

## ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA

# It Used to be Our Home! An Empirical Aftermath of Displacements Caused by Urban Regeneration

## *Burası Eskiden Evimizdi! Kentsel Dönüşümden Kaynaklı Yerinden Edilmelerin Sonuçlarına Ampirik Bir Bakış*

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### ABSTRACT

In Turkey, urban regeneration is being utilized as a tool for actively manipulating cities, especially after the 2000s. Even though studies on both Turkey and the world reveal that one of the most common effects of such practices is the displacement of residents, follow-up studies on the impact of displacement on the lives of displaced residents lack in literature. This study pursues the residents of Yazıcık Neighborhood of Gaziantep who were displaced due to an urban regeneration project. The main purposes of the study are to discover the patterns of movement of displaced residents within the city and to find out the factors contributing to the choice of new neighborhoods. Quantitative and qualitative data sets were co-evaluated to fulfil the goals of the study. A questionnaire was applied to the post-regeneration residents of the Yazıcık area to determine the scale of the displacement. With this strategy, the percentage of residents who remained in Yazıcık after the regeneration was estimated. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 households who were found to be displaced from the neighborhood after renewal, and the factors that shaped their preference for new neighborhoods were discovered. The outcomes of the study confirmed that the urban regeneration project indeed resulted in displacement. Moreover, various parameters such as the income level of the displaced household, heating infrastructure, and overall quality of housing in the area were found to play a role in the decision of the neighborhood. These results showed that improvement in the quality of life was a shared motive amongst displaced residents for the decision of new neighborhoods.

**Keywords:** Decision of new neighborhood; displacement; Gaziantep; urban regeneration; Turkey.

### ÖZ

Türkiye’de kentsel dönüşüm projeleri 2000’li yıllardan sonra aktif bir kentsel müdahale aracı olarak tercih edilmektedir. Gerek Türkiye gerekse de dünyada projelere dair yapılan araştırmalar uygulamaların en yaygın etkilerinden birinin ilk kullanıcıların yerinden edilmesi olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Fakat yerinden edilme süreçleri sonrasında dair bilgi eksikliği literatürde kendisini hissettirmektedir. Bu çalışma Gaziantep Yazıcık Mahallesi kentsel dönüşüm projesinden hareket ederek yerinden edilme sonrası hanehalklarının izini sürmektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı yerinden edilmiş hanehalklarının kent içi hareket kalıplarının ve yeni yer seçim tercihindeki nedenselliklerin açığa çıkarılmasıdır. Çalışmanın amacına ulaşmak için nicel ve nitel veri setleri beraber değerlendirilmiştir. Kentsel dönüşüm projesi gerçekleştirilen Yazıcık mahallesindeki yerinden edilmeyi tespit etmek amacıyla alanın yeni kullanıcılarına anket uygulanmıştır. Proje sonrasında mahalleden gitmek zorunda kalan 14 hanehalkıyla yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatlar gerçekleştirilerek yeni yer seçim tercihindeki nedensellikler açığa çıkarılmıştır. Sonuçlar kentsel dönüşüm projesinin yerinden edilme süreçlerini doğurduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Yerinden edilmiş hanehalklarının yeni yer seçim tercihinde ise ısınma tercihleri, konutların fiziksel durumları, gelir düzeyi gibi farklı parametrelerin rol oynadığı anlaşılmıştır. Bu durum yerinden edilme sonrası konut ve mahalle seçiminde yaşam şartlarının iyileştirilmesi içerisine girildiğini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Yeni mahalle seçimi; yerinden edilme; Gaziantep; kentsel dönüşüm; Türkiye.

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## I. Introduction

Urban renewal entered the political agenda of Turkey after Grand Marmara Earthquake in 1999 (Görgülü, 2009, p. 771; Ünsal and Türkün, 2014, p. 19) and became the main policy for restructuring cities after the 2000s. Regeneration practices that took place in the last 20 years have focused on squatter neighborhoods that resulted from the rapid acceleration of urbanization after the 1950s (Bektaş and Türkün, 2017), and historic city centres (Erden, 2006). Since squatter houses were the major housing type available in the large cities of Turkey such as İstanbul, İzmir, Ankara, and Bursa (Keleş, 2015), a considerably high number of urban regeneration projects were carried out. Studies on these cities shed light on spatial changes and social outputs that were stemming from urban regeneration practices (Ergün and Gül, 2011; Waite, 2020).

Similar renewal practices may lead to different outcomes in different countries. The Big City Policy in the Netherlands, Hope VI in the USA, and The New Deal for Communities in Britain had emerged to prevent the concentration of poverty-stricken areas. The Creation of mixed-income neighborhoods was an important aid to deconcentrate growing poverty-stricken areas especially in these countries amongst all other policies for this purpose (Anderson and Musterd, 2005; Bolt et al., 2010). Output of renewal practices implemented on a general scale are evaluated in two perspectives. Especially in Bolt and Van Kempen, (2010) p.160, renewal practices were found to be successful when evaluated in terms of generating mixed-income neighborhoods. Moreover, there are even side-bonuses such as the improvement of the physical quality of the houses, the increase in the financial value of the house due to these improvements, and the development of services in the neighborhood. On the other hand, renewal causes displacement, especially of low-income households due to rising rents and price of houses. As a result, regeneration practices brought along different discussions such as the distribution of poverty, the sharpening of spatial segregation between classes and macro-scale gentrification.

The common negative outcome of the restructuring, which are called by different names such as urban renewal/regeneration in Turkey and also on a global scale, is that low-income people are exposed to displacement, eviction, and deterioration of social relations (UN-HABITAT, 2011; Lees and Ferreri, 2016). However, as Wang (2020) pointed out, despite the presence of a respectable amount of studies on causes of displacement and on the process itself in the literature, there is a gap when it comes to events taking place after displacement. Therefore, Wang has created a post-displacement agenda along with his studies on where displaced residents moved to after regeneration, and how this process affected their employment and livelihood (Wang, 2020, p. 703–704).

In many studies focusing on the Netherlands, movements of displaced residents tried to be revealed (Kleinhans, 2003; Kleinhans and Van Der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2010). In this sense, studies focusing on Turkey could be considered similar to the literature. Especially studies dealing with gentrification carried out in İstanbul under names of urban regeneration projects discovered that residents were displaced while (İslam and Sakızoğlu, 2015; Markoç and Çınar, 2018; Waite, 2020) tracing of displacement was rather ambiguous. This not only prevented the detection of patterns of movement of displaced residents, but also made it difficult to understand the factors contributing to the choice of new neighborhoods and houses. The absence of post-displacement analyses is explained with difficulties in the development of methods to follow residents in the relevant literature (Atkinson, 2000; Atkinson, 2002; Newman and Wyly, 2006). While Atkinson (2000) describes the difficulty of the following residents as measuring the invisible Newman and Wyly (2006) p. 27 simply explained this by the fact that researchers and census takers were not able to contact the residents in their addresses after gentrification. Therefore, many questions regarding this remain unanswered such as where did the households affected by the project moved, what criteria did they take into account for choosing a new house, what is the impact of displacement on their perception of urban regeneration.

