Methodology

Once established that Yedeğirmeni is an Istanbul neighborhood in the process of gentrification, bringing a social mix to the area, we can question the community's ability to find a sustainable path to mobilization. As part of this research into community engagement in the Yedeğirmeni neighborhood, we used various tools to understand and consider the different strata of this engagement.

In order to grasp the varieties and tensions in community engagement against gentrification in the neighborhood, we established a research protocol based on three questions enabling us to understand both the origins of the gentrification process and the struggle against it, as well as the motivations and actions of the struggle. The first question concerns the origins of gentrification. The second question focuses on actions taken to limit gentrification. Finally, the last question asks how people feel about gentrification.

A number of semi-structured interviews focusing on these questions were conducted with various community players with varying degrees of influence on the social organization of the neighborhood. The first interview was with the Muhtar of Yedegirmeni, whose role and responsibilities enabled us to observe the ambivalence of her administrative role vis-à-vis her commitment to the neighborhood community. A second with the neighborhood's social network organizer for 8 years, who plays the role of project coordinator (in charge of making links between different associations programs and the municipality). She lives in the neighborhood since 10 years and works with local alternative associations, trying to represent the voice of the minorities. A third was conducted with the tenant manager of a cooperative store that had set up in the neighborhood following the Gezi movements. A fourth with a member of TAK, a design studio that works in collaboration with the municipality while being highly integrated into the neighborhood dynamic. Finally, we conducted a final interview with the manager of a local vintage store whose customers are almost exclusively people living outside the neighborhood. The store owner herself lives outside the neighborhood.

In addition to these interviews, we used existing literature dealing with gentrification issues in the neighborhood. Two articles were central to our analysis. The first one is *the Changing Meanings of Neighborhood in Modern Istanbul* (Durgun, 2021). The second one is *bridging and bonding social capital in gentrifying neighborhoods:'Yeldeğirmeni district in Istanbul'* (Arısoy & Paker, 2019).

Origins of the gentrificication

Scientific materials have enabled us to identify the origins of the gentrification phenomenon at different territorial scales, in Istanbul, Kadikoy and Yeldeğirmeni. They show that this urban and social phenomenon has been driven by political will since the 50s (modernization, globalization, beautification) and accelerated by the combined effect of major metropolitan projects, real estate developer projects, municipal reconstruction plans and urban transformation plans.

The various sources reveal four pivotal moments in this gentrification phenomenon:

- In the 50's, a phenomenon of modernization and "beautification" of the city of Istanbul in a globalized context,
- In the 90's an acceleration of this phenomenon,
- In the 2000's, the 1999 earthquake had a real impact on the way of thinking about the making of the city, with a strong will to build while often evading the issues of rehabilitation and heritage,
- After 2013, a displacement of creative populations and activists after the Gezi movement.

Sezgi Durgun's article (2021), focuses on Rasimpaca, a mahalle of Kadikoy where Yedelgermini is located, and on the transformation of this district, with the following question as a common thread: How do the local shopkeepers perceive the recent changes in the neighborhood and what are their reactions regarding the past present and future of neighborhood? Rasimpaca is a historically cosmopolitan neighborhood and a popular centrality that has been attracting a creative middle class for the past decade. Its demographics are becoming more heterogeneous (36% of residents are graduates, 53% are aged between 15 and 45), with more and more students, artists, activists and young professionals, while the neighborhood is becoming a place of leisure, culture and freedom. The main effects are inflation and conflicts of use and cultural conflicts (alcohol, music, etc.) that are disturbing some of the historic residents. There is a perceived tension between a more individual lifestyle and the Mahalle community lifestyle, but the strong cosmopolitanism of the local community, due to its history, means that this gentrification movement is experienced as less violent than in other neighborhoods, with a relative mix and relatively peaceful co-presence between communities.

The article by Alp Arisoy and Nurbin Paker (2019) shows that the historical functioning of building courtyards as semi-public spaces in the neighborhood finds its continuity in cafés and art studios, themselves becoming liminal spaces of sociability. Local vendors are also brokers, intermediaries between different populations. After 15 years, homophilic relationships tend to become heterophilic ones.

Ambivalent anti-gentrification process

On reading the three scientific materials, it would appear that there are no regulatory levers capable of slowing down or halting the current gentrification process. Putting these readings into perspective with the interviews, it appears that the position of peoples interviewed on this gentrification phenomenon is ambivalent, sometimes perceived as positive, particularly on a micro and individual scale, sometimes perceived negatively, on a macro and collective scale. No citizen movements against gentrification exist on a neighborhood scale, with the exception of the Rasimpaca muhtar Sultan Aksu. she doesn't directly fight against touristification, recognizing that this phenomenon is also one of the causes of the neighborhood's cosmopolitanism, she does fight against one of its symptoms and the unprecedented development of Airbnb, driving up property prices, and provoking evictions of tenants, thus participating in a gentrification phenomenon. Sultan Aksu has little recourse to resolve this situation, however, as he has no power on his own scale, and cannot mobilize existing local, regional or national legislation.

