> *"UT projects are actually a disadvantage for the poor of the city because the master scale plans are made in line with the demands of the rulers of the city and the city's profit-generating elements."* (E.Y., local community activist)

> *"However, governors and authorities' understanding of UT is not to provide communities with safe and earthquake-resistant buildings or to ensure their safety, but to turn the region into a transformation for profit-seeking purposes and to earn unfair profits. In other words, the state's policy is not an approach aimed at providing safe living spaces."* (Y.D., community leader)

This strengthens the argument that these projects are built in favour of a particular group within society, while excluding another, and are built purely for profit purposes. The underlying notion gathered from the interviews indicated that any profits made from such projects should in theory be given to the dwellers of the *gecekondu's*, or used to improve public services in the city for the city. However, in Istanbul, neoliberal urban policies have created a society where profits are put above the livelihood of workers and the vulnerable in society, creating low standards of living and inequality.

> *"This is how the accumulation of capital is carried out within this neoliberal system; profit is obtained through services provided in the city, and through the act of land grabbing under the banner of UT projects."* (C.S., academic)

> *"These projects are just a way for gaining capital and segregating the city. We have to first change the system."* (C.B., academic)

Once again this emphasises how capital is generated through the anthropogenic use of the city that does even benefit those who are impacted by such projects. Thus, this study has found that profit-oriented markets, free-market capitalism and privatisation are perceived to be central characteristics of UT in Istanbul.

In reference to encouraging environmentally friendly transport modes, the head of the CEA states that such services are only used to fuel consumerism and for marketing UT projects. She gives an example saying that *"[the investors] placed the subway station in the basements of large shopping malls"* (E.K., local expert). Placing a subway station in a newly built mall can be seen as strategy to increase the attractiveness of the shopping mall to customers and so draw more people in, promoting consumerism, and thus lowering trade barriers. Another perspective linked to this, which will be elaborated on further in this section, is how these practices which are marketed as environmentally friendly, are in fact a tool used by the investors to advertise the projects. As C.S. from Istanbul University points out:

> *"While marketing [environmentally friendly] projects, there are these kinds of statements used, but this is just the marketing method. Because there is no intention to keep the locals there, all of that is nothing but a lie."* (C.S., academic)

This observation, which was backed by 14 out of 16 interviewees including all local experts, further strengthens the argument that these projects are purely profit-oriented as the investors are prepared to ultimately do anything that will make the project more marketable, even if it means being untruthful.

One of the main components of neoliberal policies is the concept of free markets. As mentioned before, the Turkish government have paved the way for private investors to

dominate the UT sector. The head of the CSCE explains that unless the government authorities or pro-government private investors such as TOKI, approach a certain community for UT, those living in *gecekondu* communities must take their own initiative to find an investor that is willing to carry out an UT project:

> *"The central government avoid taking on large UT projects which require a lot of time and effort. They prefer to take on small-scale projects that would bring the most profits as is the case with the police academy mentioned earlier. In addition, in individual building-based transformations, the owners of the building demand extra floors from the municipality because they cannot afford the costs incurred so that the investors that will renovate the building can make a profit. This is done without any consolidation with urban planners or environmental experts."* (M.H., local expert)

This is a clear example of neoliberal urbanism as the government avoid taking responsibility of UT for *gecekondu* communities whereby existing road infrastructures, sewage and wastewater systems, access to basic facilities and green spaces to name a few need to be considered. They prefer to take on individual building projects where they do not need to worry about the local community and that will bring them quick profits. As most of these private UT projects are carried out without government supervision, the investors in charge are able to ignore wider city zoning and urban planning, and cut corners when it comes to environmental standards. The issues surrounding urban planning and environmental standards are mentioned further on in this chapter. In fact, A.G. from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's (IMM) UT department, also agrees that the central government and local municipalities are not interested in UT projects that involve wider urban city planning:

> *"We constantly talk about smart city systems to be in projects, we say that we should include them in the application, but when it comes to the cost, nobody wants to worry about them."* (A.G., municipality)

On the other hand, UT in Istanbul, as mentioned by all interviewees barring the municipality, is one of the main ways that the government use to boost the construction sector.

> *"Consequently, the contractor looks commercial, and the government sees that the more active the construction sector is, the more the economy will breathe, tax income will increase and job opportunities will increase in construction-based records."* (I.D., local expert)

5.3 Sustainability of UT in Istanbul

The data collected from the interviews have been used to complete the Sustainability Assessment Framework (SAF) shown in Tables 4, 6 and 6. A final column has been added to the framework to indicate which groups of stakeholders agree or disagree with the respective indicator. The quotations from these stakeholders are presented in the Appendix 1. From the interviews it was evident that the primary focus of UT in Istanbul is the social dimension. Despite economic and environmental impacts also being very important, the interviewees had a tendency to talk more about the social impacts, namely about disaster risk, urban planning, gentrification and stakeholder participation. Therefore, I have focused more on these topics when analysing the data. This chapter has been further divided into 3 sections with each dimension from the SAF: social sustainability, economic sustainability and environmental sustainability. The final column in the table refers to which stakeholders spoke about the respective indicator, and whether they smoke for (✓) or against (✗) it. Stakeholders are mentioned by their abbreviations as follows:

- CL   -   Community Leader
- LE   -   Local Expert
- LCA   -   Local Community Activist
- A   -   Academic
- UTP   -   UT Planner
- M   -   Municipality

5.3.1   Social sustainability

"The 'Ministry of Environment and Urbanization' is a problematic ministry. Actually, the words 'environment' and 'urbanism' should not come together in a ministry." (M.H., local expert)

Table 4: Sustainability Assessment Framework: Social Dimension

Dimensions	Themes	Indicators	Stakeholder mentions	
			✓	✗
Social	**Participation of stakeholders**	Active participation and decision-making from *gecekondu* residents in developing the project is encouraged	M	UTP, A, LCA CL, LE
		Other stakeholders such as academics, local experts and community associations are active participators		CL, A, LE, LCA
		Minorities and under-represented groups are treated equally and taken into account sufficiently		A

	State-public relations	The government (or private investor) fulfil the promises made to the *gecekondu* communities		A, LE, CL
		Government do not act unlawfully		A, CL
	Land use and buildings	Basic amenities, services and access to social and recreational areas is provided or improved for *gecekondu* residents	M	CL, M
		Low capacitated residents are provided with improved access		UTP
		An increase in population as a result of UT has been accounted for (project is part of wider urban spatial planning)		M, LE, CL
	Gentrification	*Gecekondu* residents carry on living in the same area		A, CL, LE
	Culture	*Gecekondu* community and neighbourhood culture is preserved		M, A, LE, CL
		Efforts are made to mediate and harmonise different cultures, ethnic groups and religious sects.		A
		Historical buildings and structures are protected		LCA, A
	Disaster Risk	Residents of the *gecekondu* community that have been transformed are living in earthquake resistant buildings after the project		CL, A, LE
		Scientific reports and risk assessments have been abided by in an honest and ethical way		CL
		Disaster risk (floods) has been considered while planning UT projects		LE

Social sustainability was the central focus point of this study. It was evaluated by mainly looking at disaster risk, gentrification and participation of stakeholders, while other themes such as culture and land use and buildings fell within the previous themes. The concepts of urban planning and rights to the city were also discussed as these seemed key concepts within the research. It is important to understand that all sustainability dimensions are interconnected: social sustainability issues also have impacts on economic and environmental sustainability and vice versa. By looking at Table X we can see that UT projects in Istanbul do not promote social sustainability, but in fact acts as a barrier.

<u>Disaster Risk</u>

Neoliberal urban policies are also evident in how disaster risk is used to legitimise UT projects in Istanbul. In other words, the government uses the disaster risk law (6306) to designate any plot of land or building as risky, thus opening it up for UT. However, in this section we will see how the government exploits this law to their benefit by choosing which areas or buildings they deem are risky, without considering expert advice, to fulfil their profit-oriented goals. Despite there being laws and standards in place, UT projects in Istanbul do not take them into consideration. While E.K. believes that *"there is indeed an ambiguity in the law"* (E.K., academic), I.D. thinks otherwise:

> *"Actually our laws - labour security, building control law and our spatial planning laws - are very good laws. While UT is carried out, large-scale plans are made and the groundwork of that region, the geological situation, the needs of the people living in that region are investigated, data is collected, but in practice, what we encounter is in a completely different dimension."* (I.D., local expert)

This shows how government authorities turn a blind eye when these laws, regarding planning permission and spatial planning, are broken by investors. Any urban zoning plans, evaluation of existing infrastructure or the assessment of local communities is simply left at the planning stages within these projects. The government not only turn a blind eye to other investors but also break these laws themselves:

> *"They enacted a law called the Disaster Risk Law and made this law applicable everywhere. This gave them permission to enter, demolish and transform any region due to this law."* (C.S., academic)

> *"The state can make decisions against the law. For example, In Istanbul there is a valuable plot of land which has a police academy on it. The government comes and says that this building is under risk of earthquake disaster and so allows for UT to take place. There are over 30 thousand buildings in Istanbul that urgently need to be transformed but the government don't care. They only care about the areas which are profitable for them, areas with high value."* (M.H., local expert)

If a certain area is deemed valuable due to its location, and hence would generate good profits, the disaster risk law is used to designate that area as risky, disregarding any opposition by the rights-holders against the project. This shows that the government do not prioritise the riskiest areas with regards to UT, but rather the areas they can profit the most from, hence leaving thousands of homes still under disaster risk. "*I say again, the infrastructure that needs to be renewed is not touched."* (I.D., local expert). The disaster risk law is also used when the investor is unable to get permission for UT from the majority of rights-holders that live in a certain community. Even if the communities take the investor to court, the government plays

around with the laws to favour the investors. As the head of the Kirazlitepe UT Zoning and Beautification Association explains:

> *"We filed a lawsuit for the cancellation of the risky area decision. They changed the definition of the risky area and passed a law on it. They said that if 60% of the buildings were built without permission in a neighbourhood, it is a risky area. The state evacuated all owners from their homes with various law changes and initiated the transformation."* (R.S., community leader)

This shows that the needs and wants of those living in *gecekondu* communities are ignored. The government amend laws and legislation in such a way that the locals cannot oppose it. The *gecekondu* communities in Kirazlitepe, and in the majority of neighbourhoods in Istanbul, are mostly recognised as 'illegal' settlements as the government claim they were built without permission. Therefore, setting a benchmark of 60% guarantees that community to be designated as a risky area. As mentioned previously disaster risk is used an excuse by the government to pick and choose which areas they find more profitable to transform. The government's policy is not an approach aimed at providing safe living spaces:

> *"Governors and authorities' understanding of UT is not to provide communities with safe and earthquake-resistant buildings or to ensure their safety, but to turn the region into a transformation for profit-seeking purposes and to earn unfair profits."* (Y.D., community leader)

The table below shows 6 different neighbourhoods in Istanbul which have undergone UT and what our interviewees have said about disaster risk regarding those communities.