Based on these shortcomings, this study traces the residents who were displaced due to urban regeneration. This study tries to reveal the experiences of displaced residents and neighborhoods that moved in predominantly after regeneration. For this purpose, Yazıcık neighborhood of Gaziantep is chosen as an area that has undergone an urban regeneration project. The main questions asked to reach the goals of the study are "What movement patterns were observed among the displaced residents after the regeneration project?" and "What are the factors that contributed to the choice of new neighborhood?". Such questions forced the evaluation of qualitative and quantitative data together. Thanks to surveys completed in the regeneration area, the extent of the displacement was revealed, and qualitative results obtained through surveys were utilized in the evaluation of movement patterns. Moreover, factors that contributed to the choice of new neighborhoods were also revealed by semi-structured interviews conducted with 14 households who were residents of the area before the regeneration project. The study contributed to the gap in the literature by shedding light on the post-displacement of low-income households that occurred because of regeneration. While doing this, it also uncovered the causes behind the choice of displaced households for new settlement areas. Thus, commonalities between voluntary movements of residential mobility literature and forced movements occurring due to restructuring

was questioned. Such a comparison could be considered as the second contribution of the study to the literature.

In this article, the second part covers the theoretical background of the study. Here, area-based restructuring carried out as urban regeneration projects are discussed through the perspective of gentrification. In this section, outcomes of the urban regeneration such as displacement will be discussed by referring to relevant literature. The third part of the study is devoted to the experiences and preferences of displaced residents. The fourth part covers the dataset and methodology of the study. In this part, collection and analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data are explained. In the fifth part, the main findings of the case study are presented. The article closes with the conclusions.

## 2. Gentrification and Displacement as an Urban Strategy

Gentrification has been discussed in various forms in urban research because of its impact on social dynamics. "Gentrification consists of the renewal of deprived, low-income, inner-city neighborhoods into new wealthy areas based on population change (influx of affluent newcomers and displacement of initial inhabitants) and improvements to the built environment" (Criekingen and Decroly, 2003, p. 2454). The term gentrification was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964 to describe the urban regeneration in London. According to this, working-class neighborhoods were taken up by middle and upper-income groups and low-income groups were displaced, hence the term gentrification. It was a complex urban process which involved the rehabilitation of old houses, change of property status from tenancy to ownership, and displacement of the working class (Glass, 1964, p. 18).

More than fifty years after Glass's conceptualization, many articles have been written on the gentrification debates in urban research (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). In this respect, an obvious finding is that gentrification, generally associated with Global North, is now a basic strategy of today's world (Smith, 2002; Lees et al., 2015). The most notable problem of this worldwide strategy is the displacement of the neighborhood population, which is common among the initial examples of gentrification (Marcuse, 1989; Hartman et al., 1982; Atkinson, 2003; Hochstenbach and Musterd, 2021; McKane and Hess, 2022). On the other hand, explains this most controversial effect of the gentrification processes by arguing that both concepts are siblings, (Hartman et al., 1982 cited in Waite, 2020, p. 55) moreover, Wang (2020) and Herrera et al. (2007) address difficulties when it comes to the determination of displacement processes. Especially, the difficulty of following the residents after displacement is a factor that prevents the characterization of populational movements after the process.

In recent gentrification studies, it is discussed in connection with neoliberal urban policies (Lees et al., 2008; Lees, 2011). Lees et al. (2008) extended Chris Hamnett's study from 1991 on five major causalities of gentrification that attracted great attention with a sixth causality: being a pioneer for neoliberal urbanization, which also contributed to the widening of the term gentrification itself. The introduction of neoliberal urban policies has brought along various practices such as large-scale housing demolition and strategies to create mixed-income neighborhoods, and resulted in their recognition together with gentrification. Especially critical urban scientists directed attention to displacement as a characteristic of gentrification with different conceptual arguments such as third wave gentrification (Hackworth and Smith, 2001) or state-led gentrification (Morales et al., 2021) and gave a novel direction to recent gentrification studies (Slater, 2012; Mah, 2021; Lees and Ferreri, 2016; Watt, 2021). According to the state-led gentrification thesis, while urban space is systematically reorganized for the benefit of property developers and wealthy gentrifiers, tenants among the working classes are among the first to experience displacement (Watt, 2021). In this respect, the close link between gentrification and displacement is still present in today's world. What makes it controversial is that urban regeneration programs conducted under legal and institutional policies in different periods and countries resulted in supportive outcomes for the above-mentioned criticisms (Porter and Shaw, 2009; Çağlar and Schiller, 2018).

Netherlands has been one of the most striking examples among other countries in recent urban research. In some studies, tracing events of post-displacement provided clues for the aftermath (Kleinhans, 2003; Kleinhans and Van Der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2010). Bolt and Van kempen (2010) provides information on the distribution of the displaced residents in the city as a result of urban regeneration in the Netherlands. According to the authors, diversity is dominant among the distribution patterns in 3 different neighborhoods. The choice of staying in the same city is dominant, while the choice of leaving the city is rare, except for The Hague. Furthermore, the amount of residents who moved out of their neighborhood was higher among others for all 3 neighborhoods, and it was also stated that residents who moved out had greater improvements in their environmental and neighborhood conditions. This has also created opportunities to improve their housing for those who were forced to change their residence. In conclusion, new neighborhoods of displaced residents were characterized with less ethical clustering and higher-income households.

The reflections of the gentrification in Turkey should be evaluated as an output of the last 30 years of urban development. According to (İslam and Sakızoğlu, 2015), while

gentrification was not performed systematically as a tool for the improvement of dilapidated neighborhoods until the late 1990s, it was in the centre of urban policies when it came to regeneration practices in the mid-2000s. Therefore, the first studies were carried out to point out new areas which fit the classical definition of gentrification, while, recent studies focused more on the changing role of the state in regeneration projects carried out on neglected areas of city centres. Overall, urban regeneration and gentrification in a generalized sense were often referred to together in studies on urban regeneration (İslam, 2009; Çeker and Belge, 2015; Akalın, 2016). The critical point in the conclusions of the authors was the direct or indirect involvement of displacement, which is similar to third-wave gentrification / state-led gentrification observed in North America and Europe. Ultimately, İslam and Sakızoğlu, (2015) consider gentrification as a useful term and a conceptual tool for analysing of middle-class occupation of Istanbul's devastated neighborhoods beginning from the early 1980s and recent urban regeneration practices (İslam and Sakızoğlu, 2015, p. 248).