Moreover, Gunce explains that because of the price raising, people who make money in this process are fighting to maintain it : "locally, nothing can be done against gentrification, money comes first". Thus, social activists have very few power. For instance, the muhtar of the neighborhood is always accused to slow the projects that will make money or modernize the neighborhood. Gunce is complaining about the lack of care for the patrimony strength of the neighborhood.

The tools to counter gentrification are many, and among the most effective is certainly encouraging bottom-up participation and promoting horizontal approaches in designing community-related dynamics. In this context, it is

essential to develop initiatives that truly address the needs of the residents, avoiding projects and interventions imposed from above without considering the real needs of the area.

A significant example of how this approach can be applied is the design atelier TAK, a place that has the potential to further encourage the process of urban regeneration. Although redevelopment efforts can carry the risk of driving up prices and fueling gentrification, if developed with awareness and a long-term vision, such transformations can improve the livability of an area without compromising its authentic nature.

From the cooperative shop it came out the there is an awareness about the gentrification process, that is also due to the Gezi, since many structures were relocated from Taksim, so Kadıköy inevitably became part of the gentrification process. However "Gentrification is also driven by landlords and real estate agents. We expect that rents here will rise so much that we might not be able to stay. However, our presence itself is a form of resistance. »
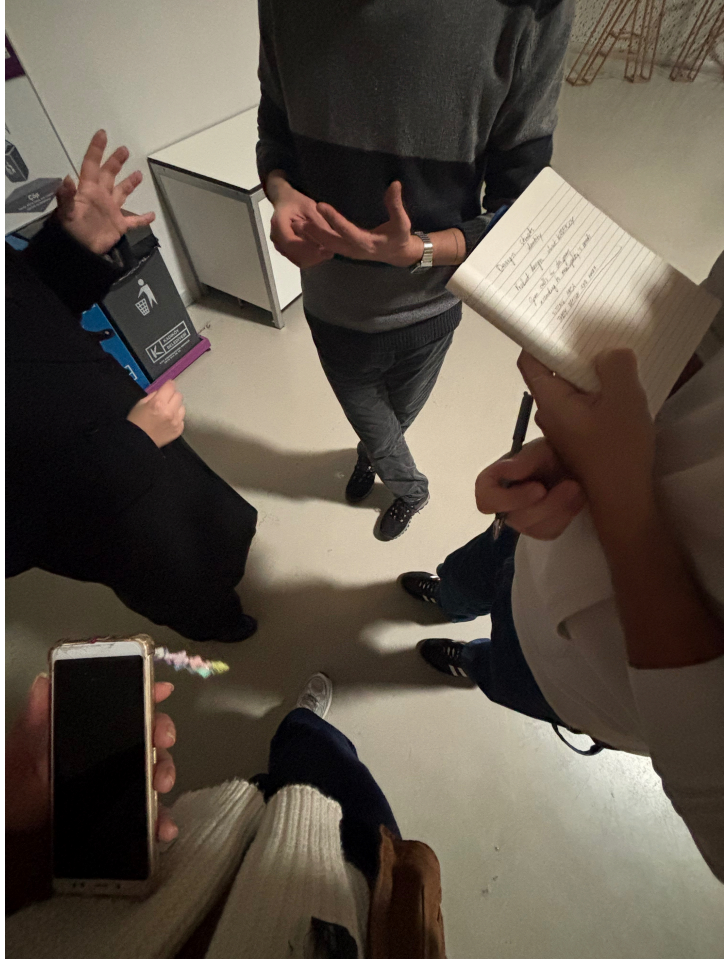
Living the gentrification as a community

The gentrification process has lead Yeldegirmini to host a large diversity of political groups and communities. Many tensions result from this because their interest converge. First, according to Gunce (a social network organizer), a conservative community is still implemented. Even if it is less and less symbolically important, it rejects all kind of changement. One big debate is the alcohol selling or the actions in favor of the areas around Haydarpasa train station (that is still very precarious : drug traffic, prostitution...) which are not morally justifiable to them : "it is very difficult to raise awareness on these topics". However, Gunce, whose job is to coordinate NGO activist programs in the neighborhood, also talks about a solidarity issue between all the activist communities. According to her the root of this problem is a lack of self-organisation capacities. Associations don't receive any money from public authorities, they work with private funds which prevail independence from the municipality but also let these programs baseless and without formal power.

Thus, the activist groups use Facebook groups to communicate and base their community. These groups are very closed from each other. This situation even lead to real scissions between some groups : the community manager worker talk about how feminist and trans activist put an end to their common battle because of disagreement about ways of protest. The other main reason explaining the lack of solidarity in the militant network is the lack of common place to debate. They mostly complain to the local governor or on digital platform, but there is no real confrontation in Yeldegirmini.

Nevertheless, Gunce point out some exceptions of few common places where the neighborhood is invited to gather and communicate. First, the coffee shops, they are a real tool for the community organizers who gather there. For instance, *Cafe Boni* is widely known for his "Kadikoy sessions" where most of the concerns and discussions about the neighborhood emerge. The second exception is the *Toy House* where a man is squatting for years with his family. This man has been describe by the community manager as an "entertainment leader" and as an actor of "pacification between groups". He is very respected by the locals (population and authorities) because he represents the only entity doing links, organizing common events. We just have to specify that these spaces are frequented mostly by militant and artist population.