Table 5: A table to show disaster risk status of 6 Gecekondu neighbourhoods according to participants in this study

Neighbourhood in Istanbul which has undergone UT	Was that neighbourhood a priority risk area according to the interviewees in the study?
Sulukule	*"The houses were not high-rise and were small. They gave such a rationale, but it was perhaps one of the most risk-free neighbourhoods."* (F.O., local community activist)
Ayazma	*"In Ayazma there were geological studies done previously and these studies showed that Ayazma was very strong against an earthquake. This was the same for Sulukule. The disaster risk law is just a way of legitimizing the projects."* (C.B., academic)
Gulsuyu-Gulensu (Maltepe)	UT has not yet begun in Gulsuyu-Gulensu neighbourhood
Tozkoparan (Gungoren)	*"There are 11 neighbourhoods in the Gungoren district and, according to this report, Tozkoparan is in 9th place for human casualties in a possible earthquake. Why would you put Tozkoparan neighbourhood, which lags behind in the risk*

	ranking so far, into urban transformation? Because their only purpose is to open the areas here to construction and income." (O.K., community leader)
Yildiztabya (GOP)	*"In the report prepared after the Izmit earthquake, GOP is not on the list of risky neighbourhoods. For this reason, we think that these neighbourhoods will undergo transformation for profit purposes. GOP is a district close to the marina and surrounding roads planned to be built in Halic. For this reason, they are profit-oriented."* (K.A., community leader)
Kirazlitepe (Uskudar)	*"We have witnessed many earthquakes over the past 20 years and our homes are still here today. Actually, the majority of homes in Kirazlitepe are no more than 3 storeys. But we have a nice view of the Bosphorus sea making it more attractive to investors"* (R.S., community leader)

Looking at the responses from the interviewees, it can be understood that even when geological studies and scientific reports were carried out to analyse the disaster risk of different communities, the government brush aside such reports and prioritise projects that are profitable. In many cases these *gecekondu* communities have strong resilience against earthquakes and may not have required UT to begin with. E.K. from Mimar Sinan University further consolidates the argument that UT is determined not by risk but by rent by mentioning that:

> *"After the 1999 earthquake, an institution from Japan and four universities from Turkey mapped the risky neighbourhoods and buildings in Istanbul. When we compare the risky zones announced by the Presidency with this risk map, 70% do not match each other."* (E.K., academic)

Another issue that arises from UT projects is the significant increase in that community's population density. As mentioned before, this is as due to two or three storey houses being replaced with for example ten storey apartments. However, when looking at building earthquake resilient residences through UT in Istanbul, investors seem to completely disregard this increase in population and the consequent impacts.

> *"The buildings that have been demolished and reconstructed are already built according to the earthquake regulations and are built more solidly. Since the density will be very high in the neighbourhoods that undergo collective transformation, safe areas are not left for people to gather in the event of an earthquake."* (I.D., local expert)

As I.D. from CEA says, not only are earthquake assembly areas not part of these projects but in fact UT projects cause a reduction of open spaces and green areas. This was supported by

all stakeholder groups. Open spaces play a critical role in hazard mitigation as they offer safe locations and spaces for communities to gather in. Since surrounding road infrastructures are not improved within UT projects, an increase in population also leads to a surge in traffic congestion. Consequently, this not only puts more pressure on emergency services but creates a further risk for communities in the event of an earthquake as ambulances or fire engines may take longer to reach the affected areas.

> *"The city becomes more congested, traffic gets worse. Because these projects are luxurious projects, you tend to have people moving in who have more than one vehicle per house. This affects the population density of the area."* (C.B., academic)

The most important point to highlight with regards to disaster risk is whether those who live in the *gecekondu* communities actually benefit from these newly built earthquake resistant buildings and residences.

> *"Transformation projects are already being carried out to eliminate the risk of earthquakes and disasters. There is no standard for UT in Turkey. But when people are forcibly displaced and end up moving elsewhere, they continue to live in older settlements so are still at risk of the earthquake."* (C.U., private UT planner)

In other words, despite UT projects creating more resilient and earthquake-proof buildings, it does not benefit the communities who were living there prior to the project if they have been displaced as a result of the UT project. In fact, those displaced communities usually end up moving to other *gecekondu* communities which are more affordable for them.

Urban Planning

The interviews conducted within this study suggest that UT in Istanbul is mostly individual building renovation, or as the government describes it 'in-place transformation'. They are approached from a disaster risk perspective allowing the main focus to be on individual buildings or plots of land rather than being integrated into the overall city urban plan. As these non-holistic, piecemeal projects are not associated with a general planning perspective, they actually bring new urban problems with them. A lack of urban planning is one of the central and most mentioned problems within this study.

> *"It is necessary to look at the imbalance between what it brings and what it takes away and the structuring of the city as a whole. It will not mean anything for a single gluttonous project to be smart, green and economical."* (E.K., local expert)

The table below summarises the views of the different stakeholders on whether UT in Istanbul is carried out as part of a wider urban plan and considers the existing surrounding infrastructures.

Table 6: A table to show the opinions of urban planning factor in UT Projects, accoridng to stakeholders in this study

Stakeholder	Is UT in Istanbul part of a wider Urban Plan that considers the surrounding existing infrastructure and other flows within the city?
Academic	*"In these projects, the capital does not cooperate among themselves, it tries to make small-scale applications with projects that are disconnected from each other. There are no projects in which the economy in the chain feeds each other. What is done is not audited by an expert opinion."* (C.S.) *"UT Projects often create more problems, certainly because these are not part of the wider urban planning. These projects are not planned according to the needs of the people living in that region, nor consider the infrastructure of the region."* (C.S.) *"They are all individual-building focused projects. The roads are the same, the sewage facilities are the same. It is not planned at all."* (C.B.) *"In this case, there is a parking problem, pollution, traffic problem, infrastructure problem, public transport problem. In other words, the flow in the city is disturbed in every sense." (C.S.)* *"Wherever you are going to transform, it is necessary to take into account the connection and flow of that region with the city." (E.K.)*
Community leader	*"Now they are planning to build 141 extra, 10-story buildings here. But they do not look at whether the existing infrastructure of this place can handle this burden, they do not make such a calculation. They will cause more problems since there is no overall planning."* (O.K.) *"In other words, the problems are growing exponentially with the increasing population since they do not re-evaluate and improve the entire infrastructure within the scope of the new project. We can see this in the actual examples."* (Y.D.)
Local expert	**"*However, in Istanbul, transformation projects are carried out not as a whole, but as a point, piece by piece. This is because plans are not made in line with the whole of the city and its physical infrastructure, economic and cultural needs, ignoring surrounding factors influencing quality of life. These small-scale transformations actually raise other problems rather than solving existing problems"* (A.A.) *"In addition to the victimization of the displaced, it causes some transportation problems, and due to the resulting increase in density, there is a decrease in urban living standards. In fact, it is transformed to trigger other problems in the long run."* (A.A.) *"As in the case of Fikirtepe, long-term solutions have not been developed for the resulting traffic problem. They carried out a project which significantly increased the population in the area but they made no changes to the surrounding road infrastructure"* (C.U.) *"For example, the E-5 highway is the main road flow of Istanbul and when we look at the traffic caused by the new UT project built along this road E5, we see that no solution has been produced for them. In Fikirtepe, for*

	example, the impact of the intense population coming there on the main traffic flow was never taken into account." (E.K.) • *"It is absolutely ignored. For example, it is estimated that 40 thousand people will work in the Atasehir finance city project, which means that 200 thousand people will be served. While traffic is scary even now, it is not difficult to predict what the traffic will be like when this place comes to life. In order to overcome this, there are bridges everywhere, subways and intersections are made, but this will not be a solution to density. Probably disaster will occur and then the infrastructure will be renewed."* (I.D.)
Local community activist	• *"There was no such overall planning."* (F.O.)
Private UT planner	• *"There are neighbourhoods in Istanbul that need to be transformed urgently and some of them are being transformed. But these transformations are not done as a whole. In other words, a master project does not take place, it is looked at on a local scale."* (C.U.)
Municipality	• *"If we are transforming a certain area, of course we do the planning accordingly"* (A.G.) • *"We are trying to protect existing open areas as IBB."* (A.G.)

By looking at the responses from the interviewees it can be said that all stakeholders, barring the municipality, are in agreement that UT projects in Istanbul are not planned within the wider urban city plan, nor is the existing infrastructures of the region taken into account. This is said to cause a range of detrimental impacts not only for those living in *gecekondu* communities but also for all residents of the city.

When new residences are built from UT and the population of the area increases, greater amounts of strain is placed on the existing road and transport infrastructure, which remains the same at it was before UT. This is worsened when the newcomers to these residences are economically wealthier and so tend to have more vehicles as mentioned previously. An increase in traffic as well as a general increase in energy use will no doubt result in more pollution. The example that was given by several of the interviewees including local experts and academics was the UT that took place in Fikirtepe neighbourhood, which "*increased the population in the area but did not make any changes to the surrounding road infrastructure"* (C.U., private UT planner) making the congestion on Istanbul's main highway, the E5, unbearable. An increase in traffic and pollution can have an infinite list of consequences on communities, directly affecting people's health and daily lives. Essentially, it results in a reduction in urban living standards and quality of life. As well as road infrastructure, the sewage and wastewater systems are also put under more pressure from the increase in population as they are also not improved with the UT projects. One of the main reasons for this could be because the projects are *"not audited by an expert opinion"* (C.S., academic).

On the other hand, IMM argue that UT projects do take into consideration the existing infrastructure and are planned as part of the wider city urban plan. However, this does not seem to be the opinion of all other stakeholders within this study who believe that UT projects are unplanned, resulting in uncontrolled expansion and consequently creating more problems than they solve. A.G. from IMM states that *"If we are transforming a certain area, of course we do the planning accordingly"* (A.G., municipality). However, it seems as so these plans are not actually implemented. If there is no urban planning and UT is not carried out in line with these plans, it is impossible for the projects to promote social sustainability.