Micro-level restructuring implemented under the name of urban regeneration projects in Turkey resulted in the demolition of houses and diffusion of households to other neighborhoods (Kozacıoğlu, 2021; Güzey, 2009; Sakızoğlu, 2014; İslam and Sakızoğlu, 2015; Ay, 2016; Waite, 2020) which are parallel to the outputs of gentrification applications in the west. When we look at these studies, which are especially concentrated in Istanbul, the discovery of the occurrence of displacement was (Lovering and Türkmen, 2011; Ayık and Enterili, 2020) mostly successful except for a few studies, however, agendas and tracing of post-displacement events remained unambiguous. Studies have been mainly shaped by the detection of displacement or probable alternative scenarios. Therefore, the aftermath of urban regeneration projects focusing on squatter areas including movement patterns of their residents within the city, reasons behind such patterns, and positive or negative outcomes of the projects on housing and neighborhood conditions needs to be discussed and revealed.

### 3. Preferences and Experiences of Post-Displacement

Today, researchers from different countries share their outputs on displacements that stem from various occasions such as evacuation, expropriation, and area-based regeneration (Chyn, 2018; Miltenburg et al., 2018). Restructuring programs in different countries such as Hope VI, The Big City Policies, The New Deal for Communities are discussed in the literature with both positive and negative consequences. The emergence of house ownership opportunities and improvements in conditions of houses and neighbor-

hoods could be shown as positive outcomes of regeneration programs (Kleinhans, 2003; Kleinhans and Van Der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2010; Kearns and Mason, 2013; Tieskens and Musterd, 2013; Miltenburg, Werfhorst and Tieskens, 2018).

The impact of regeneration is not only characterized by Global North and studies on the Global South also convey similar outcomes of regeneration on the improvement of housing and neighborhood conditions (Fang, 2006; Yuen et al., 2006; Öner and Şimşek, 2017). For example Yuen et al. (2006) p.597, provides supporting arguments with the Singapore example. It was stated that the demolition of old houses and moving into a new high-rise building has a positive effect on the satisfaction level of residents. The authors have shown that satisfaction obtained from living in high-rise buildings can be affected by factors such as the availability of facilities in the neighborhood, security, and good neighborhood relations.

Another shared output of literature on displacement is the contribution of proximity to the choice of the new neighborhood. Most of the studies show that displaced residents prefer to move to their old neighborhood or its proximity (Popkin et al., 2004; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2010; Lelevrier, 2013; Tieskens and Musterd, 2013). However, the low purchasing power of the households affected by the regeneration prevents their resettlement to the renovated houses (Kleinhans, 2003; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2010). Another important criterion for resettlement of residents to regeneration areas is the housing supply. In the absence of purchasing power and housing supply, it was often observed that displaced households were not able to resettle into their old neighborhoods (Popkin et al., 2004). This results in the emergence of the most controversial topics of displacement literature such as stress due to moving, and weakening in social relations (Lees and Ferreri, 2016; Hankins et al., 2014). Ultimately, the reason behind the motivation of residents to move back to their renovated neighborhoods is to maintain their social ties (Popkin et al., 2004). Gans (1993) also stated that as their commitment to regeneration area and neighbourly relations stronger, the probability of suffering due to displacement also rises.

Numerous approaches of residential mobility literature can be utilized to find out the housing preferences of displaced households. Two basic approaches in today's literature are satisfaction and balance (Clark et al., 2006; Özgür, 2009). Studies utilizing satisfaction approach forms the foundation of behavior-based explanation which stands out in recent residential mobility studies (Speare, 1974; Clark, Deurloo and Dieleman, 2006; Fang, 2006; Riazi and Emami, 2018; Moore et al., 2019). Individual-based explanations of housing preferences are at the essence of these approaches. Own-

ership of the house (Warner and Sharp, 2016), being satisfied with neighborhood and neighborhood quality which is determined by many factors (Hur et al., 2015; Clark et al., 2006), structural policies, and housing supply, (Causa and Pichelmann, 2020) are essential criteria playing a role in the preference of housing. The main point of discussion relies on understanding to what extent displaced households take these satisfaction-based criteria into account during their new location choice.

In residential mobility studies conducted in different cities of Turkey such as Istanbul and Ankara, it is shown that satisfaction based criteria indeed played a role in the preference of housing (Türkoğlu, 1997; Alkay, 2011; Eceral and Uğurlar, 2017; Özlü and Beyazlı, 2020). In Alkay (2011) p.537–538, it is stated that the floor area is an important criterion for the preference of residents to move. If the size of the floor area was sufficient, the residents were less likely to move. Moreover, the author states that neighborhood is another important criterion in residential mobility. According to this, accessibility of neighborhood within the city, traffic, and distance to the previous neighborhood was found to be effective on the decision of movement. In Türkoğlu (1997), the satisfaction level on the squatter areas, which mostly coincide with the application areas of urban regeneration, was measured. The results indicate that residents of squatter neighborhoods were experiencing great discontent with physical comfort, housing quality, layout, accessibility to the city centre, and social and environmental conditions of houses. These outputs are also vital criteria for the preference of new neighborhoods and new houses by displaced residents after urban regeneration projects. In the tracing part of this study, it was investigated whether these factors, which are stated in terms of improving living conditions, are taken into account in the choice of new neighborhoods of residents displaced after the urban regeneration project.

#### 4. Methodology

The main issue with displacement studies in developing countries such as Turkey is the lack of institutional data sets. For this reason, researchers from various disciplines often create their own data sets. In this study, different phases were conducted to determine the processes of displacement after the urban regeneration project in the Yazıcık neighborhood. At first, the conditions of Yazıcık residences constructed after the urban regeneration project were analysed. At this stage, the proportion of residents of the neighborhood who were present before the project among all residents of new houses tried to be estimated. 175 independent units among 43 blocks of Yazıcık residences were investigated within the scope of the study. As a result of interviews with 123 households living in the area

after the regeneration, it was determined that 96 (78%) of them were not living in the Yazıcık neighborhood before the project. Only 27 households (22%) stated that they lived in the neighborhood before the project. This finding revealed that the urban regeneration project conducted in the Yazıcık neighborhood led to displacement due to expropriation. In addition, according to interviews made with 125 households who settled in the area after the regeneration project, the average income level of 91% of the households varies between 0–3000 TL. These results indicate that gentrification occurs through the movement of residents rather than through a change in class characteristics. Additionally, residents of the project area regardless of their property status as a tenant or an owner were exposed to expropriation and displacement.

