Post-conflict urban transformation projects: the re/de-construction of Suriçi, Diyarbakır

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"el espacio

sólo es luz y silencio, sólo espacio"

Piedra de sol (1957), Octavio Paz

To solidarity, the driving force behind all efforts for a dignified and liberated life,

and

to the people of the region, who struggle tirelessly against all forms of oppression.

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Abbreviations

DBB - Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi

ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments and Sites

KAİP (Koruma Amaçlı İmar Planı) - Conservation Development Plan

TMMOB (Türk Mühendis Mimar Odaları Birliği) - Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects

UNESCO - United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

TOKİ (Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı) - Housing Development Administration of the Republic of Turkey

AKP - Justice and Development Party

PKK - Kurdistan Worker's Party

HDP - Peoples' Democratic Party

TL - Turkish Liras

Urbanisation Ministry - refers to the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change (T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı)

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Overview

This research seeks to study the post-conflict urban transformation projects in the historical centre (Suriçi) of Diyarbakır/Amed, the biggest Kurdish city in Turkey. The armed conflict between the Turkish Army and the Kurdish movement erupted in 2015 in seven cities in South-eastern Turkey and ended a year later in 2016. In these cities, significant parts of the conflict areas were urgently expropriated and demolished while remaining restricted by police and the army for a long time. An array of urban policies and development projects were initiated and implemented, aiming to redesign and reconstruct the city for the economic and social benefit of the Turkish state but also to limit and oppress the Kurdish movement (Tas, 2023). This research examines how urban planning policies become tools of power and sovereignty in the urban space in addition to spatial strategies of dislocation and dispossession introduced by warfare, focusing on Suriçi, Diyarbakır's old centre. Surrounded by a Roman fortress and enlisted as a cultural heritage monument by UNESCO, Suriçi comprises of historical buildings that have been severely damaged or demolished and were replaced by new constructions. The case study area was populated in the last decades by Kurdish lower classes and consists of 15 neighbourhoods. Since the end of the armed conflict in 2016, the urban fabric has been violently eradicated in almost half of the Suriçi area and shaped anew. The widened avenues and new building blocks built on top of the old narrow alleys and neighbourhoods are dedicated to commercial land uses, thus transforming the area into a tourist park. The urban transformation projects in Suriçi have displaced the previous residents and deprived them of their houses and properties by turning the area into a profitable field for private and public investments.

As will be analysed in the following chapters, the conflict sparked in late 2015 in seven big cities in Southeastern Turkey. Unlike some other war-torn cities like Nusaybin and Şırnak, this case study involves a historical monument and thus the potential of extracting value from the area that was demolished and later developed. The case study of Sur is a very different one, and the corresponding outcomes of this thesis should not be generalised; however, they should be examined and processed thoroughly in order to (possibly) identify common patterns with similar cases where the tool of urban reconstruction is used as a very powerful and deeply political instrument to shape the social structure of the city anew.

The research includes a fieldwork study that took place in Diyarbakır (in 2019 and 2022)[1]. The methods employed during the fieldwork include interviews (thirty in-depth semi-structured interviews), personal observations and informal discussions, as well as collection of data like policy reports and maps. In addition, the methodology also employs spatial analysis methods such as analysis of spatial registry and (aerial and in-field) photo observation supported, on-site architectural observations, as well as analysis of policies and legal documents (master plans, regulations, declarations of party representatives, parliamentary minutes, supplementary reports and literature).

This thesis aimed, through a deeper examination, the transformation projects in Suriçi affected in multiple ways the collective memory, the social, political, economic, cultural, and historical life. While financial gains and imposing control appear to be the primary two aims of the transformation project, the discursive and visual representation of the 'rebranded' Sur and the planned projects with their security and assimilative objectives illustrate a desire and anxiety for pacification. The undisclosed master plan for the re/de-constructed area leaves the long-term

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[1] This research examines the period just before the conflict of 2015 and it ends just before the devastating earthquake of February 2023. How the earthquake affected the urban transformation projects in Suriçi, the housing market of Diyarbakir, and the local society is a whole new topic that needs to be examined exclusively by future researchers and scholars. Thus, the time limits on the case study of this thesis are very strict and specifically frame the topic and the context. From the end of the peace process between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state by the time of the earthquake

future development uncertain and creates grey zones of informal negotiations and political leverage. The new Sur is being transformed into a tourist park through violent demographic shifts. The deregulated legal framework has escalated prices, resulting in permanent displacement. The project reflects a case where catastrophe presents financial opportunities for the upper classes and reveals the complex interplay of class divisions, Kurdish identity, colonialism and spatial hegemony.

When the warfare started in late 2015, I was working for an architectural office in Istanbul. I had closely experienced the conflict era, its effects on the society of Turkey, the fear of the people and the climaxing authoritarianism of the government. It was an issue that inevitably concerned society as a whole, but more specifically, as an architect and urban planner alongside friends and colleagues, we were able to witness what an essential role our science played in the conflict cities. I followed the case for some time, and after my master's in the Department of Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam, I considered applying for a PhD that would have a topic that relates to my personal, political and scientific interests. Due to the fact I had already lived in Turkey, I was familiar with the context and the language. Thus, I took the initiative to start working on this case study in the scope of my PhD.

1.2. Research questions

This work aims to explore the deep and mutually reinforcing relationship between neoliberal urbanisation and colonialism in cities that have been the space of battlefields. In particular, it is aiming to suggest that neoliberal urbanism in Diyarbakır is also a colonial urbanism. Moreover, there is a specific cutting point that applies throughout my research, and it relates to the term 'post-conflict' term and its differentiation from war. More precisely, my convention in this thesis is that the term "post-conflict" refers solely to the period after armed clashes. One of my main scopes is to demonstrate that architecture and planning can be the most valuable tools to continue the war through other means. The case study is the application of those dogmas during

and after the conflict between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state in the city of Diyarbakır, located in Southeastern Turkey or North Kurdistan. This thesis aims to explore post-conflict urban transformation projects and their role in the re/de-construction of Suriçi as essential tools for the economic and political benefit of the Turkish state. Additionally, it seeks to reveal the dialectic relationship between reconstruction and deconstruction. One more goal is to analyse and describe the methods, tools and legislations employed by the Turkish state for the seizure and exploitation of urban space for the establishment of political sovereignty and economic benefit.

The following additional research questions arose from the fieldwork, and while the research was ongoing; eventually shedding light on aspects I was not previously aware of, and which enriched my work.

How discourses and representations orchestrated by the Urbanisation Ministry are driving the success of a rather disastrous plan that causes deprivation, dislocation and annihilation? How does the public discourse of state representatives, slogans, and promotional material of the project legitimise the applied spatial strategies and accelerate the movement of the local real estate market?

Not only during the interviews but also while reading reports and academic work, the terms that were given to describe the projects in Suriçi captured my attention. Terms like *gentrification, annihilation, urban transformation, renovation, regeneration, renewal, redevelopment, renovation, 'erasure of memory', 'new creation of memory', urbicide,* and *cultural genocide* were thoroughly discussed during interviews but also mentioned in the report and bibliography. Is any of those enough to characterise this case?

How do symbolic materialities in the built environment further establish an uprooting transformation of the area? They change the character of the region, harm the cultural heritage and keep the locals away from their land. Are elements such as flags, concrete walls, and vacant areas significant material sovereignties to employ assimilation?

Last but not least, I will attempt to frame here a reflection about the future. I try to consider to what extent the distinctive experience of Suriçi can generate a productive theoretical framework that could also be used in studies about urban transformation projects not only in the Global South but also in the North. I wonder, how do the conditions of a local case study meet and open a dialogue with the international experiences of urbanisation?

1.3. Methodology

In order to meet the above research questions, the methodological approach of this research and the analysis of the data shall be defined as follows. This multidisciplinary research is engaged with different methods from different scientific fields and attempts to explore their connection through multiple ways of data collection over the last six years. The choice to rely mainly on qualitative methods and tools for doctoral research is largely due to the nature of the research questions that were initially formulated while the study was ongoing and while I had a better understanding of the nature of the data that could be collected. Also, qualitative methods offer a researcher the opportunity to investigate issues less openly discussed from personal and communal perspectives and perceptions.

Following a more open-ended research strategy has been essential for my research as both the actual territory of the study and the broader field in question were being transformed, sometimes rapidly. In this sense, research questions, observations and research methods were in a continuous dialogue, cross-feeding and informing each other throughout the research process. The most crucial change in the methodological approach is that initially, I was expecting that I would be able to retrieve quantitative data like GIS datasets/archives and I would be able to conduct a mixed methods methodology. The field, though, is always full of surprises, and despite the fact I couldn't find the data I initially had in mind, I encountered different and surprisingly interesting elements like symbolic materialities and symbolic reconstructions of 'Sur anew'.

Aside from the literature review, empirical data were collected during short-term fieldwork related to ethnography and included participant observation, archival and web research, semi-structured interviews, field visits, meeting attendance, note-taking, document and textual analysis and thematic analysis. Therefore, qualitative research methods (drawing primarily from urban ethnography), such as interviews, informal discussions and participatory research observations, were complemented with visual analysis methods, as well as other data collection and analysis techniques (including photos or analysis of dwg map files and aerial photographs from Google Earth). Both the fieldwork and the diverse data collection resulted in significant primary research material, which would be analysed through various methods.

1.3.1. Fieldwork and Internship

The in-situ fieldwork was pivotal for the progress of my research. The first pilot field visit in Sur took place in December 2019 with the intention to organise another, lengthier field research shortly after. Unfortunately, the pandemic that commenced a few weeks later made it impossible even to consider fieldwork for the next 1,5 years. When conditions allowed it, I managed to replan the initially three-month-long visit to the field combined with an internship at the local Chamber of Urban Planners. The fieldwork took place from February 2022 to May 2022 and was again repeated between October and November 2022. Most of the fieldwork was conducted in the Turkish language, as English is not broadly spoken in Diyarbakır. I strategically chose to stay in the area of Suriçi in order to take a glimpse of the local life during the day and the night. In the meantime, the initial collected data were examined and archived, additional needs were identified, and the continuation of the research was redesigned. The timing of the field visits is of particular importance as they took place before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, while in the meantime, the context, the field and the process of the project in the area changed dramatically. Participant observation was a method employed during my stay in the city. By asking informal questions to people I encountered, I could reach "relatively uncontaminated statements of the research participants' experiences and perspectives" (Morgan, 1988). I also had plenty of time for observations and the chance to study "roles and organisations" (ibid.).

At this point, I should acknowledge a crucial choice that had an impact on the derived methodology. During my two main field visits in Diyarbakır in the spring and fall of 2022, I conducted a 3-month internship at the local branch of the Urban Planners' Chamber, which I extended for some extra weeks. There, I got in touch with all kinds of experts related to the project I was researching. I decided to apply for the Erasmus+ program of my university because I thought that through a European mobility program, I would enjoy the safety of being in the city of Diyarbakır as an EU program fellow. Additionally, my involvement in a public institution like the Chamber of Engineers gave me a lot of contacts, data and many opportunities to get in touch with representatives from other Chambers like the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Architects. The reason I chose the chamber and not any other NGO is their institutional role and their effort to become the oppositional stakeholder against the authoritarian governmental plans. Professional chambers in Turkey's urban planning system hold significant influence over the practices of city planning, architecture, and engineering and are empowered by law to take legal action against urban development plans that deviate from established urbanism and planning principles (Penpecioğlu, 2013).

Lastly, not to amend the fact that by enrolling in the Erasmus placement program, I received a small amount of money to help me partially cover my stay in the region. During my internship at the Chamber of Urban Planners, I had the opportunity to help the local branch with the issue of reports on spatial planning projects in the city of Diyarbakır and mainly on the historical centre of Suriçi. I learned interesting techniques—like analysing legislations and report writing—while working with kind and team-working professionals who generously shared knowledge and data with me. Mostly, the internship at the Chamber gave me an opportunity for a more in-depth understanding of the city, the past and current urban processes and a feeling of inclusion in the local society. I believe conducting an internship in this institution was one of the most critical factors that helped me accomplish my research objectives.

1.3.2. Interviews

The foundation of data for the structure of this work is through in-depth, semi-structured interviews that were conducted with key informants and experts from the field. The data collection method was purposive sampling in order to find participants that closely aligned with the research objectives, ensuring diversity and relevance to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). Snowball sampling was helpful in broadening my network; I initially met with the first interviewees, who subsequently recommended other participants with similar characteristics, creating a chain of referrals (Bryman, 2012).

The key informants and experts were mostly Architects, Urban planners, Members of the Chamber of Commerce and Engineers, municipality officers, project stakeholders, members of the local civil society, activists and scholars. Expert interviews are valued in social research for their efficiency, access to insider knowledge, and usefulness in challenging-to-reach social contexts (Bogner et al., 2009). Those people had very specialised knowledge and often held key positions (or used to, until the time of the conflict and then dismissed) in local institutions, NGOs, universities and chambers.

Due to the sensitive information that was discussed and due to the authoritarian state, interviews were anonymous and often, the exact position of a person is not revealed to protect their lives. I achieved to meet with 30 interviewees. In fact, this corresponds to 33 interviews because, with three people, I conducted a first pilot interview in 2019 and one more well-constructed in 2022, along with the rest. After 30 interviewees, I had achieved enough data saturation, and the content of the interviews and interviewees couldn't provide me with more indicative information.

Additionally, I conducted discussions with more than six real estate agents and countless informal everyday talks with people living and working in the area. Those people were real estate agents, taxi drivers, shop owners, residents, and locals. Through those chats, I gained essential information and an overview of their opinion on the projects in Suriçi. Unfortunately, the

Ministry, municipality (appointed trustees), and regional governors or representatives did not respond to my requests for contact. According to some of my informants, it is not a surprise because even some Scholars or experts did not receive any answer to similar requests. Among the dozens of emails and requests for interviews I sent in total, most of them remained unresponded, also many recipients rejected my inquiry for an interview due to fear, mistrust or other reasons that I do not know. Overall, I feel lucky and grateful to have been accepted by 30 people who, despite the fear, trusted and talked to me.

With the help of an interview guide, interviews aimed to an "appropriate and tailored to each informant" extraction technique (Dunn, 2021, p. 153). The questions were modified according to the interviewee and the field of expertise. For example, when interviewing restoration experts questions more specialised around the process of restoring historical structures and the walls. The particularity of this case and the issue of danger from the side of the informants, alongside with the possible mistrust forced me to be very flexible in my interviews. By expressing my appreciation to interviewees and gaining their trust, I encouraged all participants to openly share their perspectives and experiences related to urban space and urban transformation, taking into account their roles in the process.

While at my first visit to the field in 2019, my questions were based on retrieving information about what is happening there; two years later, the questionnaire was evolved and enriched by my ongoing deeper knowledge of the topic and my concrete research questions. The primary question types were mostly descriptive but also storytelling, opinion and structural answers (Dunn, 2021). Each interview was organised according to the following main points:

- Firstly, I posed some questions about the relation to the person in the studied area
- Secondly, to comment on the ongoing projects, give a term that, according to them, could better define the situation
- Ask some technical questions according to the expertise of each, e.g., legislation and planning policies to the urban planners, comments about the architectural or restoration

principles in the field to the architects, the current social condition to the members of the civil society, etc.

- Lastly, I tried to retrieve some comments regarding their professional and personal opinion about the project, how they see it in the future and how they think this will further affect their lives.

According to my respondents' convenience, interviews were conducted in English or Turkish. I was making clear to all the potential respondents that: "The interview will last around an hour and can be conducted at a location of your preference. For formal reasons, I would like to clarify that your participation is voluntary; you have the right to refuse to answer questions, and you can decline to participate or withdraw consent at any time. Your involvement in this study will be confidential; your identity will remain anonymous, and no material that could personally identify you will be used. Lastly, I would like to ask your permission for the audio record of the interview."

Even though I never persisted in interviewing anyone, and I always declared that recording was not compulsory; many people who initially responded to me and agreed to talk stopped communicating after they learned that this would be an interview with recording.

In order to achieve professional quality in data collection, I, therefore, tried to have professional interpretations in the demanding and challenging interviews with officials. Thus, I collaborated with a translator for the interpretation of the interviews. I hired and paid, from my own budget, a local professional English teacher to interpret some of the demanding interviews from Turkish to English. For the cases in which I went with the interpreter, I was also asking permission for the interpreter to attend our discussions. The above information was provided in advance and through email in order not to make my respondents feel uncomfortable denying and not forcing their consent while being face-to-face.

Interpretations, transcription and translation of interviews that took place during my exploratory trip have been processed only by me, and few were transcribed and translated by the translator

but edited by me. Apart from the interpreter, no other person ever had access to the audio material and transcriptions to ensure the safety of my respondents. After the interviews, the records were transcribed, and in the cases where records were not allowed, notes were written clearly. The interview data that are presented in the text are coded by transcript citations (Dunn, 2021). To ensure the anonymity of interviewees, I numbered each one, and when referring to them or quoting them, I noted their number. In the appendix section, there is a list with further information on every interviewee (e.g., gender, position, expertise). Overall, during this research, I believe I have met my commitments to my respondents and information providers to keep their identities anonymous and to protect them from any possible threat.

For the coding of interviews, the method of thematic analysis was used in order to offer some interpretations and my reflections on how I read the data (Braun and Clarke, 2021). The reason I chose this method is because it is particularly useful to foreigners conducting fieldwork, and therefore, an approach that is based on their subjectivity is an honest way to read the data. According to my understanding of things, values, positioning, experiences, disciplinary tradition, ideology, and political life shape the way I see the data and thus interpret them. I followed the six steps of Braun and Clarke (2021) about (1) familiarisation with my data (not just interviews but also notes, photos, maps, and presentations) and (2) coded them with labels that capture interesting elements. Then I tried to (3) generate themes, (4) review them, (5) define and name them, and (6) lastly, I produced a report, which was the main material of my empirical writing.

1.3.3. Grey Literature

Apart from the information gathered during fieldwork, I also utilised a range of publicly available reports from various non-governmental organisations, research centres, and international organisations addressing multiple aspects of socio-spatial changes in Suriçi. The grey literature includes textual material like government, policy and institution's official reports, legislations and acts of parliament, online media records and local newspaper archives. Those were a big part of my main sources of data regarding conflict and the post-conflict re/de-construction process of

Suriçi. Any kind of press or visual material that was released in order to inform the public and promote this project, either from the state or affiliated agents. Document analysis of grey literature involves accumulation, selection, familiarisation through reading, identification of information and analysis of data. Notes and observations supported and guided by legal documents like master plans, regulations, declarations of party representatives, parliamentary minutes, supplementary reports and literature. Review of each of the laws and legislations that were published concerning the area of study. Report collection of all the affiliated organisations and NGOs from the local and international civil society. Reports from the Chamber of Engineers and, most specifically, Architects and Urban Planners, Reports from the United Nations, UNESCO, Amnesty International, Diyarbakır Institute for Social and Political Research and many other institutions where their data are collectively produced and analysed by experienced professionals.

Among the countless articles on (mainstream and oppositional) media that were published in the press after the conflict started and especially after the urban transformation projects started in the region and specifically Diyarbakır, I tried to collect, create and archive press and online material that I could find available in the last six years. I organised them according to the information they were providing about the project's process or when they were reporting public declarations and press releases from the side of the government and state officials. I have done all translations of literature, grey literature, and reports. My knowledge of the Turkish language is good, but not at a proficiency level; consequently, possible mistakes belong to me. Some of this material could also provide information about the public discourse, signs of the times, or reporting insightful information that proved to be very helpful for organising the fieldwork and for the research in total.

1.3.4. Analysing: context, discourse, visuals and maps

The intersection between discourses about the city and the practical actions that shape the urban environment reveals how stakeholders use these discourses to facilitate changes, establish urban

restructuring as favourable, and construct new place identities (Mele, 2000). The connection between prevailing urban discourses and socio-spatial transformations, such as redevelopment, illustrates how these discourses are employed strategically to justify and legitimise urban changes, often drawing on contemporary notions of progress and the inner city (ibid.). Consequently, language has the potential to impact the policy process through various means, including the manipulation of perceptions, the delineation of policy focus, the advancement of specific agendas and the moulding of communication dynamics (Rydin, 1998). Hence, "the rhetoric used in policy debates influences the relationship between policy actors as much as it reflects them." (Lees, 2004, p. 102). Revealing specific dominant perspectives and language regarding preferred approaches that benefit particular vested interests (ibid.) is one of the main guidelines for comprehending this work.

Content analysis is a research method aimed at drawing reliable and valid conclusions about data in their broader context, focusing on the symbolic aspects of texts that always connect to the broader cultural backdrop, ensuring consistent and credible analysis of these references within a specific group of texts (Krippendorff, 1980).

Visual research methods demand that the researcher interprets images with sensitivity, considering their context, potential for varied meanings, and the researcher's social position if they are the source, while it is crucial to be critical of the idea that photographs provide an unambiguous representation of reality (Bryman, 2012). In historical and current research, visual images of structures, interiors, and exhibitions are frequently employed, either as supplements to written records or as objects of examination themselves, with a focus on the institution's architectural aspects, encompassing its design, adornments, inscriptions, and arrangement (Rose, 2001).

Rose (2001) explains two important parameters for favoured interpretations: one centres on the visual and textual interaction between an image and the person seeing it, while the other underscores the societal aspects influencing how an image is received. A critical examination of

visual imagery is imperative, recognising that it is always shaped by practices, technologies, and knowledge, thus necessitating an understanding of its agency, the social implications of viewing, and the diverse perspectives of audiences, including academic critics (ibid.). The various perspectives of viewers have the potential to question "signs, codes, dominant codes, ideologies, mythologies, and referent systems" (Rose, 2001, p. 99). She also introduces the 'visual critical methodology', which considers the visual within its cultural significance, social practices, and embedded power dynamics, acknowledging the influence of power structures that create, express through, and can be contested by various perspectives and modes of visual representation.

For this research, I took approximately 7.000 photos during my fieldwork in order to use them as a source of data as memory aids, effectively becoming integral parts of my field notes (Bryman, 2012). I acknowledge the ever-changing nature of image meanings; it suggests that they can never be static and will always be interpreted differently by various individuals (Bryman, 2012). Collecting visual materials such as maps and photos resulted in a massive library of visual data. For the pictures that do not belong to me, I was granted permission from the author to display them in my thesis along with their name. Lastly, few maps are given to me confidentially, and I do not reveal their source to protect my informants.

1.4. Positionality

Since my research entails a significant part of ethnography and participant interaction and observation, it was essential to reflect upon my positionality as a researcher involved in this case study.

> "Bias comes not from having ethical and political positions – this is inevitable – but from not acknowledging them. Not only does such acknowledgement help to unmask any bias that is implicit in those views, but it helps to provide a way of responding critically and sensitively to the research." (Griffiths, 1998, p. 133)

Throughout the process of research, I was trying to reflect on how I was perceived, but mostly on how I perceived and interpreted the 'data' through my lenses and biases. Trying to be aware of my positionality, especially in the interpretative stage, meant reflecting on the research material and trying to cross-validate it from diverse sources. Nevertheless, considering the limitations of the particular topic, this wasn't always possible. Moreover, it was equally valuable to allow for personal opinions and biographies to inform and, at times, challenge my understanding.

1.4.1. Connection with the field

The initial idea for this thesis came during the time of the conflict. It started as a collaborative project we did together with my dear friend and colleague Sungur, C. with the title: "Urbanization in the Conflict Zone: Self-governance vs. State Hegemony in Sur" and was first presented at the Autonoma Conference in the summer of 2016.

My broad interest in Turkey and the Kurdish issue was raised during the 1,5 years I lived there as an Erasmus student at Istanbul Technical University in 2013-2014. This was the time that I made my first trip to the region and to Diyarbakır, where I had the opportunity to see the city before the hostilities. Since then, I have tried to follow the political and social struggles that sparkle against an authoritarian state being at war with any different ethnic, political or religious groups. Undoubtedly, my interest in the Kurdish issue played a significant role in choosing to study further this conflict. Although an outsider inspired by the Kurdish movement, I will still attempt to conduct a fair, calm and emotionally de-attached study. I acknowledge that as a foreigner, my lenses could be useful by elaborating even on the wrong practices of this Kurdish political movement that, for a local scholar, would be too much of a burden to do. As a foreigner who doesn't perfectly know the language and how the Turkish state and society function, I had some difficulties and might have lost important information. On the other hand, the fact that I have no emotional connection to the topic and the Kurdish issue, in general, might give my approach an advantage of a study on the subject with distance and composure.

This PhD is an outcome of how I was perceived in the region as a researcher and, at the same time, a product related to how I reflect on this topic, according to my understandings and life experiences. My ethnicity, gender, age, class, cultural and ideological background are inextricably connected with my decision to conduct such research. Also, my experience from the fieldwork was related to the above factors. And so are my methodological tools and their implementation, the design of the research, the overall process of collecting data, the interpretation of the theory, and, of course, the conclusions.

1.4.2. Researcher's identity in the field

My position in the field as a white-western or, more specifically, as a Greek non-Muslim woman plays a significant role. Due to the enduring historical and political connections as well as the "ever-present geopolitical past" between Greece and Turkey, "(re)producing stereotypes and othering processes" (Vlastou – Dimopoulou et al., 2023, p. 1) inevitably impact the lives of both sides' people. My identity and positionality are described through two different levels of lenses that play a significant role in how I see this research. The first is related to the connection between Greece- Turkey and the Kurdish issue. If the two countries are "favourite enemies" of each other (Dragonas, 2003, p. 365), then in Greece, Kurds who are the 'enemy of the enemy' are considered friends (Vlastou – Dimopoulou et al., 2023) and possibly the opposite could be true, for my case. However, I was also perceived as a Westerner or, better, as a European. As a passport holder who can move freely (to Schengen and not only) without being obliged to get through a frustrating visa process (see Dedeoğlu and Genç, 2017) I was aware that I could never pretend to be like a local. This 'privilege' of an EU passport holder somehow affected people to a certain point in some interactions, and in order to be honest about my positionality, I find it essential to mention it.

I was cautious about the way I looked and dressed up so that I didn't make a difference while living in the city. However, in everyday interactions, it was impossible to hide that I was a foreigner, as my accent was constantly betraying me. The vast majority of the people I

encountered seemed surprised by the fact that I am a foreigner and very curious to learn where I am from. From taxi drivers to shopkeepers, I was always asked where I come from and why I am there. Most of the time, I was saying that I was just a visitor, and I was giving an account of the purpose of my visit only to people who were related to my work. The interest of the people to learn about me, their surprise and motivating compliments about my knowledge of the language, as well as their curiosity about how Diyarbakır seemed to me, is something I remember vividly and emotionally. I have never interacted before with people who have such a great sense of hospitality. I was always treated kindly and warmly and felt more than welcome. Sometimes, I even felt overwhelmed and awkward by their overprotection and their persistence to help, assist and treat me nicely. Despite the fact that people are incredibly kind and generous anyway, I assume this interest was more intense because I was a foreigner.

1.4.3. Personal connections

While in the region, I tried hard to expand my networking by participating in panels, workshops, historical walks, and meetings of the Chamber. Thanks to the circle of people I collaborated with, I always felt included in any professional or academic activity around Suriçi. I also conducted a short field visit in Şırnak, Cizre, and Nusaybin to compare Diyarbakır with the other cases of destroyed cities in the aftermath of the same conflict. I would not be able to make such an exciting and enlightening research trip if I did not have the support and help from people whom I now consider friends. Besides, this is only an example of how my interaction and the bonds or relationships I developed became an accelerator for the progress of this research.

Everyday life in Diyarbakır/Amed is different compared to Istanbul and even more different compared to Greek life. The social, political and even economic context is very different, and thus, many elements, notions, behaviours and perspectives were not fully understood by me. Nevertheless, some particularities of the region were explained to me by colleagues with whom I had developed personal relations. As those people are involved with Suriçi, their narratives

reflect their standpoint. So, the relationship that emerged between some research participants and myself will also slightly entail their reflections and thus have a subjective character.

Rarely did I feel that locals saw me as an outsider or with suspicion. Often, I felt that I received a lot of help in contrast to having been Turkish or even local. Maybe some informants thought that as a foreigner who studies such a topic, I could raise awareness about this issue in my country and generally outside Turkey, and that is why they were so positive in participating. In total, I spent a lot of time, I sometimes stayed with locals, and I went around with locals a lot, so I believe I got a glimpse of the local life. Undoubtedly, my connections with some people proved to be a key to further networking and snowballing. I met wonderful people, and I managed to develop strong friendship bonds with some. Overall, I feel incredibly grateful to all the people who helped and, despite the dangers, talked to and trusted me.

During my fieldwork, I took precautions for security reasons, writing my notes and especially my contacts' names in Greek or Greeklish to prevent potential issues if authorities inspected my notebook. I also encrypted my files, used a cloud and cleared my devices of sensitive data during travelling, despite the inconvenience and risks of losing the respective data. Additional measures included securing my laptop and cell phone, using a VPN, removing location-sharing, and being cautious about social media. While I was aware that being completely invisible in a State is impossible, I aimed to limit the information available about me, avoiding personal photos and unnecessary data on my devices to minimise potential risks. Undoubtedly, my familiarisation with the field resulted in being more relaxed–and taking only the necessary security precautions– from one visit to the next.

Lastly, regarding my positionality and the means I employed to fulfil this work, I also need to clarify how important role had the context of Greek University research life. Conducting a PhD in Greece is precarious, non-paid labour without any rights for unemployment salary and health insurance or a pension perspective. It is a demotivating and frustrating procedure to conduct research work while also working in parallel at the private sector to make a living. Along with the

scholarship's tight deadlines from the funding institution, this context resulted in a dramatic influence on my pace and the outcome of this work—that I would not recall as positive.

Chapter 2

Entanglements of Power, Space and War

"The cruelties of property and privilege are always more ferocious than the revenges
of poverty and oppression. For the one aims at perpetuating resented injustice, the
other is merely a momentary passion soon appeased."
(James, 1989, pp. 88-89)

2.1. Introduction: Articulation of Space and Power

While this research often refers to the Turkish state it is 'natural' to talk of the state as a structure.

Perhaps to anthropomorphise it with intention but these are reifications of a concept. Rather,

the state is better understood as an idea that refers to the institutionalisation of social relations

of power. Mark Haugaard (2002, p. 66) defines the state thus:

> "State is not a thing or entity endowed with an intrinsic, instrumental essence and a
> measurable power-quantum. It refers instead to the relations of social classes and
> forces. By state power can only be understood as the power of certain (dominant)
> classes - that is to say, the place of these classes in a power-relation to other
> (dominated) ones - and, insofar as political power is involved here, the strategic
> relationship of forces among these classes and their respective positions. The state is
> neither the instrumental depository (object) of a power-essence held by the dominant
> class, nor a subject possessing a quantity of power equal to the quantity it takes form
> the classes which face it: the State is rather the strategic site of organization of the
> dominant class in its relationship to the dominated classes. It is a site and a centre of
> the exercise of power, but it possesses no power of its own."

In this thesis, it is such a notion of state that is invoked. The Turkish state is understood as

synonymous with an authority over a territory that is enabled and enforced by *power*. The

authority of its institutions and dominant classes (elites) is exerted through the deployment of

hegemonies and routinisation of violence.

This thesis takes neoliberalism[2] as a primary motivation along with coloniality, for the re/de-construction of Diyarbakır. It is a perspective that emphasises a number of related issues that pertained to the situation in Turkey and its southeast, Turkish Kurdistan, both at the time and beforehand and also historically. Thus, the following section introduces the focus – *neoliberalism* – and subsequent sections outline related issues – *accumulation by dispossession*, *neoliberal urbanism*, *uneven development* and *urban development projects* – with their features of *gentrification* and *touristification* – in the broader societal context of *the city and war*, *urbicide, ethnocracy and the control and regulation of space* – which relate *urban planning* to *colonialism* and *modernisation* as a *technology of war* involving a *security and securitisation* that has informed the *post-conflict reconstruction and recovery*.

2.2. Cities, urban planning and war

2.2.1. City and war

It has been observed – by Neil Smith (2022, p. 393) – that "War as a neoliberal megaproject may be the highest expression of state-led creative destruction, but it unfolds against a backdrop of existing social relations and political struggles." In contemporary conflicts waged under the name of national security, major cities have increasingly become crucial frontline spaces, a trend exacerbated by various environmental challenges, while these conflicts, particularly in less developed regions, frequently entail either coerced urbanisation or de-urbanisation, resulting in substantial population movements into and out of cities, ultimately unsettling and diminishing

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[2] "Liberalism… was always about finding the right balance between two spheres understood as properly distinct, if always related: state and market, public and private, the realm of the king and the proper domain of the merchant. Neoliberalism, in contrast, puts governmental mechanisms developed in the private sphere to work within the state itself, so that even core functions of the state are either subcontracted out to private providers, or run (as the saying has it) "like a business". The question of what should be public and what private becomes blurred, as the state itself increasingly organizes itself around "profit centers", "enterprise models", and so on. Rather than shifting the line between state and market, then, neoliberalism in this account involved the deployment of new, market-based techniques of government within the terrain of the state itself." (Ferguson, 2010, p. 172)

the cultural diversity of urban centres (Sassen, 2010). In this old-new development, cities are deemed to be "the main sites concentrating acts of subversion, resistance, mobilization, dissent and protest challenging national security states" and thus inherently very problematic spaces (Graham, 2009, p. 391).

Warfare in an urban environment is a complicated, unpredictable and chaotic process where the army is unable to have a full image of the operation area since part of the conflicts takes place inside the built environment (Filippidis, 2017) or through it, especially in historic 'eastern' cities, where the winding narrow alleys and dead-ends are difficult to read. Along with the presence of civilians, the recognition of the enemy is a challenging process where those operations create an uncertainly (ibid.). Taking into account the above, unavoidably, "the transformation of cities into fields of lower or higher intensity operations always carries a destructive potential" (Filippidis, 2017). That insight is quite apparent in the present case (as covered especially in Chapter 6).

Urbicide is, by definition, "the killing of cities" (Goonewardena and Kipfer, 2006, p. 23). It refers to a purposeful act of destruction intended to annihilate not only the physical city but also its culture (and, so far as is necessary, inhabitants). This aggressive action is driven by the intention to obliterate all traces of the city's presence with the aim of wiping out its cultural identity and collective memory. It is a "practice of wilful destruction that has been used both as warfare against certain cultures and as the obliteration of urban experience and memory" (Centre for Urban Conflicts Research, 2012).

During the Bosnian war in 1992, a team of architects from Mostar introduced the term 'urbicide' in their publication "Mostar' 92–Urbicide" to characterise the deliberate destruction of the built environment or the killing of a city (Coward, 2006; Graham, 2003). They effectively illustrated that the deliberate destruction of the built environment should not be viewed merely as collateral damage secondary to the Bosnian people's slaying but rather as a deliberate cultural annihilation through the destruction of heritage.

> "Defined as political violence intentionally designed to erase or 'kill' cities, urbicide can involve the ethno-nationalist targeting of spaces of cosmopolitan mixing (as in the Balkans in the 1990s); the systematic devastation of the means of living a modern urban life (as with the de-electrification of Iraq in 1991, the siege of Gaza in 2006-8, or the attack on Lebanon in 2006)" (Graham, 2011, p. 84)

Urbicide represents a specific manifestation of deliberate violence with urbanity as its intended target in which it is essential to view this combination of the terms 'city', 'war' and in general 'urbanity', "as processes rather than fixed concepts, none of which exist prior to or determine the formation of violence named 'urbicide'" (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 16).

Urbicide can also be described as the action of demolishing structures and urban areas that hold *no military significance*. It aims to impact the daily lives of civilians to the extent that war becomes an undeniable and constant experience for a nation's populace (Lambert, 2012).

> Urbicide had thus become a scientific, surgical, military operation in architecture that either simply murders a civilian population by the means of architecture, or practically and symbolically destroys the organizational and cultural aspects of the city in a biopolitical attack on a population. (ibid.)

Urbicide encompasses the deliberate annihilation of shared spaces and histories that define communities. In his book *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, Martin Coward (2008) argues that structures are targeted because they contain and enable the existence of a diverse public space that clashes with regimes characterised by ethno-nationalist principles. For Coward, it is the city itself that is targeted, rather than its buildings and streets. The city is the target per se, because it is often the space of conversion, diversity, tolerance, vivid life and contestations. Urban conflict and the subsequent reconstruction efforts represent a deliberate strategy of destruction aimed at eradicating the distinctive urban identity. Urbicide's inevitable destruction extends to the vandalism and looting of cultural heritage sites and consequent destruction of people's identity (Bleibleh and Awad, 2020; Weiss and Connelly, 2019).

Place annihilation refers also to the simultaneous devastation of civilian inhabitants, residential areas, neighbourhoods, key urban infrastructure and civil ecosystems, along with the destruction

of urban support systems, civilian casualties, spatial distribution of damages, and their significance in understanding the obliteration of urban spaces (Hewitt, 1983). The 'damage' should be understood with a broader meaning than just material casualties; different notions of metaphorical damage should be taken into account:

> "At stake in urbicide, the destruction of the buildings in and around which communities live their lives, is thus the destruction of the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity. Urbicide then is the destruction of buildings not for what they individually represent (military target, cultural heritage, conceptual metaphor) but as that which is the condition of possibility of heterogeneous existence." (Coward, 2006, pp. 429–430)

The act of urbicide, according to Coward (2006), in its capacity as the *destruction of diversity* on a broader scale, can be seen as a reflection of a "politics of exclusion." Coward (2006, p. 435) relates the urbicide of Balkan cities during the Bosnian war and argues that war as "a politics of exclusion is manifested in the politics of ethnic nationalism." This relation between nationalism and urbicide is based on the "politics of exclusion aimed at establishing the fiction of a being-without-others" (ibid., p.434). It frequently occurs alongside various other types of violence like genocide and state-endorsed repression. Similarly, Naomi Klein, in her influential book on the *Shock Doctrine* (2008), relates war and in general and all sorts of catastrophes (terrorist attacks, natural disasters, etc.) to the deployment of market-driven policies to stimulate economy and achieve control. In her previous work on *Disaster Capitalism*, Klein (2007, p. 49) explicitly described this as the moment when wars and "disasters have become the preferred moments for advancing a vision of a ruthlessly divided world, one in which the very idea of a public sphere has no place at all." The study presented here adds another example with new elements to her list.

Ramadan (2009) relates the notion of urbicide to the space or state of exception. By focusing on a case of the deliberate and systematic erasure of a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon by Lebanese armed forces, he considers the theft and destruction of homes that occurred without legal sanction, rendering Palestinian lives, social and political space 'sacred' in the sense that they

could be destroyed outside the rule of law. The idea of urbicide is linked to targeting a population-identity-ethnicity, informs the overall analysis presented here of – and *as*, indeed, the re/de-construction of Diyarbakır (see 6.3. and 6.4. the Timeline of Events).

2.2.2. Planning as a technology of war

Graham's *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism* (2011) provides a comprehensive analysis of the militarisation of urban spaces and the implications for cities and their residents. Graham highlights how urban areas have increasingly become sites of military operations, surveillance and control. He defines how militarisation produces itself in the city through everyday life practices by instrumentalising the planning discipline with regard to the changing nature of the city and conflict. Thus, 'war' becomes a primary solution for the urban societies perceived as constantly engaged in battles against issues such as drugs, crime, terrorism, or in general insecurity (ibid.) or against particular communities (identities). The militarisation of the police as a contemporary feature worldwide is contextualised by such wars on drugs and crime (rather than poverty), in which the metaphor becomes a reality. Today "Rebuilding the city – as in the aftermath of a war — became the leitmotif of urban policy," note Swyngedouw et al. (2002, p. 40), with "Large-scale and emblematic projects… the medicine the advocates of the new urban policy prescribed."

While frequently initiated as temporary measures, it is not unusual for extensive security interventions to evolve into permanent features (Centre for Urban Conflicts Research, 2012). The "deepening connections between militarism and urbanism" reveal "a complex set of rapidly evolving ideas, doctrines, practices, norms, techniques and popular cultural arenas" (Graham, 2009, p. 388). In the development of this as a complex set of practices, one may identify an

emergence from urban militarisation of military urbanism – shifting the emphasis, that is, from the urban as a style of militarisation to the military[3] as a style of urbanism.

Saskia Sassen (2018), working on current conflicts, has shown how the cultural diversity of cities is disrupted and following a compelled urbanisation or internal displacement. It is precisely in this context that the planning for transformation as a destructive-creative process may be calculated. As Yiftachel notes,

> "Urban and regional planning and development can have an important effect on this oppressive, homogenizing process by creating settlement patterns; dispersing or concentrating specific populations; locating communal, religious, or ethnic facilities, housing, and service; and governing the character and norms of urban public spaces. Planning is therefore part of the nation-state's space production strategy, which shapes and reshapes ethnic and cultural identities" (Yiftachel, 1998, p. 403)

Through territorial control that aims at surveillance, spatial restriction and segregation of areas—not far from Fanon's (2002) observations— the procedural control of decision-making processes affects power relations by applying exclusion and marginalisation, and then the socioeconomic control impacts the communities through (most often) deprivation and dependence. This thesis takes planning as a tool that implements, facilitates and maintains "domination and control of three key societal resources: space, power and wealth." (Yiftachel, 1994, p.221)

The concept of new military urbanism introduced by Stephen Graham (2009) signifies a militarisation of urban environments that is particularly pertinent at a time when our world is undergoing unprecedented urbanisation. Its fundamental premise lies in the continual imposition of militarised techniques of surveillance and targeting on the landscapes of cities and

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[3] The role of geography in military science and its relevance to the defence needs of states is highlighted by the historical context of how it was used in strategic thinking, both in Germany and Britain, during the nineteenth century (Ashworth, 2002). Geography played a significant role in understanding the physical position of empires and their potential antagonists – thus, the emergence of multidisciplinary research related to defence, including economic studies of the military-industrial complex and the development of peace studies. Despite the importance of defence, however, it has received less attention in urban studies than other urban functions, probably due to its sporadic and less predictable nature (ibid.).

daily life, not only within the Western cities but also across various neo-colonial frontiers and peripheries worldwide. Consequently, the world's primary battlegrounds of conflict are profoundly rooted in "urban, architectural, and infrastructural spaces" (ibid. p.389).[4]

As cities are the hubs of neoliberal capitalism production but also areas and markets of new solutions around security, they are where the political economy of new military urbanism will be sustained. At the same time, new military urbanism is closely intertwined with the neo-colonial form of exploitation of peripheries and their resources in the pursuit of sustaining affluent urban centres and lifestyles. The colonisation of everyday spaces is also perceived by Graham (2009) as a form of war that takes place in a limitless and infinite battlespace. He suggests that the key feature of extracted knowledge from security operations exhibited by the new military urbanism that springs from experiments on the colonies can also be applied to the 'security' in the homelands of the colonisers, through the Foucauldian 'boomerang effect' (Foucault, 2003). The 'Boomerang effect,' as elucidated by Foucault (2003), encompasses the process of adopting, refining and institutionalising security, surveillance, and military technologies within civilian and urban environments. Initially, this phenomenon emerged in the context of colonial and frontier warfare operations, and these methodologies were subsequently applied within the territories of the colonising powers themselves (ibid.). "Through such processes of imitation, explicitly colonial models of pacification, militarization and control, honed on the streets of the global South, are spread to the cities of capitalist heartlands in the North." (Graham, 2011, pp. 17–18). Colonial methods that Foucault describes as 'boomerang effects' (2003) are the methods of the nineteenth century, when European colonial powers introduced "fingerprinting, panoptic

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[4] "The crossover between the military and the civilian applications of advanced technology - between the surveillance and control of everyday life in Western cities and the prosecution of aggressive colonial and resource wars – is at the heart of a much broader set of trends that characterize the new military urbanism" (Graham, 2011, p. 14).

prisons, and the construction of Haussmannian boulevards" in rebel neighbourhoods of their cities, following initial experimentation applied in colonised regions (Graham, 2011, p. 18).

The colonial powers had an absolute autonomy to denude social groups from their human, social or political characteristics and decide on the lives of the 'natives' (Agamben, 1998). Inevitably, this power extended to the design of the sites determined upon as the administrative centres, which tended to be replications of the homeland (a governor's mansion, a central avenue, etc.) but with a clear military presence. Coslett (2020) argues that the presence and impact of historical built environments and practices passed down from colonial times persistently strengthen neocolonial ties between former colonies and colonisers, as well as among states and international entities. This perspective informs the understanding of an ethnocratic[5] state and Kurdistan as its ' internal colony'[6] (Ay and Turker, 2022).

In his analysis, Weizman interviewed by Misselwitz (2003) examines the historical context of urban warfare and destruction, drawing upon the insights of architect and writer Sharon Rotbard. He highlights the case of Marshal Thomas Robert Bugeaud's invasion of Algiers in the 1840s, where Bugeaud employed a colonial strategy of harshly attacking the spatial environments, reshaping cities, destroying neighbourhoods and widening roads in order to break popular support for the resistance:

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[5] Utilizing the framework of "ethnocracy," they analyse how ethnonational dominance of Turkishness serves as a governing mechanism in the reconstruction of urban spaces under the authoritarian rule of a hegemonic state. The bases of ethnocratic regime structures include demographic control, land and settlement control, armed force and securitization of land, capital flow, constitutional law, and the reformulation of public space around ethnonational symbols to reinforce dominant groups and suppress contesting cultures (Yiftachel, 2006). This ethnocratic state, along with its associated elites, perpetuates hegemony (ibid.).

[6] The term "internal colonialism" is coined to frame the patterns of uneven development within a nation-state, giving rise to regional economic and political inequalities rooted in identity-based divisions, including ethnicity, race, religion, and gender (Casanova, 1965; Hechter, 1977 in Ay and Turker, 2022). Internal colonies exhibit distinctive characteristics marked by geographically rooted structural inequalities within national borders, arising from imbalances in economic and political power between the dominant group and the internal colony (Ay and Turker, 2022).

"These were some of the first demolitions used as military planning: Kader's resistance was broken, but the European project in Africa sought to further civilise the local population by replacing their primitive habitat in accordance with the rules of modern design." (Weizman and Misselwitz, 2003)

The main principles and outcomes of these newly developed strategies for the reorganisation of the city were soon imposed in the 'civilised' West where the "re-emerging aristocratic and bourgeois elite feared, above all, the densely populated, desperately poor, and rapidly growing capital of Paris" (ibid.).

Bugeaud's return to Paris led to the publication of a manual for urban warfare, emphasizing the importance of military thinking in urban design – and it was this concept that paved the way for Georges-Eugène Haussmann's transformation of Paris in the 1870s, "one of the most influential and admired urban projects of the modern era (ibid.). In order to prevent the possibility of a repeat of the resistance of the Paris commune in its densely built central quarter, Haussmann "created wide boulevards down which the cavalry could charge against rioting crowds and artillery would have a straight line of fire to break barricades, while levelling many labyrinthine slums" (ibid.). Weizman's analysis reveals the connection between military objectives and urban design in historical contexts, shedding light on the complex relationship between warfare and the urban environment (ibid.).