Gentrification

Some argue that this is the purpose of UT in Istanbul and others argue that it is an outcome. Nevertheless, gentrification can be observed in nearly all UT projects in Istanbul and is a barrier to achieving social sustainability. Within this process richer people are drawn in to new luxurious residencies and lower income groups, in this case the *gecekondu* communities, are pushed away. Essentially, if one is to observe the sustainability of UT in Istanbul through the perspective of *gecekondu* communities, all other dimensions carry very little importance if a particular community's residents have been displaced and so do not benefit from the UT project. There are a two ways in which the process of gentrification plays out in Istanbul:

> *"UT projects in Istanbul target low income groups living in these gecekondu's. These communities are either forcibly displaced from their homes or end up with huge debt as they have to pay the difference between the value of their current homes and the value of the luxurious homes built from the project. So most of the time they end up selling their homes and moving elsewhere."* (C.B., academic)

Firstly, there is the direct action of displacing communities whereby residents are "*forced to leave their neighbourhoods that they have lived in for years*" (Y.D., community leader), and relocated to other parts of the city, usually further away from the city centre. This was the case with the Romani community who use to live in Europe's oldest Romani neighbourhood, Sulukule. They were forcibly displaced from Sulukule and relocated to "*other neighbourhoods where they had families*" (F.O., local community activist). However, it was not sustainable for these communities to continue to live on the outskirts of the city as the Romani community's main source of income is from the busy streets of Istanbul's city centre, whether it be making street music, selling flowers or cleaning shoes. This became very difficult when living far from the city centre. Out of the 400 families that were living in Sulukule prior to UT, only 3 families remain (C.S., academic). Romanis were promised more modern homes but in reality they were displaced to other areas and "*carried on living in unhealthy and unsafe buildings*" (I.D., local expert). Not only were their livelihoods destroyed but their community cohesion and neighbourhood culture was also ruined.

"There is a law numbered 5366 for the renovation of worn-out historical buildings. According to this law, for example, it is the case that, as in Sulukule, they completely eradicate the Romani culture there, describe the neighbourhood as an area of agony to brainwash the public, and then mislead the public as if they built better houses. Transformation projects bring a new life order. The common areas in the city are eliminated. It prevents people from coming together, and more misguided individuals and life models emerge." (E.K., local expert)

An important indication of social concerns mentioned throughout the interviews is the need to preserve the *gecekondu* neighbourhood culture. However, as the original Romani residents of Sulukule were dispersed to different neighbourhoods around the outskirts of the city, it became harder for them to get together and maintain their neighbourhood ties. This has a detrimental impact on their cultural heritage. Romanis are well known for communal living, sitting, socialising and dancing all together on the streets. This was taken away from them. These kinds of transformation are not culturally appropriate for not only Romanis, but all *gecekondu* communities:

*"The local people of this area have gotten used to the neighbourhood culture, garden, neighbours and existed with it. Now, with this new configuration, he will no longer feel belonging here because it has ceased to be the neighbourhood where he was used to. The people who live here are poor and the monetary value of their apartments will be high. Most of them will sell their homes and **leave from here with their own consent**. Can't get used to, can't be comfortable in new buildings."* (R.S., community leader)

Secondly, there is the indirect displacement of *gecekondu* residents whereby the newly transformed neighbourhoods and residences becomes so expensive and unaffordable that the original residents end up moving away to a more affordable neighbourhood:

"For example, such a situation was experienced here in Fener, Balat. When the investors started to open luxury coffee shops and stores here, the rents increased. For this reason, poor families had to get away from these places." (C.S., academic)

"With these projects, everything becomes very expensive. Your local shop goes and is replaced with a shopping mall. These communities don't care for a shopping mall. From their local shopkeeper they could borrow money if they wanted to, they can't do that now. Even if these communities are a part of the project, they cannot live there. Financially, socially, culturally these projects are not feasible for them." (C.B., academic)

Basic amenities and facilities such as shops and restaurants become unaffordable for *gecekondu* residents as local tradesman and shopkeepers are replaced with large shopping

malls and franchises. More importantly *gecekondu* residents are forced to pay the difference between the market value of their previous homes and the value of the newly built homes. These are paid in monthly instalments and in most scenarios these monthly instalments are significantly higher than what these families earn:

> *"Urban transformation is based on rent, there is a logic that does not listen to the people and tries to make their own wishes. So for example, they valued my house at 450 thousand TL, and they want 180 thousand TL from me to contribute towards the transformation. This is going to increase twice a year because of inflation. Eventually the monthly instalments for this is going to be the same as the pension I receive. How can they expect me and others to pay this, it is impossible. In this case, these people will have to sell their houses and leave. They are trying to impose this on people and this situation leaves the public in a difficult situation."* (O.K., community leader)

This was not only the case for Tozkoparan neighbourhood but also residents from Kirazlitepe, Yildiztabya and Basibuyuk faced a similar fate. This is mainly how the investors force lower income groups and minorities to move away because they know that the *gecekondu* residents will not be able to afford the price of the newly built homes. This is not economically sustainable as these residents cannot pay a mortgage that is equivalent or sometimes even more than how much they are earning. In some scenarios *gecekondu* residents can afford these payments but decide to move away regardless so they can benefit from renting out their new transformed homes and living for cheaper elsewhere. This raises the question of who the UT projects are aimed at, and it is clear from the responses given in this study that they are aimed at upper income groups:

> *"Only economically higher classes are moved to the new buildings built, the previous tenants have to leave them."* (A.A., local expert)

> *"The nicer parts of the city are reserved for high income groups. Turkey sells citizenship now through property buying so foreigners are also buying these new properties and moving in. (supported by E.K. too) Low income groups are expelled."* (C.B., academic)

Linking it back to neoliberal urbanism and how the elite have power over city, this again shows how gentrification functions, by expelling lower income groups from city centres and using UT as a marketing tool to attract economically higher classes and even foreigners. This is socially unjust as it is favouring those that are financially wealthier while completely disregarding the working class and lower income groups.

The Romani community in Sulukule is not the only example whereby minority groups were targeted and became victims of these UT projects. The Kurdish community of Ayazma were also ill-treated when UT took place in their neighbourhood; they witnessed both forms of

displacement mentioned previously and so relocated more than once. Originally, they were relocated to Bezirgan Bahcesi where TOKI had just finished a transformation project and had built new residences. The Kurdish residents were given apartment flats here but since the monthly mortgage cost and living costs for them was unaffordable they ended up selling their homes and moving to *gecekondu* communities elsewhere in the city:

> *"Ayazma had very bad infrastructure but they were in the middle of the city with access to everything. Then they were relocated to Bezirgan Bahcesi and then these facilities there are extremely expensive so the access to these facilities became harder."* (C.B., academic)

Similar to Sulukule, the neighbourhood cohesion was also negatively impacted as the Kurdish families ended up moving to different parts of the city. However, even for those that remained in Bezirgan Bahcesi or in any other newly built TOKI site, that community is no longer the same community as their social ties are broken.

> *"This is because in the neighbourhood, living usually takes place outside, in the garden or on the streets. This isn't possible in apartment blocks because there aren't any public socialising areas. Also in Ayazma, for example, it was a Kurdish community. Before, Kurdish women could socialise in their outdoor spaces with everyone else but when they get moved to apartment blocks and they are home alone, as part of their culture, they cannot have male guests over to socialise. These relocation sites are not adequate for the communities. Before they could ask their neighbours to borrow money or to look after their children or for other favours. Now they can't because they are all isolated and segregated."* (C.B., academic)

UT in Istanbul does not take into consideration the historical and cultural aspects of communities. This also comes with economic drawbacks whereby previous informal financial ties are also lost.

Furthermore, gentrification results in demographic change which creates tension between different groups of people. This can be different ethnic groups, religious groups or simply different economic classes. For example, in Fikirtepe, new people moved into the transformed neighbourhood and while some of the original residents remained, many of them "*realised that it would be profitable to rent out their new renovated homes and move somewhere that is cheaper. So now the demography has changed completely."* (C.U., private UT planner). A similar outcome is expected in the planned Gulsuyu-Gulensu UT project which currently has a population of 30,000 but this is forecasted to increase by 60,000 when the project is completed. As the community leader of the neighbourhood states "*This will cause a change in the demographic structure of the neighbourhood, as the newcomers will mostly be from the middle and upper income level. Therefore, we insist that the transformation*

should be made according to the existing socio-cultural situation here." (E.Y., local community activist). However, nothing is done by government authorities, the municipality or private investors such as TOKI to encourage peace-building between different communities and mediate different cultures, ethnic groups and religious groups.

> *"As these communities were Kurdish they were criminalised and victimised in the new area that they had been forcibly displaced to. They were treated as terrorists."* (C.B., academic)

> *"In our country, there is no transformation that will bring together different layers and cultures in the society. It is necessary to transform people culturally, sociologically and economically. Urban transformation is not just tearing down a building and rebuilding it, it shouldn't be."* (E.K., Academic)

Once again, this highlights the importance of the multi-dimensional characteristic of UT projects as it is not simply demolition and rebuilding of communities. Having conflicts between different groups of people who live in an area is likely to create further problems in the future and hence is not sustainable. In order to be socially sustainable, UT must consider cultural, demographic and sociological structures of communities and neighbourhoods.

Going back to what was said at the beginning of this section, it is quite clear that the target audience for UT projects in Istanbul is certainly not *gecekondu* communities but rather higher income groups. This shows that the government already knows before the project that those who are living there will be displaced. This is important to better understand the lack of stakeholder participation which follows this section.

> *"So most of the time [gecekondu residents] end up selling their homes and moving elsewhere. Knowing this, the government do not bother to approach communities or include them in these projects, because they know they one way or another they are going to force them to move away."* (C.B., academic)

Stakeholder participation

One of the most important features of social sustainability, and the most mentioned topic within the interviews, is participation of stakeholders. Having discussed the issues surrounding disaster risk, urban planning, and gentrification, we can see the negative impacts of these projects are strongly related to the stakeholders involved in these projects, or in this case the stakeholders who are excluded. The majority of stakeholders in this study, including academics, local experts, activists and community leaders, were in agreement as to who currently are the main stakeholders involved in UT projects and who is left out. The overall view is that "*since there is no such thing as participation in Turkey, there is no such thing as*

participation in UT" (E.K., academic). Judging by the responses from the interviews, it is clear that the main stakeholders that are involved and have a say in UT in Istanbul are the investors (usually TOKI), the central government and the municipality:

> *"Stakeholders in these projects are the investors (contractors), usually TOKI. Sometimes they are alone or sometimes in partnership with a private firm or the municipality. With this new earthquake disaster risk law 6306, the central government is also now another stakeholder since it is the president who decides what can be done. The municipality is the third stakeholder."* (C.B., academic)

All stakeholders, barring the municipality, within this study were in agreement that UT projects in Istanbul did not encourage active participation and decision-making from *gecekondu* residents or from other stakeholders such as academics and local experts.

> "In fact, transformation projects are from the very beginning flawed. Establishment of the Law No. 6306 on the transformation of areas under disaster risk by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in 2011 is very important. There are mostly non-participatory processes carried out by the ministry. There are two critical points here. First; It eliminates the autonomy of local governments, their views are not taken into consideration. On the other hand, the people living in the region have neither a say nor a jurisdiction in UT projects carried out on their own living spaces." (E.K., Local Expert)

Without considering and involving the residents of *gecekondu's*, academics and local experts, it is not possible to have socially sustainable UT because mostly importantly it is the *gecekondu* communities whose lives are being impacted. It is important to understand that this is a purposeful exclusion of stakeholders. As the community leader of Gulsuyu-Gulensu says:

> *"Although we wanted to include Architects and Urban planners, they persistently avoided including them. Even the Municipality did not invite the Chambers of Architects and City Planners to the meetings held. They did not share information and documents. They also withdrew because of this."* (Y.D., community leader)

On the other contrary, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) believes that communities are in fact included within projects. However, their understanding of inclusivity or participation seems to be different to everyone else's.