In the second step of the data acquisition process, the goal was to reveal the direction and causes of movement. At this stage, one approach is to trace movements, despite the difficulty of finding people who witnessed the process. To achieve this goal, old tradesmen of the neighborhood, residents who were there before the regeneration project and lived there for many years, and finally local authorities were taken as reference points to trace residents of the area before the project. The main people who contributed to this phase were residents whose houses were not included in the application of the project and maintained their connection with displaced residents. Among these people, there were 2 local grocery store owners, 1 local hardware store owner, 1 local butcher, and 9 households who were living close to by the project area. All contact details including the telephone numbers and addresses obtained from individuals or households were collected into a list. After removing redundant individuals, the list was updated accordingly. As a result, 133 different households which moved out from the project area were contacted. 2 households were excluded from the study due to false identification, and 131 households were found to be displaced due to the project.

All 131 households within the list were reached for interviews. 24 households among 131 who were contacted invited the researcher to their homes. According to the appointments arranged with 24 households, interviews were held on different days and hours in a 2-week time frame. Unfortunately, 4 households were coronavirus positive and 6 households refused to interview because of their work and family life. In the end, the number of households that in-depth interviews have been conducted was 14. The duration of the interviews was approximately 25 minutes, and they have been recorded by voice recorders. The general theme of the interviews was the urban regeneration project through their perspective, the choice of new neighborhood and housing after the displacement, and the changes

**Table 1.** The characteristic of participants

Households	Number of households	Number of children in the household	Working status	Household income rate	Ownership status	Current neighborhood	Neighborhood type
1 <sup>st</sup> household	5	3	F: Active M: Housewife	4.000 TL	P: O Af: O	Karatas	PI
2 <sup>nd</sup> household	4	2	F: Active M: Housewife	Minimum wage	P: T Af: T	Seyrantepe	PI
3 <sup>rd</sup> household	2	–	F: Active M: Active	3500 TL	P: O Af: O	Seyrantepe	PI
4 <sup>th</sup> household	5	1	F: Active M: Housewife A: Retired	7500 TL	P: O Af: O	İbrahimli	PI
5 <sup>th</sup> household	6	4	F: Active M: Housewife	Not specified	P: O Af: O	Seyrantepe	PI
6 <sup>th</sup> household	8	5	F: Active M: Housewife A: Retired	Not specified	P: O Af: O	Seyrantepe	PI
7 <sup>th</sup> household	2	–	F: Active M: Active	5100 TL	P: T Af: O	Kepenek	S
8 <sup>th</sup> household	2	–	F: Active M: Housewife	Minimum wage	P: O Af: T	Cabi	S
9 <sup>th</sup> household	3	1	F: Active M: Housewife	Minimum wage	P: O Af: O	Perilikaya	S
10 <sup>th</sup> household	3	1	F: Active M: Housewife	Minimum wage	P: O Af: O	Binevler	PI
11 <sup>th</sup> household	4	2	F: Active M: Housewife	Not specified	P: O Af: O	Seyrantepe	PI
12 <sup>th</sup> household	5	3	F: Active M: Housewife	Not specified	P: T Af: T	Karatas	PI
13 <sup>th</sup> household	7	5	F: Active M: Housewife	Not specified	P: O Af: O	Cumhuriyet	S
14 <sup>th</sup> household	2	–	F: Active M: Active	8000 TL	P: O Af: O	Guvnevler	PI

F: Father; M: Mother; A: Other family member; P: Pre-project; Af: After project; O: Owner; T: Tenant; PI: Planned housing area; S: Squatter area.

in the neighborhood culture. In Table 1, the characteristics of the participants are given. The average household size of the sample group is 4.1. All the men were married and employed during interviews, while most of the women were housewives. Only 3 women among them were actively working. Apart from these, grandparents also contributed to the family economically in some families. Before and after the project, there were no significant changes found in the profile of house ownership among participants. The status of property ownership was changed only for 2 participants.

The data based on the addresses were mapped with the help of Geographical Information Systems and the Corel Draw X7 program. Neighborhoods where interviews were conducted were categorized into two according to settlement features as planned-developed and squatter areas. As a result, preferred neighborhoods among displaced residents were mapped according to preference frequency. Semi-structured interviews were edited and transcribed. For the qualitative analysis of the interviews, the MAXQDA 2020 program was used.



**Figure 1.** General housing texture of Gaziantep city. While squatter houses are prevalent in the center of the city, planned residential areas become more dominant at the periphery. The photograph was from Ibrahim Alisinanoglu archive.

## 5. Findings and Discussion

### 5.1. Gaziantep in Terms of Urban Development

Gaziantep is one of the developed cities in Turkey. Thanks to its geographical location, it is a cultural and commercial centre located on the trade routes connecting Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt (Şen and Sandal, 2017). In recent years, it has attracted attention with breakthroughs in some sectors of the economy such as industry, trade and, tourism and urban development started to emerge in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The growth of the population, historically arising from increased birth and migration, contributed to the dominance of squatter areas in the city (Fig. 1). For immigrants arriving in the city, squatter houses became the affordable and fast option of housing. Therefore, uncoordinated migrations until 1990 were mostly concentrated on neighborhoods such as Karşıyaka, Düztepe, and Hoşgör and resulted in the increased visibility of squatter areas. The other type of housing in the city has been created in planned-developed areas appealing to the middle-upper classes. Karataş, Şahintepe, Yeditepe, Güneykent, Kızılhisar, Bağlarbaşı, Akkent, Bülbülzade, İbrahimli, and Güvenevler

neighborhoods can be shown as examples of the neighborhoods with other housing type with planned and coordinated structures (Şahin, 2016). The spatial results of the squatter settlements and developed settlements that became apparent after the 1980s and 1990s were respectively observed as planned urbanization in the north, northwest, and southwest, and as irregular and unplanned development in the east and southeast parts of the city. Characteristics of these two types of settlements are also quite distinct as high-rise buildings are dominant in planned areas, while noise and traffic density remained relatively low, urban pollution and disorganization were common in squatter neighborhoods (Sönmez, 2012).

Squatter houses eroded physically, socially and, economically with time and eventually became unable to fulfil the needs of residents, and they have been subjected to urban regeneration projects not only in Gaziantep but in many cities of Turkey. Therefore, squatter neighborhoods formed by migration from outside the city after the 1950s were reshaped by the micro-regeneration projects after the 2000s. One of the most important outputs of the reshaping is the movement of the population due to displacement.