David Harvey (2006) elaborates on Paris as replanned by Haussmann after the commune, the new character of the public space and the re/de-construction of neighbourhoods and boulevards by studying T. J. Clark's writings. Thus, he links the 'Haussmannization' to depoliticisation, as well as to modernisation and a "reorganisation of public space for the far more mundane purpose of facilitating the freer circulation of money, commodities and people (and hence of capital) throughout the spaces of the city"(Harvey, 2006, p. 7). The primary focus of Louis Napoleon and Haussmann's urban schemes for Paris revolved around ensuring the security of the state, with the redesigned city primarily aimed at safeguarding against potential uprisings (Scott, 1998). State authorities also wanted to enhance their ability to police and control complex, historic cities by creating detailed military maps, especially after the French Revolution, to quickly respond to

future urban revolts and maintain effective control (ibid.). The most important element aiming the restructuring towards a homogeneity of public space was the boulevards. They functioned as high-scale gestures in the urban fabric (Harvey, 2006). Boulevards were the elements that, by penetrating or at least surrounding, colonised the areas that were not friendly for the state apparatus to read; instead, they aimed to establish spaces that aligned with the interests of power, encompassing both military and political-economic aspects (ibid.). Private activity was placed on the same axis by supporting "the political goal, which was to shape a certain kind of public space reflective of imperial splendour, military security and bourgeois affluence [that] strictly mandated design criteria and aesthetic forms for both the public and the private construction on and around the boulevards" – all of this to achieve proper control of public space (Harvey, 2006, p. 4). Thus the "sociality of the boulevards" became defined by the surrounding commercial activity, exerting a level of control alongside the presence of police authority (ibid.). Presented as a historical analysis, this fits well with what transpired in the present case (Sections 8.2 and 8.3).

The debate about the instrumentalisation of planning as a technology of conflict, control and occupation is very crucial for this work. Defining planning as "the formation, content and implementation of spatial policies," Yiftachel, (1994, pp. 217, 219) investigates its shift "from a progressive tool of reform to an instrument of control and repression." While conducting a review of the literature on the positive outcomes associated with planning, he discerns a significant dearth of attention directed towards the potential of planning to foster objectives of a contrasting nature, such as societal suppression, economic stagnation and environmental degradation (Yiftachel, 1998, 1994). He observes that the very same planning methodologies typically introduced to facilitate social reform and enhance the quality of life for people can also serve as instruments for the control and repression of minority groups, and he proceeds to provide a critical analysis of widely accepted concepts, principles and practices within modern urban and regional planning. Yiftachel intricately illustrates how planning policies, initially conceived by the early pioneers of planning as instruments for reform and modernisation can

systematically be employed for contrary purposes, such as the control of minorities (ibid.). Making a detailed examination of the application of planning as a tool of control, he demonstrates the "link between modernist planning concepts and the control of the ethnic minorities in developing deeply divided societies"; in fact, this goes "beyond the ethical and professional aspects of planning and planners, especially in deeply divided[7] societies," as it is "directly linked to a structural understanding of the relations between the state, society and space" (1994, pp. 217, 220).

In the field of urban design, modernisation and hygiene became closely linked (already from the late 20th century), with a focus on improving the urban environment by introducing infrastructure and public service (Jongerden, 2021). Both "conservative and progressive elites considered the city a congested, filthy, and decadent and, above all, a dangerous place" (Weizman and Misselwitz, 2003). Thus, administrators became occupied with redesigning the physical layout of the space in order to achieve (a reconfiguration of) social order (Scott, 1998).

Sovereign powers aim to modernise societies by implementing visual codifications that necessitate a stark and morally charged differentiation between elements that are modern (neat, linear, standardized, concentrated, simplified, mechanized) and those that appear primitive (irregular, scattered, complicate, non-mechanized) (Scott, 1998).

> As happens in many authoritarian modernizing schemes, the political tastes of the ruler occasionally trumped purely military and functional concerns. Rectilinear streets may have admirably assisted the mobilization of troops against insurgents, but they were also to be flanked by elegant facades and to terminate in imposing buildings that would impress visitors. Uniform modern buildings along the new boulevards may have represented healthier dwellings, but they were often no more than facades. The zoning regulations were almost exclusively concerned with the visible surfaces of buildings, but behind the facades, builders could build crowded, airless tenements, and many of them did. (Scott, 1998, p. 69)

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[7] Yiftachel does not apply his outcomes to every case since he marks a distinction between liberal democracies and other societies that are more fragmented. This distinction becomes evident when we categorize multiethnic societies into two primary types: "pluralistic and deeply divided (or plural)" (Yiftachel, 1994, p. 219).

Modernising cities include implementing infrastructure and public services, with the transformation of urban areas relying on structured spatial divisions justified by concerns for hygiene and social reform (Weizman and Misselwitz, 2003). The consequences of a state-imposed vision of uniform spaces inevitably disregard local nuances, resulting in generic, state-controlled settlements that might lack functionality despite their uniformity: "In their perfect legibility and sameness, these villages would be ideal, substitutable bricks in an edifice of state planning" (ibid.). In order to acquire total control of space, the variables that might result in the loss of control should be eliminated. By creating lived environments that were "uniform in everything," including "political structure and social stratification" (ibid.), state power realizes its control. In those state-led visions, the applicability and realistic functionality of the newly designed areas do not actually play a significant role.

The modern urban design has also (itself) been criticised. Jane Jacobs's central argument against city planning revolved around the imposition of a fixed grid over a multitude of unknowable possibilities. She believed this was influenced both by the utopian tradition and directly through the pragmatic notion of art through imposition; modern urban planning "has been burdened from its beginnings with the unsuitable aim of converting cities into disciplined works of art" (Jacobs, 1992, p. 375). Although this is a rather particular perspective, the consideration of aesthetic merit and its positioning within the contemporary milieu is not. In this thesis (Chapter 8), the work done in Diyarbakır is critiqued in terms of architectural and design principles.

From a different perspective Scott Bollens examined the role and methodologies of urban planning within the context of post-conflict reconstruction processes in cities like Jerusalem, Belfast, Beirut, Nicosia, Johannesburg or Mostar. He argues that urban planning and policy-making "play critical roles in efforts to operationalise at the city scale ideologies and political goals pertaining to control, ethnic separation and reconstruction," (Bollens, 1998, p. 746). He adds that progressive and inclusively oriented urban strategies have the potential to serve as a critical component in underpinning formal political agreements. These strategies can facilitate interactions among semi-autonomous ethnic governments, mitigate the risk of a de facto division

within the city and yield mutually advantageous outcomes across ethnic divides. In urban settings characterised by ethnic polarisation and division, the primary objective of urban management is to address diverse needs while preserving the fundamental essence and functionality of urban life. Bollens' (1998; 2013) work on the challenges and principles associated with urban development[8] in polarised cities offers valuable insights into a case such as this, dealing with diverse publics and contrasting ethnic perspectives regarding the meaning and role of a city.

2.2.3. War on 'terrorism' and the state of exception

The contemporary militarisation of the city has often transformed cities into battlefields, impacting the daily lives of civilians by extensive use of surveillance technologies in urban environments, integrated into urban infrastructure and impinging on privacy and civil liberties:

> "[The] new military urbanism, in all its complexity and reach, rests on a central idea: militarized techniques of tracking and targeting must permanently colonize the city landscape and the spaces of everyday life…" (Graham, 2011, p. 15)

Graham argues that urban planning and architecture are increasingly influenced by security concerns, leading to the creation of "secure" or gated communities and the securitisation of public spaces. At the core of the new military urbanism lies a profound need for the transformation of the city's public and also private spaces, as well as its infrastructure and residents, based on the idea that they are potential targets or threats. Within the context of urban redesign, the primary objective is to construct "an inter-locked defensive system of urban

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[8] In the context of militarised cities, their development initiatives and projects themselves become a form of warfare in which people are displaced. Here, it should also be noted that development projects often lead to the depletion of the livelihoods of those displaced, frequently causing impoverishment – there is a fundamental connection between population displacement and development (Cernea cited in Jongerden, 2007). In the context of rebellion and guerrilla or asymmetric and including urban warfare – which applies to the current case, both as a general background and immediate precursor to the destruction and rebuilding (as detailed in Chapters 4 and 5) – Pamela Colombo argues that the counterinsurgency operations can also include development policies that reorder space (2014).

zones, built around design principles that include securing the state against a restive population"
(Kilcullen, 2013, p. 13).

The work of Giorgio Agamben highlights the impunity in sovereign power's decision to suspend
the normal legal order in times of crisis. A *state of exception* arises – is declared (as a 'state of
emergency') – in which the regular legal framework is temporarily set aside. In such
circumstances, when the regular order of things is displaced, so do standard values; human lives
have no intrinsic worth and can be sacrificed (Agamben, 2005, 1998).

> "Although the paradigm is, on the one hand (in the state of siege), the extension of
> the military authority's wartime powers into the civil sphere, and on the other, a
> suspension of the constitution (or of those constitutional norms that protect individual
> liberties), in time the two models end up merging into a single juridical phenomenon
> that we call the state of exception." (Agamben, 2005, p. 16)

This concept describes the exercise of sovereign authority without the usual legal limitations. The
sovereign has the power to claim the prerogative to make the decision to suspend the ordinary
legal order (a power commonly authorised by an event that is undeniably extreme and thus so
extreme that any opposition to the claim is rendered unacceptable and marginalised). The state
of exception is thus a condition of "a vacant space lined by the 'emptiness of law'" allowing for
the exercise of sovereign power without legal constraints (Gregory, 2006, p. 408).

Agamben suggests that the state of exception has become the rule in contemporary society, with
the normal legal order being constantly suspended (Ek, 2006). The state of exception establishes
a "hidden but fundamental relationship between law and the absence of law" that has actually
become a "paradigm of government today" (Raulff, 2004, p. 609) in which sovereign power is
exercised for the regulation of populations and then becomes its rationale. Thus, writes Agamben
(2005, p. 18), the "provisional abolition of the distinction among legislative, executive, and
judicial powers" develops into a "tendency to become a lasting practice of government." The
development of the contemporary 'security state' ensues, including its self-creation through

'false flag' operations and the 'enemy' (within or without), furthering societal mistrust and the process of de-democratisation. What is thus created is a

> "national security state that is called into existence with the sovereign pronouncement of a 'state of emergency' and that generates a wild zone of power, barbaric and violent, operating without democratic oversight, in order to combat an 'enemy' that threatens the existence not merely and not mainly of its citizens, but of its sovereignty. The paradox is that this undemocratic state claims absolute power over the citizens of a free and democratic nation."

The concept of the 'war on terror' – in which the 'terrorist' is the enemy whose exceptional violence justifies the response of imperialist/colonial intervention – is contextualised by Gregory (2004) as a contemporary form of colonisation. Examining military operations and wars waged in Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq, Gregory identifies 'the colonial present', which entails the exertion of authority and supremacy by the powerful. The various perspectives of this concept include military, colonial dynamics and spatial dimensions that shed light on the legal, ethical, geopolitical and social implications of the war on terror.

In Turkey, the shift of the terrorism discourse after 9/11 – in which alternatives to the discourse themselves were invalidated – coincided with the election of the AKP into government. This eventually enabled its increasingly authoritarian leader to extend the anti-terrorist rhetoric to encompass all opposition – and it was against this background that the state institutionalisation of urban renewal developed.

2.3. Capital and the take-over of urban space

2.3.1. Neoliberal urbanism and uneven development

The rise of neoliberalism initially occurred as a political reaction to the social, economic, cultural, and political influence of labour that imposed limitations on capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005).

Within this context and per Harvey's (1989) analysis, during the contemporary neoliberal era, cities have come under increasing pressure to compete with one another. They aim to attract capital by offering the most advantageous conditions for investments. This marks a transition from "urban managerialism" to "urban entrepreneurialism," in which the state's role has shifted from that of a regulator to that of an active participant in the market (Harvey, 1989). The *urbanization process* – as a mass, global phenomenon – absorbs capital and human resources (labour).

There are other ways of expressing these dynamics, of course, but this represents the analysis that has informed the present work. It is this type of *political economy* approach that is employed here as a theoretical base on which to ground an understanding of what has gone on in Turkey's southeast and, in particular, the urban centre of the region's 'capital', Diyarbakır. *This thesis thus renders the multifaceted nature of urban governance, spatial dynamics and political strategies in the context of neoliberalism* – performed not only as expressions of power and territorial authority but also through the conceptual and theoretical, in discourse, ideology and representation. As Brenner and Theodore, (2005) explain, this is achieved in three main ways. Firstly, neoliberalism shapes *urban development* by influencing policy choices, limiting democratic participation and promoting specific ideological visions within the city (ibid.). Secondly, it operates as a spatially selective political strategy, with *spatial organisation* serving as both a foundation and a mechanism for the implementation of capitalistic political approaches (ibid.). Lastly, neoliberalism works as a form of *discourse, ideology, and representation*, often presenting an idealised vision of market rule characterized by unfettered competition and exchange (ibid.). Additionally, it is noted that such discourses may be combined with other reactionary or militant discourses by political elites to legitimise neoliberal ideology and repressive measures, ultimately transforming the dominant political imaginaries related to urban life and citizenship (ibid.).

Neoliberalism involves the treatment of issues of power and material interests alongside the state-market debate. Thus, for example, the claim is made that social and economic problems

can only be solved under conditions of market liberalisation (Peck and Tickell, 2002). However, neoliberalism is a political project promoted quite clearly in response to the development of labour power in the 1960s-70s. As Harvey (2003) states, neoliberalism is not simply an economic orthodoxy of our time but a manifestation of the power of the *transnational capitalist class*. The ideological projects of *privatisation and deregulation* – the hallmarks of neoliberal policy – function as both an ideological and economic attack, with unemployment, off-shoring, enforced migration, and technological changes that all put pressure on labour power (ibid.). Underneath the headline GDP growth and poverty reduction figures, this has had some disastrous consequences, which are ongoing:

> "Whereas neoliberal ideology implies that self-regulating markets generate optimal allocations of investment and resources, neoliberal political practice has itself been a cause of pervasive market failures, new forms of social and environmental degradation, increased socioeconomic inequality and uneven spatial development, and endemic conditions of governance failure." (Cahill et al., 2018: 5)

Inspired by scholars and thinkers of state theory and urban theory, Dikeç and Swyngedouw (2017) narrow their attention to the concept of the *autonomy of the state* and its relationship with capital. Despite the primary focus on the 'state form', a substantial body of critical literature emerged – per the reviewed bibliography– often enriched by Foucauldian insights, concentrating on urban politics, governance methods, policy development, negotiation, implementation, the interplay between political-economic shifts and institutional restructuring, and the interaction between social actors and state mechanisms. These developments in the Turkish context are introduced in this thesis as a fundamental perspective on the case of the re/de-construction of Diyarbakır, with a focus on neoliberal urbanisation under the AKP (Chapter 4.1.1).

The urbanisation process is actually a means for the redistribution of wealth at the expense of the lower classes. Cities are the spaces of production and reproduction of social and geographical inequalities, and this is evident through the shaping of the built environment and hence the urban and also the territorial organisation of governance (Harvey, 2009). Today, by becoming a centre of decision-making – or rather, by grouping centres of decision-making – the modern city

intensifies the exploitation of the whole society (not only the working class but also other non-dominant social classes) (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 110). It is also the expression of an uneven development.

From among the Greek literature, the work of Vaiou and Hadjimichalis (2012) has played a pivotal role in this thesis. Through a deep and broad theoretical review, they underline the necessity for *uneven development* as actually a general rule for capitalist development. The pronounced geographical development of centres as compared to peripheries serves capital accumulation processes due to hierarchies that employ exploitation (ibid.). In capitalism, inequalities are not inherently prescribed as a rigid law, and nor do they inevitably establish enduring centres and regions. Instead, they remain in a state of perpetual flux, shaped by continuous competition, the decisions made by capital, as well as the interventions of governmental bodies, and also are molded by the actions of various social actors across diverse contexts and scales (ibid.).

Uneven development is not a transitional phase but an intrinsic facet of the neoliberal process. Instead of achieving the ideal allocation of investment and resources, neoliberal political practices have resulted in market failures, the emergence of new forms of social polarization, a significant exacerbation of economic inequality, and a crisis in established forms of governance (Cahill et al., 2018). Concurrently, it exploits and engenders socio-spatial disparities. Thus, cities have emerged as strategically central focal points in the inequitable, crisis-driven wave of neoliberal reconstruction projects (ibid.).

An internal contradiction of neoliberal urbanism is that, on the one hand, it wants to reduce the regulatory power of planning and then transfer it to private stakeholders, while on the other hand, it also needs some regulation to ensure the most profitable and uninterrupted planning (Sager, 2011). As Fırat Genç (2014, p. 38, referring to Brash) notes, the "uneven development of global capitalism not only produces socio-spatial differences, but also underscores the self-destructive and contradictory character of neoliberalism." Thus, urban neoliberalism has a contradictory nature, with both depolitisation and disposition and with phases of destruction but

also creation and even both simultaneously. One reason for this is an inherently haphazard style of development: since they are shaped by political processes and structures, neoliberal restructurings are not predetermined decisions (Peck and Tickell, 2002).

In the context of entrepreneurialism and neoliberal governance, there is a need for flexible planning, accelerated public inquiry procedures and the simplification of planning processes and relaxation of planning controls. Planning authorities are thus compelled to adopt a positive stance on all these in support of market-led development (Prior, 2005).

The growing trend of *commodification* and *market formation* is facilitated by the presence of an interventionist state that is now actively supporting capital and legislative alterations and institutional restructurings that directly impact urban processes; these encompass extensive development ventures by national or transnational corporations in desirable and peripheral areas (Genç, 2014). These both constitute 'prime real estate' – the former as the site of maximum capitalisation and the latter with the potential for maximum added value (profit). This common perspective on urban neoliberalism assesses various processes, ranging from changes in production geographies to heightened residential segregation, the commercialization of public spaces, and the involvement of the legal system and state coercion in spatial interventions.

Urban entrepreneurship aims to create conditions that facilitate capital accumulation (Jessop, 1997). This involves the adoption of pro-growth policies and the restructuring of urban governance institutions, where local officials are expected to exhibit entrepreneurship marked by enterprising, risk-taking, innovation and a profit orientation, resulting in a shift from service provision (which is increasingly outsourced) toward business-like strategies, collaborative alliances for urban competitiveness and the promotion of public-private partnerships (ibid.). The competition of cities, then, is when *the city itself becomes a good for consumption*, an entity that is marketed to attract various forms of capital (human, e.g. professionals and tourists, economic, e.g. business and investment, etc.) (Harvey, 2003).

Finally, to understand the politics of space in a dynamic and relational manner, three key principles have been used to undergird this theoretical and methodological approach. Firstly, in the current phase of capitalism, in order to understand the multidimensional relationships of urban neoliberalism, a close study of the social production of space and hegemony is necessary (Genç, 2014). Secondly, analysis of the state's strategic role in shaping abstract space in capitalism necessitates an examination of the modes and mechanisms of state interventions, viewing the state as a site of political struggles manifesting in various hegemonic and counter-hegemonic projects (ibid.). Finally, examining political conjunctures as complex combinations of time and space enables a perspective in which power dynamics and hegemony are understood as fluid, interconnected, and driven by conflicts in shaping the physical environment (ibid.). The latter is especially relevant to the case examined in this thesis.

2.3.2. Accumulation by dispossession

Marxist geography-oriented analyses focus on the structural link between the emergence of urban development projects and the accumulation of capital. As the primary method for shaping the built environment, these projects facilitate the transfer of capital from the initial to the secondary circuit, as outlined by Harvey (1985). Consequently, they play a role in temporarily addressing the issue of over-accumulation and establishing the essential economic prerequisites for capital accumulation (Penpecioğlu, 2013).

The primary outcome of neoliberalisation, according to Harvey's (2005) *Brief History*, has been wealth and income redistribution rather than wealth creation, all occurring under the concept of "accumulation by dispossession" rather than in the name of egalitarian justice. Accumulation by dispossession involves the continued and widespread adoption of accumulation practices previously characterised by Marx as "primitive" or "original" during the early stages of capitalism (ibid.). These practices encompass the privatisation and commodification of land, as well as forceful displacement by a state wielding its monopoly on violence and authority in defining legality, which play a pivotal role in supporting and advancing these processes (ibid.).

According to Harvey, accumulation by dispossession involves four key aspects. The first is "privatization and commodification," achieved while seeking new opportunities for capital accumulation in areas previously considered outside the realm of profitability, like public utilities, social welfare services, public institutions and "even *warfare*" (Harvey, 2005, p. 169, emphasis added).[9] Second is "financialization," including the deregulation in the financial sector in order for it "to become one of the main centres of redistributive activity through speculation, predation, fraud, and thievery" (ibid., p.170). The third feature is the "management and manipulation of crises," orchestrated, managed and controlled in order to achieve the redistribution of wealth from poor to rich (ibid., p. 171). The last feature, comprising "accumulation by dispossession," are the "state-led redistributions" that take place in a neoliberalised context in which the state becomes the "prime agent of redistributive policies, reversing the flow from upper to lower classes," which it achieves primarily through privatisation initiatives and reductions in state expenditures that support social benefits (ibid.). In fact this concept is the foundation for the movement of capital and exploitation. Saraçoğlu and Demirtaş-Milz (2014, p. 192) acknowledge this globally but also in Turkey:

> "As capital accumulation is no longer largely based on the expansion of labour intensive production, the concentration of the labouring classes in these inner-city areas, essential for capital accumulation throughout the 1960s and 1970s, has started to pose a major obstacle to the quest to use the urban land for the generation of profit and rent. The smooth transition to the 'urbanisation of capital' also has been reliant on the deportation of these people from the inner-city 'slums' to the outer areas of cities."

From this perspective, the urban transformation projects in the beginning of this century, mark the final stage "towards the consolidation of the urbanisation of capital in the neoliberal period" (ibid.).

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[9] Harvey here was writing in the context of the post-(second) Iraq war period, when much of the US (coalition)'s war effort – including security services – was contracted out to private companies.

2.2.3. Urban development projects

The urbanisation and development processes that this thesis attempts to analyse are inextricably related to the theoretical framework as described by Swyngedouw et al. (2002) that reveals the connections between new economic policy, new urban policy and urban development projects. The framework refers to European cases, but there are important similarities to Turkish spatial production and socio-politico-economic power relations.

Large-scale urban development projects serve as a significant arena for the exercise of neoliberal political power, and in the context of neoliberal hegemony, as Swyngedouw et al. (2002) explain, these projects manifest five distinct characteristics that underscore their role in reshaping urban landscapes. Firstly, large-scale projects are operated under exceptional urban planning and policy processes under the dogma of 'New Urban Policy'. The state of exception that operated upon the topic of this thesis is detailed in the following chapters. Secondly, these projects are operated by elite power rooted in the primary objective of profit-seeking that excludes major sectors of society by sidelining and devaluing mechanisms of participation. Considerable power is wielded through elite agencies and reduced democracy (public discussion during planning, transparency and accountability, etc.). The *majorities* of Turkish and Kurdish society disregarded by and distanced from transformation projects is extensively framed in this thesis.

Thirdly, large-scale urban projects tend to exhibit poor integration into the existing urban social and spatial structure (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Although "regeneration is defined principally by its capacity to provide an image of stability in order to attract foreign investment and tourism**"** (Centre for Urban Conflicts Research, 2012), rather than integration and stability there is commonly a rupturing of social relations that goes along with building destruction to make way for the new constructions. Relatedly, a pivotal concern within urban regeneration policies revolves around how urban development projects correspond with the prevailing planning tools and regulations in place (ibid.). Urban regeneration approaches often support government interests by facilitating control and installing military principles in urban areas (Weizman and

Misselwitz, 2003). The tendency towards de-democratisation in urban redevelopment and power of the increasingly involved state in these projects means that a bulldozer can be driven not only onsite to clear the rubble of the past but also through law to clear the impediments of restrictions taking a plurality of claims into account.

In turkey, these projects routinely bypass comprehensive and regulatory master plans, do not seamlessly integrate with the city's cultural and historical heritage, and result in a patchwork of diversified, segregated and fragmented socio-economic urban sites (Penpecioğlu, 2019). For the case of Sur, this thesis shows how the applied projects failed in regard to all these consideration.

The fourth characteristic is that these endeavours strategically target the 'rent gap' within urban areas, concentrating on high-income segments of the population resulting in displacement, socioeconomic polarisation and restructuring of the labour market (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). In Turkey, the key land-use functions associated with such projects in the inner city over the last two decades have tended to include the development of malls, five-star hotels and luxury housing, emphasising the generation of additional rent with the support of the real estate sector (Penpecioğlu, 2019). This case study includes similar motives.

Lastly, urban development projects perform processes related to the evolving scale of governance, changes that "reflect a shifting geometry of power in the governing of urbanization" (Swyngedouw et al., 2002, p.548). This is remarkably demonstrated as a background dynamic in the present case (Chapters 6-8) as the local (Kurdish) authority first worked with the central (Turkish) government and then was removed by it and replaced by representatives selected in Ankara. The local professional organisations (notably, chambers or engineers and architects) were similarly displaced from the project development process.

Even if they are launched with the aim of reducing social disparities – at least partly, at least as professed – the majority of urban development projects in Western Europe ultimately benefit the already wealthy (see Christiaens et al., 2007). These projects have significant roles in the

spatially shaping and urbanizing hegemony of contemporary cities, as they lead to the commercialization, homogenisation and estrangement of everyday life practices (Penpecioğlu, 2013). Neoliberal projects are always influenced by the legacies of existing institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices and political struggles, spanning local, national, and supranational levels (Brenner and Theodore, 2005).

In the Turkish context, as Brenner and Theodore (2005) note, urban politics are dominated by these projects, which exert considerable influence on the direction and character of urban development. Their ability to shape both the urban landscape (physically, but also culturally, symbolically, etc.) and power dynamics within the country (e.g. by establishing state-friendly businesses and thence clientelist relationships) underscores the pivotal role they play in the neoliberal exercise of political power through the production of space. Since 2001, Turkey has undergone a significant transformation in its urban land and housing market governance, transitioning from a 'populist' to a 'neo-liberal' approach, primarily facilitated by urban transformation projects that have focused on enhancing the physical and demographic aspects of *incompletely commodified urban regions*. Rather than improving the well-being of current residents, this has initiated "property transfer and displacement" (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010, p. 1479).

One may highlight the development of two distinct financial paradigms within urban transformation projects, contingent upon whether the aim is to enable self-financing: one model involves *allocating land for non-residential* purposes, thereby augmenting the project's value and generating supplementary revenue for residential sectors, while the other involves *relinquishing projects to market dynamics* under the purview of *build-and-sell developers* (Dündar, 2001). In both forms, the Turkish government has shown a preference for a public-private partnership modelling in which companies take on executive responsibilities and the state offers financial guarantees for political control (business manages, government directs, one could say). However, per the piecemeal style of development inherent in the neoliberal approach, urban transformation projects in Turkey (too) lack comprehensive planning coordination, resulting in

the endorsement of fragmented plans without due consideration of their impact on the overarching urban structure (ibid.). This makes an example from Turkey also a good case to illustrate global issues of development through urban transformation projects.

2.3.4. Gentrification

A constitutive feature of neoliberal urban development is its transformation of the built environment through a process known as 'gentrification'. This research refers to the concept of gentrification as the term was used extensively during the interviews but also as in the relevant bibliography (Chapter 9.2.3.). The term was initially defined by the British sociologist Ruth Glass (1964) in her book *London: Aspects of Change*:

> "One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle-classes—upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages—two rooms up and two down—have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences ... Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed."

Glass thus used the term to describe the process by which working-class neighbourhoods in London were being transformed into middle-class enclaves as long ago as the 1960s. Neil Smith (1982), one of the most cited scholars writing about gentrification, explored its connection to urban development and revealed it more than 40 years ago as part of a broader economic restructuring process of capitalism and its mode of production:

> "[Gentrification is] the process by which working class residential neighborhoods are rehabilitated by middle-class homebuyers, landlords and professional developers. I make the theoretical distinction between gentrification and redevelopment. Redevelopment involves not rehabilitation of old structures but the construction of new buildings on previously developed land. A number of other terms are often used to refer to the process of gentrification, and all of them express a particular attitude toward the process. "Revitalization" and "renaissance" suggest that the neighborhoods involved were somehow de-vitalized or culturally moribund." (Smith, 1982, p. 139)

Sharon Zukin (1987), a little later, also highlighted the conversion of city centres from working-class neighbourhoods to middle-class residential areas as a process that involved architectural restoration of the housing stock and enrichment of cultural uses. And he also noted the speculation aspects of this trend and the economic restructuring of city centres. Recently, Manuel Aalbers (2019) identified three 'waves' of this phenomenon. In the 'first-wave' of gentrification, the prevailing narrative about cities focused on improving urban deterioration; this phase witnessed sporadic, geographically concentrated gentrification efforts that were notably supported by government funding.

In Neil Smith's (2002, p. 446) analysis of neoliberal urbanism, a significant aspect revolves around what he terms "the generalization of gentrification as a global urban strategy." Developed during the 1990s thus identifying Aalbers' second wave, this phenomenon entails the widespread adoption of gentrification as a strategic approach to foster interurban competition. Smith attributes the success of this strategy primarily to the extensive infiltration of financial capital into urban contexts and the heightened collaboration between private capital and the local state. According to Smith, this strategy reaches its zenith in the form of urban regeneration, where the appropriation and universalization of gentrification principles become most pronounced, reshaping urban landscapes on a global scale (Smith, 2002). In the 1990s, therefore, that gentrification became a competitive urban strategy due to increased financial capital and stronger partnerships between private capital and local governments, particularly in urban regeneration, as noted by Smith.

Thereafter, per Aalbers' (2019) third-wave, gentrification came to focus specifically on the (local) state's role as an initiator, facilitator or promoter of socio-spatial transformation within the city. In other words, the contemporary development of state-initiated and state-organised gentrification (third wave) represents a refinement of its main, privately motivated, state-guided development (second wave), which had its origins in state-supported private renovation. Or, we observe *the state's progressive entry into and takeover of the capitalist enterprise of renovation*.

The *rent-gap theory*, initially presented in 1979 by Neil Smith, is essential in explaining the causes of the gentrification process. Based on a Marxist approach, this has the main movement towards gentrification as due to the growing gap between the potential ground rent of a property in the urban environment and its actual capitalised land ren) (Smith, 1979). This difference between possible and realised rent highlights the financial value of a property today as compared to the value it would have were it to be optimally exploited in the future. Thus, this land-rent gap determines the possibility of profitable exploitation of the land or the buildings on it, and the existence of a larger rent-gap means greater potential profits from the use of a property, resulting also to a shift into more profitable land uses. This approach focuses on how *capital mobility affects the production of urban space*.

Changes in the built environment are increasingly dependent on where the rent gap can be created and appropriated – usually involving displacement, dispossession, human suffering and even loss of life (Clark, 2019). Private property rights allow for almost exclusive owner control over land and its improvements, as well as control over the uses that can be developed on a site (Smith, 1979). It is these, therefore, that are annulled. Beyond the civic governance issues of planning restriction avoidance and evasion – typically by central authority power of local authority control – there is a human rights issue around property. The case of Suriçi, Diyarbakır exemplifies this, too, as examined in detail (particularly in Section 5.9 and then Chapters 7-8).

Smith (2002) also introduces the concept of '*new revanchism*'. This is explicitly framed in terms of ensuring the city's safety for gentrification through heightened levels of repression against any voices resisting these processes. It is escorted by a new form of authoritarianism that not only suppresses opposition voices and has zero tolerance for the presence of the urban poor but also creates the requisite secure environment for investments and transformation projects (ibid.). The increasingly punitive management of poor and marginalised populations involves strengthening the repressive hand of the state as well as reinforcing surveillance and security with more

enclaves for elites, displacement and exclusion. The concept of new revanchism in the broader context of the ethnocratic regime in Turkey (Ay and Turker, 2022) has very reflective insights for this case study.

2.3.4.Touristification

The connection between tourism and gentrification has serious impacts on urban landscapes, their heritage and the strategies of urban development (Guinand and Gravari-Barbas, 2017; Sequera and Nofre, 2018). Aalbers (2020) also highlights the financialisaton of the built environment and its relation to touristification along with gentrification and governance in both the Global South and North.

The touristification of historical city centres has had significant impacts on local populations and built environments, and by many scholars have linked it to gentrification (e.g. Báez & Parra, 2019; Gant, 2016; López-Gay et al., 2020). One of the consequences of touristification is the dislocation of the local poor population; as tourist activity increases, property values rise, leading to tourism gentrification and the displacement of low-income residents in (historical) city centres (Gotham, 2005). This phenomenon has been observed in urban neighbourhoods, including historical districts, where tourist enclaves have proliferated and has been correlated with increasing securitisation (Gotham, 2005).

Touristification refers to effects like the growth in tourist arrivals, the heightened influence of major tourism corporations, speculation in real estate, escalating urban amenity expenses, constraints on urban planning regulations and the perception of a diminishing local city identity (Koens et al., 2018). The increased tourist activity and changes in land use typically lead to a *loss of authenticity* (García-Hernández et al., 2017). Some aspects of tourism development threaten the protection of heritage values in urban historical peninsulas (ibid.). The rapid growth of urban tourism has put great pressure on historical centres, intensifying negative externalities that threaten their protection and proper functioning, urging for regulation measures (Vaquero et al.,

2020). The latter demand, as observed, is precisely what the latest developments in urban renovation ignore. As will be discussed in this thesis, the development of Diyarbakır's historic peninsula (also) for tourism has been integral to this urban development project (particularly Sections 5.4-5.7 and Chapter 9).

Chapter 3

Representations of space and spatial imaginaries

3.1. From material and symbolic representations to representations of space

The aspects that are introduced in this chapter start from representations and representations of space, then explore imagined geographies and social imaginaries aiming to reveal more about the concept of heritage particularly useful for this thesis. How heritage is manipulated by the Turkish state

The concept of *representation* has great significance in cultural studies and is a key process in the cultural circuit, connecting meaning and language to culture (Hall, 2020). Representation involves a complex process using language, signs and images to convey meaningful information about the world. Sometimes language merely reflects existing meaning, some other expresses the speaker's intention, but it can also actively construct a meaning (ibid.). Relevant to the present work in this regard is the (Turkish) language and terms used[10] to denote the re/de-construction process itself. In Turkey, since the establishment of the republic the army executives, politicians and bureaucrats have been perfectly aware that the re-shaping of space (towns, villages etc) would contribute to the formulation of new social relations (Jongerden, 2007). Similarly they perform the (re)naming of places as an integral aspect of delineating boundaries, imparting social significance and identity, annulling repositories of values and playing a significant role in the transformation of spaces into territories (ibid.).

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[10] Section 9.2.3 includes a report of an analysis of the descriptive language used by interviewees, which can also be regarded as an investigation into the local culture or meaning of the project in the context of the conflict.

Culture primarily revolves around the generation and interchange of meaning as well as their real, practical effects (Hall, 1997). Cultural meanings do not solely reside within individuals' thoughts. Instead, they structure and govern social behaviours, impact our actions, and consequently produce tangible, practical outcomes:

> "Things 'in themselves' rarely if ever have any one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning. […] It is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them – how we represent them – that we *give them a meaning*. In part, we give objects, people and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation which we bring to them into our everyday practices." (Hall, 1997, p. 3)

The definition of meaning is delineated by identity, is generated and shared through social engagement across various forms of communication and emerges through the act of consumption (Hall, 1997). These significations subsequently oversee and structure our behaviours and customs by establishing guidelines, standards, and conventions. In society, within the context of human culture, it is our role to assign significance to objects and concepts. As a result, interpretations will inevitably undergo transformations when transitioning from one culture or time period to another (ibid.).

How material objects, their temporal contexts, sensory qualities, and the human effort involved in their production and reinterpretation over time collectively shape our understanding and remembrance of the past, emphasising the intricate relationship between time, materiality, and memory (Hamilakis and Labanyi, 2008). Equally, infrastructures related to conflicts, like walls and barriers, can serve as memorials for remembering loss, survival, and resistance while also becoming integrated into daily life, with both positive and negative implications (Centre for Urban Conflicts Research, 2012).

Lefebvre's framework offers a nuanced understanding of how space is constructed and perceived within society, highlighting the intricate interplay of physicality, social dynamics, and perspectives in shaping our understanding of place (Lefebvre, 1992). Lefebvre approaches space as the embodiment of all the objects produced and the enclosure of their relationships and their

coexistence (Vaiou and Hadjimichalis, 2012). His conception of place is threefold in that it encompasses the physical attributes of location, the dynamic social relationships that shape it and the need to view it as a perspective rather than an empty entity. This perspective emphasises that *space is fundamentally a product of social relations*, particularly *production and property relations*, rejecting any metaphysical dimensions. The *spatial practice* is related to how space is perceived, to flows, transformations and relationships in the reality of the city, to the everyday and private life, to anything that safeguards production, social reproduction, continuity and cohesion (Lefebvre, 1992). The idea of *representations of space* refers to the realm of conceived space and is linked to production relations. It also fosters the ideas of what is possible and includes the definers of what space is (such as urban planners). Importantly again, it is related to spaces that are produced in everyday practices with their symbols and experiences, including by who dream of new meanings and possibilities with regard to the socio-spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1992; Vaiou and Hadjimichalis, 2012). Representational space is lived and embodies coded and complex symbolisms. Moreover, as Ananya Roy (2009, p. 825) notes, the "production of space also takes place through representations of space (the abstract spatial conceptions of experts and planners), through the everyday, lived experience of space, and through the collective meanings of representational spaces." It is in relation to Lefebvre's work that Roy observes that the commodification and exchange of space are important for producing surplus value.

Christopher Houston (2005, p. 117) argues for the "continued vitality in generating spatial organization and practice" of the "political sphere" through phenomenological approaches to the city and how people's interactions with and feelings about urban spaces are influenced by the way the government organises and controls those spaces. He notes that the nation-state's continual shaping of space and built environments remains significant despite the global influence of capital and its widespread investment locations – as expected given the neoliberal integration of government into capital. For Houston (2005), the Turkish State has pursued two strategies related to space and the built environment: one involves denying the existence of Kurds and suppressing their identity, while the other aims to confine Kurdish identity within

specific negative stereotypes and social spaces, both of which are challenged by Kurds through alternative interpretations and use of space.

The link between historical colonial and racist depictions and their present-day counterparts is prominent by the influence of colonial and racial terminology and the associated emotions in society. Deniz Duruiz (2021) emphasises denial and recognition in the social domain of Turkey, specifically focusing on erasure and the emotional impact of racialisation. Racialisation encompasses not only explicit acts of racism but also subtle mechanisms such as silence, omission and the substitution of social distinctions with covert symbols that may not carry racial connotations in all contexts (ibid.). This process of racialisation operates through both symbolic representations and tangible, emotional, and material practices, shaping both marked and unmarked subjects. Once these racialised emotions and practices circulate, they persist, becoming ingrained in bodies, common beliefs outlasting their original contexts. Examining contemporary erasure and racialized emotions reveals that racialisation has always been a fundamental aspect of shaping Turkish and Kurdish identities, perceptions and interactions (ibid.). This type of analysis is recognised as supplying some of the context of the present study.

Colombo describes the process of re/de-territorialization of an area aiming to uproot any definition and meaning that relates to revolution/revolt/rebelling against state apparatus. This can be achieved, according to the author, through the *annihilation of space*, the "radical reordering of space and time," which is achieved by imprinting completely new characteristics at a "physical and symbolic level" (Colombo, 2014, p. 52). The creation of particular and new spatial reconfigurations, such as new settlement areas, has as a prerequisite that the state will deploy all its powers. In this process, displacement is not an accidental, collateral damage, an intended result. On the contrary, it is very much the aim of the annihilation: "Those people who were scattered across a geography that was imagined to be uncontrollable – because it was located outside the control of the state – were reined in and relocated in spaces that rendered them visible, reordered them and made them accessible" (ibid., p. 55). This was precisely the approach that had been used by the Turkish state against the Kurdish people supporting or suspected of

supporting the guerilla insurgence (Jongerden, 2007). Such *relocation disciplines* – as Foucault might put it – order both population and space through their interaction; space is reshaped anew, and people are forced to live under the new spatial order: "Spatial dispossession operates, therefore, not only physically but also at the level of representation, and particularly in the way on which this cuts off the possibility of imagining revolution as taking place in this space" (Colombo, 2014, p. 57). Even during peace eras "the imaginaries of the various actors in charge of thinking of the city's reconstruction are unavoidably influenced by their vision of the city as a battlefield" (Lambert, 2014).

3.2. Social and spatial imaginaries and imagined geographies

Spatial imaginaries, argued Edward Said (2003), encompass collectively held narratives and ways of portraying and discussing spaces and locales, transcending the confines of language to manifest as embodied performances within the tangible world. In contrast to viewing spatial imaginaries through the lenses of 'semiotic order' or 'worldview,' the majority of geographers frame them as 'representational discourse', a perspective influenced by Said's analysis.

In his 1978 book *Orientalism* (2003), Said delineates the Orient as a construct formed through discourse, characterizing it as a distinct region shaped by linguistic representation in both imagery and textual narratives. An orientalist critique and perspective can thus reveal insights into the relations among space, power and knowledge as productive of actual or imagined geographies by producing knowledge on what are or how colonised regions and people are different or *subordinate* – such as Kurdistan and the Kurds in Turkey.

The historical evolution of European orientalism did not follow a straightforward succession of period-specific paradigms, such as the demonisation in the Medieval era, the representation of archaism, wisdom, and magic in the eighteenth century and the attribution of *un*enlightenment

in the late nineteenth century – "These patterns merge, overlap and reoccur in time and over time, and all historical stereotypes are present in the present" (Beller and Leerssen, 2007, p. 392).

Colonialism is not only responsible for reproducing current inequalities but also deeply rooted in the material, representation and imaginary space of neo-colonial structures that still facilitate the exploitation of 'former' colonies (Vaiou and Hadjimichalis, 2012). These imaginaries, intricately linked to social imaginaries, challenge the conventional notion of imagination as an individualistic construct, instead signifying shared concepts about spaces and places (Watkins, 2015). They concern the social and cultural dimensions of space, and they can assume both positive and negative connotations – such as idealised representations of 'developed countries' and stigmatising depictions of the 'ghetto' (Seller and Jaffe cited in Watkins, 2015). The imaginary of the ghetto certainly seems to have informed the targeting of Sur for re/de-construction.

This perspective contends that imaginaries are intricately woven with discourse and linguistic elements, constructing semiotic frameworks around specific subjects, while representational perspectives underscore the role of spatial imaginaries in shaping the identities of individuals within particular geographic contexts (Watkins, 2015). Representational perspectives in geography studies frequently highlight the role of spatial imaginaries in shaping the identities of local populations (ibid.). This understanding underscores the connection between power dynamics and the ability to establish place imaginaries through representation, often leading to analyses of the characteristics, inaccuracies and beneficiaries of such imaginaries. For instance, scholars have examined the process of 'othering' as a means to rationalise and legitimise colonisation. Among the manifold effects of this is the romanticisation of colonial relationships in marketing efforts, which transform colonial place imaginaries into valuable resources for economic development. Spatial imaginaries as linguistic and visual representations enmeshed within textual contexts, Watkins (ibid.) holds, offer valuable conceptual underpinnings for real-world practices. In a way, they operate as an internal justification for actions that are prima facie wrong – such as destruction as best or at lest necessary and inevitable so unavoidable.

With regard to representational perspectives of the city Marc Augé (2008) argues that major urban centres are primarily recognised for their capacity to serve as hubs for incoming and outcoming people, goods, images, and information. The connection between these cities and the surrounding region is carved in various ways on their urban environment, and the connection with the rest of the world equally affects them as their historic centres grow in popularity among tourists from across the globe. In general, place gains its historical significance after a minimum condition of stability through the combination of identity and relations; "the relationship with history that haunts our landscapes is being aestheticized," claims Augé (2008, p. 59), and "at the same time desocialized and artificialized."

While spatial imaginaries are interpreted as representational discourses concerning places and spaces, Watkins (2015), through an extensive literature review, presents a perspective that has emerged wherein they are regarded as *performative* discourses. As he explains (2015, p. 518), performativity "justifies analysis of how material practices themselves communicate, create, and change spatial imaginaries"; thus, "inquiries into language, texts and images are complemented by analysis of material practices 'living', 'citing' and 'reiterating' discourse." This shift toward performativity as a theoretical lens allows for an examination of how material practices themselves contribute to the communication, creation and alteration of spatial imaginaries, one that is employed here (Section 9.2).

3.3. Heritage

Since the re/de-construction processes studied in this thesis can be identified as originating with the UNESCO involvement and identification of the city's historical value and representation for world civilisation (Section 5.4), no less– which supplied the rationale for the transformation – or erasure, annihilation of space – the final part of this introductory part – prior to describing the context of the study itself (Chapter 4) – a consideration of the meaning of *heritage* seems worthwhile. This section initiates with definitions of heritage, elucidating its significance in

shaping identities and power dynamics. It endeavours to scrutinize the influence of 'West' and colonial perspectives on the comprehension of heritage, juxtaposed with alternative discourses of critical heritage. The exploration extends to the multifaceted role of heritage in nation-making, nationalism, and wars. Central to this work is the utilization of heritage sites in constructing and manipulating memory, maybe explaining why sometimes that renders them frequently susceptible to deliberate destruction. At other times, the built environment and heritage sites serve as poignant testimonials of wars and attacks, underscoring their crucial role in processes of recovery, healing, and peace-making. Lastly, this section briefly addresses the role of heritage as a tool for remembering or forgetting, emphasising its impact on the shaping mechanism of Turkish national identity.

UNESCO (1990, pp. 87-88), focuses on the world civilisational value as an objective fact: "The cultural heritage may be defined as the entire corpus of material signs either artistic or symbolic handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of humankind" Thus divided into tangible and intangible aspects, cultural heritage can encompass a variety of forms, ranging from archaeological sites and medieval cities to antique rugs and social rituals.

Heritage plays a significant role in identity formation and more specifically in national identities and myths; thus, it gives meaning to collective social entities (Bevan, 2007). The notion of heritage pertains to how present-day society employs the past as a resource in social, political, or economic contexts (Graham et al., 2000). Nevertheless, it is subject to varying interpretations; it's worth can be viewed differently, often mirroring societal divisions; and the divergence between the cultural and economic utilisation of heritage can lead to potential conflicts of interest (ibid.). Manifestly, heritage is tightly enmeshed in *politics and policies* (Ashworth, 2002). Not only the sites that are chosen to be characterised as heritage but also their historical aspects that are highlighted and the ways they are presented are all a matter of political preference.

The process of shaping identity both emerges from and plays a role in shaping community agendas and aspirations on the regeneration and development issues. "Heritage is a cultural and

social process" (Smith, 2006, p. 307), and it becomes evident that without the ability to control how experiences are remembered and the meanings derived from those recollections, individuals or communities risk having their identities governed or arbitrated by external powers. The imperative lies in exerting control and recognising that self-conscious self-expression constitutes a legitimate means of constructing identity. Lastly, Smith also deals with memory and the process of remembering as valuable concepts in comprehending the dynamics of heritage, as they illuminate the processes through which individuals link their identities to tangible and intangible elements of heritage, places and historical events (Smith, 2006).

Heritage is a complex and dynamic concept that defies strict chronology or a clear beginning (Harvey, 2016). Rather, it is a discursive construction with material consequences, deeply intertwined with the power dynamics of society and intimately connected to identity construction on both communal and personal levels. Harvey (ibid.) argues that heritage is not a static entity but a process by which people use the past; its meaning and value are rooted in *idealised representations of the collective past* that help to define that collective. It thus becomes a tool used by those in power to control and shape narratives, often at a national level, backward-looking motif that has future-oriented dimensions (ibid.).