> *"We inform people, explain the perspective of the municipality and collect their demands."* (A.G., municipality)

This is a more of a top-down approach whereby the municipality is providing the community with information about the UT project, such as when it will happen, how long it will take and other project details. This does not encourage active participation and decision-making from *gecekondu* residents. A.G. says the municipality collect their demands but many stakeholders say that these demands are never taken into consideration in practice. This is also backed by C.U. who says:

> *"But typically, the opinions or needs of the communities are not taken into consideration. TOKI or whoever is in charge of the project will just come to the area and explain what is going to happen to the locals."* (C.U., private UT planner)

The lack of participation by the stakeholders mentioned could be a reason for the social sustainability issues that have been discussed in this study: disaster risk, urban planning and gentrification. For example, if academics and local experts had an actual say within these projects, the issues relating to a lack of urban planning or the issues relating to disaster risk could be avoided. If UT was inclusive of rights-holders, the *gecekondu* residents, UT projects could be carried out which are culturally and socially appropriate for their way of life. However, this cooperation between stakeholders does not exist in Istanbul:

> *"We are in a country where ministries and municipalities are far from the understanding of social state and they are trying to make themselves a compulsory stakeholder"* (O.K., community leader).

> *"If these projects were designed as projects where different sectors could collaborate with each other, they could improve people and societies. However, in these projects, the capital does not cooperate among themselves."* (C.S., academic)

When the interviewees in this study were asked about which stakeholders they think should be involved for sustainable UT, a mixture of responses were gathered. Nevertheless, they were all in agreement that rights-holders should be the primary stakeholder. The majority of them also agreed that the government, occupational chambers (i.e. local experts) and academics should be involved.

> *"In an urban process, I consider the main stakeholders as the inhabitants themselves. The city is the peoples. It is not the governments city. The neighbourhoods and communities are the most important stakeholder because their lives are at risk when a project is announced without their knowledge."* (C.B., academic)

C.B. gave an example that really put the lack of community involvement into perspective:

"For example, when the Basibuyuk neighbourhood, right next to Gulsuyu-Gulensu neighbourhood, was founded in the 1990s, those people built their own homes. There was a patch within the area where they did not touch because there was water coming from underneath, a well. They built a playground for the children around there. Then TOKI came and they built a high-rise building there and it started to slide down. TOKI's engineers did not predict this, the communities knew better." (C.B., academic)

This highlights the importance of community involvement and participation within UT projects. If the community was a part of the project and their voices were heard, this would have been avoided. Moreover, it was interesting to hear the perspective of the municipality who stated:

"So everyone, who lives in this city, should be able to give their opinion for each work." (A.G., municipality)

Once again, A.G. does not clearly state that *gecekondu* communities should have an active role within these projects, but rather that the communities should be able to give their opinion. It was also interesting to see that many interviewees did not say that the municipality should be involved. This could be due to the widespread opposition to previous UT projects in Istanbul which have not proven to be sustainable from any dimension.

Table 7 is a table to show the stakeholders that should be included within UT in Istanbul, as suggested by the participants in this study. This is relevant as it contributes to existing literature on which stakeholders need to be included for a more sustainable UT. The ticks (✓) in the table refer to which stakeholder from this study referred to which stakeholder to be involved. The quotations supporting each tick (✓) can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 7: A table to show which stakeholders should be included in UT projects, according to the stakeholders in this study

Interviewees	Stakeholders that should be involved to achieve sustainable UT						
	Rights-holders (communities)	NGOs / community associations	Government	Occupation chambers (Independent local experts)	Academics	Private investors (TOKI)	Municipality
Local Community Activist	✓			✓	✓		
Community leader	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Academic	✓			✓	✓		
Municipality	✓		✓				✓
Local expert	✓		✓	✓			✓
Private UT Planner	✓		✓	✓		✓	

Overall, a lack of collaboration and active participation by all relevant stakeholders within UT was found to be one of the biggest contributors to a lack of social sustainability. UT projects are approached from a top-down perspective whereby the government act above the law:

> *"They say we are the state, we are the official institution, we can do as we want. UT is based on rent, there is a logic that does not listen to the people and tries to make their own wishes"* (O.K., community leader)

<u>Rights to the city</u>

"These projects are a form of gentrification, where rights are violated and people are displaced." (C.S., academic). Closely linked to the issue of disaster risk, urban planning and gentrification is the concept of rights to the city which also has proven to be a barrier to social sustainability. Throughout this study, many stakeholders make reference to the rights to the city and essentially how it is neglected within UT.

> *"Housing is not evaluated in the context of right to the city with these transformations."* (A.A., local expert).

> *"It is a violation of the right to self-determination. When you displace a community that have lived there for decades, you destroy their social ties, their neighbourly relations, their livelihoods. Something comes to the door and takes it all away from you."* (C.B., academic)

The rights to the city of *gecekondu* communities are ignored from many different perspectives beginning with the right to live and reside. *Gecekondu* communities in Istanbul have been living in their neighbourhoods, which they built themselves, for the past 50+ years. It is socially unjust to forcibly displace these communities from their homes and destroy their livelihoods. The stakeholders in this study argue that it is not up to the government to decide which groups of people can occupy different areas of the city. Since *gecekondu* communities are normally displaced to outskirts of the city, this also brings in the concept of the right to feel unalienated, as they are treated as second-class citizens who do not have the privilege to live in the city centre. For example, the neighbourhood of Kirazlitepe is considered to be one of the most beautiful places to live in Istanbul, as it is topographically higher up and has a view of the Bosphorus Sea going through Istanbul. When talking about the UT project plan for this region, community leader of Kirazlitepe says:

> *"An item says to me; If adequate housing is not built, the landlord will be given a comparable flat elsewhere. So it is not specified where to give. However, this is one of the most beautiful places in Istanbul. They took the lands of those who did not give, by dividing and shredding the lands they had bought. After convincing 2/3 of it, the*

remaining 1/3 says you will either sign this project and the contract, or the house goes on sale. For this reason, he actually takes away everyone's house and land." (R.S., community leader)

Thinking back to what was talked about within urban planning, there is also the rights to define and design. This is also not taken into consideration as there is a lack of stakeholder participation in these projects, which is further analysed in the next section. For social sustainability the residents of *gecekondu* communities must have a say in what will happen to their homes which they built themselves. As C.B. from Istanbul Bilgi University says, *"People should be given the opportunity to rebuild their homes with affordable means. A social state should provide affordable credits for these people or provide them necessary materials or technical advice. This was done in the 1960s"* (C.B., academic). This is a very interesting point as it highlights how distant the current system is from a social state, and C.B. also makes comparisons to social housing systems within UK and other European countries to show the difference of rights to the city between different countries.

From analysing what the different stakeholders had to say, it seems that one of the biggest debates with regards to rights to the city and UT is about determining who the rights-holders are.

> *"There were problems encountered when determining the rights-holders. For example, there were tenants, Syrian refugees and squatters. And so the question of who are rights-holders came about. Since there is nothing mentioned in legislation or law about this, we had to use our own interpretation. We then came up with a model taking into consideration the right to housing for the tenants, refugees and squatters. Our proposal was rejected and we were taken off the project and replaced with someone who had very different views."* (M.H., local expert)

There are complications regarding who are rights-holders because as M.H. mentions, *gecekondu's* are not always occupied by the rightful owners as some have refugees, tenants are squatters. C.U. also agrees that there is legality related problems and the existence of illegal settlements stating that "*The issues surrounding planning permissions and zone planning are not so problematic in Europe. This is a big issue in Turkey as there are a lot of illegal settlements."* (C.U., private UT planner). Therefore, on one side of the debate you have the government and municipalities which believe that stakeholder participation should be determined on the basis of ownership stating that:

> *"If the main denominator is private property, it should be the owners of the property in the first place. If the land is owned by the state, or it is an illegal settlement, it should be the state's decision in the first place."* (A.G., municipality)

However, the other stakeholders in this study had opposing views on this matter. C.B. argues that the *gecekondu* residents who migrated to the city during the 1950s and 1960s were given the right, by the government at the time, to build their own houses. She also argues that these people who came as labourers to work in factories are the creators of the city:

> *"When these people came, the government did not provide any social housing for all these labourers. It is written in literature actually that at the time, when these people came there was an agreement between the labourers, the factory owners and the government that the labourers can build their own settlements where they please. At the time there was so much free land, that this was an easier and cheaper option for the state rather than providing social housing. The factory owners were also happy; if there was social housing this could have put pressure on them to have a minimum wage (so the workers can pay their rent) but since that did not exist, the factory owners did not have to worry about minimum wage. So the migrants, the newcomers were left to solve their own housing situations. They built their homes and then went to the local authorities to ask for electricity, water, gas, roads, transportation and pavements. This took forever. There were no roads for years and years. Every time there were elections, every 5 years, the government would provide a little bit more in terms of these basic facilities in return for votes. But now the government says they are illegal squatters. during the economic depression in the 1980s, Turgut Ozal introduced gecekondu amendment laws. This gave further rights to the gecekondu's to build more. The most prominent builders of cities, planners of cities, are the informal settlers because they know where and how to build it."* (C.B., academic)

It seems that the current government have forgotten or ignored what has happened in the past and now are labelling these *gecekondu* communities as illegal. They are also disregarding the fact that previous governments further legitimized these *gecekondu's* by providing these communities with water, electricity, gas, roads etc.

Overall, it can be said that rights to the city within UT in Istanbul is not taken into consideration and thus acts as a barrier to promoting social sustainability when it comes to issues such as gentrification, urban planning and stakeholder participation.