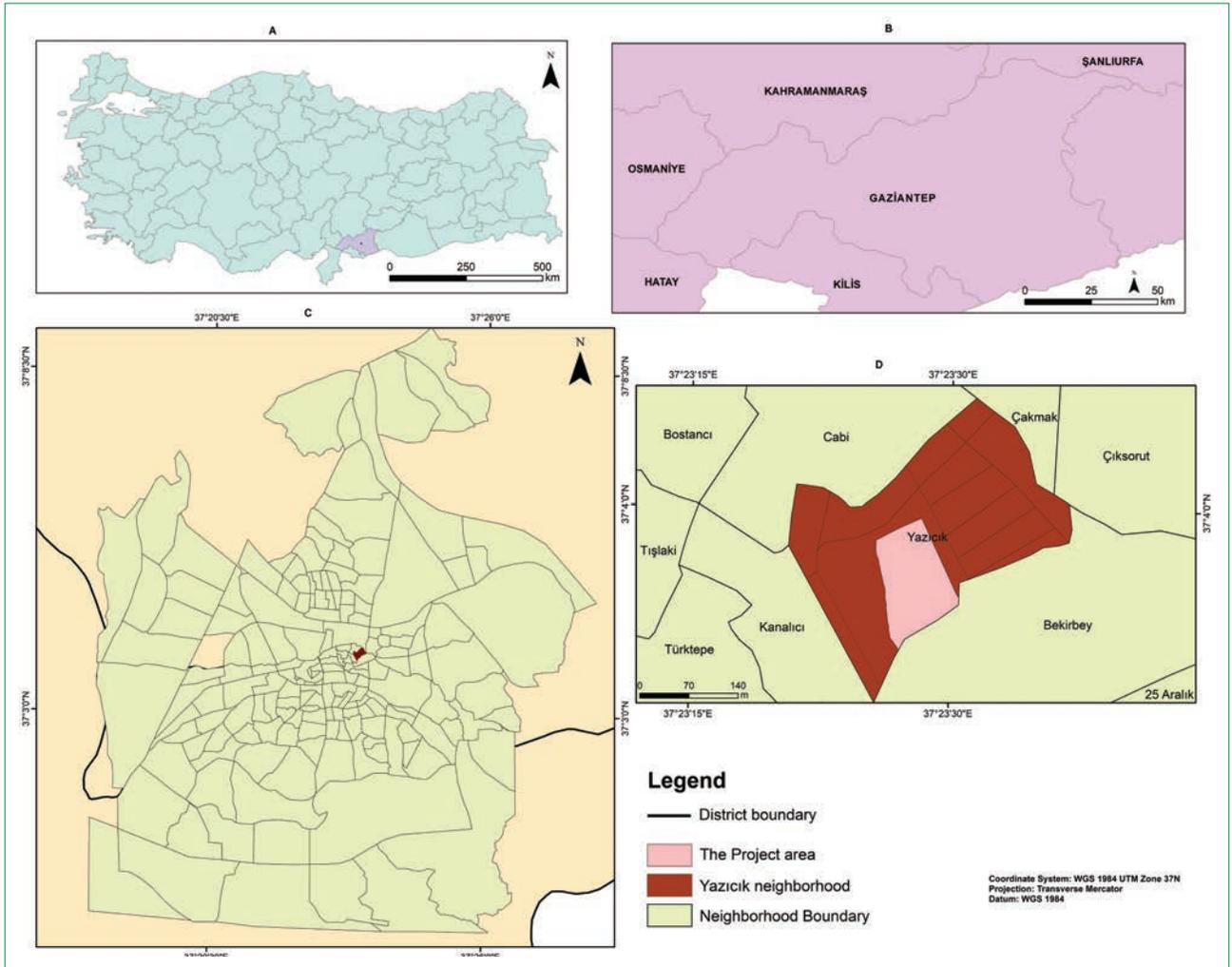


**Figure 2.** (a) Squatter houses, previous housing patterns of the area. (b) After expropriation, the existence of squatter houses in the area disappeared and road expansion activities became apparent. (c) High-rise residences as a characteristic of the planning have become evident. (d) Completion of the project can be seen. Because of the regeneration, a dual outlook is created with the presence of both planned areas and squatter houses in the remaining of the neighborhood. Photos are obtained from the Municipality of Şahinbey.

Although studies in recent years convey general results regarding the completed project, (Şirin, 2017; Gürbüz, 2013; Ayık and Enterili, 2020) analysis of displacement has remained limited. In one of these studies belonging to Ayık and Enterili (2020), displacement was evaluated with outcomes of the urban regeneration project planned in 2010 and completed in 2016 at Nuripazarbaşı, Gaziantep. As a result of interviews with 420 households in Çamlıca Residences created after the regeneration, 319 (76%) of them stated that they did not live in the area before the project. This proves the fact that most of the previous residents of the area moved to other parts of the city after the urban regeneration project. According to the study, they mainly moved towards the planned developed areas such as Karataş, Akkent, Yeditepe and Mavikent, and to a lesser extent, other squatter neighborhoods such as Cumhuriyet, Yukarıbayır, Etiler, Saçaklı, and Perilikaya. After regeneration, squatter areas have disappeared, and high-rise structures that are characteristic of planned areas became prevalent (Fig 2). This study is also pioneering in terms of analyzing the displacement in Gaziantep (Ayık and Enterili, 2020).

## 5.2. Yazıcık Neighborhood and Urban Regeneration Project

Yazıcık is a neighborhood of Gaziantep's largest district in terms of the population, called Şahinbey. Urbanization movements in the neighborhood have caused irregular development of squatter regions to become prevalent in the settlement texture. With time, these squatter houses have become useless to meet physical, economic and, cultural needs. Furthermore, the fact that Yazıcık Neighborhood is located in the centre of Gaziantep causes especially traffic and many other problems that accompany the daily life of the neighborhood. Because of the unbearable conditions in urban life, the Municipality of Şahinbey initiated an urban regeneration project on a residential area in the neighborhood by the expropriations made in 2011 (Fig. 3). The main goal of the municipality in the urban regeneration project was to eliminate the squatter houses that cannot meet the needs of residents as time passed and to build houses more suitable for modern urban life. Approximately after 4 years of controversies, 114



**Figure 3.** Location of the project area.



**Figure 4.** (a) Housing patterns formed by squatter houses prior to the regeneration project in Yazıcık neighborhood. Source: <https://www.ensonhaber.com/> (b) The new housing structure created after the urban regeneration project in the neighborhood. This place is called as Yazıcık Residences. Source: Archive of Şahinbey Municipality. (c) The distinctive settlement texture of Yazıcık Residences can be seen compared to the rest of the neighborhood. Source: <https://www.apainsaat.com.tr/>.

buildings, 310 independent sections and, 10,266.73 m<sup>2</sup> area have been expropriated. Negotiations were held between the municipality and the right holders, and even lawsuits were filed against the project between the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2015. With the groundbreaking ceremony attend-

ed by various political and local actors in 2015, the construction of new residences started and was completed physically at the end of 2016 (Fig. 4). According to data from Şahinbey Municipality, 485 households were interviewed during the expropriation phase of the project. It is stated that the number