Laurajane Smith's *Uses of Heritage* elucidates the intricate interplay among power dynamics, power relations and cultural heritage in a framework that delineates how heritage sites are strategically employed as political instruments. Her book commences by asserting the existence of an "authorized heritage discourse," influenced by the grand "narratives of Western national and elite class experiences" (Smith, 2006, p. 299). This discourse reinforces the notion of inherent cultural value associated with factors such as "time depth, monumentality, expert knowledge, and aesthetics" (ibid.). The examples given in this book demonstrate that the choices regarding heritage definition and the language employed in framing "conservation, preservation, interpretation, and other management practices, have consequences" directly impacting practical applications (ibid.).

Novoa (2022) suggests three key contributions suggested by the intersection of *critical heritage* and *urban theory*. It highlights the interplay of memory and place in shaping *counter-hegemonic urban practices*, challenges Eurocentric heritage discourse through *ethical place-based care*, and *integrates culture into citizenship*, potentially forming a distinct form of citizenship. Consequently, insurgent heritage reimagines the concept of heritage by revealing exclusionary methods of urban preservation while conceptualising how individuals perceive and engage in preservation efforts as an ethical commitment to caring for their places, thereby opposing established inequalities. Ultimately, the act of preserving their spaces serves as a bridge connecting the past, present and the *envisioned future*, offering alternatives for involving citizens in decision-making processes and the equitable allocation of rights (ibid.).

Acknowledging the literature that sees heritage through a critical lens, as a field where colonialism and a Western understanding of what heritage is and how it should be preserved has been of concern of some scholars (Coslett, 2020; Novoa, 2022). In a similar vein, researchers focusing on heritage themselves may be blind to and hence perpetuate power dynamics, excluding diverse perspectives in the formation of identities. Recognising and responding to this, Magdalena Novoa (2022) takes a radical dive into the topic of heritage and its role in shaping the concept of urban citizenship. Her '*insurgent heritage*' suggests that by bridging the divide between preservation and urban planning, we can gain a deeper understanding of how grassroots organisations utilise the past as a resource in the present to conceive and advance intricate radical urban and political strategies.

Nation-making involves a well-observed rendition of culture as identity through a rote listing of events and inculcation of meanings: "The formation of nations includes collective myth-making and ethno-historical selection, ethnic territorialization, cultural assimilation and mass public education, economic unification and legal standardization" (Smith, 1999, p. 115). It encompasses the development of collective consciousness and representations among a broader segment of the population. Rather than relying on the establishment of cultural institutions or social

networks, the construction of nation primarily hinges on the dissemination of symbolic representations.

The argument of 'banal nationalism' is framed within the context of critical discourse analysis, which scrutinises language; this analysis can similarly be extended to the realm of visual imagery (Billig, 2010). There is a constant reinforcement of the concept of nationhood, achieved through an ongoing process of "flagging," utilising various commonplace vehicles, such as routine political discourse, cultural artifacts, and newspapers (ibid.). This repetitive act of reminding is so ingrained and consistent that it easily goes unnoticed at a conscious level. The metonymic representation of banal nationalism is not akin to a flag being vigorously waved with fervent enthusiasm but rather involves the unnoticed flag quietly adorning a public building (ibid.).The essence of a nation is understood through the symbols, meanings, images, and fictions it employs in literature, art, and media – and space and architecture. "For the post-modernists," argues Smith (1999, p. 168), the nation has become a cultural artifact of modernity, a system of collective imaginings and symbolic representations, which resembles a pastiche of many hues and forms, a composite patchwork of all the cultural elements included in its boundaries."

Anita Bakshi (2014) observes that cities play a central role in ethno-national conflicts, where memory is used to stake claims over specific sites. The relationship between memory discourses and urban design in contested cities, is crucial to how memory shapes the meaning and fabric of these spaces (ibid.). The exploration and analysis of memory, history, heritage, and conflict, particularly within the context of divided societies and urban landscapes, is necessary for this. By employing architectural and spatial methodologies to investigate these topics, going beyond historical analysis to provide practical strategies and insights into how memories are shaped, represented, and stored in various contexts. Official representations can impact memories of contested places, so places can store occluded memories (Bakshi, 2017). Bakshi thus explores the relationship between memory and forgetting, particularly in divided cities where the role of place-based memories in understanding them is very important. Within this context, she explores congruent and discordant memories, considering the influence of national constructs, and

examines how perceptions of the past can be shaped through images rather than personal experiences.

The destruction of the built environment can also be considered as a shifting in architectural symbolisation and the targeting of the symbols and structures representing diversity and cosmopolitanism (Bevan, 2007). In *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, Rober Bevan sees that the vandalisation of symbolical sites can be part of a war strategy and emphasises how post-conflict reconstruction and restoration processes, especially those of cultural heritage, can actually continue the war by other means (he refers to examples like the Old City of Dubrovnik in Croatia and the destruction of the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia and also to the reconstruction of Warsaw after WW II that aimed to replicate the city centre without recognising the conflict as if this history had never happened). Bevan underlines how the re/de-construction of cultural heritage sites re-introduces or erases their symbolisation and, along with them, the identity of a whole community (ibid.). In the case considered here, the touristification of Sur as the historic centre of the city did not honour the past but emptied the place of meaning; it created a space for consumption that .

Susan Pollock (2016) examines the complex relationship between archaeology and war, focusing on the commodification of archaeological remains and the destruction of archaeological sites and objects. She emphasises the need to understand the practices of cultural heritage and the implications of their destruction. Lousie Grove (2013) contributes to the discussion of *heritage crime* by presenting a typology to facilitate interdisciplinary discussions on the problems facing *heritage assets*. The author emphasises the need for an expansion of our ability to tackle heritage crime and protect cultural heritage. In their 2015 book *War and Cultural Heritage*, Sørenson and Viejo-Rose underscore the significance of cultural heritage sites in post-conflict reconstruction processes. They state that these sites serve as vital conduits through which society can forge connections with its memories and history. Overall, "heritage can play a crucial role as a point of reference, a visual representation, or an expression of identity. Identity-building and political and national imagination can have their reflection in the manner in which cultural heritage is

constructed and reconstructed." (Armakolas, 2015, p. 229). The formation of cultural heritage sites inevitably also involves power balances partial interpretations; closely related to conflict, these are crucial to the effectiveness and sustainability of post-conflict reconstruction processes that include those sites (Kaya Taşdelen, 2020).

Sørensen and Viejo-Rose's (2015) *War and Cultural Heritage* explains how the consequences of conflicts can be examined by assessing the transformations experienced by specific locations as they absorb the repercussions of conflict, resulting in modified roles, meanings and connotations. One of the authors' primary objectives is to trace the processes by which places gain or lose significance and how particular interpretations are formed while also acknowledging the potential for manipulation or alteration of these interpretations. Consequently, places do not solely represent the 'heritage of war' but actively engage in the recuperation and reconstruction of communities. They endeavour to establish the significance of materiality in the context of place, emphasising its influence on our phenomenological engagement with particular locations, encompassing both their physical presence and visual impact, transcending the corporeal encounter:

> "Places are also loci for experiences and events, means of recall, and foci of memory. Through these connections places provide testimony to events: they are evidence. They are the tangible results of bombings, battles, reconstructions, decay, and dismantling." (ibid., p.7)

Sørensen and Viejo-Rose's (2015) approach acknowledges three key facets of this work. Firstly, it emphasises the need to examine and deliberate upon the multifaceted aspects of post-conflict heritage at various levels, encompassing analyses of decision-making processes and the investigation of connections between actions and consequences. Secondly, it recognises the significance of materiality and seeks to introduce this relatively unexplored dimension into discussions regarding post-conflict heritage. And thirdly, it maintains the intrinsic connection between heritage, place, and identity, thereby illustrating their interrelatedness:

"What the case studies clearly indicate is that some places become iconic representations of complex events, gaining an array of meanings that transform them into signifiers for understandings that go well beyond their own context-specific histories and which sit apart from official heritage valuation and management policies." (ibid., p. 3)

Concerning conflict and post-conflict activities, these tangible attributes of a location hold significant importance, shedding light on the reasons why such places become focal points for both destruction and reconstruction (ibid.):

"Place [is] selected as a means of addressing both the concrete impacts and the intangible marks that conflicts leave on the fabric of specific sites: buildings, monuments, bridges, parks, or squares. Place is a powerful focus because it is at once the means and the medium for reconstruction and recovery efforts. In addition, there is clear evidence that places imbued with symbolism have often been targeted for deliberate destruction during conflicts." (ibid., p.2)

Hence, places can serve as instruments for both the dismantling and the reconstruction of society, encompassing transient elements like a sense of belonging, meaning, intrinsic worth and concepts of integrity (Sørensen and Viejo-Rose, 2015). Their physical existence naturally draws attention and serves as a focal point for various activities; modifications to their physical structure are observable and elicit responses, making the 'message' of destruction inevitable. They hold significance due to the intangible values inherent within their physical presence, clarifying why certain places carry symbolic meaning and evoke emotions while others do not: "Consequently, cultural heritage can therefore be used to serve a number of functions acting simultaneously as receptor, container, and reflector of intention, meaning, and emotion" (ibid., p.9).

Barakat draws on his experience of the dynamic relationship between war and cultural heritage recovery in understanding cultural heritage as an important element in the post-conflict recovery process and not to be considered a "luxury to await attention later." (Barakat, 2007, p. 26). The postwar recovery process, especially when focusing on the restoration of cultural heritage, is a lengthy and challenging endeavour, and it is crucial to understand that quick solutions are not feasible. Addressing the restoration of war-damaged cultural heritage is significantly more

intricate and demanding than commonly acknowledged. Cultural heritage plays a fundamental role in a comprehensive approach to postwar reconstruction. Its restoration should be guided by a clear vision of future recovery scenarios, shaped not only by external entities but also by the perspectives of local communities. The reconstruction process should incorporate specialised conservation strategies, necessitating a foundation in theory, analytical methodologies, inclusive policy-making processes, and adequate resources. Most importantly, it requires a harmonised effort involving both international and local stakeholders (ibid.).

Barakat (2007, p. 38) suggests a set of "nine critical lessons for the international postwar recovery of cultural heritage." He proposes the avoidance of assumed automatic shared visions for cultural heritage recovery; the continuation of political and financial support as a given for long-term recovery goals should not be taken for granted; the attainment of sufficient competency for rehabilitation and reconstruction work is often challenging, but worthwhile; the same goes for the enforcement of conservation codes and legislation immediately after war; effective reconstruction does not require choosing between replacement and conservation approaches since they can complement each other; cultural heritage recovery should extend beyond physical restoration to address broader economic and social dimensions; rapid recovery efforts should not be assumed because these can pose risks to quality, authenticity, or even peace-building; securing local support for recovery is essential, and the active participation of affected communities is central to the process; and the recovery of cultural heritage must also address intangible aspects related to belief and religion (ibid.).

Cultural heritage sites offer a tangible representation of people's historical connections with the past (Kaya Taşdelen, 2020). The significance of cultural heritage in the context of *post-conflict healing* can be traced back to the conflict's challenge to the negotiation process between the historical past and the emerging new reality (ibid.). However, in the process of post-conflict reconstruction, the science of planning as a method of remembering-forgetting or a tool for the formation of symbolic structures and spaces can be utilised for struggles over power and identity. Kaya Taşdelen in her work on Suriçi observes that demolition of a heritage not only results in the

obliteration of collective memory but also anchors the site's memory to the physical destruction process, effectively erasing what existed before it. That is why she recognises the therapeutic role of cultural heritage in terms of facilitating personal healing, addressing one's historical background and mitigating the traumas inflicted by the conflict, and advocates for it not to be underestimated during the reconstruction phase (ibid.).

In light of these perspectives, the relationship of the Turkish state to the heritage of its others must be viewed quite critically. Banu Pekol (2021) has done this for its non-Muslim heritage in Turkey. Pekol's first point is that the Turkish state has approached this heritage through exceptional measures and has failed to protect it adequately. This was a long time process that did not solely refer to periods of political turmoil but was also enacted as an enduring and perpetual state of crisis, thus challenging the conventional distinction between states of emergency and normalcy. In this context, states of emergency, initially designed to be temporary, were tactically transformed into a constant, facilitating the erosion and vulnerability of the heritage of the other: "When contextualizing [the] politics of imposed emergency in terms of the architectural heritage, histories of deliberate dispossession and destruction are in striking abundance" (Pekol, 2021, p. 62). This argument posits that the Turkish state has employed its *heritage of the other* as a means to validate prevailing or officially sanctioned nationalist cultural assertions, subjecting it (them) to a politics of recognition and disrecognition, which has resulted in substantial losses (hence social memory, meaning, etc.). In conclusion, therefore, Pekol (2021) understands heritage conservation as an intangible process of negotiating cultural identities and meanings that itself reveals the underlying causes of the destruction of such heritage. Unfortunately, as this this will show, this also applies to the re/de-construction case of Sur, Diyarbakır.

Chapter 4

The Context: Turkey and Kurdistan

4.1. Introduction

Turkey has experienced several periods of political instability with military coups and authoritarian rule during its post-WWII 'democratic' era. It was during the period after the 1980 coup that the neo-liberalisation process was introduced (Özatalay, 2011). In the 1983 parliamentary election, Turgut Özal oversaw the replacement of the old import-substituting industrialisation strategy by an export-oriented industrial development along with the introduction of a large-scale privatisation program – which progressed relatively slowly, however, until the 2000s. Following currency collapse and financial crisis in 2001, an IMF bailout came with free trade as well as banking regularisation conditions; these were facilitated and introduced by the ex-vice president of the World Bank, Kemal Derviş, who took up the position of economic Minister in the newly formed AKP government (Özatalay, 2011).

The AKP had swept to power in a landslide election victory in 2002 as a party advocating for democratic reforms but rooted in Islamic values and popular among religiously conservative segments of society, which had historically been marginalised by the secular (laicist) state system, even as "ruling elites and pro-republic intellectuals… gave Islam a new cultural and civilizational meaning" and utilised this "nationalized and modernized… understanding of Islam as a source of national identity" (Yabancı, 2022, pp. 3-4). What was dubbed the 'neo-Ottomanism' that emerged during the AKP's 'golden period' of moderate democratisation and high economic growth not only aimed at "inventing a new national – conservative – religious pride" but also at combining "corporatism with an Islamic vision" (Çavuşoğlu and Strutz, 2014, pp. 139-40).

The AKP government and party under Erdoğan gradually consolidated power by gaining control of key (judicial, security, etc.) institutions. Even as this transpired, however, economic growth slackened (in the aftermath of the US and international crisis of 2009); a system of patronage and cronyism with business leaders close to the government (and in Erdoğan's family) developed, with corruption becoming exorbitant (European Commission, 2021); and the administration took on a increasingly authoritarian tone, with violations of civil rights, censorship and persecution (Amnesty International, 2013, 2014; HRFT, 2021; HRW, 2015, n.d.; OHCHR, 2017, 2018). A crackdown on peaceful protests, notoriously at Gezi Park in the summer of 2013, demonstrated a new level of intolerance of dissenting views (Amnesty International, 2013, 2014).[11]

This situation worsened markedly after the imposition of a state of emergency (*Olağanüstü Hal*, OHAL) following a botched coup attempt in the summer of 2016. What ensued, according to the 2018 report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), involved the (further) shuttering of independent media outlets and civil society entities dedicated to human rights; the mass, ad hoc confinement of individuals apprehended in the context of the state of emergency provisions, such as trade unionists; wholesale politically motivated dismissals of public sector employees including civil servants, members of the armed forces and judges and prosecutors; interference in the autonomy of the judiciary; instances of torture and mistreatment during detentions; limitations imposed on the freedoms of expression and mobility, along with the denial of travel documents and the revocation of citizenship; unjust appropriation of private assets; and practices of collective retribution directed at the relatives of individuals suspected of offences or linked to the movement behind the coup.

By the end of December 2017, over 150 thousand citizens had been arrested under emergency decrees (in fact, decree laws became a legislative tool to bypass the national assembly). In the

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[11] The "Report on the Impact of the State of Emergency on Human Rights in Turkey, including an Update on the South-East" provides additional information about the Kurdish region (OHCHR, 2018); see below (4.4).

aftermath of the coup attempt (see Christofis, 2021), another 150 thousand people – civil servants – faced dismissal, with some being arrested, primarily based on alleged connections to the coup (OHCHCR, 2018). This included more than 100 thousand individuals listed in emergency decree attachments (ibid.). The legal community also bore a heavy brunt, with well over 500 lawyers arrested and approaching 1,500 facing various forms of prosecution; 79 received lengthy prison sentences, and some 34 bar associations were forcibly closed on accusations of affiliation with a terrorist organisation (ibid.). The judiciary experienced significant upheaval, with 4,240 judges and prosecutors removed through executive orders of the High Council (OHCHCR, 2018; see also Christofis, 2021).

The state of emergency had a profoundly chilling effect on civic freedoms. Over 20 thousand people lost their livelihoods due to the closure of private institutions, including NGOs, trade unions, and media outlets, and over 1,700 organisations were permanently closed, including lawyers' associations and others focused on human rights and humanitarian efforts (OHCHCR, 2018). Some 166 media outlets – publishing houses, newspapers, magazines, news agencies and television and radio stations – were liquidated through the emergency decrees, their assets confiscated without compensation (ibid.). The government also reportedly blocked over 100,000 websites in 2017 (ibid.).Some 300 journalists were apprehended and detained during this period, most of them facing terrorism-related charges. This environment of fear and judicial harassment compelled media outlets and human rights NGOs to practice self-censorship. (OHCHCR, 2018).

The education sector also suffered, with dismissals affecting teachers and academics. In January 2016, a group of 1,128 "Academics for Peace", including 355 international academics, released a strongly worded petition urging the Turkish government to address escalating violence in the south-east (Barış İçin Akademisyenler, n.d.; OHCHR, 2018), and by December 2017, 380 had been dismissed from their universities and barred from public service (many others just left the country). Later that year, in the coup aftermath, approximately 6,300 scholars were removed from their academic positions, and 15 universities were closed, impacting tens of thousands of students throughout the country (OHCHR, 2017). All the above resulted in a new migration wave

and brain-drain tendency of "white-collar employees, students and activists" who "began leaving Turkey (or started to consider leaving) to start a life abroad" due "concerns for the future, and perceived lack of human rights in Turkey" (Öztürk and Baser, 2021, p. 3).

4.2. Urbanisation in Turkey

There has been a prolonged population flow to cities in Turkey, initially following its industrialisation and as a result of internal conflict, particularly between the 1950s and the 1990s (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2020). Fuelled by internal migration for its labour supply, urbanisation became the "driving force of the capital accumulation regime in Turkey in the post-1980s" (Penpecioğlu, 2013, p. 168). It brought with it urban problems, particularly unplanned and unregulated construction.

Historically, the housing supply and urban land availability in Turkey had been limited because public funds were primarily channelled to support sectors like industry rather than housing. Until the 1980s, housing investments from the public sector comprised less than 10% of the total public investment and mainly benefited middle-income groups (Yonder, 1998). Also, the underdeveloped financial institutions mainly provided direct credits to commerce and industry, while larger construction companies focused on public projects, leaving the housing sector in the hands of small development firms with limited capital (ibid.). Just before the millennium and AKP entry and domination of the political scene, Yonder (1998) asserted that over half the population lived In Turkey's three largest cities – Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir – in settlements formed through informal processes, including land-squatting, construction and then legalisation of the shanty properties (*gecekondu*) and unauthorised land subdivision (*bisseli tapu*).

Then, legal and administrative reforms in the 1980s included a general amnesty for all unauthorised buildings, "transformed the housing sector and reduced the share of informal processes in overall housing production" (ibid., p. 56). There then followed a speculative real-

estate market boom along with "informal settlement formation" that was influenced by several interconnected factors, including a supply-and-demand squeeze, clientelism in local and national politics and transition issues from the Ottoman land system making "urban land and building regulations prone to contestation" (ibid., pp. 58–59). Political promises made during national elections of the giving of title deeds and provision of services to informal settlements further fuelled this speculation boom that boosted urban informality and benefited various socio-economic groups, transmuting urban real property into an attractive and "inflation-proof" asset for all income groups seeking to invest their savings (ibid.). The concept of informality here should not be seen though as an "unregulated domain" – rather, it was "structured through various forms of extra-legal, social, and discursive regulation" – it was "a capitalist mode of production, par excellence" and was not at all a pre-capitalist relic or an indication of a 'backward' economy (Roy, 2009, p. 827).

Inspired, among others, by Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell (2002), some Turkish scholars have regarded the history of neoliberalism in terms of a destructive phase in the 1980s-90s – a "roll-back" (of the state) characterised by privatisations and deregulations – and then, after the 2000s, a creative process – a "roll-out" (of the new regime), characterised by a restructuring of institutional powers and legislations (Kayasü and Şenbil, 2014; Özatalay, 2011). This type of analysis has informed conceptions of urbanisation in Turkey and its state-led renewal projects under the AKP.

4.2.1. Neoliberal urbanisation under the AKP

Upon gaining power, the AKP introduced an interventionist form of neoliberalism aiming for market increase specifically by triggering the development of the built environment (Bayırbağ and Balaban cited in Penpecioğlu, 2013). The "urbanisation of capital" (Harvey, 1985) in Turkey was achieved through a combination of approaches including parliamentary legislation, the reorganisation of local authorities and of (central and local government) institutions involved in urban planning and the stimulation of urban development projects and introduction of "new

housing finance mechanisms" (Penpecioğlu, 2013, p. 169). Dominant urban "political-economic trends" were characterised by "market forces under authoritarian state interventions" aimed at speculative production through "attracting investment" – trends that were characterised by the "privatization of public resources, commodification of natural/common resources" and "mechanisms to stimulate urban rent," fostering the aggrandisement of the built environment and constant growth in the construction sector[12] (Penpecioğlu, 2019). A summary of the experiences in Turkish cities revealed the urban planning and governance regime of the AKP to be characterised by an authoritarian, top-down, "corporatist and co-employing mechanism of consent and force in urban politics," as well as clientelism and (other) populist and Islamic characteristics of neoliberal urban governance (Penpecioğlu, 2019).

One of the defining features of Turkey's neoliberal urbanism has been the use of mega-projects as a means of spurring economic growth and urban transformation. The AKP period has seen the prioritisation of "profit-driven, large transportation and infrastructure projects" – including dams for irrigation and hydroelectricity projects, airports and hospitals, roads and bridges and mosques, shopping malls and luxury residences nationwide. Functioning as the engine of economic growth, this has resulted in a constant, sprawling urbanisation. The process has been facilitated by the manipulation or avoidance of urban planning procedures and principles, law violations and decimation of the natural environment (Penpecioğlu, 2019), accompanied by a lack of transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

Among the effects of this unchecked and unregulated urban development were social division, displacement of the urban poor and "uneven distribution" of the extracted urban rent, along with shattered social movements daring to challenge the AKP's unsolicited governance (Penpecioğlu, 2019). As part of the silencing of contrary voices in civil society more broadly, there

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[12] Construction sector between 1972-2015 was involved in 8693 projects and had raised to 322,6 billion dollars and in 2015 it raised 19,3 million dollars more (Sen, 2016). The construction sector is so important to the economy that even the Oxford Business Group considers it "well positioned to continue growing, though Turkey's reliance on foreign capital inflows" (2015).

has been a prevention of opposition not only to environmental destruction (which prompted the Gezi protest) but also to the remarkably increasing profits achieved through speculative rent-gap strategies. Typically, these have targeted areas populated by lower classes that are developed as properties to be sold to the middle classes (such as the central Istanbul district of Tarlabaşı, close to Gezi Park). Most of the urban regeneration projects in Turkish cities either displace the local population or sentence them to long-term debt through buy-back schemes at the newly inflated prices (Azem, 2012).

For the government, the redistribution of wealth among preferential stakeholder networks has been a mainspring both for their development strategy and for maintaining consent and political power (Penpecioğlu, 2019). Those authoritarian neoliberal manoeuvres have included a constant increase in public budgets devoted to the mega-projects, non-stop urban regeneration projects all around Turkey, the private sector's risk-taking at the expense of the public sector (through public-private partnerships {PPPs] with guaranteed investor returns) and the initiation of new investment areas related to the construction industry, such as energy (Penpecioğlu, 2019).

According to Cenk Saraçoğlu and Neslihan Demirtaş-Milz (2014, p. 179), urban transformation projects in Turkey involved the practice "of clearing old neighbourhoods" and "displacing lower-income groups from inner-city neighbourhoods" to mass housing areas at the city's outskirts, "thereby making the vacated inner-city lands available for new purposes." Urban transformation projects have also been criticised as urban coalitions comprising private landowners, municipal authorities and state officials that see empty urban areas as a chance to maximise the rent-gap through real estate development (Türkün, 2011).

In Diyarbakır, on 21st November 2020, the Diyarbakır Chamber of Engineers (TMMOB) Provincial Coordination Board organised an urban transformation workshop (*Kentsel Dönüşüm Çalişmasi Sonuç Bildirgesi*) under the leadership of the Chamber of Urban Planners Diyarbakır Branch. Announcing its findings through a press release (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2020), the chamber generally supported the idea of urban transformation, particularly since a large part of the country was

situated in earthquake risk zones (ibid.). It also noted, however, that despite the fact that unplanned and uncontrolled construction activity is known to be linked to the loss of life in natural disasters, it had not been eliminated by the state authorities (ibid.). On top of that, the construction amnesties (*imar affi, imar barisi*) enacted every few years had made it difficult to implement long-term planning solutions (ibid.) because people continued building on public land knowing that they would not suffer any consequences as another amnesty would be passed in the near future.

According to the chamber's press release, urban transformation projects have been mostly conducted in densely populated, unplanned and/or slum areas where the people residing were politicised and belong to low-income groups (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2020). Such areas, it was stated, tended to encounter profit-oriented or rent-speculative-oriented construction activities that dispersed the local population (ibid.). This construction activity was far from any holistic planning mentality; on the contrary, it was mostly project-based, lacked adequate infrastructure and social facilities and gave little to no concern to the local historical, cultural, and architectural heritage (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2020).

The threat of natural disaster has also played a key role in justifying the urgent implementation of many projects. Earthquakes in Turkey, like the recent one in the south-east in February 2023, and other natural phenomena, like landslides in the rain and mountainous Black Sea region, can be catastrophic, causing massive human and material losses. Accompanied by dire warnings of such potential catastrophes, which pose or are said to pose an imminent threat to the residents of hastily constructed buildings, urban transformation projects are thus developed by official authorities not only as an alternative policy with citywide benefits but also as an indispensable, unquestionable safeguard for the lives of neighbourhood residents (Saraçoğlu and Demirtaş-Milz, 2014).

To summarise, following the upswing in urban migration and informal urban development in the last decades of the last century, there has been a huge upsurge in construction activities under

the AKP. Turkish urban governance over the last two decades has increasingly been characterised by an "authoritarian and top-down" and "conflictual and contested" approach, often manipulating procedures for clientelist and imperious initiatives that transgress the law (Penpecioğlu, 2019). While there could be a potential for social innovation, property-oriented urban development projects have tended to result in "socio-economic segregation and socio-spatial polarization" (Penpecioğlu, 2013, p. 166).

4.2.2. The Housing Development Administration (TOKİ)

The state housing development agency, TOKİ, is dedicated to addressing housing and urbanisation challenges on a national scale. Since 1984, TOKİ has been tasked with the development of housing projects to meet the demand for housing among low and middle-income groups (TOKİ, n.d.). As described in its website, TOKİ serves as an overarching entity in Turkey's housing sector; its efforts encompass urban regeneration, social housing projects, low-rise designs in harmony with local architecture, the development of educational and social facilities, afforestation, landscaping, and community gardens (ibid.). Under the "Planned Urbanization and Housing Development Mobilization" programme, initiated in 2002, TOKİ has launched housing production projects in all 81 Turkish provinces, totalling 1,082,645 units as of June 2022 (mostly social housing), and it has successfully sold and delivered to the value 224 billion TL (ibid.).

TOKİ determines the sales prices of housing units after taking into account construction costs, social facilities, infrastructure expenses, consultancy services and land costs, declaring that the prices are set without profit in mind and that the saving patterns and monthly affordability of the social groups are taken into consideration (ibid.). Notably, it claims that land prices are not incorporated into the sales prices for social housing, which is designed to benefit economically disadvantaged citizens, but title deeds are only issued once the full repayment of debts is achieved, thus ensuring a structured approach to housing finance (TOKİ, n.d.).

The majority of TOKİ's land portfolio is described as non-registered, pasture-qualified or unplanned idle properties, often impractical for resource development purposes, and since 2003,

it has been following a "comprehensive policy toward supporting modern urbanisation in cooperation with local administrations, with the support of the central government" (TOKİ, n.d.). The primary objective of these initiatives as stated is to revitalise impoverished urban areas, such as slums, shanty settlements, and dilapidated regions. TOKİ has also created financial tools, like the "income (revenue) sharing model" (ibid.), which develops and sells houses for high-income groups in order to establish a fund for housing projects targeting low and middle-income groups. Operating in collaboration with the private sector, this model has been implemented on TOKİ-owned lands in several major cities, including Istanbul and Ankara (ibid.).

TOKİ was granted increased and unique powers for mass housing production and urban revitalisation through a series of legislative measures in the 2000s (Penpecioğlu, 2013). In the critical discourse, it is regarded as too powerful. The predominant entity responsible for housing infrastructure development, it has the authority to acquire land and set prices and yet is largely autonomous, bypassing the need for consultation (Çavuşoğlu and Strutz, 2014). It enjoys tax exemptions, operates independently of the Privatisation Board (*Özelleştirme İdaresi Başkanlığı*) and State Planning Agency (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*), offers credit, is not under financial control, and remains immune to inspection concerning building construction and materials (ibid.).

Despite government and TOKİ declarations, it is argued, the general norm is that the Turkish state does not provide adequate housing, leaving the working class, especially the poorest, susceptible to marginalisation (Türkün, 2011). TOKİ predominantly measures its success in terms of quantity rather than quality; considerations of architectural design are limited and sidelined, with TOKİ focusing on fast and cheap production (Aysev, 2014). While there have been attempts, such as architectural competitions, to improve design quality, they struggle to break free from TOKİ's predetermined production parameters; the solution lies in questioning and transforming the institution's practices and fostering broad participation and dialogue (ibid.).

While officially touted as beneficial, TOKİ's mass-housing infrastructure is linked to frequent quality issues and structural problems, concerns about incompatibility with the target tenant

lifestyle , and its "'un-aesthetic' presence in city space" (Saraçoğlu and Demirtaş-Milz, 2014, p. 179). During my time spent in Turkey, I have come to understand TOKİ as a synonym for a poorly built environment. Chatting with a woman who has lived in Diyarbakır for 60 years, for example, I was told that "TOKİ is like cancer spreading around Turkey." In this woman's opinion, which was not unusual, "It used to have a nice scale, with quality" and was "a good solution for the poor," but now it wasn't "even worth the money they give."

4.3. The Kurdish issue and the Kurdish struggle

Although Turkey remained under an official state of emergency for two years as a specific response to the coup attempt, in general through the decades, the country has been in a "permanent state of exception in terms of not being a state of law" (Uçarlar, 2015, p. 77). In the case of its Kurdish-majority south-east, a historically impoverished region that is not given equal prominence in the mainstream media or the public mind (Uçarlar, 2015), this has also been largely true in the formal sense, for the region has largely been ruled directly from Ankara in an ongoing state of exception. During the last quarter of the last century, it was under martial law (from 1978 to '87) and emergency rule (1987-2002) (OHCHR, 2018). After an initially democratic period under the AKP, direct rule from Ankara was largely returned through the 2010s (with mass arrests of the elected representatives of the main Kurdish opposition party and their functional replacement by centrally nominated officials). Turkey's "Kurdish issue" remains unresolved, as it has done since the foundation of the republic, with deeply inherited roots that go back to the empire.

The variety of ethnicities in its lands was an important issue for the Ottoman Empire, although largely subsumed under religious denomination. Its established system of peoples (*millet*) was challenged by the rise of nationalism, as it lost territory during the late 1800s, its social order was put under strain by the waves of incoming Muslims. In the development of Turkish nationalism

and 1923 establishment of the republic, strategies deployed aimed at shaping the demographics of minorities included mass deportation and internationally coerced migrations agreed as bilateral 'population exchanges'. The 1934 Settlement Act (No. 2510) was employed for the forced resettlement of populations as part of a major strategy for the newly-founded state (Jongerden, 2007).

The Kurds, the largest minority in the newly founded republic (Sala and Schechla, 2016), staged uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s, ultimately leading to aerial bombings (Adalet, 2018). Increasing oppression of Kurdish identity saw an attempt at assimilation in which Kurds were considered backward 'mountain Turks'. Economic and thence sociocultural development – modernisation – it was held, would solve the problem, as long as the state was strong, which meant a non-recognition of Kurdish identity in the public sphere. Thus, Kurdish could not be taught or used as an official language; a long-standing policy of the state employed to this end of identity elimination – or erasure –was the replacement of traditional by Turkish place names (toponyms) (Jongerden, 2009),

The problem was not limited to Turkey but rather a function of the broader control of territory. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and redrawing of maps, Kurdish lands were divided across Iraq and Syria in addition to Turkey (and further to the historical division with Persia) – or, Kurdistan was split not only at Rojhilat (its eastern part in Iran) but also between its Turkish north, called Bakur, Iraqi south (Başûr) and Syrian west (Rojava).

Figure 4. 1. Kurdistan, showing its northern region, Bakur in dark green (edited version based on Estremo, n.d.).

From the mid-1980s onward, the region of southeastern Turkey or northern Kurdistan experienced a protracted armed conflict involving as the PKK waged a Maoist-inspired insurgency with the goal of establishing an independent state (Çaylı, 2016a). A reorganisation of the failing Turkish military strategy to a tailored counter-insurgency in the early 1990s saw the introduction of a programme of forced evacuation of Kurdish villages. The new approach favoured resettlement from villages to towns because densely populated urban or urban-like areas facilitated centralised supervision and control (Jongerden, 2007). The evacuation and displacement was aimed at depriving insurgents of their rural bases and establishing a new urban-based social order.[13] At the height of this activity in the 1990s, however, it was extended to significant towns, such as Sırnak and Çukurca (Jongerden, 2007). In total, at least a million

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[13] The village-town and centre-village models are analysed by Jongerden (2007) as mechanisms to promote modernisation by introducing new forms of settlement in rural areas and creating structured settlement patterns.

people were internally displaced as some 3,000 settlements were emptied (Jongerden, 2007, p. 80; Tan et al., 2020, p. 39).

The increasing involvement of Kurdish youth in the PKK guerrillas led to its perception not only as a defence against state violence and local abuse but also as a just and trustworthy entity shaping Kurdish identity. Ankara instigated further harsh measures, extending to the institution of a state-sponsored militia programme, the Security Village Guards (*Güvenlik Köy Korucuları*) and sponsoring of irregular forces and illegal measures in a 'dirty war' of 'forced disappearances' and extrajudicial executions, particularly between 1993 and 1995, along with punitive acts like burning agricultural fields and forests (Uçarlar, 2015).

Around the turn of the millennium, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan began to review the Kurdish aims and methods, and after he was captured, led an ideological transformation process rethink in which the party changed its political direction. Instead of claiming a separate state, they entered a struggle for the creation of a 'democratic confederation' and a society organised from below (Gambetti and Jongerden, 2015; Yarkın, 2015). This coincided with the electoral victory of the AKP, a party established as oppositional to part of the republican history and which gained large support from the Kurds.

Thus, it was that after more than three decades of Kurdish struggle, a 'resolution process' between the two conflicting parties was initiated. With the AKP promoting Turkey's bid to become considered for EU membership, Europe's liberal and rights-based principles became important, and Kurdish identity, like that of other minorities, could no longer be ignored. In 2004, the state was compelled by its EU engagement and applications submitted by victims to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to pass legislation that would compensate for the financial losses incurred by the displaced (Tan et al., 2020).[14] Secret peace talks were conducted

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[14] AKP even withdrew support from the problematic Village Return and Rehabilitation Development Plan and "announced its intention to come up with a new approach," which never materialised (Jongerden, 2009, p. 8).

with the PKK in Oslo, and certain cultural rights were granted to the Kurds (Çaylı, 2021). Despite the initial progress and relative peace, however, the process did not endure, and the AKP once again fell back to the discourse of "terrorism" in oppressing Kurdish moves towards local autonomy.

Yonucu (2018) argues that the ruling elites of Turkey have utilised anti-terror laws since 2006 to target historically marginalised groups engaged in oppositional political actions, particularly those with the ability to mobilise people at a local level. The laws were deployed during the 2010s in the AKP pivot away from pluralism and towards a Suni religious identity and state nationalism. Indeed, Turkish right-wing authoritarianism, rooted in mainstream social conservatism, has a strongly Islamic and anti-Kurdish character (Journal of Global Faultlines, 2017).

At this moment, I should highlight that Turkey implemented a colonisation strategy in the southeastern region during the 1920s and 1930s, asserting control over diverse populations through martial law, with the overarching goal of assimilating ethnic identities, mainly Kurdish, into a unified Turkish identity (Gambetti and Jongerden, 2011). Respectively, in contemporary pro-Kurdish politics, there is the assertion that Kurdistan experienced colonisation from Turkey (and Western powers), while this effort of nationalising areas of the East is also defined as 'internal colonisation' (Jongerden, 2007; 2021). Meanwhile, the aspects of modernisation in the Turkish national identity, the republican project in which 'the West' is contrasted with 'the East', are in a continuous negotiation. However, this case is actually more than colonisation because Turkey might exploit Kurdistan like most colonial powers but also denies the existence of Kurds for decades. Thus, as will be discussed in other chapters, the aim of modernisation was also an aim of assimilation, attempting not only to turn a primitive Kurd into a modern Kurd but, in fact, to a modern Turk.

4.4. Spatial approaches to modernisation and the Kurdish context

Meltem Ahıska (2003) argues both for a celebration of the republic as a model and its condemnation as a threat to indigenous values. Neither unproblematically embracing the Western model nor dismissing the fantasy of the West in the national imaginary is adequate, she maintains, for understanding the construction of Turkish modernity and identity. Highlighting the ambivalent relationship Turkey has with all aspects of the East and the West, Ahıska also argues that "modernity is a historical construct, and its historicity is displaced in the polarity of East and West" (ibid., p. 46), while the long-standing endeavour to bridge these worlds with self-conscious anxiety and a sense of inferiority is related to the dual nature of Western civilisation as a source of both progress and threat.

Nesrin Uçarlar explains, through a broad bibliographical review, how Turkish modernisation and the nation-building project aimed to assimilate "the peripheries into the centre in the period of modernisation and industrialization," resulting in ethnic conflicts, intra-group solidarity, and anti-nationalist movements that developed through cultural divisions and economic disparities (Uçarlar, 2015, p. 79). Besides, as noted by Tattara and Nichols (2015, p. 9). "state-building projects have always come with an agenda of modernization."

Ankara's assimilation strategy has predominantly relied on spatial processes – including, as mentioned, the removal, relocation, and exile of rebellious Kurdish populations, the resettlement of non-Kurds in Kurdish regions, the plans for new centralised villages, the renaming of places to align with Turkish identity, the imposition of indefinite states of emergency, the deployment of checkpoints and curfews and the identification of pro-state locations through the a village guard system (Jongerden, 2009). Analysis of the Kurdish situation in Turkey, described in terms of an "interstate colony," is sharpened by the judgment of "genocidal colonial violence" in Kurdistan during the 1990s, which sets the region apart from the rest of Turkey (Uçarlar, 2015, p. 80).

Deniz Duruiz (2020) discusses the spatial aspects of Kurdistan as a colonized territory and examines Beşikci's characterisation of it as an international colony involving Turkey, Iran, Iraq,

and Syria. This has the Turkish state's strategies of dominance as incorporating spatial elements aimed at reshaping the Kurdish connection to Kurdistan (ibid.). The colonial aspects of Turkish modernisation were evident in the constant and explicit violence in the colonised regions, in the removal of those who resisted, in the Turkification policies applied by military measures and in forced migration (Uçarlar, 2015). And the spatial aspects of the 'internal colonisation' were evident since the beginning of the republic in the aiming at modernisation and Turkification through the redesign of the rurality by planners and architects who saw themselves as 'cultural missionaries'. Their duty was to civilise and to make the population into modern Turks, which included the conceptualisation of new village models (Jongerden, 2009).

From around the 1930s, various village plans designed to embody the concept of the nation were developed. These had in common the use of geometric layouts that 'flattened' territory, denuding it of detail and difference. Modern space was thus depicted as uniform, reflecting the ideal of a nation where individuals are essentially identical through models like uniform grid villages, concentric zones villages, and square plan villages, often excluding significant architectural elements like mosques in the attempt to secularise and modernise:

> "Turkish modernizers imagined that they could produce 'Turks' by changing the spatial format of society, although there was neither consensus about what exactly that spatial format should be, nor consistent and comprehensive efforts to implement such policies. What was not desired was reasonably clear, namely, the dispersed, disorganized, disconnected and un-integrated, parochial patchwork of hamlets and small villages of Anatolia inherited by the republic from the empire." (Jongerden, 2007, p. 311)
> "The project of internal colonisation thus brought together the organic imagery of national unification, the spatial redistribution of populations, and the discursive reorganisation of the material landscape. Over the years, these efforts also merged with educational projects, such as boarding schools for Kurdish girls, as well as infrastructural plans, such as the construction of railways and roads. (Adalet, 2018, p. 39) [15]

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[15] Highways and railroads were used both as "infrastructural tool of assimilation and coercion" and for military purposes such as guerrilla annihilation (Adalet, 2018, p. 39); dams have been similarly utilised in recent years (Akinci and Tan, 2016).

Manifestly, the extensive literature highlighting modernisation as a dynamic process actively involving society or often requiring resisting is quite at odds with the top-down, state-centric practices mischaracterised as "westernisation" or "modernisation (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). In Turkey, the nation-building was taken rather literally, with physical constructions aiming to shape the Turkish identity of the republic as envisioned and in which (rural and) urban planning was also very much a matter of identity politics (Jongerden, 2021, 2007).

4.4.1. The GAP project

Initiated in 1989, the Southeastern Anatolia Project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*), now the GAP Regional Development Administration project, aimed to economically restructure the region by supporting traditional ways of production like agriculture and the return of displaced populations to their villages (Jongerden, 2007). However, the project was (again) driven by a centralised, top-down approach that failed to consider the needs and aspirations of local communities. As a result, it was to a significant impact on the region's Kurdish population, exacerbating existing inequalities and leading to further dislocation and dispossession.

One of the key ways in which the GAP project impacted the Kurdish population was through the construction of large dams on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and development of irrigation systems, which often required the acquisition of land and relocation of local residents. In fact, the project proceeded to further resettlement and evacuation of villages (Jongerden, 2007). Additionally, the construction of dams and irrigation systems often destroyed cultural heritage sites (Adalet, 2018) and disrupted the region's ecosystem, leading to cultural and environmental degradation as well as a decline in biodiversity.

Also, the dams and hydroelectric facilities assisted the securitisation of canyons that had been used as alternative routes by guerrillas, and were consequently was employed as a means to control the movement of Kurdish communities, making them more visible, trackable, and subject to surveillance (Jongerden, 2007). Although the GAP project incorporated initiatives related to

"social development" and "sustainability," therefore, the many projects that fell under its umbrella did not replace military violence in the region but rather complemented it (Nilay Özok-Gündoğan, cited in Adalet, 2018).

Chapter 5

The Local Context: The City of Diyarbakır

5.1. Introduction

Diyarbakır – or Amed (for the Kurds)[16] – is a city of some 1.8[17] million inhabitants in southeastern Turkey near the border with Syria. It is the ninth biggest city in Turkey (Statista, 2021), capital of the corresponding province and a regional centre in the southeast. It is also the putative capital of northern Kurdistan; Diyarbakır today is mainly inhabited by Kurds.

Located next to the Tigris River and Karacadağ mountain, Diyarbakır is an important and ancient city. It has been the cradle of many civilisations and carries a rare cultural and historical heritage with unique architectural elements (DBB, n.d.). Once the capital of Mesopotamia (UNESCO, 2014, p. 24), its historical and geopolitical importance derives from its position on a natural transit route through the valley region. The city played a pivotal role as a significant trade artery linking Asia to Anatolia through Mesopotamia and by the nineteenth century was one of the biggest commercial centres in the Ottoman Empire (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Consequently, it has been a centre of cultural, historical, economic, social, and symbolic importance.

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[16] 'Amed' is the Kurdish-origin name; before 1937, the name was 'Diyarbekir', but Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), called the city 'Diyarbakır' during a visit, whereupon Cabinet Decision No. 7789 was enacted, which changed the official name to its present version (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021)

[17] The Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat; *Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*, TÜİK) estimated the Diyarbakır province population for 2022 at 1,804,880; the main district, Bağlar, has a population of 406,471, with Kayapınar put at 419,513 and Sur at 100,613 (TÜİK, n.d.). In fact according to municipality data online in 2019, the total metropolitan population was 1,756,353 DBB, n.d.).

Figure 5.1. Aerial view of the city, with mass housing blocks and low-scale residential areas on either side of Fırat boulevard in the Kayapınar district (taken by the author, 2022).

The present-day city boasts a rich heritage characterized by a multifaceted past marked by diverse languages, religions, nationalities, and cultures and an architectural landscape adorned by mosques, churches, remnants of synagogues, tombs, educational institutions, commercial establishments and bathing facilities (Açıkyıldız, n.d.). The walls of Diyarbakır are inherited fortification structures. Constructed from black basalt stone, the biggest parts of the walls along with bastions and gates have survived; their construction date is unknown, but it is known that they were repaired and expanded by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 349 C.E. (SAMER, 2017).

Figure 5.2. An image from Lalebey and Alipaşa neighbourhoods in Suriçi, the historical centre of the city (taken by the author, 2022).