5.3.2 Economic sustainability

Table 8: Sustainability Assessment Framework: Economic Dimension

Dimensions	Themes	Indicators	Stakeholder mentions	
			✓	✗

Economic	Jobs	Support local employment by creating new jobs around the project site or post project	LE	A, CL, M, LE, LCA
	Economic impact on *gecekondu* residents	Basic amenities and services remain affordable to the original residents of the transformed areas		M, A
		Gecekondu residents are provided sufficient compensation during the transformation projects		CL

In order to promote economic sustainability, UT projects should make obvious contributions to economic growth of the *gecekondu* communities. This can be in the form of creating new employment opportunities during planning and implementation stages as well as after the completion of the project. The interview responses however, indicate that UT projects in Istanbul have not created local employment opportunities for *gecekondu* residents at any stage of the project. When asked about employment opportunities to the community leaders of Basibuyuk community and Yildiztabya community respectively, this is what they had to say:

> *"In fact, most of the people living here are painter and brick fast, but even they are not offered the opportunity to work in these projects. These people could both have a job and pay their debts for their homes. If they really cared about providing job opportunities for locals, there is much that can be done. For example, the construction materials of the project can be supplied from local dealers whenever possible. They can use local engineers, labourers etc. If it were like this, this transformation project would be in favour of local construction companies, big people, tradesmen and tenants, but they did not do that."* (A.K., community leader)

> *"No job opportunities were provided even to local construction companies. Even local hardware stores, local craftsmen and workers were not given job opportunities. The municipality and the state are giving their transformation projects to large construction companies that they have close ties with. They are doing all their work with their own staff."* (K.A., community leader)

This was also supported by the municipality itself who said:

> "No, UT projects do not create employment opportunities. To do this, we applied for a grant program from the EU. We had applied before. For example, while we were doing R&D work, we organized a job and vocational training course for 80 young

people, thanks to the funds we received from the EU in the transformation project in Fatih. But we were able to provide employment for 3 of them." (A.G., municipality)

Despite one local expert who said that employment opportunities are created *"because offices and banks are built in the newly built places, there is an opportunity for employment"* (I.D., local expert), it is questionable whether these opportunities are for *gecekondu* residents or the newcomers who have moved into the newly built houses.

Overall, it can be said that UT projects in Istanbul did not promote economic sustainability but actually negatively impacted the livelihoods of *gecekondu* communities by changing the dynamics of the region and neighbourhood and making it a much more expensive area to live in.

5.3.3 Environmental sustainability

"Environmentally friendly practices in these projects are just on paper to use it as advertisement. Practically it is not done." (A.K., community leader)

Table 9: Sustainability Assessment Framework: Environmental Dimension

Dimensions	Themes	Indicators	Stakeholder mentions ✓	Stakeholder mentions ✗
Environmental	Transportation	Environmentally friendly modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport is encouraged		M, A, CL
		The surrounding road and transport infrastructure is considered		LE, CL, A
	Environmental Pollution	Air, noise or visual pollution impacts on the residents have been considered throughout the UT projects.		CL, M, A, LE
	Energy Use	Designed to incorporate energy saving techniques, such as more efficient heating and ventilation systems		UTP, A, LE
	Education	Local residents are encouraged to be more environmentally friendly (e.g. more efficient waste management)		A
	Open spaces, green areas & Wildlife	Green areas are protected and project is designed to support the use of open spaces for public interest		UTP, CL, LE, A
	Environmental Standards	An EIA is carried out and followed		UTP, CL, LE, A

Environmental sustainability has been evaluated by looking at aspects regarding transportation, environmental pollution, energy use, education, open spaces and environmental standards. There was not a single stakeholder within this study who believed that UT projects have had positive impacts on these aspects mentioned. It is also worth noting that most interviewees did not have much to say about the environmental aspects of UT projects since they were more focused on the social sustainability issues regarding gentrification and stakeholder participation. They argued that environmental issues were the last thing that the investors and government gave importance to and that environmentally friendly initiatives were used as a marketing tool that never got implemented. Issues regarding transportation link back to the lack of urban planning which has put further strain on existing road infrastructures and traffic. Talking about the UT project carried out in Fikirtepe local expert I.D. said that:

> *"The region has become a place with the highest traffic density, as a valuable region has been overlooked in terms of rent and the planning of the existing infrastructure."* (I.D., local expert)

Discussions regarding sustainable waste management, a decrease in energy consumption or creating green areas after the projects are far from the realities of UT in Istanbul.

> *"Most of these projects are ecocide projects. They destroy the environment and ecology. In Ayazma, there were lots of trees and all of these got cut down."* (C.B., academic)

> *"Green building and renewable energy opportunities are not included in the transformation projects in Turkey. In projects, there are no such things as equipping roofs and facades with sun panels."* (E.K., academic)

On the contrary, green areas and wildlife is destroyed, and nothing is done to mitigate the air, noise and water pollution created during the construction phases of the projects. When asked about EIA reports and whether they are conducted and followed, most interviewees found this question comical.

> *"The second stage is being built and the dust emitted by the excavation trucks negatively affects the lives of the other residents. No measures are taken for this, the municipality does not inspect it, and no penal sanctions are imposed."* (A.K., community leader)

> *"Continuous changes are being made in the EIA regulation in this country. For example, trees are cut down. Wherever EIA is required, they make a decision immediately and say that EIA is not necessary there, and they remove it from the EIA obligation in favour of rent."* (E.K., academic)

6. Discussion

The multi-dimensional aspect of urban transformation and the poor execution of these projects in Istanbul can make it difficult to grasp an understanding of what is happening and why it is happening. However, when approaching the issue from the perspective of neoliberal urbanism, it certainly does seem to fit all in place. The urban transformation projects that we see today and in the past twenty years in Istanbul are a direct outcome of neoliberal urbanism.

Steel et al. (2017) talks about how urban transformation can take place in a series of patchwork activities while being disguised as redevelopment and transformation. This is actually what we can see happening in Istanbul whereby the disaster risk law is being used to justify the transformation of *gecekondu* communities. While they claim that urban transformation is necessary to build stronger earthquake-resilient homes, what we can see is happening is totally different. In reality, the government decide which areas or buildings they deem as risky, without considering expert advice such as an earthquake risk report. When you look at the *gecekondu* neighbourhoods in Istanbul which have undergone or currently in the process of urban transformation, they are in fact not at the top of the list for being a priority high risk area. They are either prime locations close to the city centre (Ayazma, Fikirtepe, Sulukule) or have very nice scenery (Kirazlitepe) or any other reason that makes that neighbourhood valuable and hence profitable. Therefore, rather than prioritising neighbourhoods that are actually under disaster risk, they prioritise areas which can generate the most profit. This supports what Guzey (2006) says about how urban transformation nowadays pays more attention to place-specific strategies, and also supports Steel et al. (2017) when she talks about how small parcels of land is acquired and transformed with the ultimate goal of increasing the value of that land.

It is also interesting to highlight that the political system within a country also impacts how its neoliberal agenda plays out. Since the Turkey is governed by an extremely authoritarian government which has proven to be corrupt on many different occasions, the processes involved in urban transformation is certainly different from other countries. Since the ultimate decision is controlled by the president of Turkey, in many scenarios the government acts above the law. The application of the disaster risk law is a prime example of this. Even when the government is taken to court by *gecekondu* communities to resists against these unlawful projects, the government make small edits to the law and still go ahead with the project.

Vives Miro (2011) expresses neoliberal urbanism as a way of urban powers positioning their cities on the global market. This is also the case in Istanbul as the urban transformation projects are all profit-oriented and prioritise economic gains rather than urban living standards. Examples such as the entitlement of citizenship to foreigners who buy newly

transformed houses proves how these projects are being marketed on the global market. Moreover, replacing local tradesmen and shopkeepers with more western-style shopping malls is yet another way of how the projects are being advertised and how the city space is used for profit-generating purposes.

Another aspect of neoliberal policies is the promotion of a free-market. This can be seen in Istanbul's UT projects whereby the government have opened the market for private investors such as TOKI to be in complete charge of UT projects, to such an extent where they have the power to forcibly evict residents from their homes. As mentioned in the results, the government does not like to get itself involved in big projects which require taking responsibility and require more urban planning. On the contrary, they will focus on small in-place individual building transformation that can generate quick profits. It is also worth noting that not everyone can be a private investor in these projects. From the investors to the construction company to the engineers, most parties involved will usually have some sort of affiliation with the current political party in power, ensuring that they are the ones profiting. This seems to fit in with the global pattern explained by Kirkpatrick and Smith (2011) of more public investments which are serving the interests of the private sector and high-status or authority figures. While the government should have more of a supervisor role, as suggested by interviewees in this study, they play the role of an investor trying to profit from their own people, far away from being a social state which it was closer to in the 1960s. The shear lack of urban planning and consequently a lack of integration of UT projects into the wider spatial planning and existing infrastructure shows how the government's position has shifted from a "managerial" role to an "entrepreneurial" one, as Harvey (1989) describes.

Harvey (2009) continues to talk about how neoliberal urban policies ignores the fact that not everybody is equal. However, what we see happening in Istanbul is essentially the 'equal treatment of unequals', as Thomas Jefferson puts it. UT projects create luxurious houses and consequently increase living costs in that region. While these costs could be affordable to newcomers who are likely to be middle or upper class, it becomes unaffordable to the *gecekondu* communities who are expected to pay for their new homes that have been transformed. This is far from realistic when these residents do not have a stable income and work on minimum wage. This of course contributes to the widening between class divisions, and in the case of Istanbul also between different ethnic groups, thus leading to a distinct difference in quality of life as the more one can afford, the better resources they can access to improve their socio-economic situation.

This leads onto the concept of gentrification, which Steel et al. (2017) argues that has become a part of urban redevelopment through appropriating land and changing it to a point where the residents can no longer live there. This is certainly the case in Istanbul: *gecekondu* communities are demolished and are replaced with luxurious residences or even gated communities. These are neither socially, culturally or financially appropriate for the existing

residents and so they are forced to move away. This is also in agreement with Rigolon and Németh (2019) who state that such demographical changes impact local businesses, culture, social networking and neighbourhood dynamics. Therefore, as Steel et al. (2017) says, UT and gentrification cannot be judged as separate entities, in the context of Istanbul.

In some cases, such as with the neighbourhood of Sulukule (Romani community) and Ayazma (Kurdish community), the *gecekondu* residents were displaced from the very beginning of the project as they were offered new homes that were not in their existing neighbourhood, but miles away in other parts of the city. This reinforces Lopez-Morales (2015) when she argues that gentrification is not only an economic force but also a political conflict. Despite most UT projects leading to gentrification as mentioned previously, why is it that out of all of the projects that have taken place, it is the Kurdish and Romani communities who have had not even been offered the chance to carry on living in their neighbourhoods. One reason for this could be because these communities tend to be in opposition to the current regime and so the government do not want neighbourhoods in the city centre which vote against them in elections. It is of no doubt that negative impacts are often more harmful to the underprivileged, the urban poor and less educated, lower income people, people of colour and politically marginalised communities as stated by Harvey (2008) and Rigolon and Németh (2019).

It is also interesting to see how gentrification in Istanbul, fits into the wider debate that focuses on supply versus demand. The demand side argues that there is an abundance of well-educated middle and upper-class people ('gentrifiers') who are looking for new luxurious residences to move into. Whereas the supply side, as Guzey (2006) states, argues that it is the actions of the government, investors and profit-oriented organisations which carry out these UT projects, increasing rent gaps and property values. Having conducted 18 in-depth interviews, read many scientific journals, and many other observations, I would have to agree with scholars such as Smith (2002) who argue that gentrification is not due to the demand of 'gentrifiers' but rather because of the developers who are creating the supply for the gentrifiers to move into. It is very common to drive around in Istanbul and see hundreds of vacant newly built apartment blocks. This is another reality of UT projects: after completion it can take several years to sell the flats. The Turkish governments political agenda and economic policies furthers strengthens the argument that gentrification is as a result of supply and not demand. Many stakeholders in this study mentioned that the government's main focus is boosting the construction industry. This is seen as one of the main ways in which they generate profit.