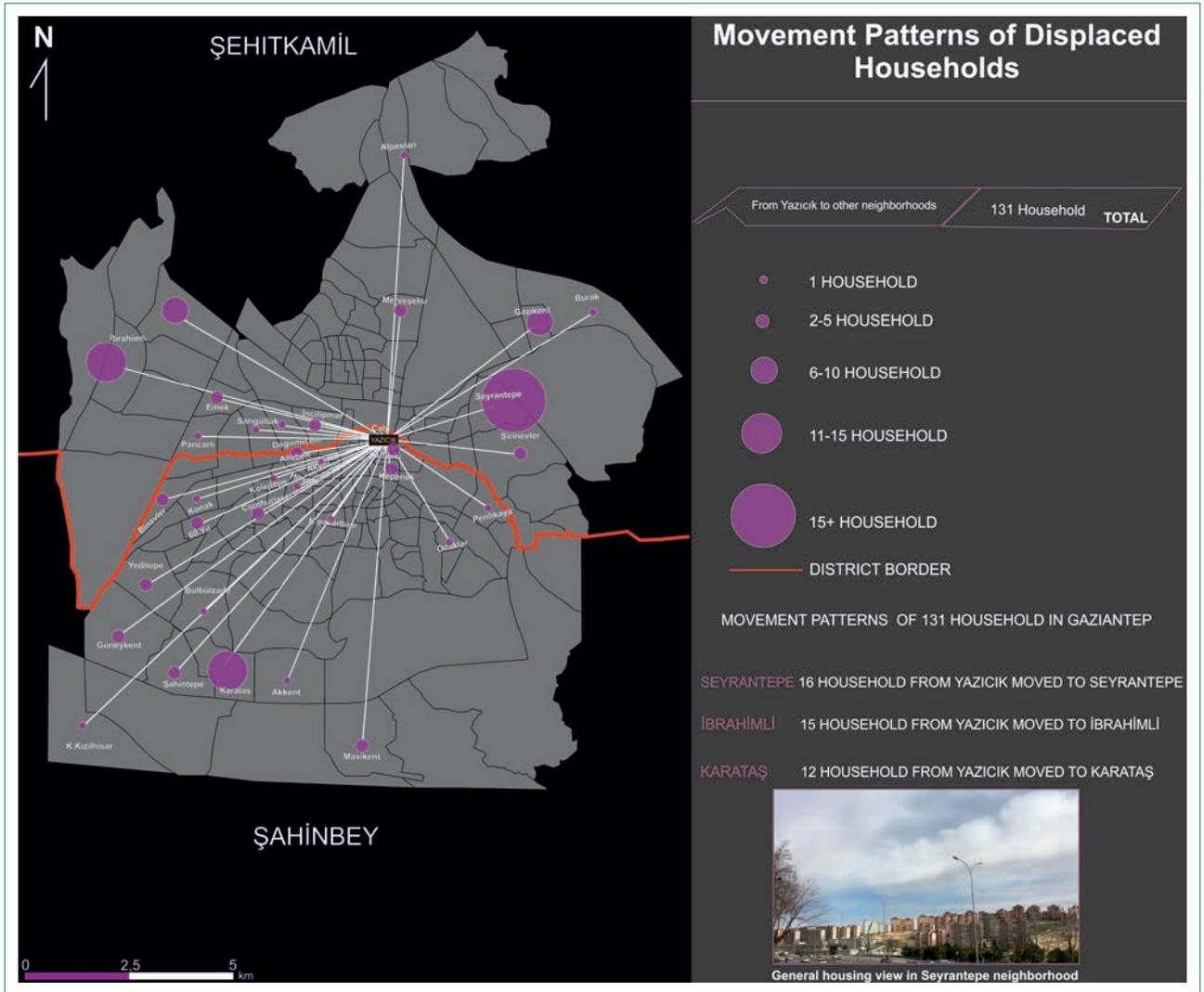


Figure 5. Displacement after the urban regeneration project in Yazıcık neighborhood.

of residents before the regeneration project was between 1500 and 2000 (Şahinbey Municipality Archives, 2020).

Who Moved Where, and Why?

Researchers in Turkey identify the processes of displacement arising from urban renewal projects through field studies (Loving and Türkmen, 2011; Sakızıoğlu, 2014; Öner and Şimşek, 2017; Waite, 2020). The new neighborhood preferences of 131 displaced residents within the scope of the study provide clues about their current neighborhoods and residences. The first result that emerged from the data set is that the displaced residents preferred planned and developed neighborhoods such as Seyrantepe, Karataş, İbrahımlı, Güvenevler, and Gazikent as their new neighborhoods. Relatively mild concentrations were also seen in the movements towards the Bülbülzade, Şahintepe, Küçük kızıllıhisar, Mavikent, Emek, Kolejtepe, Binevler, and Pancarlı. Another settlement

option that was preferred relatively less compared to planned areas was the squatter settlements. Such areas were identified as Hoşgör, Akyol, Perilikaya, 60. yıl., Boyacık, Ocaklar, and Şirinevler (Fig. 5).

As mentioned above, the interest of displaced households towards planned developed neighborhoods is consistent with the improvement of housing and conditions of the neighborhood (Kleinhans, 2003; Kleinhans and Van Der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2010; Kearns and Mason, 2013; Tieskens and Musterd, 2013; Miltenburg et al., 2018). Among the differences that distinguish the housing pattern in these areas from squatter settlements such as Yazıcık neighborhoods are the recent building date of houses, improved conditions, and natural gas being available as a heating method. In conclusion, the motivation for improving the conditions of the house is obvious in the new neighborhood

choice of displaced residents. This finding of the study also coincides with the findings of the previous study conducted by Ayık and Enterili (2020) for the Nuripazarbaşı neighborhood in Gaziantep. In their study, the authors discovered that the residents from the Nuripazarbaşı neighborhood, which is a typical squatter area, had a tendency towards housing in the planned developed neighborhoods. This clearly indicates that those who previously lived in the squatter settlements tended to move towards the planned housing areas after the regeneration, in which urban life is relatively more organized. It has also been found that former Yazıcık residents who moved to other squatter neighborhoods preferred those which are closer to the Yazıcık neighborhood. Such a preference for the nearby squatter neighborhoods can be interpreted with the desire to preserve the existing ties and connections in the area, that formed the backbone of a lifestyle full of cooperation between neighbors for daily struggles.

### Physical Conditions Are Crucial for the Preference of New Housing

Studies from different countries show that one of the most fundamental outputs in area-based regeneration practices is the improvement of the housing conditions of the displaced residents (Kleinhans, 2003; Kleinhans and van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008; Kearns and Mason, 2013). These changes sometimes occur due to destruction, and some other times with a comprehensive regeneration. The improvements in the physical conditions of the houses after restructuring leads to increases in the level of satisfaction. An increase in the quality and the size of the house are some factors that especially positively affect the level of satisfaction. The interviews conducted have shown that supportive satisfaction factors are effective during the preference of a new location. The reason for the tendency toward planned areas among all choices of new neighborhoods is the expectation of comprehensive improvement in residences. In the interviews, another factor that contributed to the preference of planned developed areas over squatter areas was found to be the significant improvement of especially physical conditions in their current house compared to their former house in a squatter neighborhood. Availability of elevators in apartments of planned developed areas was a factor that was found to be contributing positively to the choice of such areas.