5.2. Development of the city and region

Diyarbakır province is divided into 17 districts, four of which are in the city of Diyarbakır: Bağlar, Kayapınar, Yenişehir and Sur (DBB, n.d.). Officially, Sur refers to the city district (an administrative territory larger than the historical area, Figure 5.3.) while Suriçi is the area inside the walls (the site of the old city). In fact, people (and this thesis) use both the names Sur and Suriçi to refer to the historical area inside the walls.
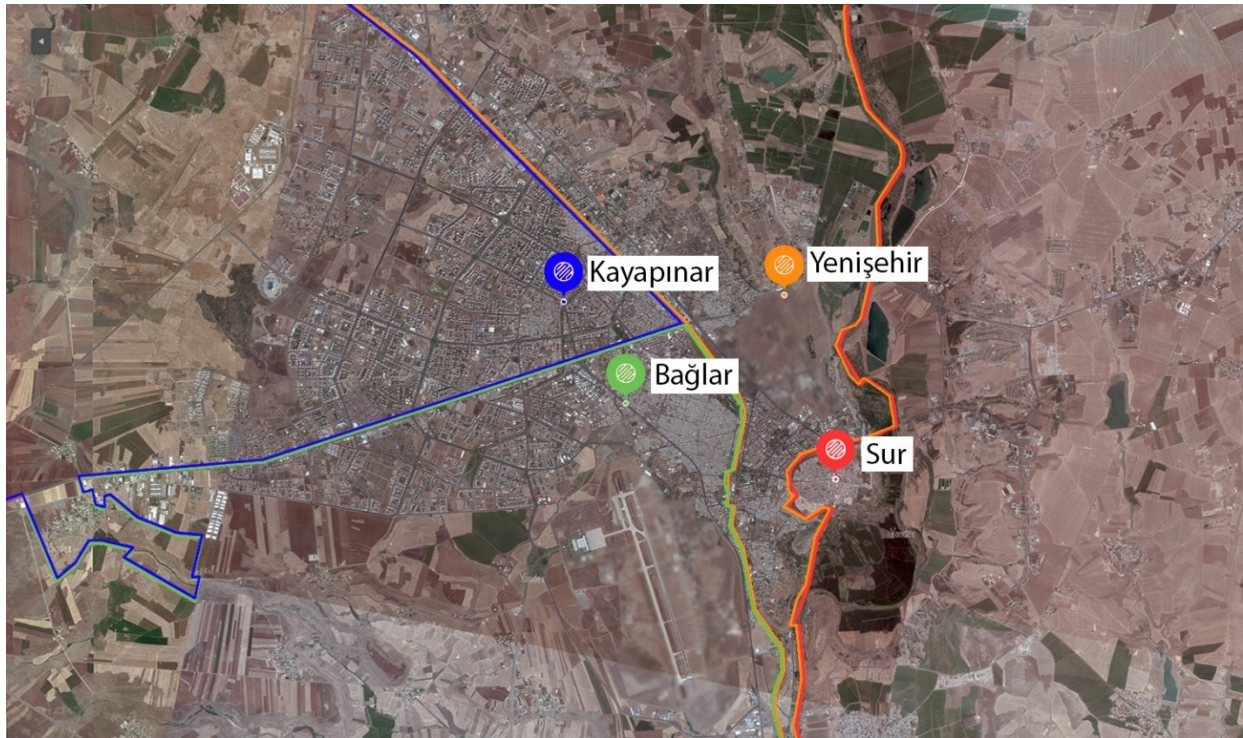
Figure 5.3. Map of the four main districts comprising Diyarbakır city: Bağlar, Kayapınar, Yenişehir and Sur (edited base map from Yandex).

The Diyarbakır Association for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets (*Diyarbakır Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Derneği*, DKVD) argues that the fortress and, more specifically, the gates, have radically influenced the development of the city, both the old but also the new city, from both urban and architectural perspectives (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Figure 4.4 shows the Diyarbakır region that, by the beginning of the 20th century, was constituted by the fortified city of Suriçi beside the Tigris River.
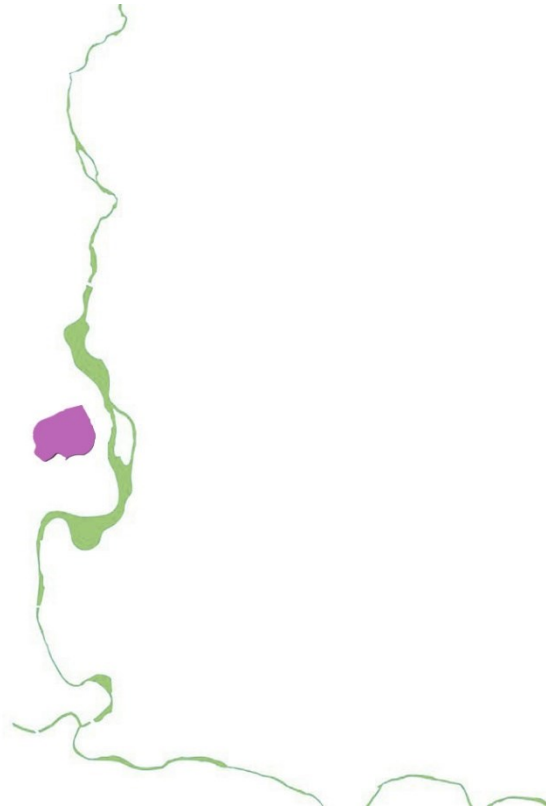
Figure 5.4. Conceptual map of the region: at the turn of the twentieth century, purple: Diyarbakır city (purple); green: River Tigris (edited version based on Tattara et al, 2015)

During the period of the formation of the Turkish republic, a military presence was installed in the city and the construction of Yenişehir (the new city) in the northwest, immediately outside the walls, installed "modern bureaucratic power or spaces" in the urban environment, including hospitals, parks and the city hall (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021, p. 374). The physical construction, design and architecture of Yenişehir were based on principles of modern planning and the "identity construction policy of the Republic," with the republican administration aiming to "erase the traces of the past" by moving the city out of the historical peninsula of Suriçi as a 'revanchist' urban strategy against the Ottoman imperial legacy (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021, pp. 371, 373).

The city population had a proportionally important percentage of non-Muslims, mainly Armenian and Assyrian Christians forced to flee due to a sequence of events spanning the Armenian

Genocide in 1915 to the Istanbul pogrom events of 6-7th September 1955 (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). A major part of the walls near the north and south gates was demolished in 1930 for ventilation purposes (ibid.). During that period, the train station, factories, schools and other important infrastructure installations motivated people to live outside the walls to the western of Suriçi (ibid.). Prior to 1952, the city primarily consisted of Yenişehir and Suriçi, but after 1955, urban growth extended beyond the train station area to the west of the city (AFAD, 2021).
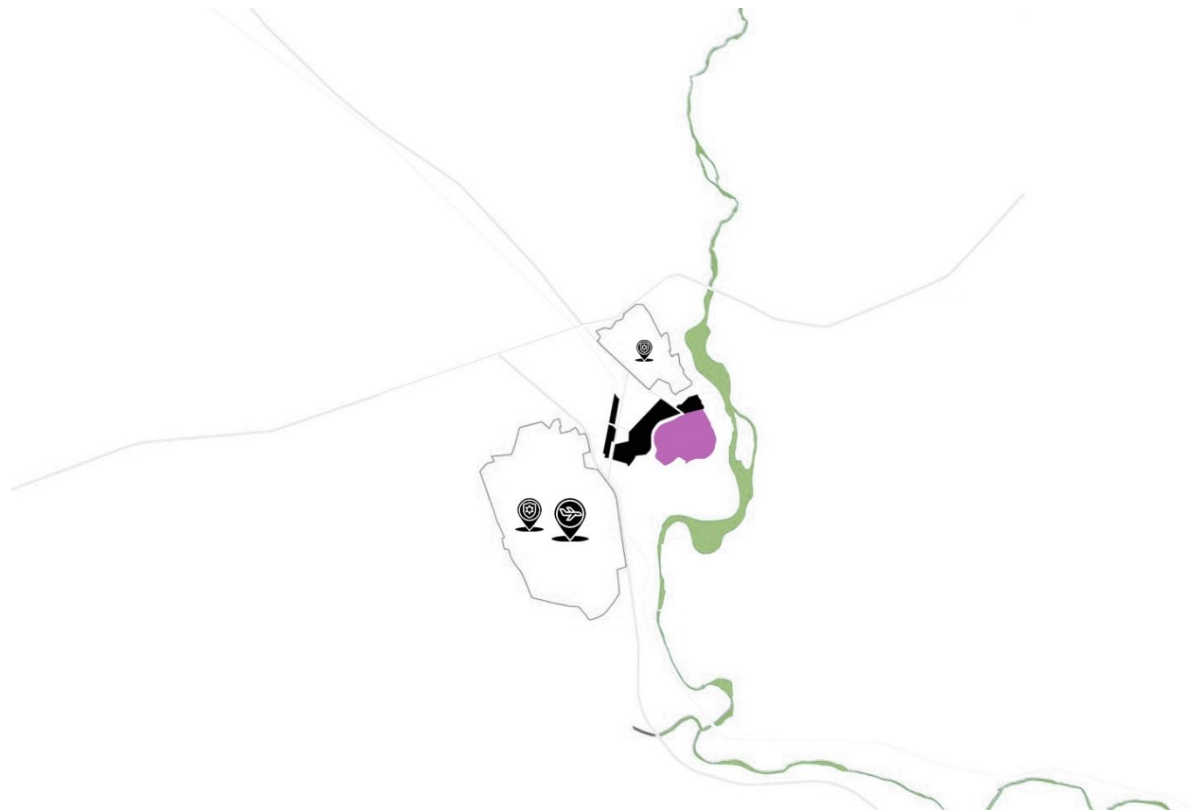
Figure 2.5. Conceptual map of the region: Diyarbakır in the first years of the republic (edited version based on Tattara et al, 2015)

Urbanisation in the Bağlar area (Figure 5.3.), which used to be vineyard land, began with the settlement of the landowners, so the original parcel layout of the vineyards came to directly influence the current street layout and housing (AFAD, 2021). In the 70s, the unplanned growth of Bağlar shaped areas of informal and shanty housing (*gecekondu*), driven by rural-to-urban migration due to economic factors. This resulted in the construction of single or two-story

irregular dwellings, particularly in neighbourhoods around Sur, Bağlar-Dörtyol, and Yenişehir industrial site (*sanayi sitesi*) (AFAD, 2021), while new centralities and suburbs also emerged.

**Figure 5.6.** *Gecekondu* area immediately outside the southern part of the walls (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.7. Conceptual map of the region: Diyarbakır in the 1960s-80s (edited version based on Tattara et al, 2015)

Between 1975 and 2000, urban development was most pronounced in Bağlar and Yenişehir, with nearly half of the new housing areas added to the city between 1975 and 1984 located in Bağlar (AFAD, 2021). After the 1980s, populations displaced and dispossessed by the Turkish state evacuation programme in its war with the PKK fled to nearby towns and (then) regional (Kurdish) cities, especially Diyarbakır (and also, perhaps later, to the country's largest metropolitan centres in the west). In Diyarbakır, this internal migration resulted in a skyrocketing of the city's population (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Suriçi – the area inside the walls – underwent various reconstruction and deconstruction phases due to the migration. The influx thus shaped a different demographic as well as a new built environment.

> "For the displaced population, settling into the city was a shift from a pre-modern life
> with clear social structures and relational networks to an unclear urban society and
> economy. The arrival of the refugees also changed the city itself, forging an unfamiliar

mixture of rural and urban patterns of subsistence, social life, and solidarity." (Tattara and Nichols, 2015, p. 5).

Parallel with this process, the expansion of the city continued towards Şanlıurfa Boulevard when Diyarbakır experienced rapid residential development between 1984 and 1994 (AFAD, 2021). In the 2000s, new development areas emerged in Kayapınar and Bağlar, marked by a notable increase in vertical construction, particularly high-rise residential blocks, which significantly transformed the cityscape (ibid.). By around 2010, the urban area of the city had doubled, and then the construction sector experienced a slow-down and development was paused (Çaylı, 2021). Within the city, the city's middle class instigated a novel trend of internal migration towards the Kayapınar district over the past two decades, fuelling the ongoing growth of postmodern Diyarbakır (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021).
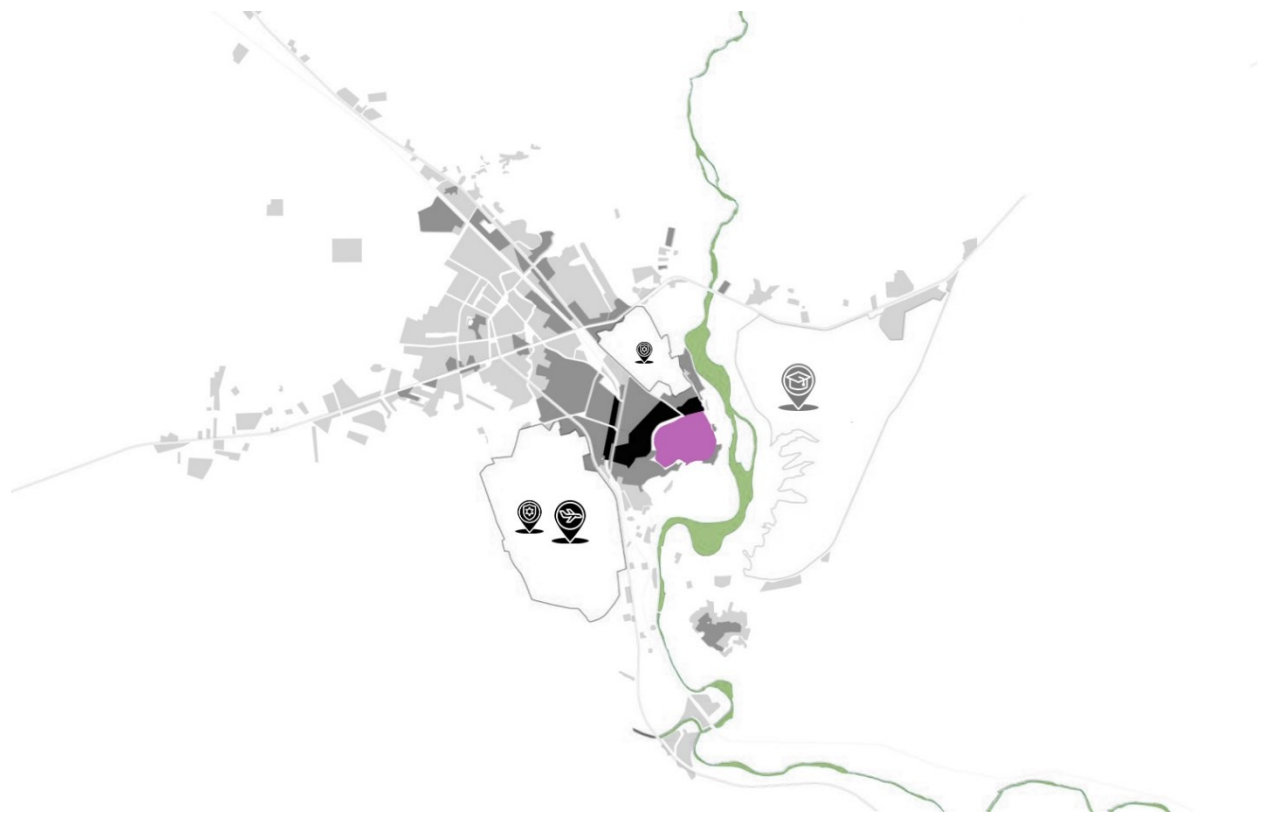
Figure 5.8. Conceptual map of the region: the development of Diyarbakır after the 1980s (edited version based on Tattara et al, 2015)

Overall, if we consider Sur Fortress as the city centre, the rest of the city was developed to the northwest:

> "Restricted by the [Dicle] river valley to the east, a military site to the north, and the airport to the south, Diyarbakır grew in a corridor towards the northwest." (Tattara and Nichols, 2015, p. 13).

Preventing development in the south also are the Hevsel Gardens, an area used to produce fruits and vegetables that sustain the city, up to this day. The southwest direction was developed as an area of informal settlements, but limited by the airport area. Thus, the city has been and continues to be developed mostly towards the northwest, broadly following the Elaziğ and Diclekent Boulevards.
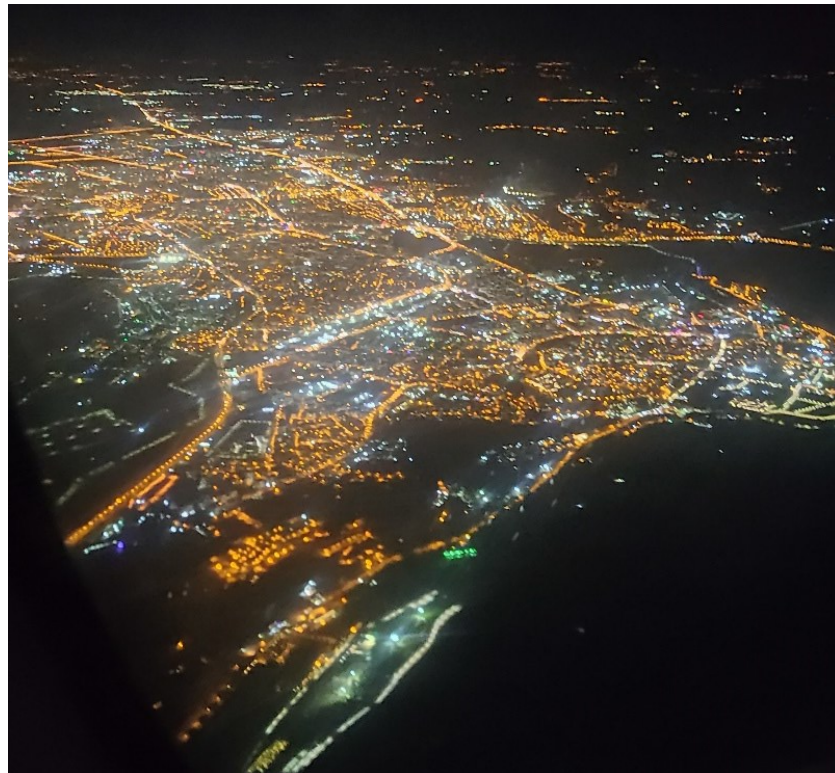
Figure 5.9. The modern city: Diyarbakır by night (taken by the author, 2022).

5.3. Diyarbakır today

The city of Diyarbakır has been growing beyond its historical walls since the 1930s (Gambetti 2010). In addition to its old quarter in the centre, the "downtown" area where the main commercial district is situated, it has westernised suburban neighbourhoods (the Bağlar, Yenişehir and Kayapınar districts), with wide boulevards, high-end residential sites and several shopping malls with international brands: "Diyarbakır is thus a micro cosmos as well as an example of provincial cosmopolitanism" (Gambetti, 2010, p. 101). Despite all this expansion, Diyarbakır has still ranked among the poorest cities in Turkey during the last decades and "has no identifiable economic sector aside from the construction industry" (Tattara and Nichols, 2015, p. 2).

The new parts of Diyarbakır city are organised in massive housing estate blocks of 3-10 tower blocks 10-15 stories high. These suburbs are designed for housing, with commercial activities on the ground floors.[18] The scale of the buildings and boulevards is really quite different than that of the historical centre of the city, as is their modernist layout, which follows the geometry of Le Corbusier (Figure 5.10).

> "But the human mind loses itself and becomes fatigued by such a labyrinth of possibilities. Control becomes impossible. […] Thus, in order to save himself from this chaos, in order to provide himself with a bearable, acceptable framework for his existence, one productive of human well-being and control, man has projected the laws of nature into a system that is a manifestation of the human spirit itself: geometry." (Corbusier, 1967, pp. 82–83)

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[18] For more on mass housing and the housing demand in Diyarbakır, see Sinemillioglu et al,(2005).
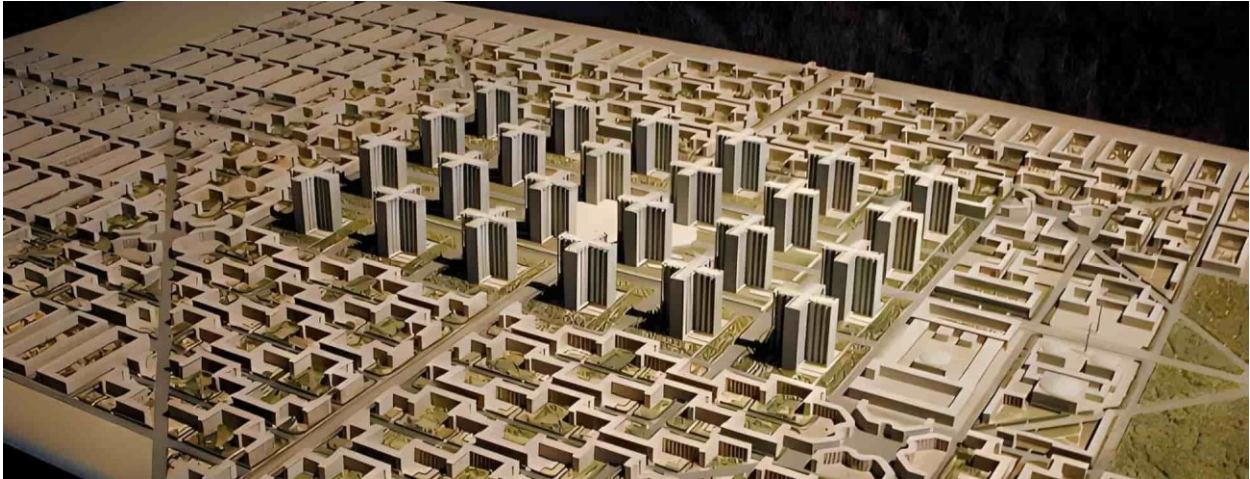
Figure 5.10. The Ville Contemporaine of Le Corbusier (Frithowulf, 2023).

Figure 5.11. Aerial view of Diyarbakır: Kayapınar district (taken by the author, 2022).

Kayapınar – or 'Yetmişbeş' (which means 75, named after the width of the streets) – is a residential area in the city's northwest suburbs. The scale here is designed to maintain enormous distances from apartments or shops in order to allow a sense of space between the residential towers; the estates have no sense of focus, with no central squares. Not only the scale but also

pace of life is very different from that in the new city. A vehicle is necessary to get around, and road junctions as roundabouts orient mobility and movement and becoming the local, daily-life reference points.

Figure 5.12. A focal roundabout: boulevards and the scale of housing blocks in Kayapınar

(taken by the author, 2022).

The Kayapınar area was divided into big parcels for development, so only large companies could invest in and construct on the plots—resulting in blocks of three-to-four 12-storey buildings along with the huge boulevards and widely spaced tower blocks. Each block has its own private security checkpoint and includes facilities such as parking, small parks, security cameras, cleaning and trash collection services. Oriented to the city's middle and upper class of the, the apartments are all over 100 m^2 – some much more than that – with at least three bedrooms and three bathroom/toilets (one alaturka, the other two European [*alafranga*]) and come fully equipped with technologically updated amenities.

Important city events (political and cultural) are held in Kayapınar. The people who attend those events also tend to live there, and it makes sense that civil society events are staged where most civil society actors are based. Although areas like Kayapınar seem designed to depoliticise by removing and de-articulating the peoples' togetherness, this does not seem to be what has transpired. Thus, one might observe, for every political or cultural event (Newroz celebration, Kurdish language performance/screening, etc.) that is held there, a successful challenge to the main principles and the underlying design rationale is made.

Figure 5.13. Housing blocks in Kayapınar area (taken by the author, 2022).

Finally, the two parts of the city, the old and the new, are different in terms of lifestyle and urban morphology and configuration. This does not necessarily place them in opposition, however; rather, they may be described as symbiotic.

5.4. The importance of Suriçi

Situated atop an escarpment within the upper Tigris River basin, an integral part of the renowned fertile crescent, the fortified city of Diyarbakır and its encompassing landscape have played a pivotal role from at least the Hellenistic era to the present, spanning the historical epochs of the Romans and the Sassanids, the Christian Byzantines and the Islamic Arabs and Ottomans (UNESCO, 2015). The heart of this cultural treasure encompasses the citadel – the Inner Castle (İçkale) – housing the Amida Mound, along with the sprawling, 5.8-kilometre city walls featuring a profusion of towers, gates and buttresses and adorned with 63 inscriptions (ibid.). Bearing the scars of time in the form of damage, repair, and fortification, the ancient city walls serve as a tangible testimony to the region's multifaceted history (ibid.). This is the old quarter of Suriçi.

In addition to the İçkale and city walls, referred to as the Dışkale or Outer Castle, the site as a whole encompasses the Hevsel Gardens alongside the Tigris River, historically supplying sustenance and water, and the venerable Ten-Eyed Bridge (ibid.). While the roles of the fortress and gardens have evolved over time, they have endured for centuries, still embracing the innermost core of the historic city (ibid.). Their significance, materials, form and architectural design remain quite discernible, meeting the authenticity requirements of UNESCO (2015).

Diyarbakır's urban planning history has focused on this architectural heritage, encompassing an initial plan in 1937, followed by a Master Plan in 1959 prepared by Iller Bank and the introduction of Implementation plans for the Suriçi district, activated in 1962 (AFAD, 2021). Additionally, a zoning plan was established in 1965, and planning efforts initiated by City Planner Zühtü Can in 1983 culminated in its completion by 1985, with subsequent revisions by the same planner made in 1994 (AFAD, 2021). The Suriçi region was declared an Urban Conservation Area by the decision of the Diyarbakır Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets in 1988 (TMMOB MODŞ, 2022).

Figure 5.14. Outside the walls, looking onto Hevsel Gardens (taken by the author, 2022).

The area was included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List on July 4, 2015, by Decision: 39 COM 8B.32 (UNESCO, 2015). Under this framework, the Suriçi area was to be protected under Turkish and international law (Küçükkırca, 2018). Upon the nomination, publicly consultation on a 'Site Management Plan' was engaged through participatory approaches with municipalities, related governmental institutions, NGOs, interested initiatives, scientists and neighbourhood mayors in the city (ANF News, 2017; Soyukaya et al., 2016).

The walls and their urban and natural contexts were adjudged to meet the criteria to be counted as of "outstanding universal value," along with the hydrological and natural resources that underpin the property's functional and aesthetic attributes (UNESCO, 2015). The area boundaries encompass all the elements requisite for articulating its value, including its landscape setting in proximity to the Tigris River (ibid.). Despite historical instances of demolition and some inadequately planned and executed conservation work in recent decades, the city walls largely stand in a well-preserved state. However, the Hevsel Gardens face vulnerabilities stemming from unauthorised settlements, commercial encroachments at the citadel base, obstructed drains, water quality issues, and (Tigris) river dams diverting water upstream (ibid.). Adequate buffer zones have been delineated, yet the property's integrity remains at risk due to urban

development pressures within the city centre and surrounding areas, including its buffer zones (ibid.).

Figure 5.15. Outstanding Universal Value of Hevsel Gardens and Tigris River (taken by the author, 2022).

The fortress walls and towers have been granted protection through their designation as an "Urban Site" (*Kentsel Alanı*) adhering to the directives of the Diyarbakır Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation (*Diyarbakır Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Bölge Kurulu*, DKVKBK) and the stipulations outlined in Law No. 2863 governing the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties (UNESCO, 2015). The Inner Castle (İçkale) peninsula is classified as a "1st-degree Archaeological Site," mandating official authorisation from the regional board for any prospective new construction or physical interventions. While scientific excavations can be authorised, they are strictly delimited to excavation endeavours without allowance for any construction or developmental activities (ibid.).

The Suriçi Urban Site Conservation Plan stipulates special provisions for the historical walls, towers, and wall gates, requiring clearance from the responsible municipality for any new constructions or physical interventions outside the walls and in the Hevsel Gardens ((UNESCO, 2015). Oversight and control over all archaeological studies and excavations in these areas are entrusted to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Diyarbakır Museum Directorate (*Kültür ve*

Turizm Bakanlığı, Diyarbakır Müze Müdürlüğü) (ibid.). Diyarbakır Fortress, İçkale, the Anzele Water Body, and Hevsel Gardens constitute the heritage zone, while Suriçi and the Tigris Valley are designated as the buffer area (Figure 5.16). Consequently, through national legislation and international agreements, Turkey has undertaken the responsibility of safeguarding the Suriçi buffer zone (Soyukaya et al., 2016). Site management is under the protection of both international laws and the Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Act (*Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu*), No. 2863:

> "These international agreements signed by Turkey as well are UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 2003), Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972), Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954), Venice Charter (1964) and The Declaration of Amsterdam (1975)." (Soyukaya et al., 2016, p. 3)

DİYARBAKIR FORTRESS AND HEVSEL GARDENS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

N

BZ

BZ

NP

MAP KEY

DİYARBAKIR FORTRESS

BOUNDARIES

NOMINATED PROPERTY

BUFFER ZONE

TIGRIS (DİCLE) RIVER

DATA ABOUT THE AREA

SITE MANAGEMENT AREA - **(NP+BZ+BZ)** : 21.818.143,99 m² (2.181,81 ha)

NOMINATED PROPERTY - NP : 5.212.388,44 m² (521,23 ha)

BUFFER ZONE - BZ (INSIDE THE CITY WALLS) : 1.317.212,40 m² (131,72 ha)

BUFFER ZONE - BZ (OUTSIDE OF THE CITY WALLS) : 15.288.543,15 m² (1.528,85 ha)

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES OF THE NOMINATED PROPERTY - NP

NP.1 -Longitude : 40° 13' 31.36" E
Latitude : 37° 54' 26.69" N (Westernmost Point)

NP.2 -Longitude : 40° 15' 1.69" E
Latitude : 37° 55' 12.93" N (Northernmost Point)

NP.3 -Longitude : 40° 15' 20.29" E
Latitude : 37° 53' 52.95" N (Easternmost Point)

NP.4 -Longitude : 40° 13' 38.69" E
Latitude : 37° 53' 5.31" N (Southernmost Point)

NP.5 -Longitude : 40° 14' 21.51" E
Latitude : 37° 54' 11.16" N (Central Point)

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES OF BUFFER ZONE - BZ (OUTSIDE OF THE CITY WALLS)

BZ.1 -Longitude : 40° 13' 05.42" E
Latitude : 37° 54' 46.72" N (Westernmost Point)

BZ.2 -Longitude : 40° 14' 6.35" E
Latitude : 37° 56' 53.24" N (Northernmost Point)

BZ.3 -Longitude : 40° 16' 16.30" E
Latitude : 37° 53' 50.47" N (Easternmost Point)

BZ.4 -Longitude : 40° 13' 48.95" E
Latitude : 37° 52' 19.73" N (Southernmost Point)

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES OF BUFFER ZONE - BZ (INSIDE THE CITY WALLS)

BZ.5 -Longitude : 40° 13' 39.46" E
Latitude : 37° 54' 38.00" N (Westernmost Point)

BZ.6 -Longitude : 40° 14' 21.30" E
Latitude : 37° 54' 59.36" N (Northernmost Point)

BZ.7 -Longitude : 40° 14' 39.64" E
Latitude : 37° 54' 42.98" N (Easternmost Point)

BZ.8 -Longitude : 40° 13' 50.68" E
Latitude : 38° 54' 18.32" N (Southernmost Point)

500 m   0m   500 m   1000m   1500m
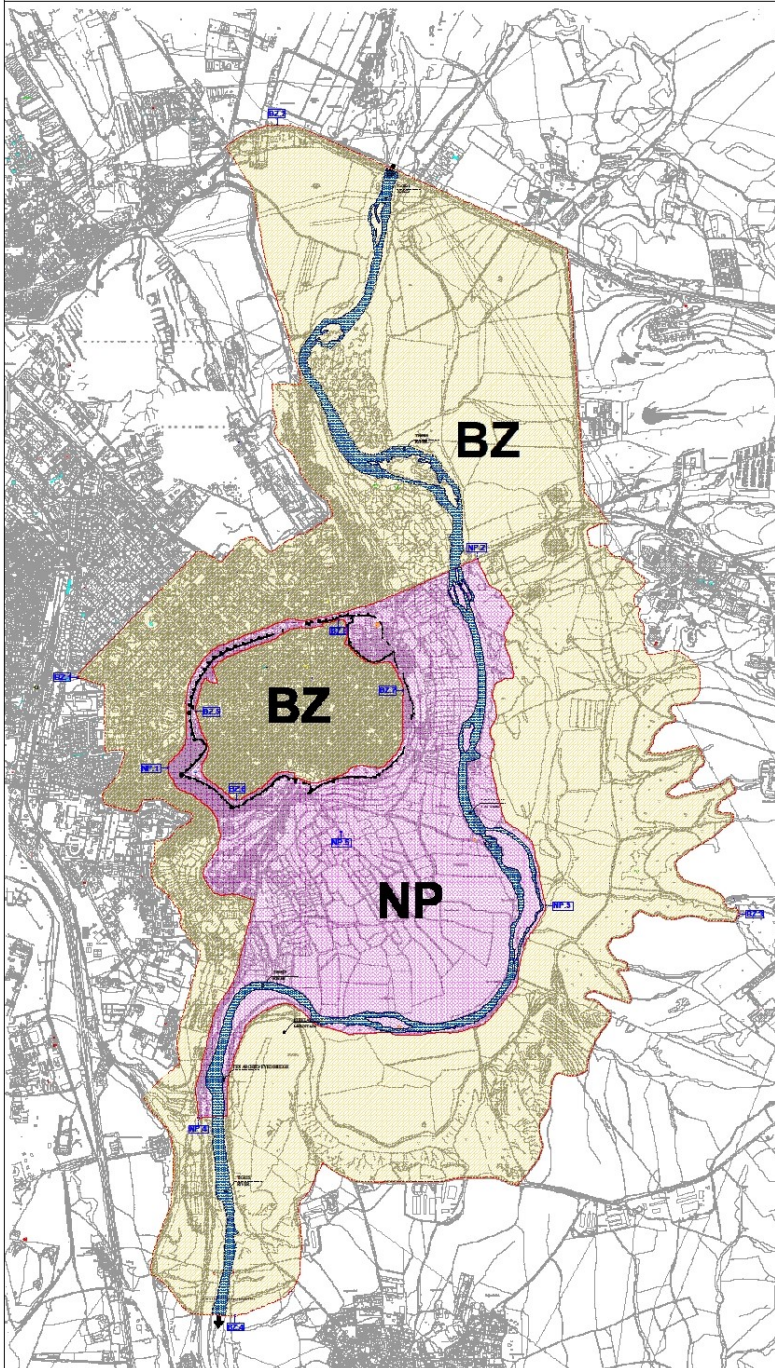
Figure 5.16. Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens World Heritage Site, map of inscribed property. NP (pink): Hevsel Gardens area and fortress walls; (beige): buffer zone and BZ: inner part of Suriçi; (blue): Tigris River (UNESCO, 2014).

5.5. Suriçi: the study site

The historical peninsula of Diyarbakır, Suriçi is defined by its fortification walls With a history dating back to 3-4,000 BCE, comprising 82 bastions of various geometric forms, the walls were constructed using basalt, primarily sourced from Şanlıurfa Karacadağ (ÇŞİDB, n.d.). Although known as an importantly architectural heritage feature, for the local people, the walls are also a place where people climb to sit and relax; according to my fieldwork observation, they make up a beloved space of the city.

The fortress has four gates, each oriented towards a different direction: Dağkapı (also known as Harputkapı) facing north, Urfakapı (or Rumkapı) facing west, Mardinkapı (or Telkapı) facing south and Yenikapı (alternatively referred to as Dicle or Surkapı) facing east (Kamer, 2015). The total surface area of the fortress (old city) site is 700 hectares (TMMOB MODŞ, 2018).

The old city of Suriçi has long been divided into four quarters by the main trade roads. The north-south Cardo Maximus Way is now Gazi Road (*Gazi Caddesi*) and the east-west oriented Decumanus Way is Melik Ahmet Road (*Melik Ahmet Caddesi*) (which now, after the recent redevelopment, continues uninterrupted to the east part of the walls). The north-south Gazi Road is the basic traffic vein of Sur with lively commercial activity and a sense of neighbourhood life (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Previously called 'Bağdat Road', it was renamed 'gazi' (war veteran) after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as part of the republican renaming programme (ibid.) (see above, Chapter 4.3). The area that took its name after the walls – the Turkish word '*sur*' means 'wall' – consists of 15 neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) as shown in the map below (Figure 5.17).

This area has witnessed the rule of various empires and dynasties and has been "a potpourri of ethnic and religious groups, which had lived intermingled for centuries" (Aydın and Verheij, 2012, p. 15). Turks, Kurds, Turkified Kurds, Zazas, Arabs, Armenians, Syrian Orthodox (Süryanî), Jews, Greek-Orthodox (Rum), Syriacs comprising of Nestorians (Nesturî) and Catholic Nestorians, known as Chaldeans (Keldânî) compelled a multi ethnic and religiously diverse social structure (ibid.). Around the mid-19th century, Diyarbakır had an estimated population of 35 to 40 thousand, with one half comprising Christians (Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Rums [Greeks]) and Jews, and the other half consisting of Muslims (Kurds, Turks, Arabs), alongside smaller communities of (Christian) Circassians, (Muslim) Alevis, and (Kurdish [Kurmanji]-speaking) Yazidis living in nearby villages (DITAM, 2018).
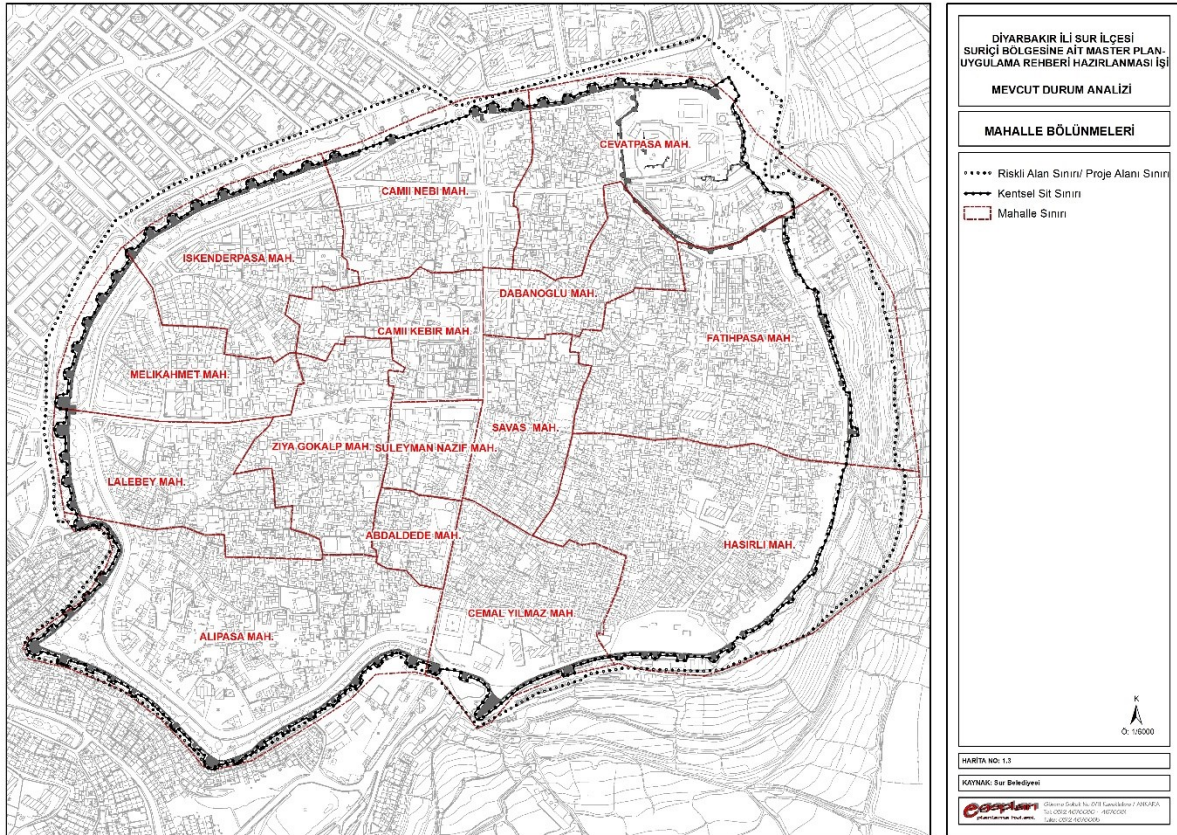

Figure 5.17. Neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) of Suriçi (source: protected).

Figure 5.3. Suriçi in 1939 aerial image (source: Technical Chamber archives).

As an enclosed and little developed area in terms of vertical housing (tower blocks), the population of Suriçi did not change greatly during the twentieth century. In 2015, it was estimated to have approximately 50 thousand residents (Soyukaya, 2017, p. 2) – but it had around three times more than that during the daytime, primarily due to its city-centre role as a cultural and commercial hub (Küçükkırca, 2018). On and around the main commercial streets, old-style low and contemporary high apartment buildings saw bustling trade activity. The rest of Sur was mostly residential areas with dishevelled, two-storey buildings along narrow labyrinthine streets. It was also a highly politicised area. Local election results in 2014 gave 54% support for the pro-Kurdish party (at that time, the BDP) and 36% for the AKP. The general election on 7th June 2015 indicated 82% support for the pro-Kurdish party (now the HDP) and 12% for the AKP,

while the general election on 1st November 2015, revealed 76% support for the HDP and 20% for the AKP (Küçükkırca, 2018).[19]

Sur was also the poorest of the city's four districts in terms of the socioeconomic status of its residents. This was partly due to the outward movement of people in the form of middle-class suburbanisation leaving behind a familiar pattern of inner-city poverty; but it was also a result of the huge number of immigrants it had been hosting, regionally internally displaced people from the 1990s who had generally arrived as destitute villagers (DITAM, 2018; see below, 5.6.3). As a working class and immigrant area the solidarity among people in Suriçi was strong. In my fieldwork, I found this to be still the case, among both those who lived or worked there and even though the conflict had disrupted all social bonds and alliances:[20]

> "The traditional city of Diyarbakır [Suriçi] is not a dead archaeological site but rather a vibrant city centre connected to the growing metropolis encapsulating markets and numerous traditional and densely populated neighbourhoods (until recently) despite its increasing significance. (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021)

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[19] The percentages are subject to turnout, of course, with different demographic considerations applicable to different elections; various factors were specific to the vote share changes in the November 2015 're-run'.

[20] An interesting example of solidarity captured my attention during the fieldwork: in the central part, where the shops are small and close to each other, restaurants that serve breakfast do not generally make tea for their customers but leave this for tea-sellers (*çaycılar*) walking around the area and selling tea from a tray; even though tea is very easy to prepare, shop owners choose not to maximise their profits in order to leave a space for local individual traders.
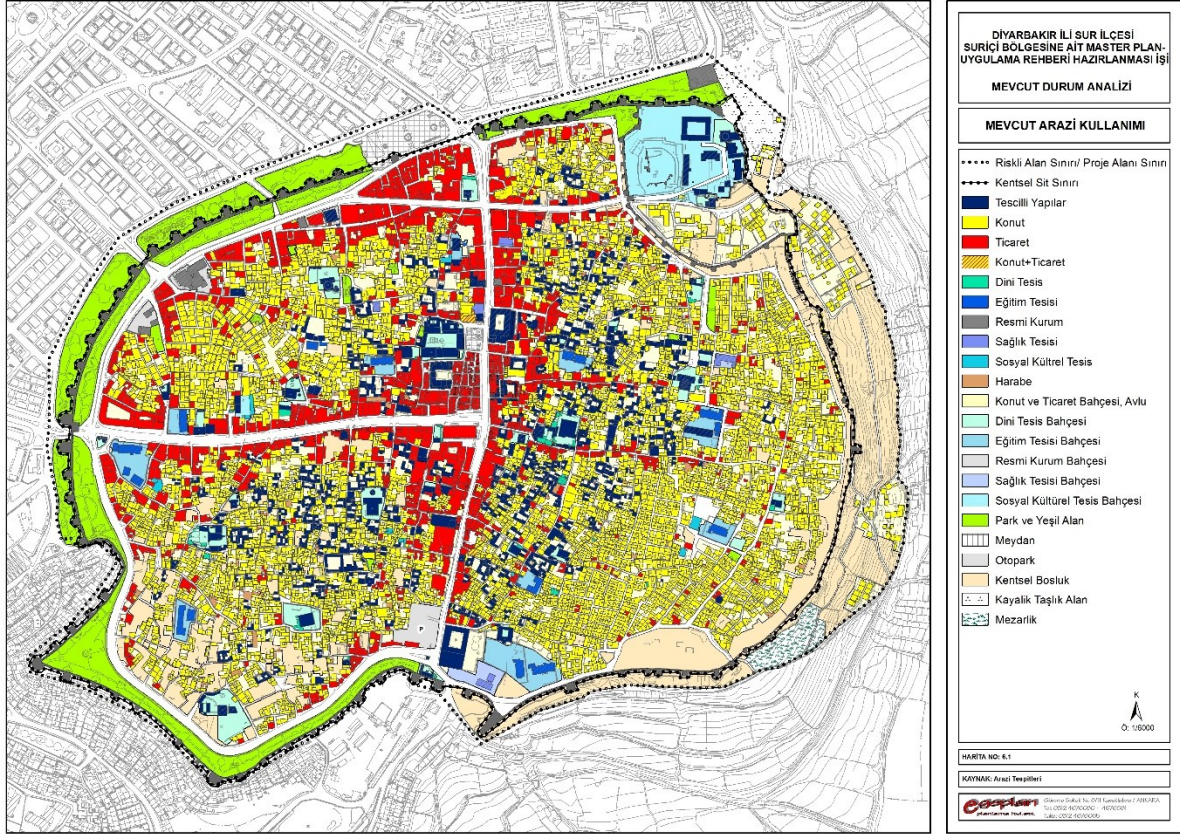
Figure 5.4 Suriçi: land use in 2012; red: commercial; yellow: residential; blue: social/cultural facilities (Sen, 2016, p. 11).

5.6. Architecture of Suriçi

Because Suriçi is an old and important city, it has many old religious structures in addition to the ancient fortress. An overview of its architecture can thus be divided into the ordinary residences or 'traditional', 'vernacular' dwellings and everyday spaces (markets, etc.), on the one hand, and religious buildings or monumental structures, on the other. Many of these are protected as registered cultural buildings Before the 2015-16 conflict (detailed below, in Chapter 7), Suriçi (Sur) had 595 registered structures, of which 147 were monumental and 448 were examples of vernacular architecture (Ayboğa, 2017).
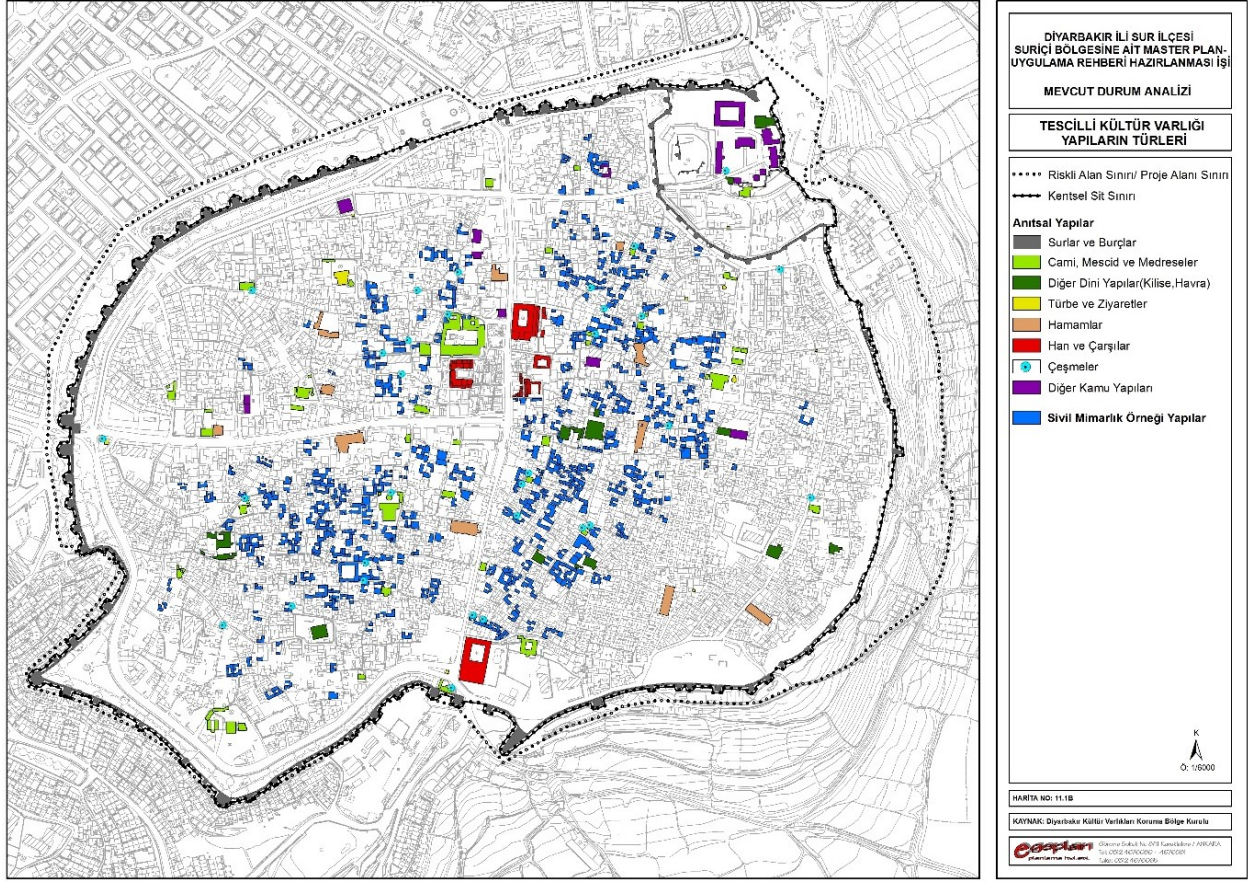
Figure 5.20. Suriçi: types of registered cultural heritage buildings (*tescilli kültür kultur varligi yapalarin türleri*), showing mosques, churches, tombs, baths (*hamam*), fountains, etc.; green: religious buildings, red: inns (han) and markets, blue: vernacular and traditional architecture (source: protected).