Nevertheless, gentrification is a reality in Istanbul and assessing the social, economic and environmental sustainability of UT projects in *gecekondu* communities carries less of a weight when those *gecekondu* residents are being forced to leave their homes and their livelihoods. Moreover, as mentioned in wider gentrification literature, the term gentrification is also

largely ignored in Turkey and considered a "dirty word" by politicians, developers and investors, as Atkinson (2011) states. The focus for these people in higher positions is more the financial benefits that **they** gain, whereas gentrification is just seen as an unfortunate outcome of UT. With this sort of mentality, it is difficult to be optimistic about the future of UT in Istanbul.

7. Conclusion

Neoliberal urban policies along with urbanisation has laid the foundation for the urban transformation projects that have happened and are still happening in Istanbul, Turkey. The main focus of these projects have been on the transformation of gecekondu communities but unlike the international experiences where sustainability has been an explicit concern, this has not been the case in Istanbul. UT has proven to be a strategy for the government to impose their power onto the city while also making huge profits in the process. The profit-oriented mentality of both government and investor has resulted in the complete disregard for the livelihoods of gecekondu communities, including socio-economic impacts, and for the environment. Rather than promoting social sustainability the UT projects have also been used to promote gentrification and demographic change. Neoliberal policies have also led to a lack of urban planning and a lack of implementation of city zoning, which has further hindered the long-term functioning and sustainability of UT projects. UT in Turkey can be seen as the primary tool in bringing deprived urban areas into the real estate market with the justification of disaster risk. The lack of a large-scale development plan, the absence of a housing policy, the absence of plan guarantees, frequent changes in plans, and their materialization in politics creates a barrier for sustainable urban transformation. UT projects have made no contributions to promoting social, environmental or economic sustainability of gecekondu communities. On the contrary, it has caused more problems than its solved, destroying the neighbourhood culture, leaving gecekondu communities in more economic hardship and displacing them from the homes that they have lived in for decades.

Sustainable UT is widely spoken in academic literature and a lot can be said on how to improve the sustainability of UT projects in Istanbul. In the case of Turkey, it is not a matter of not knowing the right actions to take but rather the beliefs and greed of those in power which acts as the biggest barrier to achieving sustainable urban transformation.

Recommendations for future studies include:

- Indicators could have a scale or benchmark to make them more measurable.
- Interview questions which were mainly derived through literature review on sustainable UT may, this may have led the conversations a certain way, different questions could have brought about different key concepts

- Focus on the different types of gecekondu residents: there are rights-holders who own the rights to the property but then there are also tenants. A differentiation was not made in this study.

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9. Appendices

9.2 Appendix 1

Dimensions	Themes	Indicators	Stakeholder quotations
Social	Participation of stakeholders	Active participation and decision-making from gecekondu residents is encouraged	"We inform people, explain the perspective of the municipality and collect their demands." (A.G., municipality) "But typically, the opinions or needs of the communities are not taken into consideration. TOKI or whoever is in charge of the project will just come to the area and explain what is going to happen to the locals." (C.U., private UT planner) "Two types of application are made in this process: (1) top-down approach; forcibly displacing the people and (2) persuasion, when they realize that they cannot victimize the public. Here, landowners and construction companies sit at the table and negotiate. Victimization is less there because they have a chance to bargain. TOKI is actually a structure that brings this forced transformation to life. Normally, no one can transfer someone's finances to another person without his consent. You cannot forcefully evacuate. You can only do this when there is a public interest." (C.S., academic) "Decisions are made on the table, excluding local peoples." (C.S., academic)

| | | | "For example, the Romani's in Sulukule believed them. In Sulukule and Ayazma, the tenants were completely excluded from the projects." (C.B., academic)

"In fact, transformation projects are from the very beginning flawed. Establishment of the Law No. 6306 on the transformation of areas under disaster risk by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in 2011 and its very important. There are mostly non-participatory processes carried out by the ministry. There are two critical points here. First; It eliminates the autonomy of local governments, their views are not taken into consideration. On the other hand, the people living in the region have neither a say nor a jurisdiction in UT projects carried out on their own living spaces." (E.K., Local Expert)

"During the participation process, it is necessary to bring the parties together, to let them get to know each other and to listen to each other, for social cohesion. But this is not done in this country." (E.K., academic) |
| | | Other stakeholders such as academics, local experts and community associations are active participators | "Occupational chambers are not included, they are excluded. Professional organizations and experts know best what kind of construction will be made on the historical and architectural fabric of a city. There should be a justice and legal system that will measure and determine the accuracy of these projects and protect the rights of property owners. A system that will give right to the right. But there is none of these in Turkey." (C.S., academic)

"Although we wanted to include Architects and Urban planners, they persistently avoided including them. Even the Municipality did not invite the Chambers of Architects and City Planners to the meetings |

			held. They did not share information and documents. They also withdrew because of this." (Y.D., community leader)
		Minorities and under-represented groups are treated equally and taken into account sufficiently	"The Kurdish people in Ayazma were treated terribly. When the Olympic stadium was built, the walls of the homes that were facing the stadium were painted white to make it look more pleasing. The inhabitants were told not to turn their lights off during the night and not to make too much noise to minimise visual and noise distraction." (C.B., academic)
	State-public relations	The government (or private investor/municipality) fulfil the promises made to the gecekondu communities	"The municipality first called us to a meeting and told us fanciful stories. There we realized that our house was going to be destroyed, and when I raised my voice, for example, I was accused of being an agitator (trouble-maker)." (C.S., academic)

"After these projects and other projects such as Tarlabasi, people realised what was going on and they no longer believed the fake promises made by the government." (C.B., academic)

"Urbanism congresses are held, very good things are said, but they are not put into practice." (E.K., academic)

"Projects also have car parking requirements, but the local municipality makes such an offer to the contractor (investor) in charge of the construction, where it tells the investor that they will build the carpark and takes the money from the investor but then they use the money for something else entirely." (M.H., local expert)

"they did not take into consideration our demands on the green areas and the areas reserved for education. We received an unrealistic response to our objection, such as "Don't worry, the contractor will listen to you and fulfil your demands during the construction phase." In fact, our petition of objection was |

			answered 169 days later, not within the 60-day legal process." (Y.D., community leader)
"		Government do not act unlawfully	"Avcilar Municipality (CHP) wanted the mayor of Istanbul (CHP) to do something, but since AKP/MHP coalition hold a majority within IMM they vote against anything, they are politically viewed." (E.K., academic) "For example, Yenimahalle is a neighbourhood that supports the government as a majority and they immediately sat at the table and were convinced. By frightening or forcing those who were not convinced (with the arrival of thieves and thugs who entered the vacated flats and those who dealt with illegal business), they evacuated them from their homes. And these people were victimized at this point. But they couldn't do this in every neighbourhood." (K.A., community leader) "The government sent thugs to cause trouble and unrest in the area to justify the evacuation of houses. They want the municipality to use this as an excuse: saying these places are in a very bad condition, and they want to empty their houses and sell them. In other words, the fact that official institutions are stakeholders turns into a situation to the detriment of the public, as this example shows." (O.K., community leader)
	Land use and buildings	Basic amenities, services and access to social and recreational areas is provided or improved for gecekondu residents	"A place was opened for park, transportation, health and culture unit" (A.G., municipality) "These are included in the UT projects that create gated-communities." (A.G., municipality)

| | | | "No basic facilities are not improved with these projects. They are building shopping malls and lending their shops with high rents." (A.K., community leader)

"However, improvements that will enable or increase the comfortable access of citizens to public services are ignored in transformation projects, not given priority." (K.A., community leader)

"We want common living spaces (community centre etc). There should be places where old people can come together and socialize. Most of the people living here are workers and labourers. Women and men leave their homes early in the morning to go to work. We demanded the opening of shops under each 8-storey building to meet the needs of the employees, for example; breakfast places, coffee shops etc. We wanted a nursery for children. However, we saw that the transformation project did not include nursery." (Y.D., community leader)

"No, access to basic services and facilities have not been improved. All these things started to be provided as a service to be bought, as part of the private sector. In these newly built multi-storey residences, people with high income can benefit from such services. In the city, we can say that those who live economically are distinguished by the substitution of private services - private educational institutions, private hospitals, etc. - instead of public services." (E.K., local expert)

"Only when the UT projects create gated communities than these communities have swimming pools, cycle paths, parks, exercise |
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			areas. But these areas are not open for the public to use." (M.H., local expert)
		Low capacitated residents are provided with improved access	"the needs of elderly or disabled people are not considered, their rights are not protected" (C.U., private UT planner)
		Residents are given an opportunity to strengthen their homes	*"People should be given the opportunity to rebuild their homes with affordable means. A social state should provide affordable credits for these people or provide them necessary materials or technical advice. This was done in the 1960s."* (C.B., academic)
		An increase in population as a result of UT has been accounted for – project is part of wider urban spatial planning	"When applied individually, 4-storey houses increase to 8 floors, which created traffic load, further increased the lack of open space and human density." (A.G., municipality) "Dozens of multi-storey buildings were built next to each other and the area was turned into a complete concrete cemetery. In an already high traffic area, they have resulted in more building and population density. Natural gas, electricity, water and sewage infrastructure was not renewed. Think about it, for example; The infrastructure that serves 10 thousand people now has an expectation that it will serve approximately 15 times more people." (I.D., local expert) "In another neighbourhood, Bagdat Street, for example, 4-storey buildings are demolished and 10, 20-storey buildings are built in their places. The same road and infrastructure stays that way, without any change." (I.D., local expert) "Our neighbourhood with a population of 32 thousand was expanded to accommodate 74 thousand people with this project, but the number of health centres envisaged for so many people was planned

			to be only one. When we wanted this number to be increased to at least two, they delayed our request. Similarly, they did not take into consideration our demands on the green areas and the areas reserved for education." (Y.D., community leader)
	Gentrification	Gecekondu residents carry on living in the same area	"UT projects in Istanbul target low income groups living in these gecekondu's. These communities are either forcibly displaced from their homes or end up with huge debt as they have to pay the difference between the value of their current homes and the value of the luxurious homes built from the project. So most of the time they end up selling their homes and moving elsewhere." (C.B., academic) "Ayazma had very bad infrastructure but they were in the middle of the city with access to everything. Then they were relocated to Bezirgan Bahcesi and then these facilities there are extremely expensive so the access to these facilities became harder. Furthermore, as these communities were Kurdish they were criminalised and victimised in the new area that they had been forcibly displaced to. They were treated as terrorists…..Area is gentrified, rents go up, property prices go up etc." (C.B., academic) "For example, such a situation was experienced here in Fener, Balat. When the investors started to open luxury coffee shops and stores here, the rents increased. For this reason, poor families had to get away from these places. In neighbourhoods that are "gentrified" by state power, everyone is already leaving and the newcomers are compatible with each other." (C.S., academic) "slums are being liquidated and new neighbourhoods are being built." (E.K., academic)