*"I can talk a lot about this. The house was wooden and flimsy, like an abandoned hamlet in the heart of the city. To say the least, it was out of tune with the city. For these reasons, I came to Karataş. If you ask if I miss people from there, yes, I do. But not the buildings. The regeneration project could have been done differently." [1<sup>st</sup> household, father]*

Squatter houses are structures that emerged during the urbanization process of Turkey (Keleş, 2015). Many houses in squatter areas are physically far from meeting the needs of the people today. The interviews have been conducted have shown that the factor that negatively affected the satisfaction levels in the old squatter area of Yazıcık, was the heating infrastructure of the houses. Discontent with the stove as the only heating option was another factor that contributed to the preference of planned areas. The stove as the most common mode of heating in squatter areas leaves its place to gas heating in planned developed areas and this transition translates in daily life as a notable improvement in conditions for many households which was one of the main reasons behind the preference for planned areas. Especially women in the household cited the transition from stove to gas as an important factor for satisfaction. Heating infrastructure being a key factor for the choice of new neighborhoods is one of the main differences that distinguish Turkey from the relevant literature. The heating mode in the squatter neighborhoods of Gaziantep city is the stove, in which either coal or wood is primarily used. The stove has many disadvantages such as the poisoning danger during adverse wind conditions, inability to heat the entire house, and difficulty of cleaning afterward. On the other hand, the heating of houses in the planned residential areas is provided by natural gas. Some important advantages of the gas versus stove are its affordability, ability to heat the whole house effectively, and being a cleaner choice overall.

*"I suffered because of the stove for years. When one room is cold, the other is too hot. It almost melts the people in the surroundings. When you sleep at night, you cannot light the stove because of the fear of poisoning and if you don't, you tremble from the cold. That's how bad the stove was for us. Of course, there were also bright sides. Of course, there was. But when I compare it with my current house, I am well-pleased with gas. That's why I moved into this house in Seyrantepe. The buildings are a bit crowded, but what can we do, we did not come here from a palace as well." [3<sup>rd</sup> household, father]*

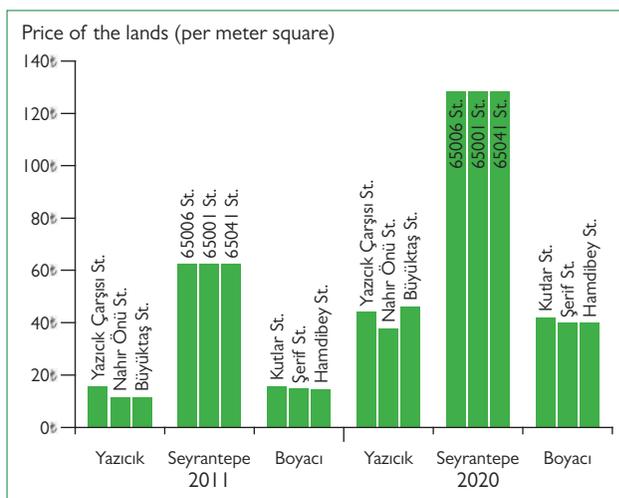
*"Of course, the period of urban regeneration project was difficult for us. We have experienced more stress than we have ever done in our entire lives. It's not easy to lose the house that your family lived in for generations. As you know, we are from a poor class. But we left, and Yazıcık is behind us now. We thought that we were already in debt. At least, we are more comfortable now. Let my children live in a comfortable home. We also got some money from the expropriation. Believe me, we never considered a house with a stove. My wife is happier now with the house heated by natural gas." [6<sup>th</sup> household, mother]*

## Income Level is a Variable But Dominant Factor

The physical quality of residences improves after urban regeneration programs. Improvements in the physical quality of the houses also increases the price of the house in most cases. Bolt and Van Kempen (2010) p. 162 states that there are two reasons for residents choosing to stay in their old neighborhood. The first of these is the amount of housing supply in the neighborhood, and the second is the purchasing power of the households. The authors point out that in the Dutch case, households cannot buy houses which prices of which have increased after regeneration. A similar approach is described in Kleinans (2003) p.5. Conditions of displacements should be evaluated together with the purchasing power. If, after renovation, low-income households cannot pay rent or buy a home, they are forced to move. Therefore, this negatively affects the creation of housing opportunities for residents. Findings in this study differ from the literature in some aspects. The basis of this difference lies in the fact that low-income households preferred houses that were above their purchasing power. The people living in the Yazıcık neighborhood were the people from the lower-income group in terms of socio-economic conditions. Parallely, the purchasing power of the people living here was also low. The fact that the local municipality did mandatory expropriation during the project was the main reason for the displacement in Yazıcık, and it partially determined the direction of the movement.

*"Squatter houses were difficult in many ways. Coal, maintenance, renovations, and fights would always be there. We sat down as a family and talked. If we were going to move out, we decided that it was going to be a better neighborhood. We also borrowed a lot. Our loan interest was convenient. I don't remember the exact numbers right now. But our kid is also working now. Somehow, we are paying our debt. You might also agree that it is difficult to buy something without getting in debt in this country. Especially buying a house." [1<sup>th</sup> household, father]*

The first apparent outcome of the expropriations with low prices was the stimulation of loan usage. Since households received relatively lesser returns compared to the actual value of their houses because of the expropriations, they were forced to use loans from banks. Another determinant was the unit price of lands. When the project started in 2011, the unit price of the lands per meter square was ranging between 11–15 Turkish liras in the three streets of the project area. In the same year, the price was over 60 Turkish liras for the Seyrantepe District, where the most movement happened towards. Boyacık neighborhood, a squatter neighborhood near Yazıcık, had similar prices ranging between 14–15 TL. The land prices per unit in the areas of Seyrantepe, Boyacık and, Yazıcık did not change in 2020 in terms of ranking (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** m<sup>2</sup> price for lands in some designated streets of neighborhoods. Source: It is arranged from Sahinbey and Sehitkamil municipality documents.

These outcomes reveal that even though prices were almost fivefold in the Seyrantepe and other planned-developed areas during the time the project was being implemented, households preferred those planned neighborhoods when they were displaced. On the other hand, although the unit price of the land was in similar ranges as Yazıcık, there was less movement towards Boyacık and other squatter areas.

*"Our moving out after the project was related to our financial situation. I am a minimum-wage employee in the textile industry. My wife does not work, and she goes to other houses as a maid from time to time. We did not have much choice. We did not spend the expropriation money we received. We are keeping it for the future. We do not know what awaits us tomorrow. We took a rental here. Since I didn't think of going away, we chose a neighborhood close to Yazıcık." [8<sup>th</sup> household, father]*

The effect of non-satisfaction of needs of better physical conditions and heating was immense on this issue. Another reason that supported the movement towards planned areas, was financially supporting policies that can provide low-interest loans by drawing lots. In the end, displaced residents preferred improving their physical conditions at the expense of having more debt.