5.6.1. Residential buildings

Diyarbakır houses have been shaped by the influence of a variety of factors, including the traditions of the varying social cultures and different (ethno-religious) social groups, neighbouring cultures, the geography and climate and the available material possibilities of the region.[21] Here, the local materials and the courtyard are emphasised:

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[21] For extensive information on the local architecture, see Yıldırım et al. (2012).

"In all the periods of the city, a construction tradition based on the use of basalt, formed from the lava of the Karacadag volcano and quarried from the rich stone pits nearby and lime mortar. Brick and wood stand out as materials used in the architectural cover, while yellow limestone, quarried in Ergani and its environs, is used frequently in ornamentation. The alternating technique of black and yellow stone, developed in order to contrast the dark and string expression of basalt, is used especially on facades. The courtyard is one of the fundamental elements in the creation of any architectural plan in the city, where summers are very hot. Without exception, residential, religious commercial or social architecture all feature and are shaped around an inner courtyard. […] Facades facing the courtyard are designed in a highly dynamic and ornamental manner, while street facades have often been imagined as blind and massive structures. Ornamentations on the courtyard facades focus around symmetrically aligned doors, windows and niches." (Açıkyıldız, n.d.)

Figure 5.5 View of the Abdaldede neighbourhood (taken by the author, 2022).

Suriçi residences typically feature a secluded inner courtyard, shielded from external view, with buildings arranged around it (Kale Restorasyon, n.d.). These houses usually have a single-story winter section, with the northern part abutting the two-story summer residence of the neighbouring property (ibid.). Consequently, a two-story summer home often functions as

protection for the single-story winter dwelling (one neighbour to another), with the number of floors influenced also by family size (Kale Restorasyon, n.d.).

Figure 5.26 Old houses in the Alipaşa neighbourhood (taken by the author, 2022).

As shown below (Figures 5.23-5.27), these buildings have elements like bay windows, basalt stone masonry, courtyard walls with details, wide courtyards with pools, trees and street-facing doors. Other architectural features include windows with a multifoil arch (*merdiven*), passages (*geçit*) underneath buildings connecting spacious yards with the street, bay windows (*cumba*), pools (*havuz*), arches (*eyvan*) and balconies (*gezemek*). The book *Surveying Techniques Course, Student Studies* produced by the Chamber of Architects and University of Dicle shows examples of Suriçi traditional and vernacular architecture and its main architectural elements; it also analyses the great value of the unique local architecture and proposes conservation and restoration solutions for some building units in the area (Yıldırım et al., 2012).

Figure 5.23. Left: window with multifoil arch (*merdiven*) and a passage (*geçit*) underneath connecting the yard with the street; right: bay window (*cumba*) (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.24. Multi-family residence house, with an inner courtyard and newer additions (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.25. Arches (*eyvan*) and balcony (*gezemek*) (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.26. Traditional house courtyard, now working as a café (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.27. Pool (*havuz*) in a yard (taken by the author, 2022).

The important and various markets and bazaars (*pazar*, *çarşı*) that have survive until today – like

Demirciler Çarşı, Marangozlar Çarşı, Buğday Pazarı, Sipahi Çarşı and the Great Mosque Bazaar—

maintain the culture of traditional production and trading. Despite the fact that they are slowing mutating into centres aimed at touristic commerce, they continue to maintain much of their traditional character (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Yenikapı Street, on the other hand, is quite different now. This significant commercial area where merchants sell all kinds of goods from the region (food, fabrics, etc.) has taken on a very different shape today (discussed below, Chapter 8.3).
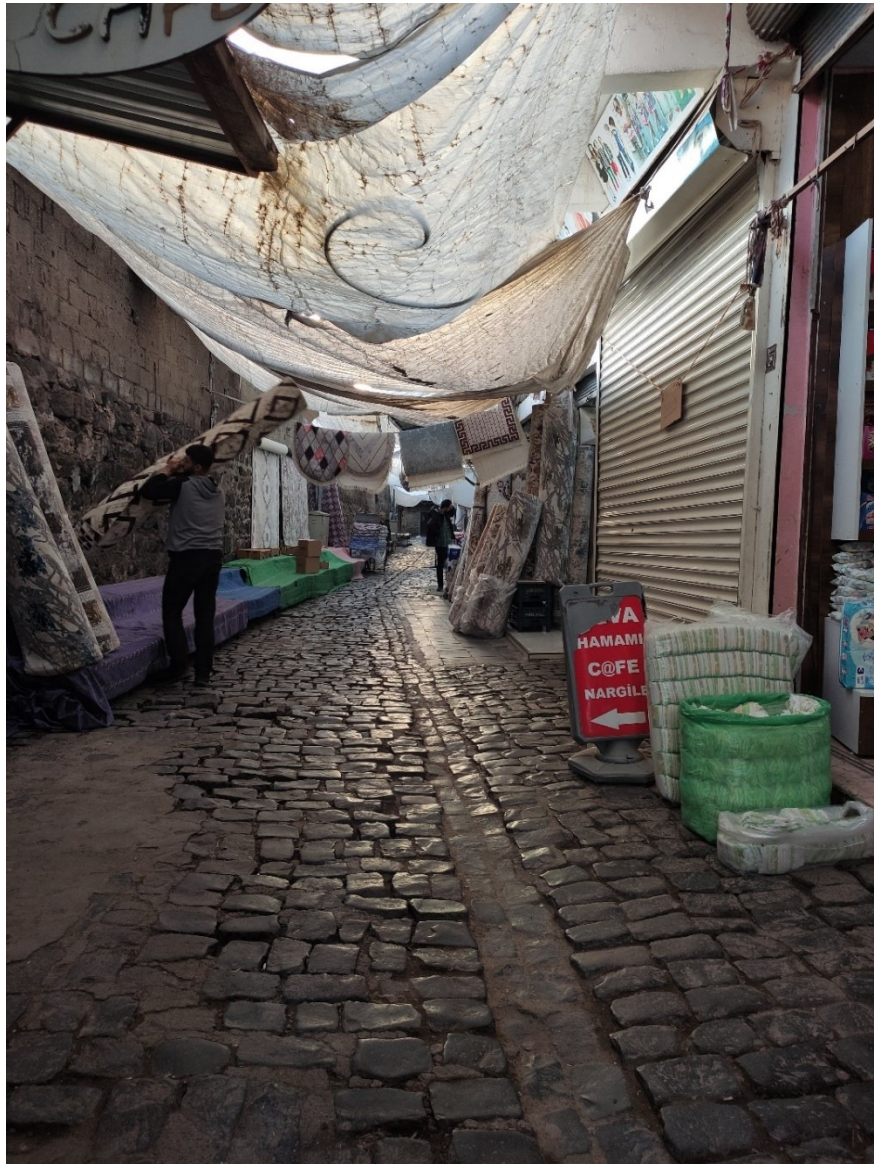
Figure 5.78. Peynirciler Çarşısı on Deve Hamamı street in the evening (taken by the author, 2022).

5.6.2. Monumental structures

The most important landmark of the city is undoubtedly the Great Mosque (Ulu Cami) (Figure 29). In fact, this is the oldest standing mosque in Anatolia (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021); prior to its conversion in 639 CE, it had been the St. Toma church (ibid.). Ranked in importance only after Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Damascus, the '5th Harem-i Sharif' is the Great Mosque of Diyarbakır (Çelik et al., 2016). In front of the building is what used to be the city's central square (ibid.).

Figure 5.89. Ulu Mosque and the old central square of Suriçi (taken by the author, 2022).

Located almost where Gazi Street meets with Yenikapı Street, Şeyh Matar Mosque stands beside the Four-Legged Minaret (*Dört-Ayaklı Minare*), "one of the most momentous symbols of Diyarbakır with its unique architecture erected on four columns" (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021, p. 479). Apart from its unique architectural value, the Four-Legged Minaret is also important as the starting point and symbol of the 2015-16 armed conflict. On 26th November 2015, clashes damaged the minaret, and on 28th November, a delegation headed by the human rights activist

and lawyer Tahir Elçi (head of Diyarbakır Bar Association [*Diyarbakır Barosu*]) urged against the damage being done to the local neighbourhood and its cultural heritage – but he was shot dead on the legs of the monument (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021).

Figure 5.30. Four-Legged Minaret (*Dört-Ayaklı Minare*) (taken by the author, 2022).

The area behind the four-legged minaret is the Gavur neighbourhood ('*gavur*' refers to non-Muslims, generally used pejoratively, as 'infidel' or 'heretic'). This is a heterodoxic area home to different languages and religions, mainly Armenians, and location of the Surp Giragos Armenian and Mar Petyun Chaldean churches (Beysülen, 2015).

Figure 5.31. Surp Giragos Armenian church and Mar Petyun Chaldean church (on the left) with impressive belltower; the churches were restored together (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.32. Newly restored interior of Surp Giragos Armenian Church (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.33. Newly restored interior of Mar Petyun Chaldean church (taken by the author, 2022).

5.7. Making Suriçi: displaced migrants and their new home

According to my discussants, prior to the 1960s, most of the population in Diyarbakır lived in the Suriçi district. However, from the 1960s to 80s, wealthy residents began moving to newer areas of the city due to difficulties with maintaining the large, historic buildings in Suriçi for daily living, such as the lack of proper kitchens or bathrooms and challenges with heating during winter. In the 1990s, the conflict in the Kurdish area caused many people living in villages to move to larger cities, including and especially Diyarbakır, resulting in a sudden population increase in Suriçi. In an interview during the recent conflict, the ex-mayor of Suriçi said the following:

> "Many residents of these towns are poor families who were forced to flee the countryside when the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state was at its peak in the 1990s. Those who are digging trenches and declaring "self-rule" in Sur and other cities and towns of southeastern Turkey today are mostly Kurdish youths in their teens and 20s who were born into that earlier era of violence, poverty and displacement and grew up in radicalised ghettos." (Demirbas, 2016)

The relatively low cost of living in the district and the traditional practice of relatives living together in large buildings (called *mazgar*) was a crucial factor in the choice of relocation of the internally displaced. Another important characteristic was that most people in Suriçi did not have stable employment and worked in the informal sector, so casual employment could be found that paid enough to cover daily expenses. In Suriçi, people lived in small houses with shared courtyards and developed unique economic relationships, such as the practice of '*veresye*', where one could pay for purchased goods later.[22] These economic relationships do not exist in the rest of the city. Interviewee No.27, a member of the Architect's Chamber and a woman who also had personal experience of this life when growing up in a large family in a *gecekondu* area, described life in Sur thus:

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[22] The same word is used in Greek.

"People there are not people who have bottles of olive [oil] at home for breakfast but people who go to the grocery store and buy cheese and olives on plastic plates just for that morning and take it home. People who don't have a stable monthly salary, most of whom work in casual jobs, [as] porters or in construction. They're people who were already in a bad situation. The fact that Suriçi is in the centre of Diyarbakır is something that can improve the economic situation for those in Suriçi, even a little, because they're close to everywhere. They didn't have any serious transportation expenses; they could easily reach everything or get something cheap. For example, Balıkçılarbaşı [bazaar] is not a place where there was a shopping mall but rather an area where these people produce food and clothing and sell to each other…"

The establishment of Sur as a home was influenced by the identity and identification of its residents (new and old), with lower-class Kurdish families fashioning the unique character of the area (Küçükkırca, 2018). Before the conflict, Zeynep Gambetti had written the following about the migrants in Suriçi:

"[They] denaturalize the effective identification of state, nation, and space. They disrupt the inscription of state power on space by twisting or disregarding regulations concerning urban existence. They further defy the cultural homogenization project by forming pockets of Kurdish culture within a space that the state intends to mark with Turkishness. As villagers, they were formerly invisible to the geopolitics of urban nationalism; now, their very presence in the city as immigrants disturbs the frontiers of visibility/invisibility within the space of nationalist practices." (Gambetti, 2010, p. 109)

This denaturalisation, defiance and disturbance was enabled by the confidence of numbers and cohesion in adversity enabled by the conditions of a liveable life in the poor city centre. While this was deeply problematic from the perspective of the state "cultural homogenization project," for the local people it was a natural expression of self and a way to get by. For the displaced in particular, the making of an urban home in Suriçi in the context of fraternity and solidarity among equals after having been roughly ejected from their family heritage in the countryside sharply contextualised the experience of being ejected again. The expropriation of properties and evacuation that was to be enacted by the state upon the conflict – the lack of autonomy, of a say in what happened – came like a wound on a wound:

"…so, when they leave the area, these people would actually prefer places like this [Suriçi], but they didn't have that possibility. The place they were given [apartments that were proposed for relocation by the state] was the mass housing areas in the

city's outskirts. Even going there meant a transportation fee. Also, there was no shared building expenses in Sur because everyone had their own garden and they didn't have a doorman. Unlike Sur, [in the new areas], there is a building fee in the housing estate, with a doorman, and people have to pay them.

"Since they couldn't pay for these services, they headed to other *gecekondu* areas [similar to Suriçi]. For example, there's a slum area at the last stop of Huzurevleri district. It's where I lived as a kid, and there are a lot of people there. Most of them migrated to Bağlar, which is under urban transformation, too, now! It was like these people were going somewhere, and the state was chasing them all the time. They took refuge here when their villages were burned in the 90s, they left here [Suriçi], went to Bağlar, and now they are being taken out of Bağlar! I mean, these people are in a constant struggle for life and they're being constantly chased." (Interviewee No. 27).

Figure 5.34. A child on the streets of Lalebey neighbourhood (taken by the author, 2022).

5.8. The spatial symbolisation of Turkish and Kurdish identity

Before the conflict, the Kurdish local government played a significant role in "the formation of a public sphere" and the "(re) appropriation of social space" by struggling as an intermediator both between and within the grassroots and the state apparatus (Gambetti, 2005, p. 69). The municipality highlighted and celebrated the multicultural aspect of the city – like the Armenian and Syriac cultures – rather than just the Kurdish – and transformed the urban space of Diyarbakır into an arena for counter-hegemonic narratives through re-appropriation of languages, cultural events and the renaming of streets, parks and buildings (Gambetti, 2010, 2005; Jongerden, 2009; Yüksel, 2011).

The ideological struggle centred around cultural and historical identity reconstruction was prominently expressed through competitive (mostly restoration) projects involving the municipality and state institutions (Genç, 2016). While the government was enriching the hegemony of a (Suni) Islamic identity, the Kurdish movement aimed to 'reconstruct' Diyarbakır into a cultural-political hub and "took physical and symbolic steps towards the decolonisation of Kurdistan" had determined that the region through political discourses since the 1970s (Genç, 2016, p. 6). This counter-hegemony was based on and incorporated the campaign to nominate the city walls for the UNESCO cultural heritage list and an associated move to gain recognition of the city's multicultural past in alignment with the current political discourse inside the Kurdish movement (Genç, 2016).

Historically, for the Turkish republic, the spatial strategies of Turkification had been materialised through the re/de-construction of cities and villages. The basic principle was materialised at the main avenue and square of towns and cities, which typically took the epithet 'Republic' (*Cumhuriyet*); the focal point was a statue of Ataturk (Jongerden, 2007) and administrative buildings would be prominent. In Diyarbakır, this function was performed by the main street in Suriçi, Gazi Road, which began at the city's monumental central Dağkapı Square with its statue of Atatürk.

An interesting element of the square was a massive concrete building, much larger than anything else in the area, which had an enormous mural of Atatürk as a soldier on the main façade; built in 1966, it was used as military housing apartments (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). The "skyscraper," was symbolic in the city as an example of modernist architecture, served as a prominent emblem of the square until recently (ibid.). It was featured on city postcards, showcasing the essence of republican Diyarbakır. In 1983, above Ataturk's figure, a sentence that he had said was added: "Those from Diyarbakır, Van, Erzurum, Istanbul, Thrace and Macedonia are the children of the same race, the veins of the same ore" (Gambetti, 2010, p. 106; Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021)).

Figure 5.35. Dağkapı Square, 2003; on the left are the city walls; in the centre. between the fountains. is the statue of Atatürk; on the right is an imposing military building with a huge Atatürk mural (ÇŞİDB, 2017).

In 2015, the building was deemed unstable and at risk to earthquake. It was evacuated, and five years later, in October 2020. it was demolished. Despite not invoking fond memories for most, this structure had become an integral carrier of the city's historical narrative, bearing architectural and cultural significance and asserting state power and the military control while also standing as "a reminder of the waste of public resources" (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021, p. 369).

These republican symbolic spatial practices of the state served the goal of reinforcing the foundational national narrative of Turkish strength and superiority. In the southeastern provinces, they took on a new meaning, simultaneously marginalising Kurdish identity in relation to Turkish identity and asserting the central state's presence and authority within the local landscape. For Kurds, therefore, Atatürk's figure transcended mere identity formation and came to represent the desire to erase their cultural identity through an internalisation of defeat, subjugation and powerlessness (Gambetti, 2010). The republican spatial practice provided a "material testimony to the official policy of denying the existence of a Kurdish identity" (Gambetti, 2010, p. 108). Today, one might argue, this practice is less linked to the denial of the Kurdish identity per se but rather to the political struggle with which this identity is linked.

Interviewee No. 22, a political scientist, activist and city NGO member gave the following overview of the imagination of the city:

> "There is an urbanisation of pro-Kurdish politics. In Turkey, there is a legalisation of the pro-Kurdish politics and institutionalisation of the pro-Kurdish politics – '*kntleşme, legaleşme, kurumsallaşma*' in Turkish. Before 1999, it was a rural movement, and this transformation, in fact, basically changed the class structure of the pro-Kurdish movement. Before 1999, it was a lower-class movement, and most of the people supporting the movement were poor, but after 1999, it became a coalition of lower class and middle class. In the legal party areas like the local government, media and NGOs, the power of the middle class increased dramatically, and that's why I say that the idea of gentrification is part of this middle class.
> "They wanted a gentrified city in Suriçi because they were thinking it was an area of illegality, you know, an area of poverty, that's the image they had about the city, and they thought they had to change this negative image. They wanted to build a modern image of Diyarbakır. That's why they were thinking 'We need to transform the area; we need to move the local population to another part of the city and open Suriçi for tourism, restaurants and hotels' …for the construction of the middle class. […] In fact,

the middle class has a different social imagination of Diyarbakır, and the lower class has a different social imagination about the city. Both of them are Kurdish, but they have different imaginations about the city, about the region. […] So, it's not an ideologically homogeneous group. It's a combination of lower class and upper class. The class base is also heterogeneous."

5.9. The past of urban processes in Diyarbakır

In 1999, the main (legal) pro-Kurdish party – then the People's Democracy Party (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*, HADEP) – won 38 municipalities at the local elections. This significance of this success was as much cultural and social as political (Gambetti, 2009). The first Kurdish movement mayors focused on 'decolonising' the city and delivering service provision to the socially disadvantaged (Jongerden, 2009). The decolonisation aimed at a local government that would take care of local society's needs and that would once again highlight its non-Turkish characteristics, which for decades had been suppressed. However, the municipal authorities were consistently engaged in negotiations with the Kurdish elite as well as the Turkish state and aligning with neoliberal requirements in addition to serving the local community (Yüksel, 2011). These considerations and forces were in play in the move towards archaeological restoration and urban renewal in and of the city, especially the old city.

5.9.1. Projects and plans

In 1988, the Suriçi area, encompassing the citadel (Inner Castle), was designated as the 'Diyarbakır Urban Archaeological Site', and in 1990, a protection-oriented development plan was established for the area (ANF News, 2017). According to information retrieved from municipality records, between 1999 and 2002, the informal structures around the city wall were subject to demolitions.

Figure 5.36. Demolitions of informal structures at Urfa Kapi, 2002 (ÇŞİDB, 2017).

In 2008, Diyarbakır was designated as the regional 'centre of attraction' as part of the Ninth Development Plan and Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) Action Plan. This involved the initiation of a coordinated effort led by the Karacadağ Development Agency (*Karacadağ Kalkınma Ajansı*) to implement a tourism-based growth strategy involving expensive restoration projects for prominent landmarks like the Ulu Cami and historic city walls (Genç, 2016). The objective can be understood in terms of a convergence of the AKP's specific strategy in the 2000s to establish dominance over the Kurdish population and the nationally embraced "economic and social

development" paradigm developed during the same era by development agencies, which played a key role in shaping its institutional and administrative structure (Genç, 2016).[23]

The concern about the direction the city was taking through such spatial projects – towards a touristification to the detriment of the locals – was not new. Gambetti (2009) had already raised concerns about the "cleaning-up" of the informal settlements contiguous to the historical walls of Suriçi and the motivation of transforming the city towards the principles that a tourist destination should have. According to the data of the Turkish Engineers' Chamber, a protocol was signed in September 2007 between TOKİ and Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality under Osman Baydemir, mayor for ten years between 2004-2014, entitled "Diyarbakır Historical Sur Urban Renewal Protection Zone (Shanty House Transformation) Project".

Under TOKİ-municipality renewal agreement, a conservation plan would be implemented, and 452 structures were identified as to be cleaned from the surroundings of the historic walls (TMMOB, 2019). The plan was expanded in 2008 to include the Lalebey & Ali Pasa neighbourhoods (see below, 5.9.2). In 2012, a Conservation Zoning Plan (*Koruma Amaçlı İmar Planı*) was approved by the regional cultural heritage conservation board (DKVKBK) and entered into force. Along with the planned Sur urban renewal, there were thus three different projects drawn up for the area by the municipality by 2012 (Figure 5.37). In short, an urban renewal strategy was being initiated focusing on conservation but emphasising the opportunities for tourism and consumerism that the historical city could seek and proposing the destruction of informal settlements (Jongerden, 2021).

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[23] The 2007-13 development plan strategy established a vision for "a Turkey… transforming into a society" (*toplumuna dönüşen… bir Türkiye*) to be effected through five "axes": increasing competitiveness, increasing employment, strengthening human development and social solidarity, ensuring regional development and increasing the quality and effectiveness of public (TCCSBB, 2006)
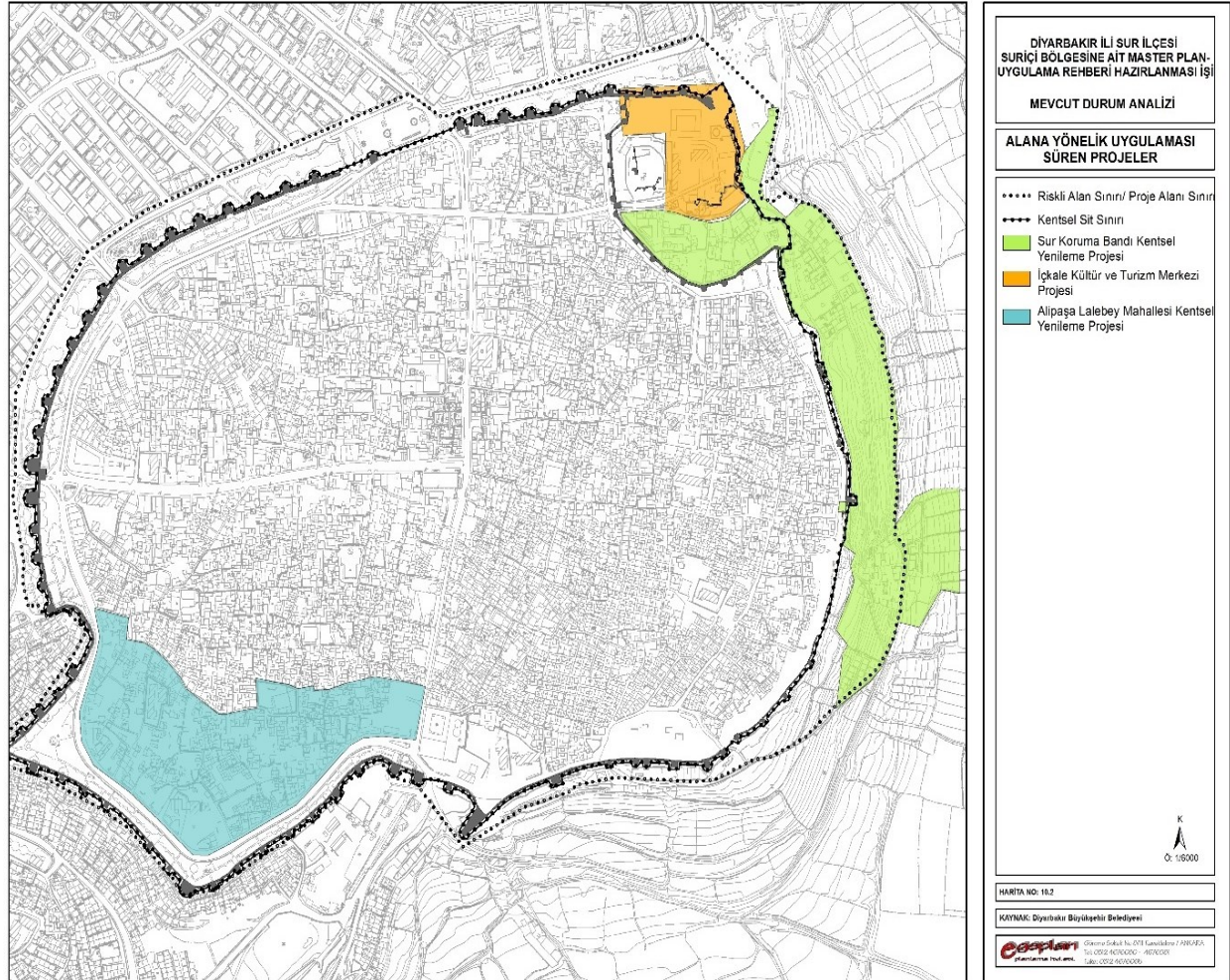
Figure 5.37. Projects introduced in 2012 by the local government; green: Sur Urban Renewal Protection Zone; blue: Ali Paşa-Lalebey Urban Renewal; orange: İçkale Culture and Tourism (Bakan, 2019).

On 4th November, an official announcement by the Council of Ministers declared Suriçi a "Disaster Risk Area" (*Afet Risk Alanı*) according to Law No. 6306, which had been passed just a few months earlier (in May) (Resmî Gazet, 2012a, 2012b). This decision transferred all authority and competence for development to the urbanisation Ministry (Vardar, 2015). At a single stroke, the whole area, approximately 187 hectares of land within the borders of the district of Sur, was made subject to the potential of redevelopment on the pretext of unsafe construction and empowered the central rather than the local authority to oversee this. Moreover, the decision

simply represented the whole of Sur with a single outline map as determining the geographical scope of risky buildings, like a blank slate to be filled.[24]

In addition to uncertainty about quite what was envisaged or planned, this decision raised legal and human rights concerns. Objections were expressed against the decision due to non-compliance with legal requirements and potential violations of the right to property and housing (SAMER, 2017). These were based on

> "the lack of proper processes and assessments as required by law, the absence of analysis and reports on the geological structure, the discrepancy between the number of buildings at high earthquake risk and the declaration of the entire area as risky and the violation of the "Right to Housing" as stated in the Constitution." (SAMER, 2017)

The interests in this on the part of the public and private sectors of the construction industry involve the exploitation of natural resources and the environment, in this case, the public land and small-scale property. It also tends to mean the ejection of local residents, one way or another, and may occur in restoration work – as part of the redevelopment process – as well as in urban renewal. For the city of Diyarbakır, this had been evident from the local authority actions after the nomination for the UNESCO Heritage List:

> "When you go to Yenikapı, which is located in the eastern part of the city, you come across windows and doors opening to the walls. In the past, there were hundreds of shanty houses built adjacent to the walls in this part of the city. Plastered painted places on the walls are from those houses. […] A few families who do not have any income and cannot afford to rent have started to use the warehouses and passages in this part of the city walls as homes. UNESCO's decision caused them to be homeless rather than joyful because they had seen destruction before." (Kamer, 2015)

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[24] The decision simply represented the whole of Sur (with a single detailed outline map *[kroki]*) as determining the geographical scope of potentially risky buildings; a classified presentation of the urbanisation ministry confirmed that 'risky building' was understood as legally defined, namely as "a building inside or outside the risky area, which has completed its economic life, or which is determined on the basis of scientific and technical data to be at risk of collapse or severe damage" (*Riskli alan içinde veya dışında olup ekonomik ömrünü tamamlamış olan ya da yıkılma veya ağır hasar görme riski taşıdığı ilmî ve teknik verilere dayanılarak tespit edilen yapıyı*) (Law 6306, 2, c) (Resmî Gazet, 2012b). In fact, this only applied to a small proportion of the buildings in Sur (see below, 7.3.1).

By removing informal settlements encircling the city walls, the Diyarbakır municipal authority aimed to establish an area that recognised the city's physical heritage, while a part of the local population, specifically those in poverty (Hakyemez, 2018). A major driving force for this was economic – the aim to gain from tourism – and it was a similar motivation that saw the declassification of green areas to residential areas.

In September 2013, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation (*Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı*) unilaterally (under Decision No. 5721) transferred the city park called '*Kent Ormanı*' {lit.: 'town woods'] to TOKİ to be made into a 3,000-decare "Housing Reserve Area" (Radikal, 2013). Clearly, the motive was financial profit – this green site was prime real estate for expensive housing – a decision characterised as "environmental destruction by architectural construction" (Çaylı, 2016b, p. 369).

The above-mentioned plans – prepared prior to the conflict – intended a commercial upgrading and the promotion of a new historical and cultural identity for the old city. These projects orchestrated in the pre-conflict period established the framework of the recent production of urban space in Diyarbakır. The major urban initiatives of the pre-conflict period involved– primarily the government, TOKİ and the metropolitan municipality – united by their aspiration to reconfigure Suriçi into a hub for commerce and tourism (Bakan, 2018). While this shared objective fostered cooperation between the central state and the Kurdish leadership on urban regeneration and cultural revitalization endeavours the divergence in ideological stances and shifts in macro-level politics rendered deliberations challenging at the grassroots level (ibid.).

It is apparent from this brief review that while the responsibility for what happened after the conflict lies with the (Turkish) central government, a major share of the blame for what happened beforehand and led up to it falls on the (Kurdish) local authority. While conducting my fieldwork and interviews, I encountered several local stakeholders who discussed legislation acts as being initiated by the Kurdish mayorship at the expense of the city's lower classes. Indeed, it was Mayor Osman Baydemir who suggested an urban transformation plan, which was eventually the idea

that would be enacted by the Ministry. While commenting on the period of Baydemir's governorship, Interviewee No. 30, an architect scholar and activist who worked in the region but now lived in Istanbul said the following:

> Baydemir's plans introduced those wide, big avenues to the city. Those openings, those green lands between the highways [referring to the declassification and development of green areas]. I think it has to do something with the way the city itself became middle class. How the city gained some kind of investment potential. How the city developed its own bourgeoisie Not even middle class but also upper class.

A different approach to urban policy and the inner-city neighbourhoods was introduced In 2014, when Gülten Kişanak became the new mayor.[25] Kişanak was against people's displacement and disposition, heard the reactions from the local community and halted the urban transformation projects (Jongerden, 2021). According to the Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, the metropolitan municipality "unilaterally suspended the project plan due to the fact that the project carried out did not respect the interests of Sur people" (TMMOB, 2019, p.77). Upon later research by the Zan Institute, over 80% of respondents were found to have a negative opinion about the project (Arslan et al., 2016). This is not unlike the opposition expressed in historical neighbourhoods in other cities in Turkey – as seen in cases like Sulukule, Tarlabaşı and Ayvansaray in Istanbul, areas hosting predominantly Roma and Kurdish populations. These old neighbourhoods also faced demolition and enforced evacuation in order to make way for top-down urban redevelopment projects without any local consultation or regard to property rights or social considerations (HIC, 2016).

5.9.2. The Lalebey & Ali Pasa urban renewal projects

Following the 2007 Sur urban renewal agreement between TOKİ and the municipality, the project's scope was expanded, leading to the signing of a new protocol between Diyarbakır Governor's Office and TOKİ on March 31, 2008, entitled "Diyarbakır Ali Pasa and Lale Bey

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[25] Kişanak had a very different political background from her predecessor, although they were from the same party; on 25th October 2016, she was arrested, accused of supporting terrorist organisation and replaced by a trustee.

Neighbourhood Urban Renewal (Shanty House Transformation) Project" (*Diyarbakır Tarihi Sur Kentsel Yenileme Koruma Bölgesi [Gecekondu Dönüşümü] Projesi*) (TMMOB, 2019). The primary objective of the Sur project, which was anticipated to bring about a comprehensive revitalisation in Suriçi, encompassed the demolition of impoverished areas, reducing the local population by relocating them and enhancing the prominence of historical landmarks (Genç, 2016). This urban renewal initiative, which sought to demolish high-rise structures and facilitate the conversion of Suriçi into a commercial and tourist hub, aligned with the municipality's vision, prompting their involvement in the project due to their shared interest in tourism-driven economic development (Bakan, 2018; Genç, 2016).

In 2009, as a result of a protocol jointly signed by the Diyarbakır Governorship, TOKİ, Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, and Sur Municipality, four neighbourhoods of Sur – Cevatpaşa, Fatihpaşa, Alipaşa and Lalebey – were encompassed within the framework of urban transformation (Arslan et al., 2016; TMMOB, 2019) or urban regeneration (Rebrii et al., 2019). Per this protocol, the metropolitan municipality would be responsible for seizing the properties of Suriçi residents. The protocol outlined the evacuation process for a total of 1,276 housing rights holders (824 from the Ali Pasa and Lale Bey neighbourhoods). Meanwhile, TOKİ would oversee the construction of 1,272 residences at a mass-housing site named 'Çölgüzeli' (lit.: 'beauty of the desert'); located 16 kilometres west of the city centre (TMMOB, 2019).

Figure 5.38. Location of Çölgüzeli compared to the location of Suriçi (edited base map from Yandex).

A total of 294 property owners and 207 tenants from the Cevatpaşa and Fatihpaşa neighbourhoods along with 431 property owners and 144 tenants from Alipaşa and Lalebey were assigned TOKİ flats in Çölgüzeli. In 2012, the demolition began, primarily targeting the deteriorated structures within the project's designated neighbourhoods and the residences of people who had consented to relocate to Çölgüzeli (Arslan et al., 2016). TOKİ proceeded by demolishing 330 constructions in Alipaşa and Lalebey (Vardar, 2015). Some people accepted to sell their properties and started to move. They soon became dissatisfied because their new houses were so far from the city and they lost their contact with their old neighbours. Most of the residents, however, especially in Alipaşa and Lalebey, refused TOKİ's offer for relocation. They did not leave their homes and began protesting against the evacuations. Eventually, TOKİ was unable to complete the demolition process and halted the project (Arslan et al., 2016; TMMOB, 2019).

According to a report made by the Zan Institute, this project was to initiate class transformation through gentrification, driven by the real estate and construction industries; state institutions and lawmakers would regulate the market at the expense of the disadvantaged working class and impoverished communities, resulting in further deprivation of housing rights and homelessness (Arslan et al., 2016). The plan were not aimed at the benefit of Sur's residents, leading to the formation of opposition. In this, they were supported by some NGO members, who saw the injustice of their having to undergo a second forced removal from their homes and migration to a new place to live.

Figure 5.39. Alipaşa today, new constructions beside old (taken by the author, 2022).

5.9.3. The İçkale project

İçkale, the inner castle or citadel, is located in the north part of Suriçi, and currently includes a park, a mosque, museums, and some archaeological excavation sites and administrative buildings. Serving historically as the fortified, central settlement hub, the İçkale area includes the Virankale (Amida) Mound, an Artuqid-era palace and caravanserai, the city's oldest church (from

the second century) and an eleventh-century mosque, as well as administrative and military structures from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and ancient motif mosaics in the Artuqid palace (the oldest mosaic findings in the area) (SAMER, 2017). In 2012, the municipality drew plans for its development as a cultural centre for tourism:

> "In 2000 a project for area of the citadel (Inner Castle), was approved as a cultural and touristic area. It was planned that in the first stage of the project, would be a museum area and cleared of buildings lacking quality" (Soyukaya, 2017, p. 17)

Clearly, the existing *gecekondu* housing and other informal structures would have to be removed. This vision would definitely result in the dislocation of the people living there. Nevertheless, it was justified locally on political grounds:

> "The İçkale Project was framed by the [Kurdish] movement as an attempt to reveal the multicultural history of Suriçi — an important challenge against the hegemonic construction of Turkishness and Muslimness — in the public space." (Bakan, 2018, p. 168).

The area is protected by the UNESCO enlistment and the 2012 Conservation Plan, where it was referred to as 'Archaeopark' (Aydın et al., 2020). The local population were required to vacate the area in 2012-13 to facilitate major excavations; these uncovered antique monuments, including a Roman amphitheatre (Ayboğa, 2019). Unfortunately, the conflict in 2015-16 and following transformation works resulted in the destruction of archaeological sites and listed structures (Aydın et al., 2020).

Low-quality buildings were demolished, and a registered building was delisted and destroyed, transforming the now empty area into a 'modern' park. This activity actually posed a significant risk to the underground archaeological layers, particularly as it was accompanied by extensive excavations and the planting of inappropriate trees (with overly extensive roots) (Soyukaya, 2017). One of the structures demolished was a World Heritage-listed property, a monument within the citadel; due to government pressure, its conservation status was revoked by the regional conservation cultural board (DKVKBK), leading to its destruction in 2017 to make way for the park (Ayboğa, 2019).

Figure 5.40. Demolition in İçkale (ÇŞİDB, 2017).

Figure 5.41. İçkale after the demolition (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 5.42. İçkale museum area today (taken by the author, 2022).

Chapter 6

The conflict of 2015-2016

6.1. Introduction

After decades of war in the south-east region, a period of relative calm was then disrupted by a series of events that irreversibly altered the social, political, economic and morphological landscape for the whole country. Kurdish politicians and civil service leaders were rounded up in police operations, and in May 2015, the escalation of tension was marked by attacks on pro-Kurdish (HDP) party election offices. Thus, the intensification of violence brought an end to the 'peace' period ((Jongerden, 2021; Küçükkırca, 2018).

The re-appropriation of urban space in Kurdish-majority cities by local governments affiliated to the Kurdish movement (above, 5.8) had brought an important deal of political, cultural and social freedom (Taş, 2022b). This, in turn, boosted the institutional political struggle of the -HDP to gain momentum and to represent a broader democratic front in civil society across the country as a whole rather than concentrating on exclusively Kurdish issues. In the general election of 7th June 2015, the HDP a secured 13% share of the vote, enabling its representation in parliament with 80 MPs and effectively ending the AKP's 13-year period of uninterrupted single-party rule (Küçükkırca, 2018).

This unexpected damage to AKP hegemony due to HDP's advocacy of broader democratic rights saw Erdoğan's AKP – as it now very much was – make a pivot toward nationalism. Requiring a coalition partner for a parliamentary majority, the government party and its leadership turned to the main Turkish nationalist party, the hard right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), and (once again) redefined the Kurdish problem in as a security concern

(Jongerden, 2021). Meanwhile, in mid-June 2015, with the Syrian civil war ongoing, the PKK-linked Kurdish Syrian People's Defence Units (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel,* YPG) gained victories over the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and liberated a significant part of northern Syria (west Kurdistan, or Rojava). Self-rule in the self-declared the Cezire and Kobanê cantons was to be modelled after Öcalan's democratic confederation (Chapter 4.3) (Küçükkırca, 2018).

On 4th July 2015, the Diyarbakır Castle and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape was officially made part of the UNESCO Cultural Heritage list. And on 20th July, 32 young people were killed in a bomb attack against youth members of the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (*Sosyalist Gençlik Dernekleri Federasyonu*), who had gathered in Suruç, near the Syrian border, to show support for the Kurish effort and distribute toys to children in Kobanê (Baysel, 2018).

6.2. The conflict

The victories of the YPG against ISIS and increased arrests and attacks targeting political activism animated the pro-Kurdish movement in Turkey. In August 2015, following the example of Rojava, Kurds in towns and cities began declaring autonomy. The Kurdish movement reiterated its commitment to local self-governance (Jongerden, 2021), and on August 12, 2015, the executive council co-chairman of the PKK-linked Kurdistan Communities Union (*Koma Civakên Kurdistanê*, KCK) announced that there was "no alternative to self-governance for the people of Kurdistan" (Küçükkırca, 2018). Self-governance was proclaimed in 16 provinces of Turkey within a week. An escalation of violence followed, shifting the historically rural campaign waged by the PKK to urban conflict areas throughout 2016 (ibid.).

During these urban conflicts, Kurdish youth employed spatial strategies derived from the Kurdish movement's experiences in combatting ISIS in Rojava, such as the excavation of street trenches and setting up ditches and barricades with the aim of establishing no-go zones – autonomous areas free from Turkish state oppression (Darıcı, 2016). An armed confrontation between the

Turkish state and the PKK ensued. An extensive and brutal state military operation put the Kurdish neighbourhoods under siege and curfew (*sokağa çıkma yasağı*), where the ban on going out on the street was total (people were given the choice of either leaving their homes or else effectively consenting to being in a war zone) (Ferguson, 2016). This affected over 1.6 million residents across at least 22 districts in seven cities (Sala and Schechla, 2016). The extensive destruction of many residential areas followed, with the state using regular and irregular forces, heavy weapons and tanks, sometimes air strikes, and killing hundreds of people (Amnesty International, 2016; Soyukaya, 2017).
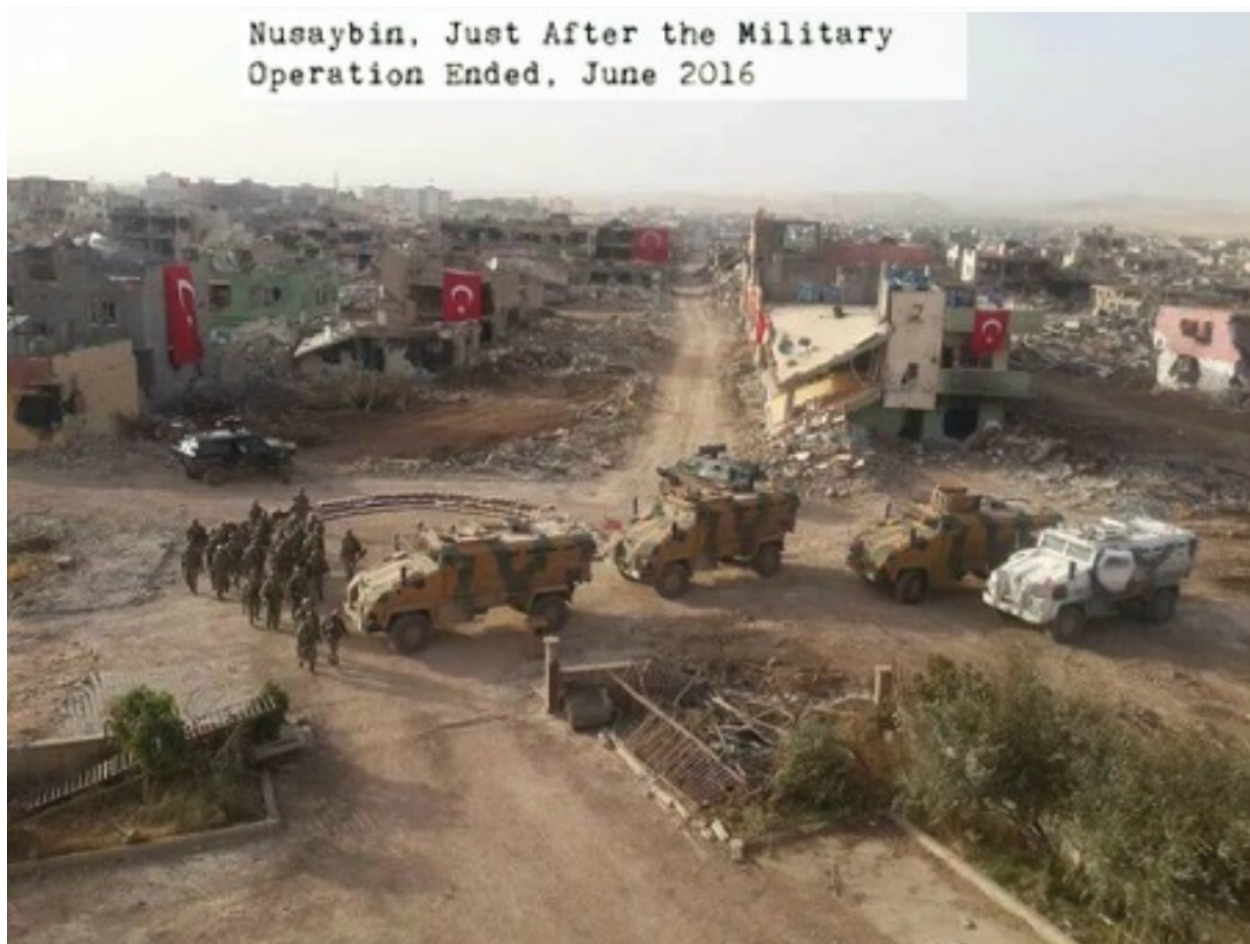
Figure 6.1. Military operations in Nusaybin city, Mardin province (GABB, 2016)

The "enormous variability of war once it gets urbanized" (Sassen, 2010, p. 33) became evident during World War II when cities became the tools for generating fear and their deliberate destruction serving as a means to terrorise entire nations. During an interview with a political scientist and NGO member in Diyarbakır (Interviewee No. 22), I had the opportunity to discuss the shift of the Kurdish conflict from the countryside to urban areas. After the village evacuations in the 1990s, he explained, the state was able to sustain the conflict in rural areas became manageable in terms of cost and resources for the state. The primary aim of an insurgency war is to generate a cost: "in the literature and the main idea [of conflict resolution] is that, in fact, the small [party], I mean, the insurgents, cannot win militarily, but they can win the conflict in terms of politics." Thus, he continued, if the PKK wanted to continue the struggle, they had to find a way to increase the (political and economic) cost incurred by the state. He emphasised that rural areas are under state surveillance in the new era of military technology and thus could no longer provide security for guerillas – especially, it can be added, taking into account the inexperience of the new generation of rebels in the rural environment (Jongerden, 2021).