				"They are given to private people, so that forest areas and facilities are built. At the expense of the public, private companies are favoured. In this way, private firms and capital owners are allowed to seize forests, plateaus, streams and green areas." (C.S., academic) *"The opportunities offered to the newly arrived rich people because the local people are driven away from there. Since you don't keep the local people there, you are doing nothing for them."* (C.S., academic) *"The transformation made by giving public lands to private firms."* (E.K., academic) *"Once upon a time, the rich worked in villas away from the city centre, and the poor worked in the production areas in the city centres and lived close to them. With the privatization policies, directly, urban centres began to become private service areas, and therefore the wealthy class living in the mobiles began to move to homes in the centre of the city. The tension here grew even more and the poor began to be completely expelled from the city."* (E.K., local expert) "There are many examples in Istanbul where the state drives away the poor, builds million-dollar villas and makes those areas attractive to wealthy people who can buy them." (M.H., local expert) "The new buildings are being built within compounds which include swimming pools, car parks, security guards and green areas. However, this means that the apartment fees become unaffordable and so people end up selling their apartments, and end up having to leave their neighbourhoods. This is the reality of Turkey." (Y.D., community leader)

			"Those who leave are again transported to insecure and unhealthy places. The local residents cannot benefit from the stores and shops built as a result of the transformation. These are low-income families. Those who come are those who buy houses for investment or people from high income levels." (O.K., community leader) "For example, they set a price of 436 thousand TL for the apartments we live in and they ask us for 180 thousand TL to contribute to the cost. Interest will be added to this 180 thousand TL according to the annual inflation two times a year. In other words, the amount of repayment you start to pay low will be as much as people's pension after a while. In that case, how can people pay for it? In this case, these people will have to sell their houses and leave." (O.K., community leader) "Designing houses for the middle and upper classes to buy and making the society even more alien to each other in this way. The transformation projects made cause this. To move the workers and labourers away from the centre of the city towards their fronts and to transform the central places into neighbourhoods where middle and upper classes can live." (Y.D., community leader)
	Culture	Gecekondu community and neighbourhood culture is preserved	"These are included in the UT projects that create gated-communities. But in this case, the neighbourhood culture disappears." (A.G., municipality) "Even if the community is relocated all together to a TOKI site, that community is no longer the same community, the cohesion is broken, the neighbourhood ties are broken, social ties are broken. This is because in the neighbourhood, living usually takes place outside, in

| | | | the garden or on the streets. This isn't possible in apartment blocks because there aren't any public socialising areas. Also in Ayazma, for example, it was a Kurdish community. Before, Kurdish women could socialise in their outdoor spaces with everyone else but when they get moved to apartment blocks and they are home alone, as part of their culture, they cannot have male guests over to socialise. These relocation sites are not adequate for the communities. Before they could ask their neighbours to borrow money or to look after their children or for other favours. Now they can't because they are all isolated and segregated." (C.B., academic)

"We are losing our local tradesmen culture. That's what makes the city. When you go to your local shop you know that person very well because they are also your neighbour. That informal relation does not exist in a shopping mall. They do not speak the same type of language. As the franchise restaurants enter these areas, we lose our local restaurants which is a big part of our culture. When the area is gentrified there is no people left anyway to go to the local restaurants so they end up closing either way. We are losing the lively part of our culture, the soul of the city." (C.B., academic)

"there is a law numbered 5366 for the renovation of worn-out historical buildings. According to this law, for example, it is the case that, as in Sulukule, they completely eradicate the Romani culture there, describe the neighbourhood as an area of agony in order to clear what they have done about it in public, and then mislead the public as if they built better houses. Transformation projects bring a new life order. The common areas in the city are eliminated. It prevents people from coming together, and more misguided individuals and life models emerge." (E.K., local expert) |
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			"neighbourhood culture disappears. High buildings and flats are and people are completely separated from each other and confined to vertical, multi-storey buildings and residences." (M.H., local expert) "In fact, another important point that draws attention in the project is that our neighbourhood is divided into 5 pieces and 20 meters wide roads are built between each. We believe that this will damage our neighbourhood relations and destroy unity and integrity in the neighbourhood." (Y.D., community leader) "UT is destroying the neighbourhood culture and destroys social solidarity." (O.K., community leader) "These residences will not be buildings that are accustomed to local residents or that are shaped according to their needs." (K.A., community leader) "They take away our neighbourhoods that we have built with our own power for years. This is a very traumatic process, actually." (R.S., community leader)
		Efforts are made to mediate and harmonise different cultures, ethnic groups and religious sects.	"Then they were relocated to Bezirgan Bahcesi and then these facilities there are extremely expensive so the access to these facilities became harder. Furthermore, as these communities were Kurdish they were criminalised and victimised in the new area that they had been forcibly displaced to. They were treated as terrorists." (C.B., academic)

			"There are disputes between the old tradesmen and the new tradesmen. Cultural conflicts are taking place." (C.S., academic) "In our country, there is no transformation that will bring together different layers and cultures in the society. It is necessary to transform people culturally, sociologically and economically. Urban transformation is not just tearing down a building and rebuilding it, it shouldn't be." (E.K., Academic)
		Historical buildings and structures are protected	"This neighbourhood was a historical protected area, so it was illegal to build in that way." (F.O., local community activist) "These urban transformations are made by removing the historical and architectural texture, the beauty of the underground - there are water cisterns, passages and tunnels. As seen in the example of Sulukule and Tarlabasi, they destroyed not only the above ground but also the underground texture and architecture." (C.S., academic)
	Disaster Risk	Residents of the gecekondu community that have been transformed are living in earthquake resistant buildings after the project	"Earthquake resilient buildings are only made for people with money." (O.K., community leader)
		Scientific reports and risk assessments have been abided by in an honest and ethical way.	"In other words, without taking any technical analysis, for example, without examining it in the laboratory, the municipality prepares a risk report for the buildings, via faculties from the University. They do not give us this report. We could not reach it although we wanted to, they prevented it." (O.K., community leader)

| | | | "The communities are not taken into consideration. The Romanis or the Kurds are not considered. In Ayazma there were geological studies done previously and these studies showed that Ayazma was very strong against an earthquake. This was the same for Sulukule. The disaster risk law is just a way of legitimizing the projects." (C.B., academic)

"Avcilar is the riskiest district in Istanbul. But there are no houses on the list declared by the government as a risky area. So the only area that would bring them profits was risky. They are turning even the earthquake into politics." (E.K., academic) |
| | | Disaster risk (floods) has been considered while planning UT projects | "Because of the pandemic, people turned to using private vehicles instead of public transport, and this made the existing traffic problem worse. Parking garages started to be built in the basements of the newly built buildings, but it was observed that this also caused floods when it rained. There is no soil left in the city to attract the rain and the infrastructure is not renewed to compensate for this. They are concreting even existing trees to their bodies and further reducing the green areas remaining in the city." (E.K., local expert) |

| Economic | Jobs | Support local employment by creating new jobs around the project site or post project | "Of course, because offices and banks are built in the newly built places, there is an opportunity for employment. For example, in Fikirtepe, there will be shopping areas, sports halls and similar areas under each building and people will work here." (I.D., local expert)

"The construction sector and project processes are managed and carried out by large companies. In the implementation phase, we can see that the people living in that region can take part within the scope of need, even if it is a little. In addition, these are generally temporary employment. Moreover, temporary employment is not sustainable, as this transformation made in his own life sphere cannot continue to live" (E.K., local expert)

"Neo-liberal policies and capitalism itself actually only work with large corporate groups. Therefore, small shopkeepers are trying to survive. There is no economic policy that supports them either. I do not think these policies are sustainable. During the time of the (COVID-19) pandemic, the value of these small places was once again understood. While they could not go to shopping malls, people could easily meet their needs from the small shops in their neighbourhoods." (E.K., local expert)

"These projects provide no hope or prosperity for small business owners. They hope that their business will be better at first, but then the large supermarkets open up within the scope of the project which forces these small businesses and shops to close. Newcomers who move into the newly built apartments do not really care because they didn't know the local shops anyway." (M.H., local expert) |
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| | | | | "Kucukcekmece municipality promised the Ayazma population that jobs will be offered. They started a workshop programme but to apply to these workshops, you had to have high school diploma. The majority of Ayazma population do not even know how to read or write. These workshops then turned into a way of taming the population to teach them how to act in modern areas. There was an employment office in the area, they got the funds from the EU and did not offer any jobs." (C.B., academic)

"There is no such thing employment opportunities in this project. I think maybe it will be discussed after the transformation project is finished." (E.Y., local community activist)

"The project had no such goal or concern" (F.O., local community activist)

"The economic dimension of UT is ignored, ignored." (E.K., academic)

"In fact, most of the people living here are painter and brick fast, but even they are not offered the opportunity to work in these projects. These people could both have a job and pay their debts for their homes. If they really cared about providing job opportunities for locals, there is much that can be done. For example, the construction materials of the project can be supplied from local dealers whenever possible. They can use local engineers, labourers etc. If it were like this, this transformation project would be in favour of local construction companies, big people, tradesmen and tenants, but they did not do that." (A.K., community leader) |

| | | | | "No job opportunities were provided even to local construction companies. Even local hardware stores, local craftsmen and workers were not given job opportunities. The municipality and the state are giving their transformation projects to large construction companies that they have close ties with. They are doing all their work with their own staff." (K.A., community leader)

"No. In the project presented to us, there were no spaces that created new business opportunities. They did not include the shops and business centres we wanted to be." (R.S., community leader)

"No, UT projects do not create employment opportunities. To do this, we applied for a grant program from the EU. We had applied before. For example, while we were doing R&D work, we organized a job and vocational training course for 80 young people, thanks to the funds we received from the EU in the transformation project in Fatih. But we were able to provide employment for 3 of them. Now, our aim is to involve more women living in the transformation area, to make sure that the young people and the unemployed there work during the construction phase of the project." (A.G., municipality) |
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	Economic impact on gecekondu residents	Basic amenities and services remain affordable to the original residents of the transformed areas	"Renovated places are very expensive, luxury houses and shops are built, but there is a very different social life behind and around it" (A.G., municipality) "Furthermore, they have to pay very high unaffordable monthly instalments for these new houses. Many of these people cannot afford these instalments." (C.B., academic) "With these projects, everything becomes very expensive. Your local shop goes and is replaced with a shopping mall. These communities don't care for a shopping mall. From their local shopkeeper they could borrow money if they wanted to, they can't do that now. Even if these communities are a part of the project, they cannot live there. Financially, socially, culturally these projects are not feasible for them." (C.B., academic) "But looking at income levels, the owner prefers to sell his new place and go elsewhere, as his new home is worth much more than it was before. They see it as an opportunity to earn an income." (A.G., municipality)
		Gecekondu residents are provided sufficient compensation during the transformation projects	"According to the 6306 Disaster Risk law, beneficiaries have to make rent subsidies as long as the construction continues throughout. However, this period has been extended here to 8 years and there are disruptions in rental payments. There are even families who cannot get their 5, 6-month rent. The rental income paid by the state is 1100 TL and it is impossible to find a decent for that price. For this reason, the owners make the difference from their own pockets." (K.A., community leader)