## The Search for Good Neighbors and Neighborhood Remains Valid

The primary negative consequence of urban regeneration practices is the weakening of social relations (Hankins et al., 2014; Lees and Ferreri, 2016). Households whose homes were destroyed or drastically changed had to experience displacement,

as seen in many examples in the West (Goetz, 2013; Chyn, 2018;). One of the main findings on these households is the fact that they are having difficulties establishing social networks in their new neighborhood (Greenbaum et. al, 2008). During the interviews, it was found that the expectation of good neighborhood relations is important in choosing new houses. It was understood that all participating households longed for their old neighborhoods. Longing ensures the continuity of emotional attachment to the old neighborhood. Therefore, the fact that high devotion increases the likelihood of suffering stated by Kleinhans coincides with the findings of the study.

*“Let’s look through the window, if you want. The houses are all alike. I have no idea about the people inside. I know people on the same floor at most. But my wife gets along better with the neighbours. Sometimes I am really looking for people that I can talk to after Yazıcık, I really look for sincerity. I don’t want to do injustice to people here as well. Maybe we will get closer together in the coming years. We will meet new people. But the situation is not very pleasant for us for now. We think twice when we let our kids out. We always check if they are OK.” [4<sup>th</sup> household, father]*

Neighborhood relations are important in squatter settlements of Turkey. Solidarity networks established during the establishment of the settlements made social relations crucial in these areas. Neighbourly relations in the Yazıcık neighborhood have been shaped as a result of warm and sincere relationships. Solidarity and cooperation in the neighborhood still stand today. In the interviews, participating households stated that they miss their old neighbours in their current neighborhood. Expressed longing for the old neighborhood by displaced residents was observed, together with the loss of their social network. It has been determined that those households who moved to planned developed housing areas, complained about the weak social ties in their new neighborhoods.

*“It’s hard to live here. Look how many people are staying on one floor. There are 8 apartments. Can you imagine? 8 apartments on 1 floor. But if you ask, I don’t know the people living next to me. The other day, I watched it on the news. A man died, and people found his body one-week later.” [12<sup>th</sup> household, mother]*

The effect of displacement on neighborhood structures does not always occur negatively (Kleinhans 2003; Lelevrier 2013). Lelevrier, (2013) p.268 states that displacement does not always mean the rupture or deterioration of social relations, and even it can be considered as an opportunity for the development and protection of ties in the neighborhood. Although

the results of the interviews showed that such a situation did not exist, it was understood that the old neighborhood was visited frequently with individual efforts. Some participants stated that they frequently went to Yazıcık to maintain social relations in their old neighborhoods. However, the question is whether the same emotional bond can be maintained over the years. The change in neighborhood ties should be revealed through long-term studies.

*On the days when we are not working, I and my wife go to Yazıcık together. Our old neighbours and relatives are still there. We have lived in Yazıcık for years. Although it’s been a long time since our arrival, we do not feel like a stranger when we go to the neighborhood. Things have changed in pandemic conditions, though. We used to eat snacks and talk until late hours. It is also difficult to go back and forth because of covid precautions. [14<sup>th</sup> household, father]*

Change of neighborhoods because of displacement has a direct effect on the children as well. In the interviews, it was understood that households living as small families think about their former neighborhoods through the perspective of safety for their children. Despite having better conditions such as schools and kindergartens, poor neighbourly relations in planned developed neighborhoods make households uneasy in terms of cooperation.

*“I used to leave my child alone with my next-door neighbour when I go to work in Yazıcık. Now I do not know the people living next door, so I cannot leave my child. I miss Melek who was a sister to me. She put in a lot of effort for my child and the whole neighborhood loved her. If I had another chance, I would return to Yazıcık. We talked about this with my husband, but he does not agree. I’m simply longing.” [3<sup>rd</sup> household, mother]*

## 6. Conclusion

Urban regeneration practices that have been put into effect in different countries in recent years have become evident with different spatial and social outcomes. The most important of these outputs is displacement processes becoming more evident as events emerge because of such projects (Markoç and Çınar, 2018; Ayık and Enterili, 2020; Waite, 2020). Critical urban scientists are trying to expand the discussions of results of these widespread urban interventions with different discussions such as state-led gentrification/third-wave gentrification (Mah, 2021; Morales et al., 2021). This study deals with displacement, the impact of which is frequently mentioned in the gentrification literature, through the case study of the

Yazıcık neighborhood of Gaziantep. The most important finding of the study that supports the literature is that the residents were displaced due to the urban regeneration project. The findings revealed that during the displacement, residents showed a tendency of moving towards the planned developed areas of the city. These finding also provides clues about the processes discussed in the displacement literature. Houses of planned developed neighborhoods provided far better conditions of living to displaced residents compared to their squatter houses. The houses of these areas were built relatively recently, and transportation opportunities were simply better. Thus, displaced households took steps to improve their living conditions in the squatter areas with the necessary actions they took after the urban regeneration project. This is a result that coincides with the satisfaction-based approaches in the residential mobility literature (Türkoğlu, 1997; Alkay, 2011; Eceral and Uğurlar, 2017; Özlü and Beyazlı, 2020). Factors such as the existence of an elevator and heating with gas are examples from daily lives proving the improvement in living conditions. In conclusion, residents of squatter settlements decided to their new neighborhood in a way that improves their living conditions. Another direction for movements performed due to displacement was towards other squatter settlements nearby the project area. Such patterns of movement can be explained by the motive to preserve existing social connections and ties along with employment status (Popkin et al., 2004).

The second important finding of the study is about neighborhood relations. One of the issues frequently discussed in the literature is that the destruction occur not only physically in the house but also in social relations (Gans, 1993). The findings indicate that the project implemented in an area where the solidarity and cooperation network is strong created ruptures in neighbourly relations. In the study, it has been shown that the displaced households have problems in their neighborhood relations in their new neighborhoods and that they miss their previous relationships in the project area. This situation is tried to be compensated by the displaced households with visits to their old neighbours in the previous neighborhood.

Finally, the gentrification practices performed because of the implementation project did not create significant changes in the class composition of the area. Interviews with 125 households living in new residences in the area showed that the new residents in the area did not reveal any economically meaningful divergences from the financial profile of old residents. The average income level of new users was also between 0–3000, TL. However, displacement of residents has arisen in the area due to the urban regeneration project. These finding has the potential to open a different discussion on gentrification studies. Continuing to trace the aftermath of urban regeneration projects with future studies on Turkish cities will be beneficial in terms of expanding the widespread effects of such projects.

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