Interviewee No. 22 similarly argued that it is in the urban terrain now that guerillas have the support of the people and where it is thus easier to hide and access human resources and supplies. Moreover, they have expertise of the local terrain there, a knowledge of the labyrinth alleys and how to move across rooftops to avoid streets (Bakan, 2018). Therefore, since the early 2000s, there has been an effort from the side of PKK to expand or even shift the conflict away from rural to urban areas. Nevertheless, the Turkish security forces' high technological surveillance capacity along with heavy artillery expertise, drones and snipers accompanied by curfews resulted in the isolation of the guerillas, leaving the state as the winner of this war (Jongerden, 2021).

6.3. The losses

During the conflict period, seven Kurdish cities in southeastern Turkey – Cizre, İdil, Nusaybin, Silopi, Sur, Şırnak and Yüksekova – were taken by the Turkish army and faced significant damages (TMMOB T, 2019). In some areas, schools were turned into police stations while roads were enlarged in order to connect them (Soyukaya, 2017). Additionally, "the use of heavy weapons and, possibly, air-dropped munitions" was documented by the United Nations report (OHCHR, 2017, p. 10), combined with cutting off electricity and water supplies to compel people to leave the affected areas.

While precise figures were difficult to obtain, it was estimated that the conflict affected approximately 6,320 buildings or 11,000 residences across five of those cities (Sur, Silopi, Cizre, Idil, Yüksekova) (Sala and Schechla, 2016). The other two were worse hit. In Şırnak, after a field visit in 2022, I observed extremely few buildings left in the city; the old ones had been replaced by TOKİ tower blocks, and the city did not have even a single central square. In other words, it had been rendered modern: uniform and featureless. Extensive data have been documented and presented by the Chamber of Turkish Engineers and Architects in their investigation "Destroyed cites Report"; all seven cities underwent a massive re/de-construction process (TMMOB, 2019).

Clearly, it is the Turkish state is responsible for such extensive destruction, principally the army supported by the Gendarmerie Special Forces, Police Anti-terror Combat Team, Police Special Forces, and the Riot Police, all under the leadership of the Turkish Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence (HIC, 2016). Additionally, unofficial militant groups were implicated, like the Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism or Gendarmerie Intelligence Organization (*Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele Grup Komutanlığı*, JİTEM) along with Hançer, Fatihler, and Esedullah teams, also associated with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence, while the latter group, Esedullah, is allegedly connected to the Islamic State (HIC, 2016).

From August 16, 2015, to April 20, 2016, the authorities officially enforced 65 open-ended, 24-hour curfews in a minimum of 22 districts across the seven cities (Sala and Schechla, 2016). This expansion of curfews targeting "terrorism" resulted in the loss of lives, counted at 338 civilians (78 children, 69 females, 30 elderly individuals and 161 young men). The OHCHR (2017) report put the estimated number of reported displaced persons in south-east Turkey at a third to half a million, predominantly citizens of Kurdish origin.
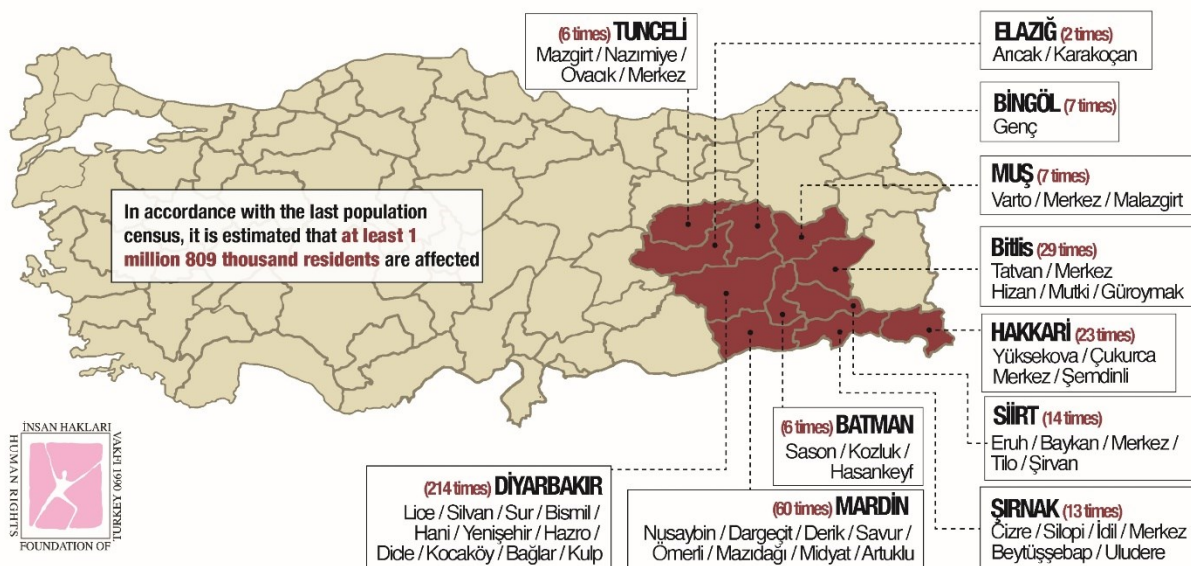

Figure 6.2. Total data on curfews (HRFT, 2020).

The current fatality tally of this conflict (last updated on 28th September 2023) is reckoned as "at least" 6.685 people who lost their lives in clashes or terror incidents (from July 20, 2015). Approaching three-quarters (4.502) were PKK militants and 1.443 were state security force

members; 614 civilians were and were 226 individuals of whose affiliation, if any, was unclear (ICG, 2022).

The UN report clarifies that those numbers include children, women and the elderly, while "up to 189 local residents are believed to have been killed in the town of Cizre alone (Şırnak province) in three related incidents" (OHCHR, 2017, p. 7); these involved people trapped in burning basements. Additionally, the same UN report also points to official government data reports stating that during the terrorist campaign (from July 2015 to November 28, 2016), a total of 799 security personnel were killed, 4,428 were injured, and 231 civilians were abducted by the PKK (ibid.).
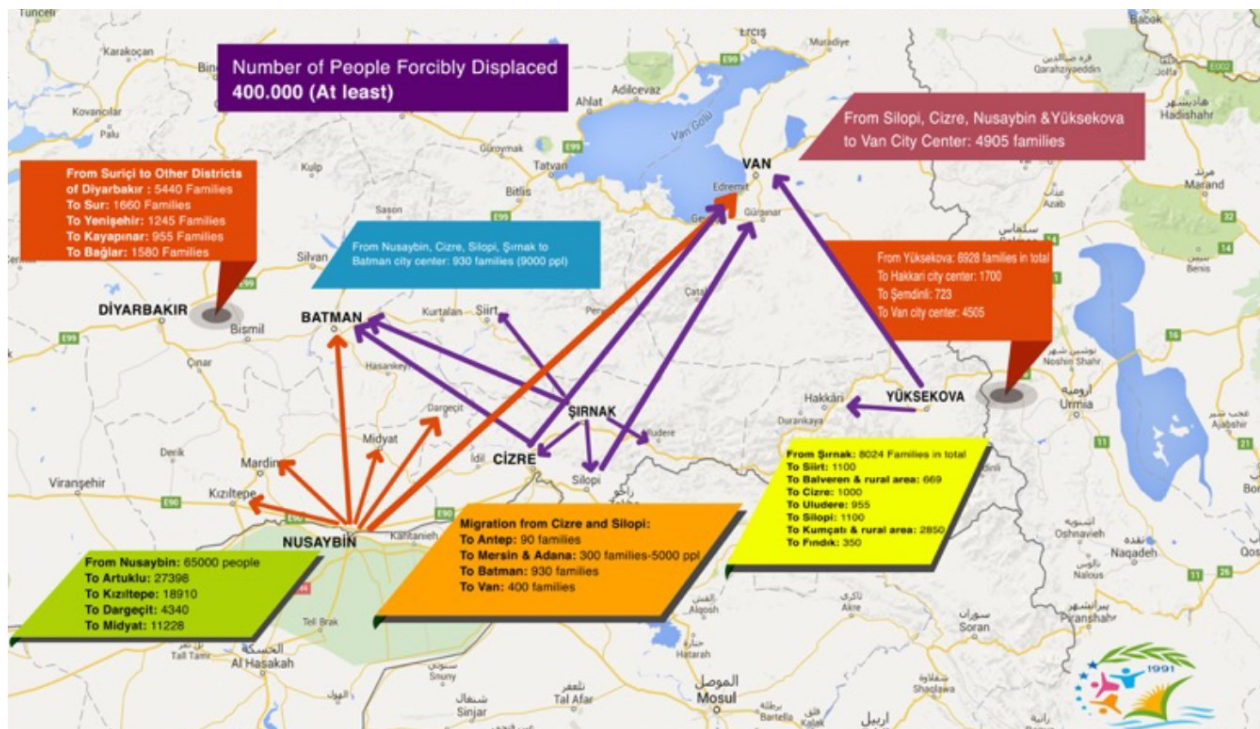
Figure 6.3. Mapped estimation of forced migration in south-east Turkey, 2015-June 2016 (GABB, 2016, p. 14)

There is a difference in the numbers and data presented as depending on the organisation that has done the recording, the dates and the methodology used. However they are calculated, even the minimum figures of the killed and of the displaced are still large.

The operations were conducted with the aim of killing rather than apprehending armed individuals, reports Amnesty International (2016), since the Turkish state not only violated human rights but, in some cases, acted in what amounted to collective punishment. A characteristic example is the fact the "Turkish state did not allow people to retrieve the bodies of their relatives in neighbourhoods under curfew." (GABB and SİBB, 2016, p.22). Furthermore, the precise number of individuals arrested and detained was unknown (OHCHR, 2017), as well as the population endured posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a range of "physical and mental health issues" stemming from the conflicts (DITAM, 2018, p. 142).

According to Ercan (2019, pp. 119-120), "The core of the counterinsurgency conducted by the state relied on three lines of operation: enforcing civilians to flee self-defence areas (conflict zones), assuming territorial control in self-defence zones, and making Kurds outside the conflict zones see the physical and humanitarian devastation." Even when the curfews were over, Turkish police persisted in conducting searches of town residents at checkpoints, with reports of frequent harassment and verbal abuse by the security forces, causing people to feel unsafe in the presence of police on the streets (GABB and SİBB, 2016).

As the conflict appeared to be diminishing, a new crisis emerged with the attempted coup, and subsequent declaration of a state of emergency, which was extended in three-month intervals for a total of two years in total. During this period, numerous municipalities, NGOs, and businesses in the south-east were placed under state-appointed trusteeship, HDP MPs and (more) councillors were arrested, public employees were dismissed via decree-laws, journalists were detained, and academics' positions were terminated (Küçükkırca, 2018).

State of emergency legislation enacted after the coup attempt (Decree 674 of 1st September 2016 and of 24th November 2016) authorised the appointment of trustees (*kayyum*) in place of elected mayors, deputy mayors, or municipal council members who were suspended due to terrorism-

related charges (OHCHR, 2017).[26] This decree granted the Minister of Interior the authority to appoint trustees in metropolitan municipalities, while provincial governors appointed at district municipalities (ibid.). By the end of 2016, it was reported that 69 municipal co-chairs from the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (*Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi*, DBP) had been arrested, 58 had been removed from their positions, and the majority had been replaced in 50 municipalities (ibid.).

As of July 2015 until publication of its 2017 report, the OHCHR count of detained HDP executives, members, and supporters had risen to 8,711. According to its report in the following year, "87 out of 105 mayors were imprisoned" (35 women, 52 men), all of Kurdish origin; meanwhile, "the Ministry of Interior had appointed 94 trustees (only men) in 105 municipalities" in the region (OHCHR, 2018, p. 26). The Ministry's reasoning for the direct rule was that the resources allocated to these municipalities should benefit the residents in the area rather than terrorist organisations (140 journos, 2017). HDP leader Selahattin Demirtas and former presidential candidate was detained In November 2016 and then jailed in September 2018.

The Turkish Army is unlikely to be held legally accountable for any crimes committed during the conflict; local prosecutors have consistently declined to initiate inquiries into reported killings,

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[26] The administrative divisions of provinces (*il*) and districts (*ilçe*), which are administrated by a governor (*vali*) and district officers (*kaymakam*). The governor, as the province's chief executive, is not elected but appointed by the president upon nomination by the interior minister and represents both the state and the government (Jongerden, 2007). Districts within a province have their own administrations led by district officers who report to the governor; also appointed by the interior minister, they essentially act as agents responsible for overseeing and inspecting government activities within the district (ibid.). There are 81 provinces and 850 districts nationwide, with the Kurdish region consisting of 19 provinces and 141 districts (ibid.). There are also provincial general assemblies and municipalities, which primarily handle budgetary, infrastructure and public service matters (Jongerden, 2007). Provincial and district capitals, as well as settlements with over 2,000 residents, have elected municipalities led by mayors; these focus on issues like budgets, housing plans, tax rates and municipal services (Jongerden, 2007). Villages are administrative units with populations below 2,000, administered by elected 'headmen' (*muhtar*), a village council and an assembly (Jongerden, 2007). Headmen are also representatives of the city's neighbourhoods (*mahalle*), which can be considered as the smallest administrative unit (Yonucu, 2018). However, in the last years, the "depoliticisation of municipalities" has seen a gradual reduction of local government's financial authority along with a shifting of funds to central government and, consequently, to a decrease in local autonomy and democracy (Bayraktar, 2007).

violating both constitutional and international human rights obligations (OHCHR, 2017). Moreover, the UN report points to local NGOs interpreting Law No. 6722, passed on 23rd June 2016 – an amendment to the laws on the armed force[27] – as having created an environment of "systematic impunity" for the security forces, as it mandated political authorities' approval for the investigation of any soldiers or public officials suspected of committing crimes during counter-terrorism operations (ibid.). Furthermore, Decree KHK/667, issued on July 22, 2016, determined that exempting individuals from legal, administrative, financial, and criminal liabilities during the state of emergency.

6.4. The conflict in Diyarbakır

For Diyarbakır specifically, the events that marked the conflict are the UNESCO nomination and the murder of Tahir Elçi. The Diyarbakır Bar Association's press conference on November 28, 2015, was the final civilian effort to prevent sporadic armed clashes from escalating into a full-scale war. Elçi and twenty other lawyers had held placards that read, "I am the heritage of humanity. Protect your heritage" (Hakyemez, 2018). A few months prior to that, on July 4, UNESCO had bestowed recognition to the historical peninsula of Suriçi, significantly augmenting the worth and tourist value of the area (Lepeska, 2016).

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[27] Law on Amendments of the Turkish Armed Forces Personnel Law and Some Laws (*Türk Silâhli Kuvvetleri Personel Kanunu İle Bazi Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapilmasina Dair Kanun*).

Figure 6.4. Conflict in Sur (ROAR collective, 2015)

On December 2, 2015, the Diyarbakır governor imposed continuous curfews in six out of 18 neighbourhoods in Sur, denying access to national or international human rights organisations for on-site investigations, shutting down essential services like hospitals, markets, schools, electricity and water, and providing just two days' notice for residents to vacate their homes (Hakyemez, 2018).

In Sur, armed confrontations occurred on 6-7th September, 13-14th September and 10-13th October (GABB, 2015), in parallel with the first three curfews declared by the Sur District Governor's office, on 6th September 2015 (one day), 13th September (two days), and 10th October (four days); these curfews were followed by more on 28th November (three days) and 2nd December (nine days) before an uninterrupted curfew starting on 11th December 2015, which continued for almost four months in some districts of Sur (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 13). According to Diyarbakır Suriçi Urban Protected Site Banned Area Technical Analysis Report

released by the engineers and architects chamber, the "curfew and prohibition of entry declared for 6 neighbourhoods of the urban protected area Suriçi" continued to 28 January 2020" (TMMOB, 2020, p. 3). In fact this curfew was achieved through the erection of metal and concrete walls blocking off those areas and some areas remained inaccessible even after the curfew declarations. The restricted are shrank over time according to the progress of the projects, but, there were still some small areas that were inaccessible in November 2022, when I last visited the field.

Figure 6.5. Banned areas in eastern Sur (taken by the author, March 2022).

Amnesty International (2016) posits that, unless compelling evidence to the contrary is provided by the authorities, the primary purpose behind the ongoing curfew seems to have been to facilitate the area's expropriation and the urban regeneration project initiated by the government. In their interviews, Amnesty International discovered that some families left the neighbourhood shortly after the first curfew was announced on November 28, while others stayed until late December 2015; the majority of families indicated that they left on December 11, just before the curfew began at 16:00. Nevertheless, according to the ex-mayor of Sur

municipality, there were people who were trapped in their houses for weeks, facing the peril of sniper attacks when attempting to leave, but also experiencing penetrative gunshots into their homes and shelling that resulted in buildings collapsing, killing even those who did not go outside (Demirbas, 2016). Due to curfews, corpses were left for days exposed on the streets, and families were denied the opportunity to collect their relatives (ibid.).

Figure 6.6. Conflict inside the walls of Suriçi (Bakan, 2019)

The first estimation of the Union of Southeastern Anatolia Region Municipalities was that in Suriçi alone (in the Cevatpaşa, Fatihpaşa, Dabanoğlu, Hasırlı, Cemal Yılmaz and Savaş neighbourhoods), the number of people directly affected by the warfare was a little over 26 thousand (GABB, 2015). The subsequent municipalities' union report stated that 5,440 families had had to leave their homes, among which 1,660 were relocated within different areas of the Sur district, while 1,245 were resettled in Yenişehir, 955 in Kayapınar and 1,580 in Bağlar, either through temporary stays with relatives or at shared rent apartments with fellow families, all within the city of Diyarbakır (GABB, 2016).

According to the records of Diyarbakır municipality, 95% of the Sur district population was impoverished (DBB, 2016b). The total count of supported displaced families in the city was 4,265, with 1,060 families receiving social support payments in Yenişehir, 1,250 in Bağlar, 750 in Kayapınar and 1,200 in Sur (including some who relocated from eastern to western Sur due to curfews and conflicts). In total, assistance was extended to approximately 30,000 individuals, while the estimated total number of displaced individuals from the Sur district was around 50,000 according to Municipality records (DBB, 2016b). Numerous families who were compelled to relocate from Sur during the curfew had previously experienced forced migration from their villages in the 1990s (GABB and SİBB, 2016). The Habitat International Coalition recorded a minimum of 338 civilians as having lost their lives in the south-east during the curfew period between August 2015 and April 2016; of these, 46 were residents of metropolitan Diyarbakır, and 21 were in Suriçi (HIC, 2016).

In 2020, a compelling feature-length film depicting the conflict "based on the diaries of those who died and the testimony of the survivors," was released. Set in Sur and produced, directed by and featuring fighters there who had survived, Ersin Çelik's (2020) *The End Will Be Spectacular* (*Ji bo azadiyê*) depicts their story in the in the houses and alleyways of the besieged zone until the last days. The narrative takes as its opening the killing of Tahir Elçi and declaration of autonomy by the People's Assembly of Sur, and it ends with the final defeat of the armed resistance, a listing of the 74 local people who died during the clashes, and an aerial shot of Suriçi with the buildings gone the ground levelled, prepared for re-development.

6.5. Timeline of Events

Figure 6.7. Timeline of the events, Sources: Amnesty International (2016), Baysel (2018), BBC News (2018), Küçükkırca (2018), TMMOB (2020).

7 June 2015
HDP received 13.02% in Turkey's general election, resulting in AKP losing its 13-year-long single-party government

5 June 2015
A bomb attack hit the HDP rally at Station Square of Diyarbakır; five people were killed, and over 400 injured

4 July 2015
Diyarbakır Castle and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape are enlisted at UNESCO Cultural Heritage

20 July 2015
A bomb exploded in the Suruç district of Şanlıurfa during a gathering of young people who were bringing toys to the kids of Kobanê; 32 were killed, and 103 injured

12 August 2015
Co-chairman of the Kurdistan Communities Union Executive Council announced: "There is no alternative to self-governance for the people of Kurdistan"

19 August 2015
Co-mayors of Sur municipality were detained on charges of "breaking the unity of the state, separating some of the territories under the state's sovereignty from the state administration"

20 August 2015
"Self-governance" is declared in 16 regions

6 September 2015
First curfew was declared in Sur, and the next day was lifted

13 September 2015
Curfew declared in Sur and next day lifted

10 October 2015
Two massive explosions hit the 'Peace Rally' co-organized by unions, chambers, and parties in Ankara; 100 were killed, and more than 400 were injured. Curfew was declared in Sur and lifted three days later

1 November 2015
AKP got %49,5 in the general election while HDP won 10,75% of the votes

28 November 2015
Tahir Elçi, the head of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, was shot dead. Curfew was declared in 6 neighbourhoods of Sur and lifted six days later

2 December 2015
After the armed clashes between state forces and guerillas increased, an indefinite curfew was declared in 6 out of 15 neighbourhoods of Sur (with only a 17-hour break on December 11)

11 January 2016
Academics for Peace signed the petition "We are not going to be partners to this crime"

27 January 2016
The curfew is expanded for five more neighbourhoods of Sur where no conflict is happening and will be lifted six days later

9 March 2016
The operations in Sur ended, and the curfew in some neighbourhoods was lifted after 103 days

21 March 2016
The Council of Ministers declared Urgent Expropriation in Sur

22 May 2016
The active curfew since 11 December was lifted in some neighbourhoods of Sur

15 July 2016
A coup attempt trembles the country

20 July 2016
State-of-emergency is declared

4 January 2017
A ceremony to initiate the new projects took place in Sur

22 May 2017
Water and power cuts in Alipaşa and Lalebey neighbourhoods evicted the last people who had remained in Sur

23 May 2017
Demolition started in Alipaşa and Lalebey

29 May 2017
"No to the Demolition of Sur" platform kicked off to support the locals

19 July 2017
State-of-emergency was extended, and it was lifted next July; it lasted in total for two years

Chapter 7

Post-conflict[28] Diyarbakır: a two-stage 'Project'

7.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the re/de-construction events that occurred after the armed clashes in Sur ended. This *planning period* is thus treated also as a *post-conflict period* in which the state dominant force reorganised the territory. Nevin Soyukaya, former head of the UNESCO site, thus divides the destruction of Suriçi in two periods.[29] During the first period, "heavy weapons, artillery, tanks, bombs and explosives were used," but the greatest and most irremediable destruction took place in the second period, "when demolition and excavations uprooted even the foundations of the buildings" (Soyukaya, 2017, p. 11).

The post-conflict period is also divided into two stages, the *deconstruction processes* and the *reconstruction*, although these did not take place in precise sequence. This chapter thus discusses the acts and responsibilities of the Urbanisation Ministry – the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation (*Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı*) – and the government as a whole – formed by the Turkish Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) under President Recep

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[28] The title of this chapter should be clarified. Here, the 'post-conflict' specifically refers to the period subsequent to armed confrontations. That post-conflict period is the era of transformation projects followed after the clashes, yet still part of the war. As explained in the introduction and will also be further analysed in the conclusion remarks, we are up against an ongoing war, which takes various forms, from armed exchanges to the restructuring of the city as attempts of a state to assimilate and pacify a population.

[29] As explained in chapter 5.4. the term 'Sur' not only designates the geographical region but also conveys the concept of 'walls'; the historical peninsula of the city is thus referred to as 'Sur' or 'Suriçi' (the latter corresponds accurately to the exact toponym, but this thesis will use both names).

Tayyip Erdoğan – regarding the orchestration and the implementation of the destruction of Suriçi and irreversible de-articulation of its social and historical fabric. In this process, I argue, the conflict was deployed as a rationale for the implementation of the governmental plans and removal of decision-making from the locality (the resident population and other stakeholders), who were not only not asked their opinions but were not even informed of the planning process.

On 20 January 2016, while operations were still ongoing, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu announced:

> "These cities were developed in the 1990s in an uncontrolled and unplanned way. Even if such events had not taken place, these cities would have to be rebuilt under urban transformation projects. Houses where people can live will be built in Sur, Silopi, Nusaybin and similar places. [...] The houses of Diyarbakır that are recognised as historical heritage sites, its mosques, churches and inns, will be restored without any harm to their architectural texture. We will reconstruct Diyarbakır's Sur just like Toledo (Spain), so beautifully that it will become a tourist attraction, and everybody would like to visit and see its architectural texture." (Sözcü, 2016)

The conflict ended on 9 March 2016, according to the announcement of Interior Minister Efkan Ala (TMMOB, 2019), and on March 10, the Governor of Diyarbakır (*Vali*) proclaimed the cessation of operations. However, the conflict-hit neighbourhoods – Dabanoğlu, Fatih Paşa, Hasırlı, Cemal Yılmaz and Savaş, comprising some half of the total Sur of some 148 hectares – remained under blockade which continued during the subsequent years of re/de-development (Ayboğa, 2017; Soyukaya, 2017). Following the ending of the Kurdish resistance in the city, the Turkish state announced its victory and the culmination of its war against terror. State announcements placed the blame for the damage to the cities solely on the Kurdish side and promised to salvage local populations in need with urban transformation projects presented as 'necessary' for reviving the affected areas. Thus, the use of bulldozers was not merely a technique to open roads but served as a form of collective punishment involving the destruction of entire blocks and neighbourhoods (Huggler, 2003).

On 21 March 2016, a cabinet decision relying on Article 27 of the 'Expropriation Law' (*Kamulaştirma Kanunu*, No. 2942 – see section 7.3.2.) declared urgent expropriation and seized

ownership of 6,292 out of 7,714 parcels of land (Turkish Official Gazette, 2016). According to the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (*Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği*, TMMOB) Chamber of Urban Planners (*Şehir Plancıları Odası*), whatever was inside the walls of Suriçi and not already under state control was taken. As Figure 7.1 shows, most of the area was announced as being expropriated, while that not to be expropriated was already in the possession of the government-backed Mass Housing Development Administration (*Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı*, TOKİ) or it was in the possession of the state (including land and buildings that had been expropriated in the past) (Soyukaya et al., 2016).
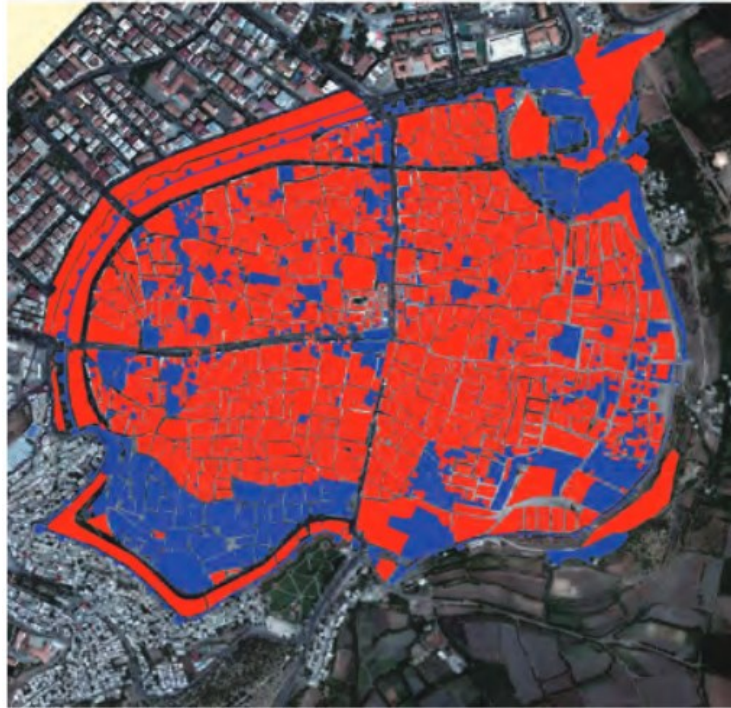
Figure 7.1. Plan of the expropriated area as documented in the Destroyed Cities Report (*Yıkılan Kentler Raporu*). Red: parcels to be appropriated under the scope of the decision; blue: parcels expropriated the previous years (TMMOB, 2019, p. 46).

The expropriated area constituted 82% of the total area in Suriçi (ANF News, 2017; Ayboğa, 2017). According to the press release of the Diyarbakır Branch of the Chamber of Urban Planners (*Şehir Plancıları Odası Diyarbakır Şubesi*) on April 2, 2016, the Expropriation decision referred to 6,295 parcels; 6,244 were located in Sur District and 51 in Yenişehir District; out of a total of 614

listed buildings in the area (149 monumental and 465 examples of vernacular architecture), a total of 553 were included in the expropriation process (122 monumental buildings and 431 examples of vernacular architecture) (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2016a). In the expropriation decree, "properties belonging to the municipality" as well as "churches and properties belonging to the foundations" were expropriated (Gültekin, 2016). These included historical churches, notably the Surp Giragos Church,[30] Surp Sarkis,[31] Chaldean Church,[32] Armenian Catholic Church, Virgin Mary Ancient Syriac Church and Protestant Church. The urgent expropriation decree violated the right to property according to the Constitution, Expropriation Law No. 2942 and the European Convention on Human Rights (Yiğit, 2016). At a press conference immediately after the publication of the decision, Ahmet Özmen, the Vice President of the Bar Association, said, "As the Diyarbakır Bar Association, as of today, we have filed a lawsuit against this urgent expropriation decision before the Council of State [*Danıştay*, the highest administrative court in Turkey] for the halt and cancellation of the execution of the decision." (ibid.).

This study concentrates on the re/de-construction enacted in the historical centre of the city of Diyarbakır, specifically in the area inside the walls of Suriçi. In the public discourse and in the interviews, reference is made both to individual projects and the project as a whole with different operational phases. Thus, projects are mentioned in the plural, as different projects under one masterplan of urban transformation, as the separate expropriation cases grouped as the

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[30] This is the largest Armenian church in Middle East. In 2011 "With legal changes in foundation administration, people from Diyarbakır living in Istanbul formed a new administrative body and initiated restoration work. With the help of funding campaigns started in the US and other countries, the church was restored. About 2 million TL was spent for restoration. And it was awarded with various prestigious restoration awards." (Gültekin, 2016). Unfortunately, during the conflict it was damaged. After the legal actions of the Surp Giragos Church Foundation, the property was returned to the Armenian Foundation (*Ermeni Vakıf*), and a second round of restorations began. The Foundation managed to gain funding from the Ministry of Culture, and today the church is open to public again.

[31] A semi-destroyed church; interviewee No. 29, a member of the Armenian community, discussed restoration projects initiatives for the near future.

[32] Restored at the same time as Surp Giragos.

restoration of the historical buildings and the construction of new residences, and conceptualised as the marketplace of the real-estate properties and the formation of new commercial axes. However cited, the project is considered as an assemblage of diverse stakeholders and actors and multiple projects and contacts imagined and implemented under the umbrella of the – still unpublished – 'Suriçi masterplan'. Through this analysis, we can discern the Turkish state, particularly the urbanisation Ministry, as the driving force behind the formulation and execution of the primary principles of this 'project'. The project(s) is referred to here similarly to Murat Kurum, urbanisation Minister (since 10th July 2018):

> "When this project is over, Sur will be more beautiful than before, and Diyarbakır will become more beautiful than old Diyarbakır. We will strive to make all areas where there are commercial axes and national cafes cultural centres where women, children and young people can spend time within the project. […] We have initiated a major transformation project in the district in order to close the damages caused by the PKK, the separatist terrorist organisation, which has made pit politics, to close the pits it has opened, and to rebuild the houses it has destroyed. […] Today, we continue our works with great determination and diligence to rebuild the houses, churches and mosques destroyed by the terrorist organisation damaging our history and culture, both inside and outside of Sur. In this sense, we are continuing the construction of 1,500 listed buildings in Sur." (Anadolu Ajansı, 2019)[33]

Images gained from Google Earth between 2012 and 2023 allow an appreciation of the evolution of Sur (six are shown in Figure 7.2; for the full set of 28, see Appendix A). Striking by their absence are the signs of destruction before or during the conflict (until November 2015), as compared with the images after its conclusion the following March (by May, large areas have been completely cleared); the images show an escalating erasure of the built environment (through November 2016) prior to the reconstruction (which first becomes clearly evident in 2020) and subsequent greening of empty spaces (2021). It is apparent from these images that some demolitions commenced shortly before the operations were halted; these demolitions were not part of the operations related to the clashes but rather conducted after the warfare when

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[33] Note that the new construction as characterised as 'listed' (*tescilli*); this supposed listing of as yet unconstructed buildings exemplifies the 'official speech' employed, indicating the inaccuracy and unreliability of its public announcements and, rather, their impressionistic intentions.

artillery vehicles were out and bulldozers had just arrived. Since residents were forced to evacuate the area between December 2016 and May 2017 (Amnesty International, 2017), the state was able to operate on vacant land through the army, other security forces and (de)construction vehicles.

Figure 7.2. Selection of images showing the evolution of the Suriçi re/de-construction process (retrieved from Google Earth Pro; see Appendix A).

7.2. Deconstruction and reappropriation: the 'master plan of collapse'

The declarations for 'cleaning' the conflicting areas and the plans for urban transformation projects were voiced by now President Erdoğan on 29 January 2016, clearly revealing that the plans for the city were not decided due to the warfare that had only recently started; on the contrary, they were pre-planned, along with those for three other cities, representing a wider, regional approach:

> "After Cizre, Silopi and Sur are cleaned, urban transformation and change projects will be carried out. Historical artefacts will be restored. Our citizens here will be settled in their own homes in a much different way." (Haberler, 2016)

In late 2016, the government established a "scientific commission" comprising experts who were mainly appointed to justify the "ongoing state-led destruction", arguing that the contested area contained explosives planted within the buildings, which made inevitable their rationale for the mass destruction of structures in the five neighbourhoods of Eastern Sur (Ayboğa, 2019, p. 13). In response, the TMMOB Chamber of Engineers Diyarbakır Branch (*TMMOB Mühendisleri Odası Diyarbakır Şubesi*) formed a committee that worked through a sequence of satellite images taken on different dates. According to their monitoring, they came to the conclusion that "although the buildings on the site were damaged from heavy weaponry, the destruction [only] became irreversible after initiation of demolition activities with construction equipment" (TMMOB, 2020, p. 5). According to Reuters (2018), at the end of April 2017, in the Alipaşa and Lalebey neighbourhoods, residents were called for to leave their houses by announcements made from the loudspeakers of the local mosques.[34] On May 1, announcements posted on bakery windows informed the residents about the buildings that would be demolished, and the next day, this demand on the residents to vacate the area was met with their reaction in protest, resulting in a slight postponement of the demolition process until the end of the month (SAMER, 2017).

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[34] Situated on the minarets, these loudspeakers are used for the call to prayer along with occasional announcements, usually funerals); the mosques are state-controlled.

Figure 7.3. Part-demolished area in Sur (taken by the author, 2022).

As reported by lawyers and residents to Amnesty International, eviction notices were fist issued in December 2016. These gave a one-week ultimatum to vacate the homes. Verbal notifications were meanwhile given that the demolitions would start in April 2017. Most people chose not to comply (Amnesty International, 2017). From April 12, the first destruction activities – of buildings that had already been vacated – were observed in the Alipaşa and Lalebey neighbourhoods of southwestern Sur, organised by the Governorship of Diyarbakır and TOKİ (SAMER, 2017). In fact, there had not been any armed clashes in these areas. As noted in Chapter 5, however, Alipaşa and Lalebey had been the locations of a failed urban transformation project some years previously (Bakan, 2018). At the end of April, the minaret loudspeakers broadcast announcements urging residents to evacuate their homes within seven days, and on 23 May, water and electricity supplies were cut (Amnesty International, 2017).

In May 2017, the Turkish government initiated the complete destruction of Lalebey and Alipaşa. This was met with months of protests from the affected inhabitants and significant sections of

civil society. The demolitions were carried out with a heavy police presence, leading to the destruction of thousands of people's homes (Ayboğa, 2019). Whole streets that had not encountered even a single bullet impact to their buildings were rapidly reduced to flat ground (TMMOB, 2020).

Meanwhile, entry to East Sur had been completely prohibited since the beginning of the conflict (at the end of 2015). For approximately four years, the area of the conflict (see Figure 7.4 dark grey part at the right part of the map) was completely inaccessible.[35] On January 17, 2020, a delegation of chamber representatives and former management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites was approved to conduct the first investigation in the banned neighbourhoods of Suriçi. Over time, the area ban was partially lifted, and fences repositioned. By October 2022 (the period of the last fieldwork visit) some parts of the conflict area were still fenced off, while the reconstruction of other parts was complete, and these had begun operating.

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[35] Or at least inaccessible to the local society; an ultra-nationalist rapper managed to gain entry and shoot a video that was published in August 2016. Keeping his face covered, he made a video, "Rap Clip Filmed in Sur," which shows images from the interiors of vandalized houses, burnt structures and streets. This video provided one of the first pieces of public information recorded in the conflict area. At https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tzvqvHea-E
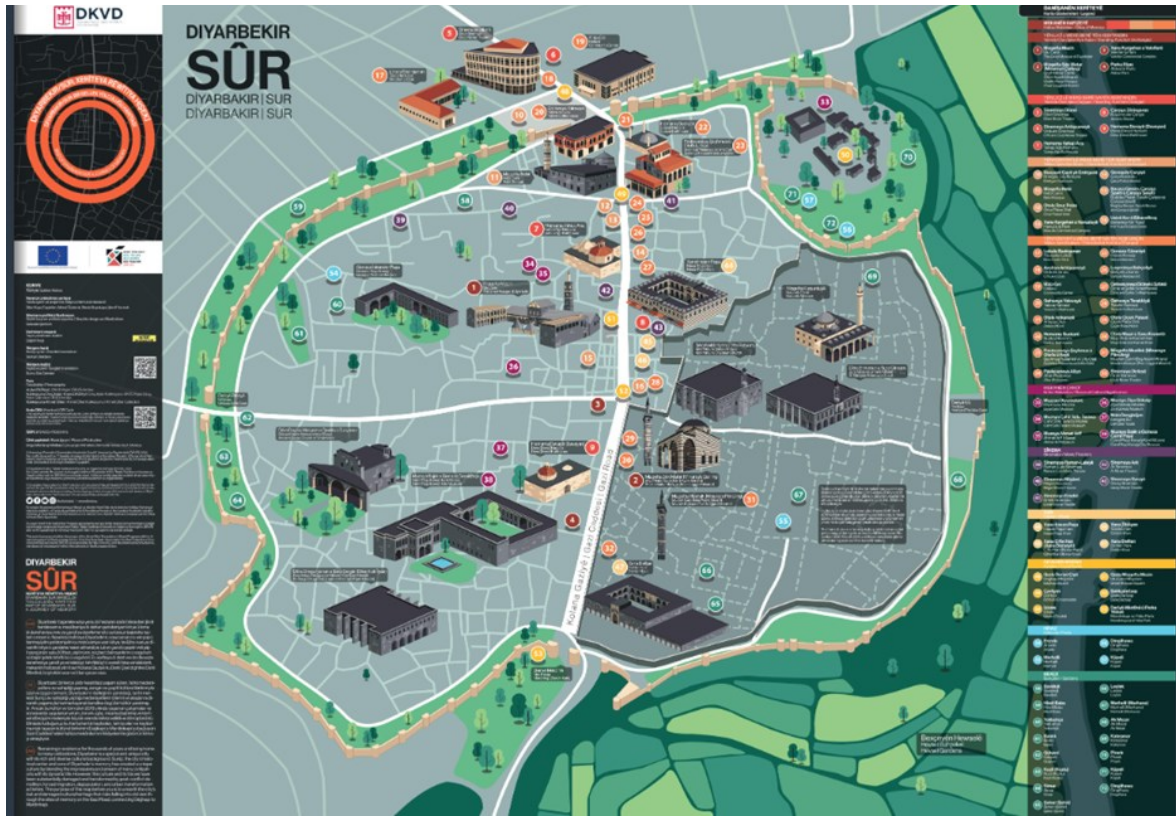
Figure 7.4. Map of Sur showing major landmarks and prohibited area until early 2020 (dark grey) (DKVD, 2021)

As will be discussed extensively in the following chapters, the new buildings erected in the east of the city were visible through satellite images from the spring of 2017 (PNDS, 2018; TMMOB, 2019). During that spring, the construction of 60 new buildings commenced in the obliterated eastern Sur area (Ayboğa 2019). By the end of the same year, the southwestern Sur area saw the construction of several hundred new buildings, 200 of which were quickly completed (Ayboğa, 2019). The combination of demolitions and construction projects resulted in significant changes to the landscape and social fabric of the affected areas. Not all activities regarding demolitions were supervised by the Ministry of Culture and technical experts; the report of the technical chamber found these to be "unregulated and sloppy" and to "lack coordination or communication" (TMMOB, 2020, p. 7).

Amid the demolition (and simultaneous construction) activities ongoing until the summer of 2017, accompanied by scattered and hastily deposited debris, there was a lack of effort directed towards rescuing the authentic elements of monuments from among the ruins (Ayboğa, 2019). This situation was further exacerbated by treasure-hunting excavations performed by people who managed to gain access despite the blockade and strict control of entry and exit by security forces; these which caused additional damage to the buildings in the area (TMMOB, 2020). According to local newspapers, the theft of historic stones making up the walls of the Diyarbakır fortress was reported by the Diyarbakır Provincial Coordination Board of the TMMOB (Polat, 2019).

Figure 7.5. Damage to Suriçi walls from the extraction of historical stones (Dilan Kaya).

The reported devastating impacts on cultural heritage did not spare sites that were already vulnerable before the destruction occurred. The iconic 1,700-year-old Virgin Mary church was damaged by a rocket-propelled grenade (Lepeska, 2016). Stones were stolen from churches during the demolition period (Figure 7.6), and it was reported by the former head of the Chamber

of Architects Diyarbakır Branch (*Mimarlar Odası Diyarbakır Şubesi*) that a large number of historical stones were thrown into the river or sold (Aydın, 2022).

Figure 7.6. Inside the ruined Surp Sarkis Armenian church showing blood reported to be from a thief injured while removing historical stones (Aydın et al., 2020, p. 17).

Nor was the heart of the World Heritage property spared, with the fortress itself suffering various damaging interventions by the Turkish government and security forces (ANF News, 2017). Poles inserted into the walls and towers created meter-long holes, and the installation of toilets for soldiers and police significantly contaminated the walls with wastewater (ibid.); also, numerous small structures were constructed at the foot of the walls, and military equipment was installed on the towers to shoot into Suriçi (ANF News, 2017).

The destruction extended to listed buildings of vernacular architecture and those preserved for their environmental value, several of which have been demolished to make way for roads (TMMOB, 2020). The problem is not just the destruction but also how this destruction was enacted. Thus, while the demolition and disruption of the historical texture itself should be condemned, it should also be further remarked that it was all performed without any specialist forecasts or monitoring to protect historical and cultural elements in the area.

Figure 7.7. Damage to the historical walls with fortification and concrete constructions (left: 140 journos, 2017; right: DBB, 2016a).

Figure 7.8. Left: landmark and historical monument, the four-legged minaret, Right: the column of Armenian Catholic Church, hit by gunshots (taken by the author, 2022).

7.3. The spatial policies of occupation

The following sections elaborate further on the lack of scientific scope and the damage to the cultural heritage and history of the site, in addition to the dislocation and deprivation of the local people. This is first done by investigating the historical background and legal method employed for the re/de-construction, before going on to investigate issues around compensation, urbicide, dislocation and resistance.

An important piece of legislation passed in 2012 has played a leading role in the "urbanisation of capital" all around Turkey by giving the urbanisation Ministry the "authority for the production of the built environment" which "has been recentralised by increasing the powers of central government institutions" (Penpecioğlu, 2013, p. 6). For the Turkish state, Law No. 6306, named "Regeneration of Areas under Disaster Risk" (*Afet Riski Altindaki Alanlarin Dönüştürülmesi Hakkinda Kanun*) and widely known as the Urban Regeneration Law (*Kentsel Dönüşüm Yasası*) (Hakyemez, 2018),[36] is one of the most valuable tools that the state apparatus can utilise to accelerate and reinforce transformation projects – including in areas of high value, regardless of the actual risk. This law "prescribed procedures for the improvement, evacuation and renewal of areas under risk of earthquake, flood and landslide, among other potential threats" (Hakyemez, 2018). Earthquakes are indeed a danger – as recently witnessed with the sequential quakes in February 2023 – but to declare an area to fall under the provisions of this law and consequently include it in forced redevelopment projects ought to be the result of thorough research. That was clearly not the case in Sur. Through this law, it is impossible to initiate legal proceedings and sue against demolition decisions (Çavuşoğlu and Strutz, 2014). Thus, the state claimed carte blanche to execute its unpublished re/de-development project without the due process of proper democratic oversight involving professional opinion and public discussion about initial needs and a range of options to provide solutions.

The map shown in Figure 7.9 was prepared as part of the folder of the Urban Conservation Development Plan (*Koruma Amaçlı İmar Planı*, KAİP) initiated in 2012, immediately after the legislation was made law. As the map shows, the whole Suriçi area is declared as at risk from earthquake (*deprem risk*). However, according to the map, few of the buildings at high risk were in the area of eastern and southwestern Sur (red corresponds to high risk). The declaration of the

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[36] LAW No.6306," (The Law of Regeneration of Areas Under Disaster Risk), available at http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6306.pdf.

entire Suriçi section of the city as a risky area in 2012, even though the Ministry acknowledged that only 6% of the buildings were at risk, raises a significant concern. This disregard for factual information seems to have led to a chain of erroneous and politically motivated decisions. Essentially, the "Risky Area Decision" paved the way for urban transformation projects in the area and served as the basis for the "Urgent Expropriation Decision" in 2016 (SAMER, 2017). In short, the 2012 law on areas under disaster risk was employed as a tool legitimising destruction and reconstruction as policies engaged for political ends.
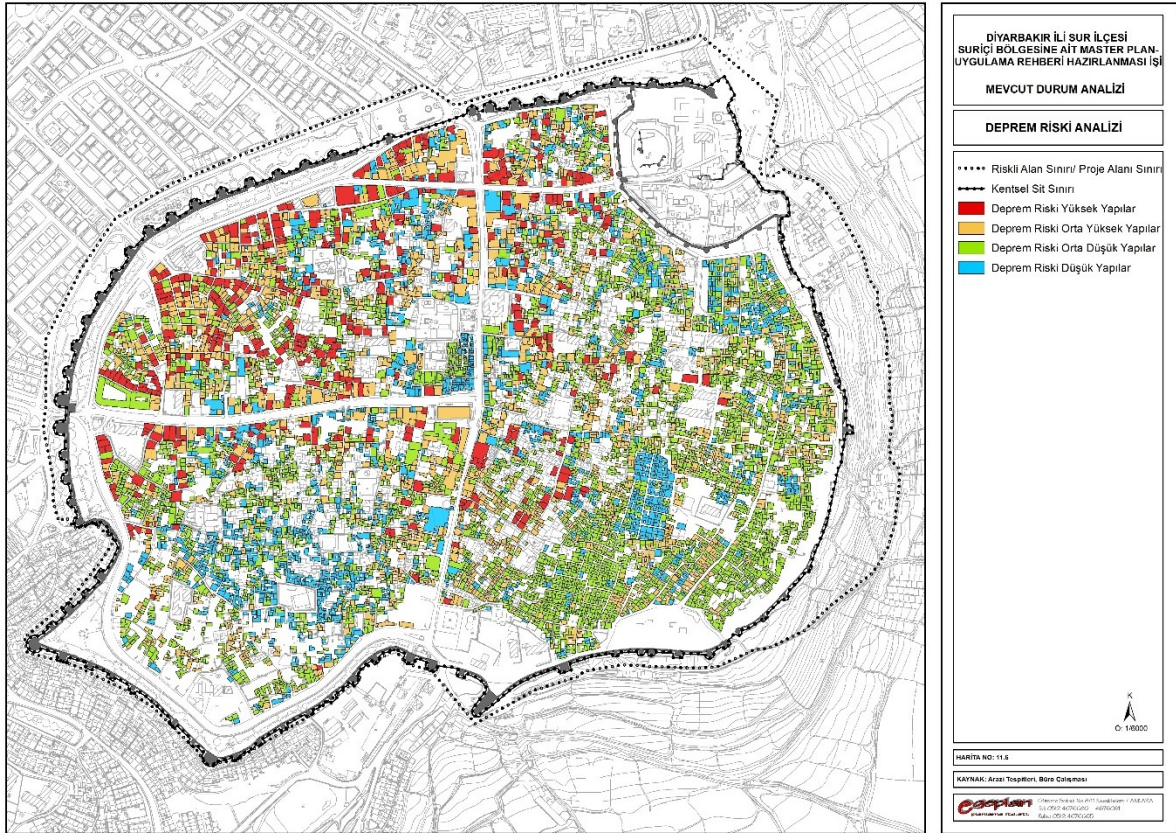
Figure 7.9. Earthquake risk analysis map of Diyarbakır (2012). Black dotted line: borders of the area under disaster risk; earthquake risk for buildings is graded from red through orange/green to blue representing high through medium to low risk, respectively (source: protected).