			"They settled 80 families in housing estates built by the municipality before - (also 2km away). Some families also give 1500 TL rent allowance, but this is not enough for Istanbul. They haven't increased in three years. I moved to a place 10km away, for 2000 TL. Each flat owner receives the same rent allowance." (R.S., community leader)
Environmental	Transportation	Environmentally friendly modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport is encouraged	"Yes on the project, but not in practice." (A.G., municipality) "Even if it is done, it has no functionality, it cannot be sustained." (C.S., academic) "We see that environmentally friendly transportation opportunities are not included in the transformation plans here and in the places that are being made." (K.A., community leader)
		The surrounding road and transport infrastructure is considered	"The region has become a place with the highest traffic density, as a valuable region has been overlooked in terms of rent and the planning of the existing infrastructure." (I.D., local expert) "As the population increases, traffic problems arise." (K.A., community leader)
	Environmental Pollution	Air, noise, water or visual pollution impacts on the residents have been considered throughout the UT projects.	"The second stage is being built and the dust emitted by the excavation trucks negatively affects the lives of the other residents. No measures are taken for this, the municipality does not inspect it, and no penal sanctions are imposed." (A.K., community leader) "We know that asbestos-containing material is present in these rubble piles and it harms human health." (K.A., community leader) "In terms of climatic sense, tall buildings disturbed the air balance of the city and damaged it." (A.G., municipality)

			"Noise, air or water pollution is not managed in any way" (C.S., academic) "Asbestos-containing wastes of a building that was destroyed in Ankara in a historical time were filled into a truck and passed through the streets and touched a channel." (I.D., local expert)
	Energy Use	Designed to incorporate energy saving techniques, such as more efficient heating and ventilation systems	"We can say that energy saving techniques almost does not exist." (C.U., private UT planner) "Green building and renewable energy opportunities are not included in the transformation projects in Turkey. In projects, there are no such things as equipping roofs and facades with sun panels." (E.K., academic)
	Education	Local residents are encouraged to be more environmentally friendly (e.g. more efficient waste management)	"While marketing these projects, there are these kinds of statements used, but this is just the marketing method. Because there is no intention to keep the locals there, all of that is nothing but a lie." (C.S., academic)
	Open Spaces and Wildlife	Green areas and wildlife is protected and project is designed to support the use of open spaces for public interest	"the infrastructure is overwhelmed, there are no green areas, there are neighbourhoods with no open areas. Some UT projects create parks but they are very small, not enough according to the population of that area." (C.U., private UT planner) "The houses here were gardens where all kinds of trees were grown. But all of these became construction sites and the trees were cut down. People were gathering fruits in summer, winter, from these trees." (R.S., community leader) "No. You do not transform, but destroy, destroy by building in a wildlife or a forest region. This is an attack. It is transforming in a

			sense, but it is a transformation to the detriment of the city, the ecosystem." (A.A., local expert)
			"Most of these projects are ecocide projects. They destroy the environment and ecology. In Ayazma, there were lots of trees and all of these got cut down." (C.B., academic)
			"In 2009, the Istanbul reconstruction plan was made, but most of the North Forests, which should never be opened to construction, were destroyed by the new airport and the third bridge. With the Kanal Istanbul Mega project, agricultural areas, water basins and forest areas will be destroyed and plundered. We don't expect such an understanding to take wildlife into consideration." (E.K., local expert)
	Environmental Standards	An EIA is carried out and followed	"Actually an EIA report is being made. A good architectural team thinks and plans all of these. We, as a state, pay attention to these." (A.G., municipality)
			"There is no EIA report, it was not done. No measures are taken to reduce the resulting contamination in any way. In fact, the rubble of collapsed buildings is left for years until the license is issued. And the people living in the neighbourhood whose houses were not destroyed continue to live with that image and physical conditions. We know that asbestos-containing material is present in these rubble piles and it harms human health." (K.A., community leader)
			"EIA is not carried out in urban transformation projects." (C.U., private UT planner)
			"EIA reports are actually very important. These reports are ignored. In fact, the state gives feasible reports to projects that should not be

| | | | done, we cannot get a positive response to our objections, for example, the Kanal Istanbul." (M.H., local expert)

"Continuous changes are being made in the EIA regulation in this country. For example, trees are cut down. Wherever EIA is required, they make a decision immediately and say that EIA is not necessary there, and they remove it from the EIA obligation in favour of rent." (E.K., academic)

"There is no EIA report, it was not done. No measures are taken to reduce the resulting contamination in any way. In fact, the rubble of collapsed buildings is left for years until the license is issued. And the people living in the neighbourhood whose houses were not destroyed continue to live with that image and physical conditions. We know that asbestos-containing material is generally these rubble piles and it harms human health." (K.A., community leader)

"For example; According to the law, in case of a situation that will create asbestos, precautions should be taken during the demolition process of the building. This is how it is on paper, but in practice I do not think that it is treated accordingly. Asbestos-containing wastes of a building that was destroyed in Ankara in a historical time were filled into a truck and passed through the streets and touched a channel. The EIA report is requested not when housing is built, but when industrial areas are built." (I.D., local expert) |
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9.3 Appendix 2

Stakeholder	*Which stakeholders should be involved to achieve sustainable UT?*
Rights holders/ local	"In fact, if the main denominator is private property, it should be the owners of the property in the first place. If the land is owned by the state, or it is an illegal settlement, it should be the state's decision in the first place. It is necessary to change the way of thinking we have." (A.G., municipality) "So everyone, who lives in this city, should be able to give their opinion for each work." (A.G) "In an urban process, I consider the main stakeholders as the inhabitants themselves. The city is the peoples. It is not the governments city. The neighbourhoods and communities are the most important stakeholder because their lives are at risk when a project is announced without their knowledge." (C.B.) "If planning for a neighbourhood. The groups in that neighbourhood should also be interviewed, there should be participatory planning. The most important denominator is those who live in that neighbourhood. It should not be top-down planning. In this way, it will be more democratic." (E.Y. local community activist) "For example, when the Basibuyuk neighbourhood, right next to Gulsuyu-Gulensu neighbourhood, was founded in the 1990s, those people built their own homes. There was a patch within the area where they did not touch because there was water coming from underneath, a well. They built a playground for the children around there. Then TOKI came and they built a high-rise building there and it started to slide down. TOKI's engineers did not predict this, the communities knew better." (C.B., academic) "Actually, the goal should first be to determine the needs of that neighbourhood and the project should be planned according to those needs. But this is not the case for Istanbul." (F.O., local community activist) "The environment they live in and the neighbourhood culture they have established are important. For example, if it is a region where Romanis live, it should be shaped according to their cultural demands. In this region there is a predominant Kurdish population and they like to live in two-storey houses with gardens so they can also feed their livestock. They don't want to lose this." (M.H., local expert)

Experts, academics	"First and foremost, the rights-holders should be at the centre of the project. Afterwards, the authorities, independent experts within the field and of course the investors. The investor can be the authorities or an individual. When projects are made in Turkey, the stakeholders look at a small scale, not a large scale. There must be independent experts who will protect the interests of rights holders." (C.U., private UT planner) "He wants three and four apartments for one circle. Who demands this tour functional spaces and spaces? Academics and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Therefore, they must be a stakeholder, inclusion, and must." (E.K., academic) "While an intervention is being made anywhere in the sense of transformation and development, the scientific and professional people and institutions should be the stakeholders. From the mapper to the engineer, from the architect to the electrician, all professional groups should actually be stakeholders." (I.D., local expert)
State	"The state must be a stakeholder as the supervisor." (I.D., local expert)

9.4 Appendix 3

<u>Interview Guide</u>

Urban Transformation (UT) = Kentsel Donusum (KD)

Name: Level of education: Years of experience within field:

Role within the institute or university represented:

Project specific questions:
1. Which group of people is this UR project targeted at?
2. Who is left remaining in the same region after the UR project?
3. How did the communities who were impacted negatively from UR projects, organise themselves to deal with the impacts?
4. Do you have any documents or figures on local employment data to see whether these projects had an impact on employment?
5. How was disaster risk before the project and how is it now after the project? For whom?
6. How do UT projects impact flows (flows of investments, ideas, people, traffic etc) within the city?

General Questions:
1. Who do you understand the main stakeholders to be within UT projects? In the case of Istanbul who are the main stakeholders and which groups are excluded from the UT projects?
2. During the planning stages of the UT project, do you believe the needs/expectations of communities are considered?
   a. How are they considered?
   b. How are minority groups able to voice their concerns?
3. From what I understand, UT leads to demographic change. Would you agree? How do you think culture and social/community cohesion is impacted from UT projects?
4. Would you say access to basic services and facilities, such as shops, transport links, schools, hospitals, nurseries etc., are improved with UT projects?
   a. Is there a separate regard/consideration to improve access for differently abled people such as the elderly or those who have to use a wheelchair?

5. Do you believe UT projects in Istanbul provide opportunities of employment for the local communities? Are these opportunities short-term or long-term?
    a. Are opportunities given equally amongst local minorities?
6. Is the progression of local businesses sustainable with UT projects? How are local businesses impacted by UT projects?

7. Have UT projects been designed to encourage environmentally-friendly transportation such as cycling, walking and public transport?
8. Is the surrounding road and transport infrastructure considered during the planning stages of UT projects? How well do you think UR projects are incorporated within urban city planning?
    a. Would you say there is a change in congestion/traffic after the project?
9. Have the UT projects been designed to incorporate energy saving techniques, such as more efficient heating and ventilation systems? Are there efforts towards increasing renewable energies such as solar panels?
10. How is the noise, air and water pollution managed or accounted for during the construction phase of UT projects? Is an EIA carried out and what importance does it carry to the project developers?
11. Do UT projects increase green space in the region/city?
12. Do you think protection of the natural landscape including wildlife and forests are prioritised during UT projects?
13. One of the reasons the government provide for supporting UR projects is to increase resilience against the upcoming expected earthquake. Do you think that these projects are managing the risks of disasters and providing security for future livelihoods?
14. Are there any educational elements to the UR projects in order to encourage the local community / local businesses to be more environmental -friendly in any way?... And in the following aspects:
    o **TRANSPORTATION?**
    o **ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION?**
    o **ENERGY USE?**
    o **WASTE MANAGEMENT?**