On the basis of this analysis, the (locally controlled, i.e. pro-Kurdish) Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality (*Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi*) was able to make a formal request to the central

government in the same year (2012) that resulted in Sur being officially designated as a "risk area" (Hakyemez, 2018). This designation granted the municipality the authority to demolish deteriorating high-rise buildings in an effort to safeguard Sur's authentic historical structures from further deterioration and potential ruin (Hakyemez, 2018). The area of Sur was declared as at risk by to the decision of the Council of Ministers taken on the 4th November 2012, thus:

> "Number of Decisions: 2012/3900. Declaring the area located in Sur District of Diyarbakır Province as a risky area with the attached sketch and the border and coordinates of which are shown in the list; Upon the letter of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization dated 15/10/2012 and numbered 1546, it was decided by the Council of Ministers on 22/10/2012 in accordance with Article 2 of Law No. 6306 on the Transformation of Areas Under Disaster Risk."

From the moment Suriçi was declared as a risk area, it was included in the areas requiring urban renewal projects (Soyukaya, 2017). And as an effect of this declaration, long before the conflict, restoration projects, new constructions and touristification of the historical area were instigated. Interviewee No.24, an experienced engineer from the chamber, commented thus:

> "The focus is just economic. There is a risk with some buildings, but how will these risks be eliminated? There are 5-10-storey buildings in Suriçi. Why don't they expropriate only those buildings? They expropriate old historical mansions [*konak*], where is their risk? They just expropriate them because they want to sell them."

Figure 7.10. Damaged structure with historical parts still standing in Eastern Sur (taken by the author, February 2022).

7.3.2. The cornerstone: urgent expropriation (*acele kamulaştırma*)

This section approaches the notion and utility of the most important tool for the Turkish state in the present matter, namely, the "Expropriation Law" (No. 2942), specifically Article 27 regarding "urgent expropriation" (*acele kamulaştırma*). The Turkish term '*kamulaştırma*' has its root in the word '*kamu*', meaning 'public'; hence, it is 'the act of making public'. Expropriation, of course, is the process of state agencies and institutions taking possession, either wholly or partially, of private property for public use or benefit (also known as 'nationalisation'). Expropriation of private property (and goods) by the state has predominantly been utilised in cases where such requisitioning in the public interest was evident and deemed to overrule private liberties.

Primarily employed to expedite the acquisition of land, it is, however, vulnerable to misuse. Land may be acquired at low cost without affected individuals having sufficient protections to object.

Urgent expropriation as measure suggests a particularly pressing need, such as war or other emergency. In this case, the rights of the state are deemed to be overriding, and individuals affected may be deprived of opportunities to object or voice their concerns. Simply, their property rights are disregarded as a matter of national priority. This pertains to Turkey in general and in particular to the case of Diyarbakır in 2016 under state of emergency rule:

> "Urgent Expropriation: Article 27 of the Expropriation Law authorizes the organization responsible for expropriation to confiscate the properties required by the project earlier than the time needed in normal expropriation procedure. This process does not prevent challenges of the property owners against the determined valuation. Mainly, for the expropriation of needed immovable properties, Article 27 of the Law prescribes that in cases of the necessity for national defense as for the implementation of the Law on Obligations for Natural Defense (No: 3634) or in cases of the urgency of land expropriation decided by the Cabinet or *in cases of emergency, which are stipulated in special laws, any immovable asset can be confiscated by the organization responsible for expropriation*. In this case, the sequence of operations (excluding evaluation of immovable properties) is completed later. Through the court (upon request of the responsible organization), the values of the immovable assets are evaluated by an expert commission according to the provisions of Article 10 and 15 of the Law within seven days. The confiscation can be carried out after the determined compensation is deposited in the bank (in the name of the owner) indicated in the invitation letter and an announcement in line with the Article 10 of the Expropriation Law, by the responsible organization." (World Bank, 2016, p. 11)

According to Interviewee No. 25, a member of the coordination board of the TMMOB, Diyarbakır Branch, urgent expropriation has a very specific function:

> "Urgent expropriation was a method used in war situations and has so far been used very rarely in Turkey. For example, if you want to build a military facility during the war and you have to do it quickly without waiting for the city's consent, you can do it, but they made the expropriation in Diyarbakır a military strategic policy."

The first declaration for expropriation in Diyarbakır following the conflict was announced on 21ˢᵗ March 2016 and published in the *Official Gazette* (*T.C. Resmî Gazete*) dated 25ᵗʰ March 2016 and numbered 29664, by the Council of Ministers Decision dated 21.03.2016 and numbered 2016/8659. It included the whole of Suriçi (anything located within the walls). The date of

expropriation for the total area of Sur was purposely chosen to coincide with the day of *Newroz,* the Kurdish New Year[37]. The symbolism cannot be overstated. AKP government selected *Newroz* as the date to mark an important step to siege the heart of the unofficial capital city of the region.

The implementation of the expropriation order has been initiated for a significant portion of the devastated eastern and southwestern part of Suriçi. Entry to the area was restricted from September 2015 (Aydın, 2022) or December 2, 2015 (T24, 2021), and by November 2022, when I last visited, there were still some parts of Suriçi unfinished, blocked off with steel doors and concrete walls.

Figure 7.11. Restricted area (taken by the author, 2022).

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[37] Historically, the Turkish state had banned Kurdish celebration of Newroz, and the initially liberalising AKP, which had come to power in the 2000s with strong Kurdish support, had allowed it; in the 2009 local elections, Erdoğan had publicly set his sights on capturing the Kurdish political fortress, as it was claimed by the pro-Kurdish party, and that attempt had failed badly.

According to the Chamber of Turkish Engineers, this specific urgent expropriation decision violates the expropriation law because it is not being properly enacted and follows the same, incorrect logic as the declaration of the whole area as at risk (TMMOB, 2019). Ahmet Özmen, Vice President of the Bar Association, held a press conference at which he stated that "the urgent expropriation decision severely violates the right to property and protects the right to property, which is clearly against the Constitution, Expropriation Law No. 2942 and the European Convention on Human Rights" (Yiğit, 2016). In short, the use of urgent expropriation in Sur was unjustified and lacked evidence of public interest.

The Chamber of Urban Planners reported that the expropriation process lacked proper justification, evaluation, and determination of the conditions; moreover, no parcel-based examination was conducted to accurately assess the situation (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2016a). According to Article 30 of the expropriation law, property owned by public legal entities and institutions is not to be expropriated by another public legal entity or institution:

> "The inclusion of public buildings such as mosques, churches, museums, etc., which are listed in the plan in the expropriation process, is clearly contrary to the Expropriation Law. According to this article [number 30 of the law]; real estate property, resources or easement rights owned by public legal entities and institutions cannot be expropriated by another public legal entity or institution." (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2016b)

As documented by the report made by Diyarbakır's Centre for Political and Social Research (*Siyasal ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Merkez*) (SAMER, 2017), four key points indicated the failure to meet the conditions for urgent expropriation:

- Lack of clarity on the state of emergency and its reasons: The decision by the Council of Ministers does not specify what constitutes an urgent situation or provide clear reasons for such an emergency, as required by the relevant laws.

- Inadequate adherence to legal procedures: The decision to declare the area as risky alone does not justify the issuance of an urgent expropriation decision. The necessary processes, as outlined by the law, were not properly established.

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- Non-compliance with the purpose and method defined by the law: The urgent expropriation decision does not align with the intended purpose and methodology specified in Law No. 6306. This non-compliance raises concerns about constitutional provisions, the European Convention on Human Rights, and legal precedents regarding the protection of property rights.

- Lack of clarity regarding the use of expropriated properties: The decision fails to clarify how the expropriated properties will be utilised. Urgent expropriation is limited to purposes that serve the public benefit, but it remains uncertain how the expropriated properties will be allocated or used, particularly in terms of residential or commercial areas.
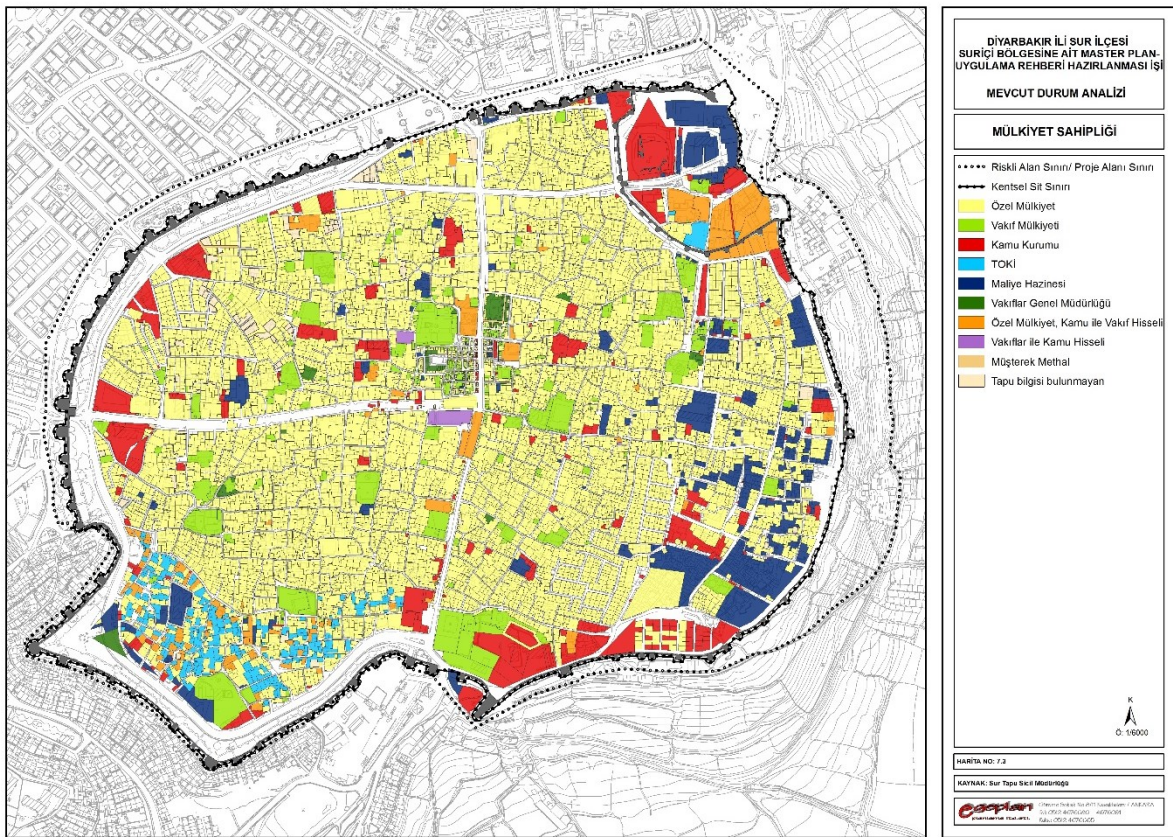
Figure 7.12. Map showing property ownership (2012). Yellow: private ownership; green: foundations; red: public areas; light blue: TOKİ; dark blue: Ministry of Treasury and Finance (source: protected).

Although private property is predominant, the presence of non-privately owned parcels is already significant. For the Chamber of Urban Planners, therefore, the expropriation decision was

> "…the reflection of a cultural genocide operation on decisions regarding physical space. Unlawful and undocumented decisions that will have irreparable consequences. The urgent expropriation decision severely violates the right to property and is in clear violation of the Constitution, Expropriation Law No. 2942 and the European Convention on Human Rights." (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2016b)

Figure 7.13. Plan of the expropriated area as documented by the TMMOB for the Destroyed Cities Report (cited at TMMOB, 2019, p. 46). Red: parcels expropriated under the scope of the decision; blue: previously expropriated parcels.

According to a newspaper article written by the ex-head of the Chamber of Architects, during a six-year period, the state declared the expropriation of almost everything but they did not fulfil the legal process (Aydın, 2022). What meant was that they had not yet compensated everyone, especially in the commercial streets and the areas where no clashes occurred. At the same time, people continue to live there, they still rent, sell and buy certain properties that have a clear status regarding their title deeds, even under expropriation. Interviewee No. 22, an expert in social justice issues from an NGO in the city, made the following interesting comment:

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"This expropriation is actually illegal. That's why the people of Sur and their lawyers sued the council, but you know, the council and the law have been taking decisions according to politics for a long time. Unfortunately, the Council of State has not yet taken a decision to suspend the execution of some of them, although the procedures for expropriation and destruction there are not appropriate. […] Anyway, this expropriation law has developed strangely. Just as the beginning did not go very legally, the continuation of it is not very legal either. Frankly, it does not work in accordance with the procedure. It's as if there's an expropriation proceeding in the form of whoever takes what."

There are examples of private ownerships (where people had the title deeds of their properties and were not located in the transformed areas) that, either by going to the court or through lobbying, managed to hold their properties against expropriation. A typical example of such an expropriated public property is the cultural centre "Dengbej house," a property of the Chamber of Architects Diyarbakır Branch.[38] The chamber sued to have the expropriation order against their property rescinded, won the case and regained possession after a three-year trial (2015-18). Similarly, listed structures and foundations, associations and religious places could be reclaimed as it was easy to prove that they were functioning already under the scope of public benefit. The ex-head of the Chamber of Architects commented thus:

"They saw that a mosque was already a public building. Churches are already a public space; you can't make it public. Why did they do this? They wanted to announce the decree on the 21 March, Newroz Day 2016, so they did everything in a rush. They are very careful about the symbolisation of the dates. After that, they cancelled the expropriations for the public buildings. First, they decided on all the structures in the area, but then they cancelled the appropriations regarding properties of people close to the AKP. Imagine that the Chamber of Architects owns the building of the *Dengbej* cultural house, and they even expropriated our property. We went to the court, and we took it back because it is a public space, so they couldn't make it public (expropriate) again.
"Regarding the Green Park Hotel, they managed to go to court and get the property back because it belongs to an AKP supporter.[39] But the expropriation process isn't

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[38] *Dengbej* house: a centre for performances of *Dengbej* music, a traditional Kurdish bard form (extended narrative singing).

[39] Green Park Hotel: a four-star hotel in a central location and the tallest building of Suriçi, seriously damaged during the conflict when snipers used it; after restorations, the hotel re-opened in 2020 (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Starbucks chain started to serve coffee at the lobby of the hotel and outside on the road (Küçük Kavas Street) that

finished yet; some people still live in their houses, and some shops are still working while trials are ongoing. The court cases aren't over yet, and the process of expropriation needs a lot of money to be completed. The state has to pay so much money for compensation, and since they don't have it, the expropriation process is not completed; this is the economic aspect. [...] The listed structures can be sold because the title deed is in the hands of the owners, like Suluklu Han and Dengbej Cultural House.[40] In fact, when we got our Dengbej cultural house back, it was because it was already a public space and also because it was a listed structure. The owners of Suluklu Han then went to the court and said, this is a historical place, and it should be protected, and then the government said that for this reason, you can't make any changes, and it should be protected. So, later on, the state can't take this property from their owners. Therefore, expropriation doesn't work for those places. However, after the conflict, the state demolished some listed structures. They weren't supposed to be touched, but they did destroy them. They said that they demolished them for security reasons."

Surp Giragos Church, the largest Armenian church in the Middle East, is among the sites in Sur that were expropriated by the decision of the Minister's council.[41] Syriac, Chaldean and Protestant churches were similarly expropriated. Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Cultural Heritage Director Nevin Soyukaya was reported by the *Agos* newspaper as stating that the expropriation order was initially used to seize all churches and properties belonging to foundations (*vakıf*): "some properties belonging to the municipality have also been expropriated, and they will initiate legal action" she stated, and urging the owners of the expropriated properties to "take legal action" (quoted in Gültekin, 2016). In the end, the expropriation decision for religious monuments was cancelled by a high court (*yüksek mahkeme*) judgment (Gültekin, 2018). Another reason that the churches were returned to the administration of the corresponding religious association was Turkey's commitment as signatory to certain international treaties guaranteeing the freedom of religion.

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leads to the historical 'Hidden Mansion' (*Saklı Konak*) behind the hotel; it was decorated with colourful chairs and white walls to imitate the atmosphere of Alaçatı, an Aegean city of Turkey (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021).

[40] Suluklu Han: a cultural centre run by a cooperative and functioning mostly as a cafeteria.

[41] Left to its own fate for years, the church was finally restored with the efforts of the Surp Giragos Church Foundation and support of the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality; it was opened to worship in 2011 but remained closed and was severely damaged during the conflict.

Despite the legal support provided by the Bar Association, only 15% of residents took legal action and opted to challenge the expropriation order. However, 95% indicated that they did not support the order (SAMER, 2017).[42] At present, we could argue that the state failed or chose not to complete the expropriation process for every single property inside Suriçi for several reasons, including lack of money and the difficulty in expropriating already public areas and listed and historical structures. For most properties in eastern Sur and in the southwest (Lalebey and Alipaşa), urgent expropriation was finalised, and the urban transformation process followed. According to Interviewee No. 21, an activist in an NGO in the city who has offered legal support to deprived families, "they stated that the government started the urban transformation process by depositing small amounts of money into their accounts, although people did not accept it." This is how some expropriation cases were conducted and completed, mainly for Lalebey and Alipaşa and the conflict areas. The rest of Sur's cases are still pending.

For the present enquiry – into motivation and intent rather than the success of execution – the important observation is that the decision for urgent expropriation was based on the 2012 risk area declaration (Bakan, 2018). Both of these decisions were primarily impelled by the desire to seize the valuable land of Suriçi. The declaration of the area as under disaster risk occurred during a time of peace with elected Kurdish mayors and was initially halted due to resistance from the local community. Four years later, amid ongoing conflict, the expropriation decision enabled the Turkish state to take full control of Sur, thus striking a damaging blow to a political foe while extending its crony capitalist program that used the construction sector to boost the economy and helped to shore up AKP power and cement the government's political control. As Interviewee Nos. 25 and 26 from the technical chamber concurred, the designation of such a large area as at risk without conducting parcel-based surveys and verifying the safety of existing buildings against disasters was simply not a valid or justifiable reason for urgent expropriation.

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[42] The question by the SAMER institute is literally translated as asking whether they approved ("*Acil kamulaştirmayi onayliyor musunuz?*")

The residents of Suriçi were actually "not given any information regarding the status of their homes" (DITAM, 2018, p. 139). Those who were squatters or renters had no way of negotiating; their only option was to flee, while those who held title deeds to their homes were given three choices. The first was to take an amount of money as compensation for the expropriated house; the second was to take up an entitlement to a discounted house in a faraway TOKİ area; and the third was to buy a new house at the new price in Sur (DITAM, 2018).

For the first option, the refund for a property in the area blatantly overlooked the value of the historical area or even the building condition. The compensation offered, for goods, such as house equipment, as well as the properties themselves, underestimated the values and did not meet the real needs of the people. Some families never received their compensation or even managed to reach an agreement with the authorities (Evrensel, 2018a). The second choice not only forced people to relocate out of Suriçi to the outskirts of the city and change their neighbourhood life to an apartment living style, it also required that they cover the difference in the assessed value of the properties through instalments. In other words, they had to pay to make a move that they generally did not want to in the first place and were being forced to consider. As for the third option, for the people of Suriçi, taking into account their class status, buying a house inside Sur was not practically possible. Both of the last choices thus "burden[ed] the families with a debt far over their financial capabilities" (DITAM, 2018, p. 139).

As explained by Interviewee No. 22, an academic who also works at the city's NGOs, all this led to a demographic change. For example, two of the areas outside the city where people could buy a new TOKİ house were in Urfa Boulevard and the hospital area (12 km from the city). In those areas, he stated, house prices ranged from 80 to 250,000 TL. If an agreement the owners of a house could not be reached, the state would just deposit the amount it had determined on in the account of the owner as a refund; "This way, the case [was] over." Homeowners with title deeds

to their properties recounted instances where the compensation was deposited into their bank accounts without their consent, leaving them wholly dissatisfied with the inadequate amount offered for the loss of their homes and belongings (Amnesty International, 2017, p. 2). Furthermore, the victims of such displacement often felt coerced into accepting the offered compensation due to intimidating practices, including threats and custody, leaving them with little choice in the matter (Tan et al., 2020, p. 144). In fact, according to Interviewee No. 22, "urgent expropriation [was] a situation where there [could] be no negotiation between the owners and the state, and the state pretended to bargain to avoid further tension".

Interviewee No. 27, a board member from the Chamber of Architects, provided the following account of the complicated path of the expropriation:

> "The process was so ridiculous. First, all of them were expropriated, but in the expropriation process, the government determined the price to be paid to the owner. For example, you come to buy something from me, but you set the price. I don't have a chance to set a price for the purchase myself here. The expropriation law is somewhat like this, but for some regions, the state says, 'We have expropriated this place, and we will renew it. After renewing, you can buy it if you want'. They give priority to those people here, but they also say that although they paid, for example, 5 TL when they took the house from those people, after renewing, they will sell it for 500 TL. The state claims that it will repair the houses for the people and does not grant them the right to repair their own property. […] We have friends working in the environment and urbanisation Ministry, when we talk to them, they cannot express how the process works and how it is shaped. The state made contracts with people to sell their houses to the state but did not give the signed contract to the people. They conducted the process secretly so that they (the state) would not have any problems later on. That's why I can't say anything clearly because the situation is a bit complicated."

Figure 7.14. Displacement and inadequate compensation (ROAR collective, 2015).

<u>Compensation law</u>

During the interviews with local experts, I understood that the Directorate of National Property (*Milli Emlak Genel Müdürlüğü*), which operates the expropriation process in Turkey, is under the urbanisation Ministry, so the whole process of first expropriation and then urban transformation is run entirely by the same government department. Only the areas declared as conservation areas are managed and financed outside of this, by the Ministry of Culture.

Law No. 5233 covering the "Compensation of Losses Resulting from Terrorist Acts and Measures Taken against Terrorism" (*Terör ve Terörle Mücadeleden Doğan Zararların Karşılanması Hakkında Kanun*) plays a crucial role in determining the compensation payable for such damages incurred (Tan et al., 2020, p. 46). However, its coverage is limited, encompassing only specific types of damages, namely, those relating to animals, trees, products, movable properties, injuries,

mutilation, death, treatment, funeral expenses and damages arising from restricted access to assets due to anti-terrorism activities. The law fails to address the comprehensive range of "social, economic, cultural and psychological" damages caused by prolonged conflicts (ibid.).

In addition to the often substantial financial issues resulting in long-lasting economic challenges for those affected by forced displacement, another of the glaring deficiencies of the compensation law is the complete absence of provisions to address psychological and emotional impacts of the conflict. Furthermore, "the damages of those convicted of crimes according to the anti-terrorism law [are] excluded from the scope of the law" (Tan et al., 2020, p. 147). These exclusions resulted in severe violations (see more at Appendix B) of people's rights, as their damages, both psychological and material, went unrecognised and uncompensated. This further exacerbated the losses due to dispossession for these families and individuals, compounding the injustices they had already faced due to the conflict. The inadequate coverage of the law undermined its potential to provide fair and just restitution for those affected by the conflict, necessitating a more comprehensive approach to address the full scope of damages incurred.

From data released at the beginning of 2017 through a confidential presentation made by the urbanisation Ministry (ÇŞİDB, 2017), this thesis summarises the following information about the expropriation practices of the Governorship of Diyarbakır and TOKİ within the scope of their joint protocol:

- Lawsuits had been filed and decisions taken for a total of 410 parcels;
- In the Cevatpaşa area, 44 lawsuits had been filed, all of which were resolved, and the money had been deposited; 366 lawsuits had been filed in the Alipaşa District, all of the decisions had been taken, and the money from 365 lawsuits had been deposited; one case file was outstanding; a total of 81,610,917.91 TL [a little over 25 million euros] had been paid in urgent expropriation fees;
- As of 21st December.2016, 180 structures had been demolished in Şemhanede, Cevatpaşa, and the demolition of 38 buildings was ongoing;

- Rent assistance support was being provided through the province (governorship) to 648 citizens who were entitled due to the determination of risky buildings within the scope of Law No. 6306.

<u>Housing allowance</u>

Families affected by the conflicts and by the expropriation decision in Sur received some support from NGOs and local administrations, but this assistance was irregular and inadequate (DITAM, 2018). The benefits provided to these families were deemed insufficient and often not delivered in a timely manner, causing further hardships in their lives. Some received housing allowances for a brief period, while others received no such support at all. Despite the benefits, many families expressed a preference for living in Sur due to its better economic and social bonds that had a greater positive impact on their lives. People believed that the aid they received was insufficient to sustain their livelihoods, and they valued the possibility of returning to their homes in Sur more than any financial compensation.

Figure 7.15. Displacement and inadequate compensation (ROAR collective, 2015).

In Sur, the primary requirement for individuals to be eligible for a modest amount of financial support for a duration of one or two years, provided they could establish their residency, was relocation from Sur (Ayboğa, 2019). Despite the fact that the western part of Sur remained relatively unaffected by the conflict, residents were not permitted to seek rental accommodations in that area.

According to an Amnesty International report, the Diyarbakır Governor's office stated in June 2016 that 4,996 displaced families from Sur had been given a total of 22,740,312 TL (approximately 6.8 million euros at the time) as cash rent assistance, 800 displaced individuals were accommodated in hotels, costing 1,767,682.36 TL (around 528,000 euros), and, as of 14 June, 29 families (109 individuals) were still residing in hotels (Amnesty International, 2016).

Figure 7.16. Wall of Suriçi house with Islamist symbols and rhetorical question, "PÖH_JÖH [Police and Gendarmerie Special Operations] are here, where are you?" (Instagram profile of photojournalist @leylarojinogurlu, uploaded November 2018).

<u>Compensation for household goods</u>

In June, Amnesty International (2016) documented the return of families to their homes in the area where the curfews were lifted. During this process, it was observed that homes and personal belongings had been vandalised, burned, damaged, looted and profaned (ibid.) According to information provided to Amnesty International (2016) from the authorities, the urbanisation Ministry conducted evaluations on the damaged buildings and generated reports, but these were not disclosed to residents. The issue of compensation for household goods has also been a matter of concern. According to numerous interlocutors who participated in the *Report on the Loss-Compensation Process After the Curfews*, the evaluation of internal damage occurred during the ongoing curfews across various cities and resulted in an internal damage estimate of around 5,000 TL for most cases. This suggests that the established commissions calculate compensation

based on pre-specified average losses rather than individual assessments for each property owner (Tan et al., 2020).

During the forced displacement from their homes (due to the conflict first and the expropriation decision in the aftermath), many families did not take their household goods and valuable possessions with them, because it was impractical and/or they anticipated a quick return and also the safety of their belongings (DITAM, 2018). When it came to claiming compensation for these when lost, however, they faced difficulties. To be eligible for a refund, individuals had to provide evidence of possession, such as receipts and documents, and often the necessary proofs had been left behind inside the damaged houses. Consequently, as my interviews confirmed, many people were unable to meet the criteria for compensation.

The compensation process itself appeared to be inconsistent, with reported cases of compensation ranging from 200 to 11,000 TL (DITAM, 2018, p. 143). Some families received compensation for their lost goods, but the amounts were insufficient to cover their losses of household fixtures and fittings and personal items.

The challenges faced by families in obtaining compensation and the limitations in the compensation process point to the lack of a comprehensive and sensitive approach to addressing the damages incurred during the forced displacement and demolitions.

Figure 7.17. Displacement and inadequate compensation (ROAR collective, 2015).

<u>Businesses</u>

In the context of expropriations and compensations, the government's actions varied significantly depending on the location or nature of the properties. Businesses in Suriçi had to remain closed during the time of the conflict. Interviewers explained how traders and service providers received no support allowance covering the period when their business was unable to operate, that those businesspeople who owned their business properties and were located outside the affected areas could often continue their activities, but those who were located in the affected areas could not. There was no provision for a refund for lost income or for any stock, products or equipment lost, regardless of whether these had been looted or destroyed during the conflict or during the subsequent bulldozing, and each owner had to individually negotiate the expropriation process and ownership status with the state. Even the restoration of each shop or house was performed through personal strategies.

At the same time, businesspeople were in need of capital to reopen their stores or refurnish their houses. This capital was rare, especially after the instability, that people could not go to work and open their stores. Some took loans to kickstart their lives and work investments and then became indebted. The situation was most challenging for businesses in the demolished region without official registrations, such as tax plates or business licences. These were not provided with any compensation (DITAM, 2018) or the opportunity to recommence their business operations.

Regarding the businesses and according to the data that were released at the beginning of 2017 through a confidential presentation of the urbanisation Ministry, an interest-free loan of 50 thousand TL was provided for "the workplaces of the tradesmen whose Social Security Institution and tax debts were postponed, whose rent was not charged for one year by the General Directorate of Foundations" (ÇŞİDB, 2017). This was to cover the modernisation and renewal of each workplace within the scope of the 'Street Rehabilitation Project' carried out by the urbanisation Ministry.

According to a local businessperson, Interviewee No. 9, in some areas, the state acquired full ownership of commercial spaces and rented them out, causing conflicts between the former owners and current renters:

> "In other words, the property passed to the state [which] either paid the expropriation fee to their former owners or deposited money to them [without their will]. It didn't give the shops to them. It took full ownership of them and rented them out to others."

The same person explained that in the areas under the projects of transformation: "No one was given their workplace [back]," he stated; "the workplaces were provided by TOKİ through bidding." In other words, the business owners in the transformed areas, whose businesses were dislocated, had to participate in a bidding process when the new buildings were erected in order to acquire a store and start trading again. They were given no priority in the bidding process,

regardless of their situation, as a result of which many were unable to return and lost their livelihoods.[43]

During an interview with a restaurant co-owner in the conflict area, Interviewee No. 13, he shared the harrowing experience of having to abruptly close their restaurant and evacuate Sur due to the escalating conflict, making a last visit on 1st December 2015 to retrieve essential items. Subsequently, clashes erupted, and curfews were imposed, effectively transforming Sur into a war zone. Their place also suffered significant damage during this time as it was located in the heavily affected areas. The clashes persisted for 104 days until May 2016, when certain parts of Sur were gradually reopened, yet this particular area, near the four-legged minaret, remained inaccessible. Only with the governor's permission were they able to visit their workplace, a situation that persisted until April 2018. Throughout this extended closure, their restaurant suffered extensive economic and physical damage, including the theft of items like tables, chairs, and air conditioners on top of the damage already sustained to the doors, windows, and walls during the conflict. Eventually, in 2018, they managed to reopen the restaurant after two-and-a-half years, enduring various financial burdens, such as ongoing tax payments despite not paying rent.

In summary, the government's lack of response to the needs of local businesses due to the urgent expropriation left many without adequate compensation or feasible options for relocation or recovery. These types of experiences of the affected individuals underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of the urban transformation process in conflict-affected areas.

<u>The issue of 'just' compensation</u>

Personal strategies were deployed for all working people and residents of Sur regarding the objections against the expropriation or the compensations. At the beginning of the conflict, for

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[43] The bidding process for the stores is reviewed below (8.4.1).

example, shop owners deployed individual approaches to the management of their goods, stock and equipment. They had to evacuate their business, but they had to decide what to leave behind on their premises. It was the same for residents who tried to carry away some of their belongings but still could not move everything out, and they could not know if their houses might be vandalised. The process of bargaining and demanding a refund for their belongings, both for residents and businesspeople, was not a collective one. Cases could not go to court collectively and had to be dealt with separately so people who lost any collective rights over their social and political lives in a type of equality as non-citizens that can be related to Agamben's (1998) "bare life" concept. Those impacted were unable to develop and deploy a collective strategy, which undoubtedly weakened the potential for a fair and just outcome of their cases.

According to the research of Dicle Social Research Centre (*Dicle Toplumsal Araştırmalar Merkezi*, DITAM), "It was seen at the interviews that the inability of the families to access their right to legal support damaged their trust [in] the justice system and caused them to lose their sense of safety and to be afraid for the future" (DITAM, 2018, p. 152). Also, when displaced residents opposed the gentrification process, they risked being branded as terrorists; compliance not only granted them access to legal housing but also enabled their inclusion as 'good citizens', a status that is primarily contingent upon obedience to state authority (Yardımcı, 2018).

In November 2019, the Ministry announced a compromise with 5,563 property owners in Sur. Although the neighbourhood population of had decreased by a third during the reconstruction process, only 1,837 of the 5,637 apartments newly built in the Çolgüzeli and Oçkuyu areas were inhabited by families of Sur (Alan, 2019). Furthermore, according to the statement of the Minister responsible for urbanisation, "a total of 116 million TL for rent, furniture and social aid allowance was granted to 3.100 people, 96 million TL was spent for expropriation fees and 7 million TL rent subsidy was paid to rights' holders" (Alan, 2019).

Figure 7.18. Graffiti in Sur: "You'll see the power of Turks" and "God is enough for everything" (GABB, 2015, p. 16).

Most households were offered and settled for a much lower compensation than the estimated value of their belongings (Amnesty International, 2016). Specifically, they accepted compensation ranging from 3,000TL to 5,000 TL (around 900-1,500 euros) for their lost possessions; despite estimating the value to be at least 40,000 TL (12,000 euro). Furthermore, all the families interviewed by Amnesty International reported that the communication office established by the authorities did not provide them with any information regarding available options or the amount of compensation they would receive, while some families revealed that they had received no rent assistance at all. In order to qualify for rent support, families were required to sign a document stating that they were displaced due to "terrorism," to which some residents objected and thus chose not to sign.

Even if the state labels them as "reasonable compensation," the settlements are not even related to the market value of the land and the properties. According to the interviewees, "the expropriation price given was as much as it cost [to build], which was very low" (Interviewee No. 4). Theoretically, residences would be returned to their former owners who could afford to pay

the difference between the construction and selling costs by borrowing money, but due to financial constraints, this option was not viable for most of them:

> "Those who received the maximum amount of money received 40 thousand or so, but the state is now selling them for 2 million TL. […] What is a person with 2 million doing in that poor neighbourhood, anyway?" (Interviewee No. 26, a member of the coordination board of the Diyarbakır TMMOB)
>
> "This is even against human rights. Something like theft. Someone is taking your property by force and gives you no other options." (Interviewee No. 27)

Interviewee No. 21, a board member of a local NGO, explained how they conducted socioeconomic research on those who had been forcibly displaced from Sur, on whether their homes were confiscated during the war in Sur under the pretext of expropriation and on the grounds of conflict and on whether they had maintained their standard of living after their displacement to another location in the city. Broadly, the findings were that people who had experienced the conflict process, were evicted from their neighbourhoods and whose homes were confiscated had experienced a major trauma whose effects were ongoing. Some were living in buildings in a poor condition, and others live in the TOKİ buildings, which were perceived to resemble prisons. Most felt lonely and unhappy, as their social bonds had been weakened and all but severed. Over half of the study respondents said that they had not yet sold their property to the state, but that money had been deposited into their accounts, regardless, and they did not want to take the money. The state had set the cost of a single-storey building at 30.000 TL and a two-storey building at 60.000 TL. This interviewee summarised the attitude of the state towards the locals in the phrase, "You'll get out of here. If you're selling, sell, if you're not, you'll be out anyway." Lastly, she explained that after the compensation payment had been deposited in people's bank accounts, they realised that their properties had been sold, and the cases were closed. After that point, the process of demolitions and new constructions could commence.

It appears clear that there were insufficient funds allotted to adequately compensate for the value of the expropriated properties and land – yet this facilitated the projects' main aims. Through a combination of its war on terror and legal instruments of emergency conditions, the state had legitimised the seizure of an area of great economic, cultural, historical and social value

and the forced displacement of many of its residents and workers. In addition to the political gain achieved by the employment of state power to hollow out an opposition stronghold, the government and its supporters were able to profit by transforming it into an investment resource. The legislative tool of expropriation was employed towards a redistribution of wealth policy where the small scale ownership passes from the lower classes to the state and from the state to the upper classes–by maximising financial profit while minimising costs. Thus it could be provocatively argued that this case has common ground with South Africa where "the apartheid state expropriated, without compensation, land and homes from the majority for the benefit of the minority" (McCall, 1990 cited in Fernandes and Varley, 1998). Although extreme, this does indeed get to the truth of what occurred. For the state and the private developers, urgent expropriation and poor compensation was thus the key tool deployed to political and economic power and accumulate financial capital through the enactment of a mega project while continuing the decade-long oppression of the Kurds and Kurdish identity.

At the human and sociocultural level, even if the compensation had been adequate and if the destruction of memory and heritage not so severe, displacement alone remains one of the most important parameters on this issue. The type of dislocation that was enforced in this case was not just the eviction of the local population but also the dismantling of solidarity, a tearing apart of a local culture and the ending of its neighbourhood life. All the interviewees elaborated on the unique characteristics of their everyday life in Suriçi (see also the thesis of Kaya Taşdelen, 2020) and argued how important this was. Insofar as the place and space sustained a precariat population that was literally surviving due to this culture and local solidarity.

Figure 7.19. Bakery in the Lalebey neighbourhood (taken by the author, 2019).

7.4. Annihilation: urbicide

Since the conflict was officially over and although the authorities had announced the urgent expropriations, it was not necessary to continue demolishing buildings in the 15 neighbourhoods of Suriçi. If the re/de-construction were merely about improving the urban environment, people would not have been deprived of their homes even after the conflict and effectively removed from the area – unless that 'improvement' involved cutting the communal ties that bound them together in a local society because they were not valued as citizens and were rather seen as the living force of the fortress to be taken. If it were to be remade, truly and radically reconstructed, the area needed to be cleansed of the people themselves and their historical and cultural identity. So, the Turkish state planned to use its power to erase everything in order to install the dominant ideology, nationality, flag and religion, by destroying buildings, monuments, life and

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collective memory. Overwhelming force was deployed to gain the monopoly of violence and destroy the local fabric of life. For such an analysis, intent has to be demonstrated.

Figure 7.20. Destruction around the four-legged minaret (DBB, 2016a).

The then urbanisation Minister (until 24th May 2016), Fatma Güldemet Sarı, announced in December 2015, when the conflict was still ongoing, the following regarding the demolitions in the area:

> "After the damage assessment work, the damaged buildings will be demolished and cleaned. After the demolition work is done, we will temporarily house our victimised citizens somewhere; afterwards, urban transformation can either be carried out by our Ministry or by TOKİ; we need to provide new living spaces." (T24, 2015)

However, damage assessment was not conducted according to the required official process and nor was housing provided. The decision to initiate the destruction was initially aimed at creating a passage for armoured vehicles through Sur. However, by the end of February, this decision had been expanded to encompass a larger area, and despite the involvement of the urbanisation Ministry, it soon became evident that the Diyarbakır (province) Security Directorate (*Diyarbakır Emniyet Müdürlüğü*) under the governorship was the sole authority overseeing the unplanned

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demolition activities that actually accelerated immediately upon the end of the armed clashes. The main demolition work was commenced immediately after expropriation in March 2016 (Soyukaya, 2017).

According to the press release of the Chamber of Architects issued on 29th June 2017, the Ministry and provincial directorate were the executives for all kinds of demolition and construction work done in Sur, and thus responsible for what was done (TMMOB MODŞ, 2017a). The date given for the end of the armed conflict signalled that the operation was no longer a military issue for the army and associated (formal and informal) security forces. Nevin Soyukaya, the head of the Conservation Board, reported to *Gazete Duvar* that "excavation trucks belonging to official institutions such as DSI and Karayolları [the state water and roadways agencies]" were operating in the area (Pehlivan, 2021). Regarding the subcontracting companies operating the deconstruction, Interviewee No. 25, a board member of the Diyarbakır TMMOB coordination board, stated the following:

> "No firm from Diyarbakır was involved in the bidding [*ihale*] for that demolition, so the state brought a firm from the city of Kayseri for the demolition bidding. The contractors from Kayseri were saying, If you had not supported terrorism in these streets, your houses would not have been destroyed. They were shouting this in the streets with the police next to them."

According to the assessment study conducted for the preparation of the 2012 Urban Conservation Plan, the quality of the buildings in the area was not bad, which contradicts the government's claims concerning the need to remove "unhealthy construction" (Çelik et al., 2016, p. 8; ÇŞİDB, n.d., p. 7). Figure 7.21. analyses the current state of the visible quality of the buildings in 2012. Especially in the eastern (Suriçi) area, where the destruction was extensive, there were many buildings shown to be in a poor condition, but there was still a significant number of buildings that were not as well as a significant number of listed structures that no longer exist.
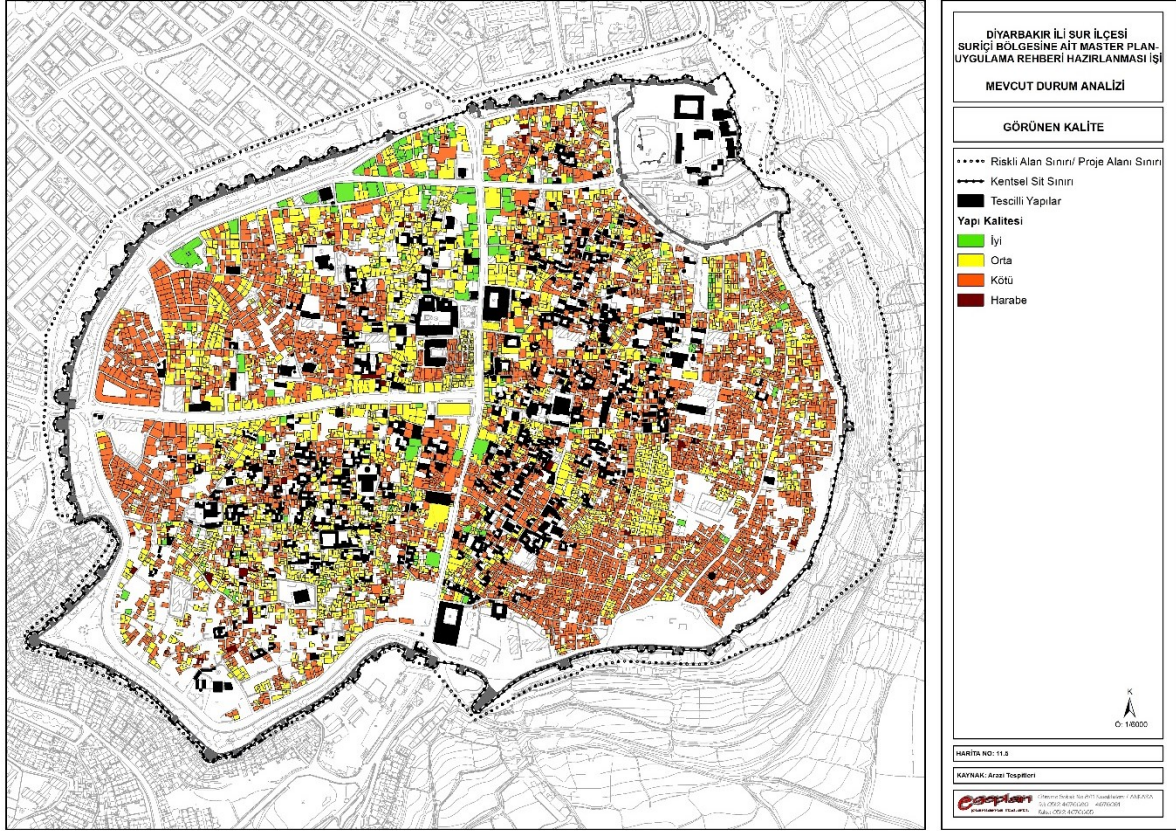
Figure 7.21. The "current state" of the "visible quality" of buildings (2012). Black: listed buildings; green: buildings of good quality/in a good state of repair; yellow: medium; red: bad; dark red: ruins (source: protected)

The Site Management (*Site Yönetimi*) and the Diyarbakır metropolitan municipality frequently requested access to the damaged areas after the armed conflict, but the governor consistently refused their requests, claiming that the region was "not safe" (Soyukaya, 2017). All the reports were carried out with the poor information that was available through news media, pictures, observations and testimonies due to "the refusal of access to the affected area for Site Management personnel" (ANF News, 2017). A report – *What Happened in Terms of Management of Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape After Being Included in UNESCO's World Heritage List* – was prepared as "a result of the evaluation made by World Heritage Sites Management on 10/05/2016 and 16/08/2016" (Aydın et al., 2020, p. 2). Most of the reports prepared by members of the Site Management were sent to ministries and the UNESCO and the

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International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) local or international offices; nevertheless, it was reported, "all requests of the Site Management have been denied, postponed or remained unanswered." (ANF News, 2017).

SURIÇI POPULATION AND REGISTERED BUILDING STATUS

Suriçi consists of 15 neighborhoods. Total population in 2015 is 50 thousand 341. Suriçi covers a 148 hectare surface area. Neighborhoods where conflicts take place are 75.3 hectare in total.

Registered Buildings:

Monumental Buildings (Group 1 buildings): **147**
Civilian Architecture (Group 2 buildings): **452**
Total: **599 registered buildings**

There were a total of 340 registered buildings including 79 monumental buildings and 261 civilian architecture in the blockaded 6 neighborhoods.

Figure 7.22. Map from UNESCO World Heritage Sites Management evaluation report (Aydın et al. 2020, p.1).

According to an architect from the chamber who entered the area of Sur immediately after the end of the clashes, the majority of the buildings had not been damaged significantly, something she also recorded on camera. This argument is supported by Google Maps images showing buildings that were still standing after the warfare and thus demolished subsequently (see below; also Appendix A). On January 17, 2020, a technical delegation consisting of the Chamber of Architects, the Chamber of Mapping and Cadastre Engineers, the Chamber of City Planners and Diyarbakır branches and the former management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites conducted the first investigation into the prohibited neighbourhoods of Suriçi. On January 28, they made a press release to announce the first outcomes of their review. This explained how difficult it was for

them to realise where they were, how alienated they felt from a space that they had known for years and that they even needed to use navigation aids in order to get around the area (Bozarslan, 2020).

As reported by the press release of the "First Investigation in Sur for Four Years" (*4 Yil Sonra Surda İlk İnceleme*) (TMMOB MODŞ, 2020), studies on satellite images processed by the Chamber of Architects Diyarbakır Branch concluded that although some structures in the area were destroyed by tanks and cannons, the main destruction was executed after the conflict. It was also observed that in the demolitions were not carried out under the supervision of the culture Ministry experts. Moreover, the excavations conducted by construction machinery for the new buildings destroyed the archaeological layers of the area. A dozen examples of vernacular architecture were found to have been destroyed, while original building materials that could have been reused for the destroyed structures were not found (i.e. these had been removed in the clearing operation). The double-track asphalt roads already showed that heavy traffic flow was planned, even though "vibrations from the traffic right next to the eastern walls" posed a "great risk" and could "even cause collapse of the walls." (TMMOB, 2020, p. 10).

Figure 7.23. Demolished structures status as reported on the first investigation into prohibited Suriçi neighbourhoods, January 2020 (Dilan Kaya).

Due to the revised (in 2016) Conservation Development Plan (see below, 8.2), several plots of land were merged, allowing the construction of commercial buildings (TMMOB MODŞ, 2020). As a result, according to the Diyarbakır Chamber of Architects, the original street layout and integrity of the protected urban fabric were seriously damaged and its authenticity challenged (ibid.). It was observed at their report that the new buildings constructed in the area were basalt-covered reinforced concrete structures, which contradicted the original, traditional Diyarbakır architectural style in Sur, where the houses had bay windows, basalt stonework, wide courtyards and door-window openings onto the street, along with courtyard wall details and ornamental pools. The basalt stone used on the façade of the new buildings was not the original basalt stone of Diyarbakır, and massive painted plastered sections of the facades of the buildings were considered to have ruined the street style. Yenikapı Street was cited as a typical example of an original alley with many monumental and vernacular architecture examples; its width had been doubled, from seven to fifteen meters wide. The Surp Giragos and Chaldean Churches and their courtyard walls had been destroyed, the courtyard wall of the Pasha Bath was removed, many houses were demolished, and the southern side of the road was destroyed. It was also observed that the new buildings there were completely different from the traditional street facade texture and that the area designed for commercial use had been built higher than the maximum floor height. The Directorate of Environmental Protection in Metropolitan Diyarbakır reported that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in collaboration with local entities, had established a committee to remove remains without conducting a comprehensive assessment of the demolitions, encompassing physical components of designated historical edifices (ibid.).

Aerial images revealed the destruction of Hasırlı Mosque and the Armenian Catholic Church. The mosque had suffered total destruction, while the church had seen the ruin of its bell tower, southern courtyard wall and pool, as well as the main entrance door and auxiliary structure (Soyukaya, 2017). Historical buildings like the Kurşunlu Mosque, Sheikh Muhattar Mosque, Pasha Hamam, and Mehmed Uzun Museum House, as well as various historic civil structures and shops

along Yeni Kapı Street suffered varying degrees of destruction (HIC, 2016). Additionally, debris[44] was reportedly relocated to the Diyarbakır Dicle University area, far from Sur, and eventually concealed with soil (Soyukaya, 2017). Armenian-origin Diyarbakır MP Garo Paylan of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP) gave a press conference in the parliament at which he reported that the archaeological layers of Sur were destroyed and a "demographic crime" was being committed and called for the protection of the cultural heritage (TMMOB MODŞ, 2019).

On 10th May 2016, the Chamber of Engineers conducted the first satellite image registration. According to their data, the total area of Suriçi is 148 hectares and the total area of the six prohibited neighbourhoods in eastern Suriçi was 75.3 hectares. On that date, the demolition area was estimated at 10.7 hectares, there were 832 demolished and 257 damaged buildings (TMMOB DİKK, 2017). The data are illustrated by the chamber on the following map (Figure 7.24).

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[44] Since the debris from the demolished parts of the buildings can be used as barricades or as weapons (Filippidis, 2017), it was, thus, immediately removed from the area.

Figure 7.24. Satellite image plan of demolished area, 10th May 2016 (TMMOB, 2019, p. 57).

The second satellite image detection was held three months later, on 16 August 2016. The demolition area had doubled, to 20.3 Hectares, and the number of demolished buildings had also

doubled, to 1519; tellingly, the number of damaged buildings was unchanged (TMMOB DİKK, 2017). Among the listed buildings, 36 (35 civilian and one monumental building) were completely destroyed, 25 (19 civilian and six monumental) were partially destroyed, and 28 were damaged. (Aydın et al., 2020, p. 2).

Figure 7.25. Satellite image plan of demolished area, 16th August 2016 (TMMOB, 2019, p. 61).

Figure 7.26. Satellite image plan of demolished area, 11th July 2017 (TMMOB, 2019, p. 65).

On 11 July 2017, the satellite image detections showed that the demolition area had more than doubled again, reaching a peak of 46.3 hectares for the six blocked neighbourhoods of eastern Suriçl, accounting for 61% of the surface area and 72% of the structures in the area. The total

numbers of demolished and undemolished structures in the area was now 3,569 and 1,416, respectively (TMMOB DİKK, 2017).[45]

According to the report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2017), the most intense phase of destruction commenced shortly after the security operations, during which the authorities were reported to have barred the displaced population from returning and reconstructing their own residences. Instead, heavy machinery was deployed to demolish entire city quarters, including even lightly damaged structures and cultural heritage sites. This clearance process seemed to escalate notably in the spring of 2016 and reached its peak in August 2016, where an estimated average of 1,000 square metres of land area was cleared each day, resulting in the demolition of approximately three hectares (30,000 m^2) of urban dwellings during that month (OHCHR, 2017).

Figure 7.27 illustrates the extensive destruction in southwestern Sur, where "no clashes occurred" (TMMOB, 2019, p. 4), but which had been targeted for urgent expropriation since 2010, leading to the acceleration of all processes after the conflict in order to implement plans that had already been decided upon long before the war.

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[45] The total number of structures was thus 4985; according to the Ministry's 2012 data, there were 9,246 buildings in the area.
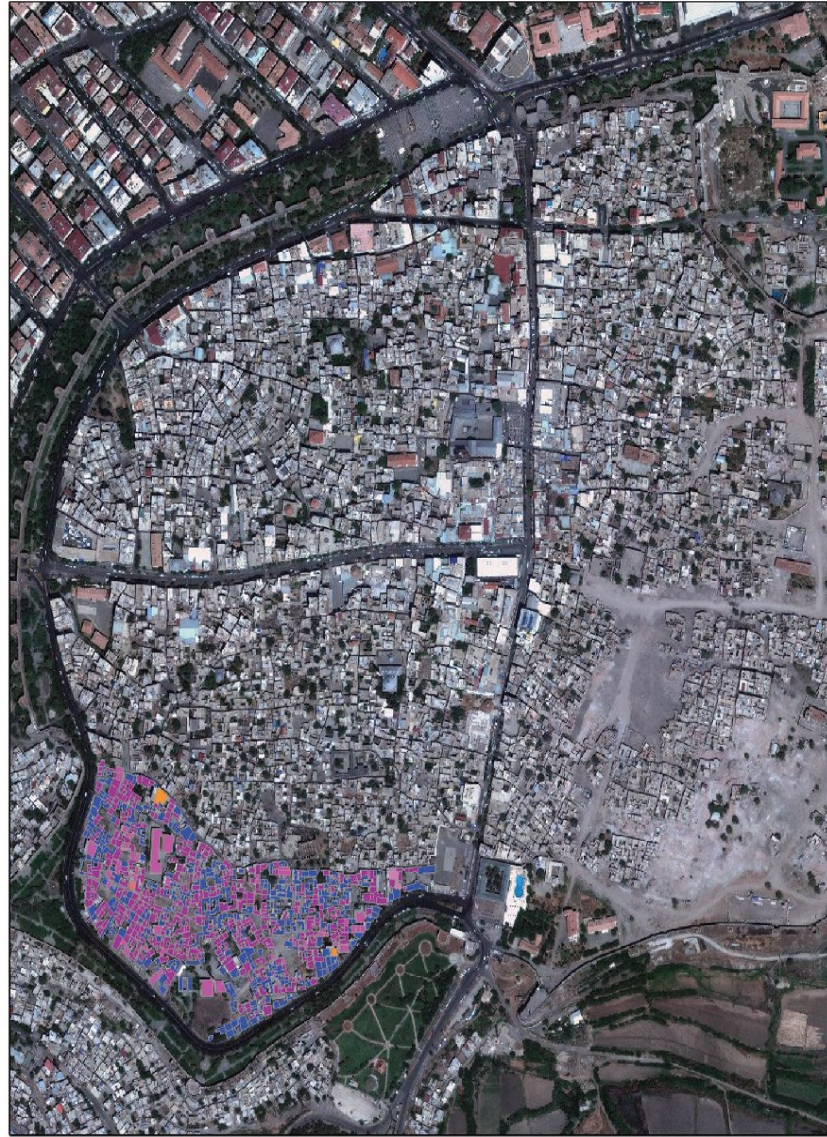
Figure 7.27. Satellite image plan of demolished area in relation to height of buildings, western Sur (Alipaşa and Lalebey); ranging from blue (one storey) to yellow (eight-storey); (TMMOB, 2019, p. 70).

7.5. Dislocation: one step before 'accumulation through dispossession'

In late April 2017, residents learnt from the minarets of mosques in the Alipaşa and Lalebey districts of southwestern Sur that they had to evacuate their homes. Most of the families living in Suriçi had previously been forcibly evacuated and displaced from their villages in the 1990s when the Turkish state was burning the villages (GABB and SİBB, 2016) during the armed conflict with the PKK. Houses were usually the only property of people who were already in economic distress or the only affordable solution for renting for those with less. During the period of the bans – when large parts of the city (and another generation) were forcibly evacuated, the conflict raged and (then) the demolition enacted – this property was destroyed along with the residents' belongings, as when they left their homes there was no time to collect or transport them.

Figure 7.28. People carrying their belongings as they flee from Sur (Sertac Kayar/Reuters; Associated Press in Ankara, 2016).

The displacement became even more violent and urgent after the initial bans aiming to clear the neighbourhoods, which were accompanied by power, water, telephone and internet cuts. In

most cases, it was impossible for residents to obtain food or medical supplies, a situation deliberately caused by the authorities in order to break the morale of residents and flush out guerrillas. The state dislocated the local people first due to the conflict (to create a battle zone in which civilians took their chances with their lives) and then through the expropriation order (to clear and raze the areas for redevelopment). Although not all properties were ultimately expropriated and almost half of the area was not demolished, this disruption of local life and property ownership resulted in a mass dislocation.

At the end of the military operations, it is estimated that 95 per cent of the local population in Suriçi was displaced (OHCHR, 2017). The total population registered as living in Suriçi was 50,341, and that of the six conflict-impacted neighbourhoods was 22,323 (Aydın et al., 2020). The total number of people who had lived in the prohibited neighbourhoods was 26,084 (GABB, 2016, p. 5). According to the Diyarbakır Chamber of Architects report for 2018, "approximately 25-26 thousand people have been displaced" (TMMOB MODŞ, 2018, p. 93). According to DITAM (2018), approximately six thousand families in the Sur were displaced due to "trenches, barricades, military operations and conflicts," and the number of people "directly affected by the conflicts" was around 40,000". Figures might vary among different reports, but in any case, the people affected by the conflict and then the expropriation decisions certainly numbered in the tens of thousands. There is no doubt that the expropriations and dislocation created a major demographic issue, on many levels.[46]

Some families reported that they had no choice during the initial stages of displacement but to take refuge in parks, while others sought temporary accommodation in hotels or stayed with relatives living outside Sur. Some affected families opted to share rented apartments with two

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[46] The issue was vividly observed during the local elections of March 2019 when the number of registered people and of those who could eventually vote plunged (Cengiz, 2019), revealing a representation issue.

or three other families, assuming that the curfew in Sur would be of short duration and they would soon be able to return to their homes (DITAM, 2018; GABB 2015).

Figure 7.29. Displacement and damaged houses (ROAR collective, 2015).

"The clashes caused many people in Sur to lose their jobs, thus causing even greater impoverishment in Sur that was already inhabited by economically lower-class people." (GABB and SİBB, 2016, p. 23). According to "Field Research on the Displaced from Suriçi" conducted with displaced families from the area in 2019, 40% had been renting their accommodation (mostly at cheap rents), a figure that had now risen to 90% (Sosyo politik, 2019). Some 82% of the respondents had had to migrate out of Sur due to the conflict and 10% due to the fact that their house was demolished (Sosyo Politik, 2019).

A high-ranking representative of the Chamber of Commerce (Interviewee No. 9) commented on the choices available to the families of Sur:

"Let's divide the people there into three categories according to what they are. At the time of the conflict, those who took one of the three options given by the state. The first moved to TOKİ and left. They are not satisfied because they were making their living at Sur; now, they can't earn a living by sitting at home, and they're looking for a job. The second is over a thousand families who did not receive anything. They did not receive the expropriation fee, they did not get a place, they did not buy a house, they filed lawsuits and their lawsuits continue. They filed a lawsuit against urgent expropriation. Their case continues, and they say they'll take the case to the European Court of Human Rights. And as far as I know, they did. The third is those who bought residences; they are about 500 to 600. Those who buy housing there benefited the most. None of them lived there and do not live now. Almost all of them are selling. Some of them say that they will wait until they are worth a little more so that they can sell for better prices."

In other words, the overwhelming majority were very badly hit in economic terms, having to leave the area or ending up in protracted litigation, while a small minority would soon be able to take advantage of the redevelopment and make a good investment.

Figure 7.30. Emptied areas (taken by the author, 2022).

7.6. Objections from civil society and resistance against the project

Residents were coerced in different ways to evacuate the neighbourhood and to obey the expropriation order and accept the amounts that were given as compensation. This process of oppression from the side of the state and constant struggle for survival from the residents' side was described by Interviewee No. 26, a member of the TMMOB Coordination Committee:

> "It's making the people tired and running away, families can't live here anymore. They're trying to ghettoise the region with drugs, gangs, and conflicts. […] The same method is used in Kaynartepe (Bağlar). In Kaynartepe, the people can't send their children outside anymore. The expropriation decision has been made. Normally, there has to be an agreement with the people, but when the people don't accept the low compensation they give, they try to make the people need that money with such methods. There is a similar method in Sulukule. They place criminals in the area and drive people out of their homes. There are 1,154 households in Kaynartepe, but there are only 94 people who agree with the state. The rest didn't agree. That's why they try this method. Every evening, they send a few gangs to the area and have these gangs shoot into the air, and in this way, they make the people there tired. They did it here, too. Here, they were cutting off the water to begin with. When the people did not come out, they cut off the electricity. When the people did not come out again, this time, they cut the sewer pipes. [...] The people were resisting, not coming out. At that time, NGOs came together and created a water platform. This struggle lasted for a long time, but since the state was acting with the greed of revenge, they destroyed a house late at night and eventually destroyed them all."

Figure 7.31. Demolitions, Alipaşa and Lalebey (TMMOB, 2019, p. 76).

With the help and guidance of the Bar Association, 140 individual applications were filed to the Constitutional Court (*Anayasa Mahkemesi*) for the cancellation of the urgent expropriation decision (Evrensel, 2018b). However, there was still a substantial power imbalance because many citizens lacked the will or finances or direct access to legal support in order to object to the state's orders. The head of an NGO offering legal assistance to the deprived residents (Interviewee No. 21) stated the following:

> "The vast majority of people didn't go to court. The reason for this is that the authority uses the deficits in the way the expropriation process is implemented to their advantage, and people do not know about the deficits and cannot trust the legal system in Turkey."

Gültan Kışanak, then Co-Mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, was a guest on a panel presented by Ayşegül Doğan for *İMC Özel TV*, a private television channel. She urged the residents of Sur not to sell their properties under any circumstances and to refrain from signing any documents presented to them with deceptive intentions to prevent property confiscation, Kışanak emphasised that the municipality, in collaboration with various non-governmental

organisations, was offering free legal advice to the affected individuals against expropriation. She stressed the significance of property owners submitting applications to the Council of State to challenge and overturn the expropriation decision. The co-mayor reminded everyone that the deadline for filing applications against expropriation was set for 21st April 2016, and she called upon all property owners in Sur to promptly appeal to the Council of State for an annulment of the decision (İMC TV, 2016). Local activists created the *No to Destruction of Sur Platform* (*Sur'un Yıkımına Hayır Patformu*) to put an end to the destruction and forcible evictions in Suriçi and help the local people defend their right to struggle against their continuous dislocation and dispossession from the state. This initiative raised concerns in local and international networks about the demolitions processes (PNDS, 2018). The Housing and Land Rights Network (Habitat International Coalition, HIC) reported on the actions undertaken against the whole process, which are summarised thus:

1. During a parliamentary session in March 2016, HDP parliamentarians questioned the Turkish government regarding the reasons behind the Expropriation Decree, which they believed violated the rule of law. In response, the AKP party, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, passed a constitutional amendment that removed parliamentary immunity, targeting Kurdish deputies for potential removal. Following the lifting of their parliamentary immunity, HDP leaders wrote a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, urging his attention to the situation in Sur.

2. The Diyarbakır Municipality produced reports on the destruction of Sur's cultural heritage and shared them with institutions such as the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, UNESCO and ICOMOS.

3. Over 300 non-governmental groups and civic leaders issued a joint statement in March 2016 condemning the expropriation.

4. The Diyarbakır Architects Chamber announced a lawsuit to revoke the Expropriation Decree.

5. The Diyarbakır Bar Association prepared an application to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on behalf of families affected by curfews, challenging the legality of the imposed curfews in Sur and other southeastern cities. After unsuccessful attempts in Turkish courts, the case was submitted to the ECHR in September 2016.

6. The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights visited Diyarbakır in mid-April 2016 and expressed shock at the extensive destruction witnessed in certain areas.

7. The Venice Commission and the ECHR initiated examinations to assess the legality of the curfews following an application from the Diyarbakır Association.

8. Amnesty International conducted a mission to Diyarbakır in late May 2016, documenting the forced displacement of the population and the demolition of Sur. (HIC, 2016)

Among the voices that were raised, the loudest came from the HDP in an announcement (among many) in August 2017: "Stop ongoing destruction and displacement in the ancient Sur district in Diyarbakır" (HDP, 2017). Zülfü Livaneli, the famous novelist, filmmaker, composer and singer as well as Turkey's UNESCO goodwill ambassador, resigned on 26th May 2016, citing hypocrisy in UNESCO for neglecting the devastation of the historical area during and after the conflicts and additionally criticising the government for human rights violations (Hürriyet Daily News, 2016). He cited the "refusal of access to the affected area" the lack of proper "assessments of damage and destruction due to armed conflict" and the denial, postponement or non-response to "all requests of the Site Management" in referring to the reports sent to the Turkish Ministry for Culture and Tourism, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, the ICOMOS Turkish National Commission, and the ICORP Turkey Commission for "broader assessments" and "measures for improvement and conservation in cooperation with the World Heritage Site Management body in the affected areas" (ANF News 2017)

In September 2016, the management of cultural sites, most specifically the country's World Heritage sites, lost their autonomy when conservation boards were brought under the direct

controlled of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Ayboğa, 2019). This decision also resulted in the revision of the Suriçi Conservation Development Plan in December 2016 and justified all previous and future violations there for security reasons. The coordination committee of the Chamber of Engineers objected to the revision of the Conservation Development Plan prepared by the urbanisation Ministry without any input from local stakeholders and accused it of not protecting life and the valuable characteristics of the region (TMMOB MODŞ, 2022).

Figure 7.32. "No to demolitions" (Refik Tekin).

Chapter 8

Re/de-construction and Assimilation: 'Sur Anew'

8.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of re/de-construction in order to render the discursive imaginaries and rationalities of 'Sur anew'. First, the Revision of the Conservation Development plan is discussed as an important state strategy aimed at remaking Sur. Second, the process of design and construction the new areas in Sur, is considered, as well as the restoration approach towards the historical structures. On the one hand, the constructive aspect involved establishing a new setting to shape identity and (supposedly) enhance societal well-being, while on the other, the damaging aspect involved the dismantling of environments that were deemed incompatible with state's modernity 'plan' (Jongerden, 2007).

All this is operated in the context of Suriçi (and in general Kurdistan region, section 4.3.), understood as an 'internal colony' operating within the framework of the 'ethnocratic regime' established by the Turkish state (Ay and Turker, 2022). Utilising the framework of "ethnocracy," Ay and Turker analyse how ethnonational dominance of Turkishness serves as a governing mechanism in the reconstruction of urban spaces under the authoritarian rule of a hegemonic state (Ay and Turker, 2022). Turkish ethnocratic state, along with its associated institutions and elites, perpetuates hegemony (ibid.). The bases of ethnocratic regime structures also include demographic control, land and settlement control, armed force and securitisation of land, capital flow, constitutional law, and the reformulation of public space around ethnonational symbols to reinforce dominant groups and suppress contesting cultures (Yiftachel, 2006).

Figure 8.1. Blocked area next to Dört Ayaklı Minare, most probably early 2017 (140 journos, 2017).

Since the very beginning of the conflict, the announcements about urban transformation projects in the mass media (see Yalcın, 2015) justified it as essential to prevent the resettlement of PKK in the region and thus as a long-term plan to halt terrorism. Since the beginning of the conflict and throughout the process of destruction and reconstruction, Suriçi remained completely or partially blocked by the security forces. Given that for many decades, the Turkish state has exercised control over the Kurdistan region in its southeast through combinations of exclusion, prohibitions, refusals and dismissals (Akıncı et al., 2020), this kind of military spatial strategy can be expressed as "revanchist" but also as involving "racialized mechanisms" aiming to punish the locals and "recolonize" the region and the urban centres (Taş, 2022a).

According to Interviewee No.22, a local political scientist and NGO member:

> "You know, after the conflict, the destroyed area was not the conflict area. I can say that a big part of the destruction happened after the conflict, not during the conflict.

> […] That's why they started the urban transformation projects not just in Suriçi but also in Bağlar[47]; It is the first peripheral region of Diyarbakır. Most of the people who live there are poor people, and they are the main human resource of PKK."

On September 4, 2016, the government unveiled a comprehensive reconstruction and economic development package for southeast Turkey, allocating USD 21 billion to the areas that had been damaged and destroyed by the conflict. The plan encompassed the construction or reconstruction of over 30,700 houses, of which 7,000 were designated for the Sur district in Diyarbakır. Additionally, TOKİ aimed to build 800 factories, 36 sports stadiums, and 15 new hospitals as part of the development efforts. The plan also included micro-grants, investments in social services, and monetary compensations to address the damages caused by the conflict. (OHCHR, 2017). The regional investment and reconstruction plan announced by then Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım did not, however, refer to public consultation nor the return of the dislocated people (Amnesty International, 2016). Hence, concern was voiced that the Government's development plan might be "implemented in the absence of any investigations and accountability measures for the allegations pointing to the massive and unnecessary destruction." (OHCHR, 2017, p. 13). The amount spent the urban transformation projects, as stated by urbanisation Minister Murat Kurum, was 6,724 million TL (around a billion euros with the currency of that time); for Diyarbakır province, a final costing was estimated at 1.4 billion TL (220 million euros) (Alan, 2019).

The Diyarbakır TMMOB coordination board carried out an evaluation of 706 residential and commercial establishments in the affected neighbourhoods after the second curfew, which ended on October 13th. This revealed that 693 of these buildings could be restored through minor repairs, while the remaining 13 structures required a more comprehensive examination for potential restoration (TMMOB DİKK, 2017). Nevertheless, the majority of the representatives of

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[47] A poor and highly politicised neighbourhood (outside Suriçi) located on the Western part of Diyarbakır's railway station.

the government, Ministers and appointed trustees actively supported the reconstruction project. For example, the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Mayor, Cumali Atilla, declared the following:

> "We will make the urban transformation in Diyarbakır. There are streets that are not accessible by fire trucks and ambulances, especially in the Bağlar and Sur districts. We will make buildings that our city deserves in the place of the ones that pose a risk to our fellow citizens. [...] Our goal is to make our citizens happy." (Aydın, 2019a)

In order to emphasise the quality and uniqueness of the new buildings, TOKİ president Mehmet Ergün Turan stated that social housing (the provision of which was TOKİ's remit) could not be built in Sur since it was a historical area with a specific Conservation Development Plan that all new constructions had to comply with (soL haber Portalı, 2015). Additionally, Turan emphasised the fact that TOKİ had worked closely with the municipality since 2009 and that all future projects would be enacted for the benefit of the people and with respect to the historical environment and not for speculation (Karakuş, 2015). He also added that:

> "People are thinking that now Sur is destroyed, and the TOKİ will come here and build apartments. There is no such thing [...] There is a plan completely planned according to its historical texture and approved by the conservation board. This place will not be a residential area. Social housing will not be built in Sur, buildings suitable for the historical texture are built, which may have 1-2 floors." (Karakuş, 2015)

The Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation made specific efforts to differentiate the urban transformation projects in Sur from those implemented in Silopi, Cizre and other cities. On the official webpage of the Ministry, it was declared that

> "The urban transformation work we carried out for Silopi and Cizre is in a separate category. But the work we are doing for Sur is a work specific to the Suriçi region. For here, there is absolutely and definitely no urban transformation statement." (ÇŞİDB, 2016a).

Despite the above declarations and the fact that Diyarbakır Municipality claimed to maintain "highly protective zoning plans" in Sur requiring proper authorisation for substantial renovations and new construction, certain situations allowed the urbanisation Ministry and TOKİ to "declare urgent expropriation of an at-risk urban area" and thus to "essentially do as they please" (Lepeska, 2016).

At the beginning of 2017, the situation inside Suriçi could be summarised as follows. Some areas had been severely affected by the clashes and the destruction activity in eastern Sur (mainly the Savaş, Ceman Yılmaz, Hasırlı, and Fatihpaşa neighbourhoods); in southwestern Sur (Alipaşa and Lalebey), no clashes had occurred during the conflict, but the demolition work had changed the place dramatically. Most of the rest of Suriçi was untouched; it had not been affected by the armed conflict and there were no plans for any mass re/de-construction. These areas were gradually removed from the prohibitions and restrictions, and life was gradually returning to them.

On January 4, 2017, a ceremony was held to inaugurate the construction of what the government dubbed "traditional Diyarbakır houses" in Sur. This was attended by the urbanisation Minister and the head of TOKİ. During the event, the new Minister, Mehmet Özhaseki, emphasised the government's commitment to fulfilling the requirements of former residents and restoring the area in accordance with conservation plans (Reuters, 2018). The construction activity would commence in the Hasırlı neighbourhood of Suriçi, and in January 2017, satellite images already showed signs of activity there (TMMOB, 2019).

Figure 8.2. opening ceremony for Sur projects (ÇŞİDB, 2017).

8.2. Revision of the Conservation Development Plan

As described (7.1, 7.3.2), the takeover of Suriçi was based on two important pieces of legislation, the Expropriation Law and the Urban Regeneration Law (Nos. 2942 and 6306). Within the buffer zones, prior authorisation from the responsible municipality was required for new constructions and physical interventions. The Diyarbakır Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation (*Diyarbakır Kültür Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Derneği*) oversaw permits for such activities within the historical Suriçi district, adhering to the provisions of the Conservation Plan (UNESCO, 2015). The fortress walls and towers were protected by the Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation and the Code of Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties (*Kültür ve Tabiat*

Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu), Law No. 2863 – although the preceding chapters testify to the violation of this law.[48] The main argument in this chapter concerns firstly the violation and then the revision of the Conservation Development Plan as a 'legislation game' that benefitted rather than regulated the government's aspirations to the realisation of 'Sur anew'.

Formulated In 1990, the Urban Conservation Development Plan was first time revised in 2012 that were influenced by the Law No.6303 regarding 'areas under disaster risk' (Küçükkırca, 2018). During the interview with (Interviewee No. 16) an ex-officer of the municipality (now exiled in Europe) specialised in the UNESCO application procedure, we discussed the process of developing the Suriçi Conservation Development Plan, which was initially introduced and executed by Sur Municipality and the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality in 2009 under their partial jurisdiction and limits on their authority in the area. In 2012, the plan received approval following the evaluation and endorsement of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change. During this period, there were changes in the composition of the planning team, with a new team from Ankara replacing the one from the municipality. The new team demonstrated sensitivity towards the preservation of the historical fabric of the area. From 2009 to 2012, slight modifications were made to rectify any errors or inconsistencies in the approved plan. The Conservation Development Plan aimed to consider the historical and social aspects of the area, taking into account the local community and the broader public interests.

Subsequently, in 2012, during revisions to the Conservation Development Plan, the municipality and urbanisation Ministry prepared a strategic action plan, aiming to promote and protect the historical parts of Sur without changing the old pattern. Those revisions gave the 2012 plan a concrete approach to the protection of historical areas, aiming to ban the erection of high

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[48] For more on this law on, see https://kvmgm.ktb.gov.tr/TR-43249/law-on-the-conservation-of-cultural-and-natural-property-2863.html.

structures (Bakan 2018). Figures 8.3 and 8.4 shows the 1:5000 and 1:500 scales of the 2012 Conservation Development Plan (*Koruma Amaçli Nazim İmar Plani Revisiyonu*).

Figure 8.3. The 2012 Conservation Development Master Plan (1:5000). Light pink (with vertical lines): residential areas; pink (with purple crossed lines): shops; red: commercial areas; blue: social facilities (schools, museums, etc.); green: religious areas; pale green: green areas; yellow: areas reserved for special projects (DBB, 2016a).

Figure 8.4. Detailed Conservation Development Plan, 1:500 scale, 2012. (Aydın et al., 2020).

At the same time as aiming for conservation, this plan paved the way for the touristification and commercialisation of Suriçi and initiated the dislocation of locals for the development of some areas. The sum of the then current population of the area was put at 61,115, which was to be reduced to an estimated 37,447 after implementation of the plan – so 23,668 people, approaching 40 per cent, who were to be moved out. The following map shows estimates for the amount of dislocation for each neighbourhood of Sur after the implementation of the 2012 Conservation Development Plan.

Figure 8.5. Technical report for Master Plan showing neighbourhood populations and estimated neighbourhood populations after implementation (using state statistics information: TÜİK/ADNKS Sonuçları ve Büro Çalışması) (source: protected).

After the above overview of the previous plans and circumstances, this section returns back to the 2016 post-conflict Diyarbakır period. Under the 2012 Conservation Development Plan, all demolition activity was prohibited. For this reason, revisions were made to the 2012 Conservation Development Plan in order to accommodate the Turkish state's demands for re/de-construction. The Turkish state avoided international obligations and guidelines for the protection of monuments when revising the plan again in December 2016 (Bakan, 2018). Without consulting with the Diyarbakır Metropolitan or Sur Municipalities and other local stakeholders, the urbanisation Ministry prepared and approved the 2016 revision of the Suriçi District Conservation Development Plan (Soyukaya, 2017; TMMOB MODŞ, 2018).

As presented by the engineers who prepared the Ministry's Diyarbakır Suriçi Conservation Development Plan Revision Plan Clarification Report (*Diyarbakır Suriçi Koruma Amaçli Imar Plani Değişikliği Plan Açiklama Raporu*), its aim was to preserve "the historical, cultural, social and economic characteristics of Suriçi" (Çelik et al., 2016, p. 10). It wanted to keep the traditional building and street texture, restore deteriorated parts, maintain the integrity between the conservation plan and architectural projects, and address security and transportation concerns. However, the signatories claimed, significant demolitions had occurred since the earlier revised plan, rendering its implementation unfeasible. Uncoordinated developments had been carried out by different institutions involving, for example, street sanitisation and architectural projects (ibid.). This, it was asserted, had disrupted the integrity of the previous plan, which was why another revision was deemed necessary, one that would eliminate damages, implement plan decisions holistically, protect the historical and traditional texture of the area, utilise its potential and ensure a balance between conservation and utilisation (Çelik et al., 2016).

For the Ministry, the lack of a comprehensive and holistic study in the past had resulted in architectural projects remaining at the parcel scale. This piecemeal approach had prevented the realisation of conservation plan decisions, it was argued. Additionally, the Ministry found it necessary to analyse the transportation network in order to improve accessibility for emergency vehicles and eliminate "the security weakness that may arise due to the terrorist threat in the region" (Çelik et al., 2016, p. 8.) Thus, the establishment of Security Service Areas (*Güvenlik Hizmeti Alanları*) was planned to address public safety:

> "The issue of controlling and keeping terrorist incidents under control is important. Due to this public need, it is planned to achieve a solution with Security Service Areas and Facilities that will be located at strategic points of Suriçi and have technical equipment compatible with today's conditions, as well as in accordance with the traditional street texture and architectural structure of Suriçi. […] The location of the Police Service Areas has been chosen by considering the necessary security criteria." (Çelik et al., 2016, p. 9).

The 2016 Ministry report openly placed the issue of security as a central concern of the newly revised plan. A part of the city was to be reorganised to prevent potential terrorist attacks and

facilitate emergency services. Revisions to the Conservation Development Plan thus also included broader provisions related to urban design, including the widening of some roads and the introduction of six Security Service Areas (essentially police stations). A map included in the report (Figure 8.6.) provided the only plan of the area published by a public institution after the conflict and remains the only official source of (map) information detailing the implemented projects.[49]

The only significant elements of this map are the widening of some roads and the security areas (with blue) while highlighted with red dots around to show clearly where they are located. The 2016 report justified the widening of streets to up to seven meters by their "preserving the traditional street texture" and for Yenikapı Street by the need to balance and continue the Melik Ahmet Road, which was to be widened to 15 meters (ibid.). This former justification, of course, is contradictory insofar as the widening of historical streets is incompatible with their preservation.

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[49] The information regarding the implemented projects is still surprisingly limited; institutions like the Technical Chamber do not have access to further maps and implementation reports, a situation that has been reported by local scholars: "During the interviews, they usually suggested that I check the statements of the Urbanisation Minister. Even once, one of the officers frankly admitted that they are not fully informed about the transformation process, they are only responsible for the implementation of the projects which have been decided in Ankara." (Bakan 2018, p.180)
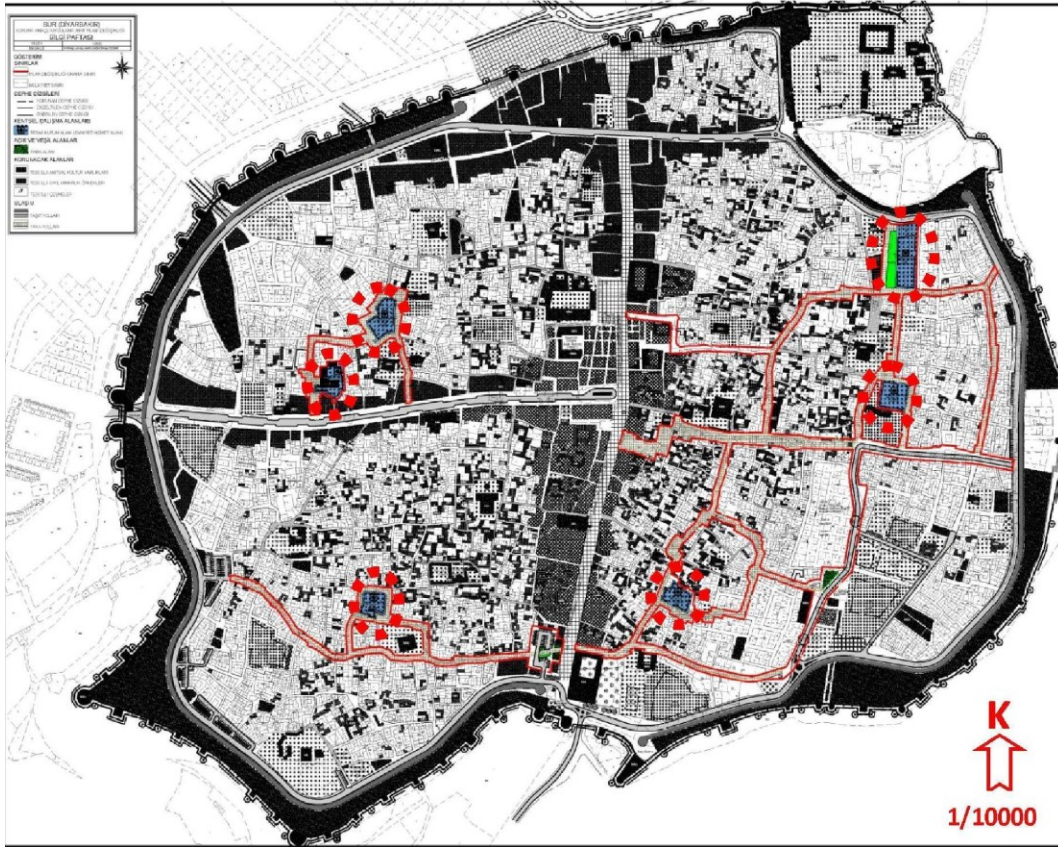
Figure 8.6. Only available public map of the revised Conservation Development Plan, showing security areas and of roads to be widened. Blue (circled with red): Security Service Areas; red lines: roads to be widened (Çelik et al., 2016)

The much-discussed revised Conservation Development Plan of Suriçi thus contains no information about land use, current and future status, protection of historical sites or the local population. There is still no knowledge of the existence of a 1:5000 or 1:1000 map or map report, although the projects are ongoing and a significant number of them have been completed. As will be explored in greater detail in the following section (8.3), it becomes evident from the present state of Suriçi that even this adjusted plan, tailored to security concerns, has not been implemented as presented.

It is important to acknowledge that while the 2016 Conservation Development Plan may be perceived as a conservation mechanism safeguarding the local area, since it was issued by the state, it was susceptible to alteration by the same in order to align with its (other) strategic

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objectives. Plans made by state institutions serve as instruments to implement their policies, whatever they may be; this basic resource or opportunity obtains – for example, for securitisation – irrespective of the plans' originally conception – such as to maintain the cultural and social fabric of a region. Inevitably, such a shift is particularly likely in an era where independent authorities are silenced and overridden and unable to engage in meaningful deliberation or consultation:

> "Before they started the concrete structures, there was a Conservation Plan with rules and criteria. They didn't apply any of these rules of the plan for the new structures. They just try to apply the plan to fit the guidelines of the new structures they build." (Interviewee No. 24, TMMOB architect and reconstruction expert)

By revising the plan immediately after the conflict and taking the urgent expropriation decision, the Turkish state managed to "provide a legal basis for the destruction in progress" (Ayboğa, 2019, p.3). According to the Chamber of Urban Planners, the Conservation Development Plan was, in fact, "adapted to the site" (TMMOB MODŞ, 2022, p. 105). The exiled former officer of the Municipality, referring to the current plan, commented: "That plan, which completely destroyed the texture, cannot be called a Conservation Development Plan".

A study of the newly revised plan was published by the Urban Planners' Diyarbakır Branch TMMOB Coordination Board on 12 January 2017 (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2017). According to the "Technical Report on the Change of the Suriçi Conservation Development Plan," the following were the most important points on the 2016 amendment of the Conservation Development Plan:

- All decisions were security-oriented, violating general urbanism principles and public interest, and ignoring planning values by turning the programme into to a defence tool;
- Security Service Areas and official institutional areas appeared in residential areas or in public spaces (where there were public buildings, etc.);
- Listed buildings were ignored or even to be demolished to allow for the widening of streets;

- The historical value of the area was unconsidered, and changes disrupting the urban texture by causing irreversible losses were not take under consideration;

- No local actors were involved in decision-making processes;

- The displacement and consequent alteration in population would lead to a demographic challenge that was unaddressed;

- Gaps and obscurities in the regulation might result in uncontrolled planning and application of architectural projects according to the interest of companies operating in the area;

- The scale of the historical area would be completely disrupted by the new constructions, walls and fences;

- Commercial use was encouraged;

- Traditional materials were not used;

- Asphalt roads around the walls exceeded the proper elevation, which would result in floods in building basements;

- The plan's descriptions and legend were lacking, resulting in a lack of clarity;

- No decisions were taken regarding the land usage of parcels after demolitions, raising further questions about the integrity of the plan;

- For the construction of the Security Service Areas, 976 buildings were to, be demolished including 17 listed and 42 traditional;

- Although the plan claimed to protect the listed structures, there was no information on how those chosen for demolition would be protected;

- The plan aimed at urban restructuring by adding new functions and buildings instead of restoring and protecting existing ones;

- It lacked a holistic approach to planning;

- Although the justification for the widening of roads was for the access of emergency vehicles, these issues could be solved by modern technological solutions without damaging the historical pattern, indicating that the plan was aimed at facilitating security;

- The plan was revised during a period of conflict and exceptional security conditions when no dialogue and arguments could take place;
- It lacked a scientific, methodological approach and did not correspond to social benefit.
- Decision-making processes were conducted in Ankara, excluding "professional chambers, (…) the local people and all urban dynamics" (TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2017).

Interviewee No.15, an employee of the municipality, explained that concerns were raised among the experts in the municipality and the chambers regarding the displacement that the 2012 plan would bring. He also said that after the war, Ahmet Davutoglu, the prime Minister until the end of May 2015, visited the municipality and claimed that the projects being implemented was the same as the project the HDP municipality had initiated. He tried to justify the State's legislation acts manipulatively and to present them as if they were in the same mentality as those applied in the past by the Kurdish elected mayors. On the official webpage of the urbanisation Ministry, the government claimed that the 2012 conservation plan approved by metropolitan and district municipalities contained some bad practices (ÇŞİDB, 2016, n.d.). Overall, the primary differences between the 2012 Conservation Development Plan and what was and is being implemented, often in the name of the 2012 plan, are the brutality, the amount of dislocation, the six police stations, the high walls inside the area, and the widening of the streets. However, those are important differences. Among the common points are the touristification perspective. Taking a critical perspective, Interviewee No. 16, an ex-employee at the municipality who now lives exiled in Europe, explained the course of events thus:

> Baydemir's [2012] plan was also very liberal; it was a plan that did not take society into consideration. It was a plan that did not take into account the needs of society. It was a plan made entirely with the aim of turning Sur into an open museum. To turn it into a spectacle, an object. It was planned to turn it into a place where tourists could come and enjoy themselves and transfer money to the city. […] We were objecting to that too, but it could never have been so destructive. Because the people who brought him there with their votes could and did stop him. But when the power is centralised, of course, it is very difficult to stop. Osman Baydemir didn't have tanks or guns. We were able to stop him. But when it is the state, it is not possible to stop it.

In my discussions with members of the TMMOB Diyarbakır Branch, criticisms of the state's decision-making processes were often voiced, including accusations that the state's desire to implement this project ignored established conservation practices and priorities. For the state, it was claimed, implementing the 2016 project in order to gain financial profit and securitise the area was much more important than the preservation and conservation of the heritage. The TMMOB filed lawsuits against the revised Conservation Development Plan of Sur, as well as against the Expropriation Decision from March 2016. These lawsuits argued that the revised Plan and the changes it facilitated were contrary to Law No. 2863 (on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets) and the "relevant principal decisions of the High Council of Conservation" (TMMOB MODŞ, 2022, p. 105). The lawsuit aiming to cancel the amendment of the Suriçi Urban Conservation Plan was rejected by the decision of the Diyarbakır 1st Administrative Court No. 2018/857, 2020/114, and an appeal against the decision made to the Gaziantep Regional Administrative Court 2nd Administrative Case Department was still pending as of 2022 (TMMOB MODŞ, 2022, p. 133).

8.3. Newly designed neighbourhoods and axes (commercial streets)

Construction of the new buildings commenced on 4th January 2017 in the Hasırlı neighbourhood, following the official opening ceremony (Figure 8.2.) conducted by the urbanisation Ministry (TMMOB, 2019). It has been ascertained that the constructions carried out in the demolished region were undertaken without the approval of the Diyarbakır Cultural Assets Conservation Board (*Diyarbakır Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Bölge Kurulu Müdürlüğü*) (Aydın et al. 2020). In a letter to the Conservation Board dated 14th August 2017 (no. 17/314), the Diyarbakır branch of the TMMOB asked how many approved projects related to the new settlement process had been provided by the relevant committee for the Hasırlı neighbourhood, which was inside the conflict zone. The Conservation Board replied a week later (letter no. 2412) that there were "no approved projects in the area" (Aydın et al. 2020, p. 10). However, it is evident from a Google Earth image

taken in January and June (above, Section 7.3) that new buildings had already been constructed there (in the northeastern part of Hasırlı).

Figure 8.7. Satellite image of first constructions in Hasırlı, January 2017 (TMMOB, 2019, p. 66).

During the interviews, interesting themes emerged to explain the reasons by which some specific neighbourhoods were chosen to be the first to undergo destruction and reconstruction. The areas where there was the greatest destruction of the old urban environment and where the reconstruction started to be implemented – in eastern Sur (mainly the neighbourhoods of Savaş, Ceman Yılmaz, Hasırlı, Fatihpaşa) and southwestern Sur (Alipaşa and Lalebey) – had low-quality, dense buildings and a low-income and highly politically engaged population (which were more marked, even, than the other areas of Suriçi). Eastern Sur was not only the main area where the conflict took place, but it was also more historical and thus more valuable culturally, with a high concentration of listed structures. Furthermore, immediately outside the walls in the eastern part of Sur are the Tigris River and UNESCO-listed Hevsel Gardens, which give extra value to this specific part of Sur. Alipaşa and Lalebey were areas that had undergone unfinished urban transformation projects before the conflict. Many properties there had already been expropriated, so the urban transformation process of displacement, demolition and new building could progress more quickly.

As explained in the previous section, the only part of the final Conservation Development Plan made available for the public was the one demonstrating the locations of new security points (police departments) and the widening of streets. Thus, new neighbourhoods were redefined through the new transport axes that become their de facto borders. During the time I was last in the area, however, some parts of this plan had not been executed or not precisely as depicted in the plan (Figure 8.8.). This could be attributed to poor or inaccurate implementation (received and/or imparted) or alterations in the Ministry's directions as well as uneven progress within the plan. The road along the eastern inner parts of the fortress was replaced in 2018 by a double-track road, for instance (Figure 8.9.), a planned security area had been developed as two-storey buildings area mostly leased by religious NGOs (Figure 8.10.), while the expansion of the street running perpendicular to Gazi Boulevard had not been initiated, as was evident from the lack of any building demolition along its façade (Figure 8.11).

Figure 8.8. Implementation of revised redevelopment plans. Red lines: roads to be widened; dark blue: security points; green arrows: widened road (apparently unplanned); yellow arrow: duplex building housing religious organisations constructed at planned security point; orange arrow: unwidened street (TMMOB DİKK, 2017, arrows added).

Figure 8.9. Double-track road along eastern wall (never depicted in available plans or information given), (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 8.10. This was initially planned as security are but currently it is mostly hosting religious NGO offices (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 8.11. No signs of street widening. Left: Gazi street; right: view from the Green Park Hotel towards Yenikapı Street (taken by the author, 2022).

The focus on road planning is not the same as that originally planned and revised, including that promised by the 2017 urbanisation Ministry presentation, in that the widening of numerous streets and alleys (such as Yenikapı Street) has not maintained the "traditional residential texture." On the contrary, this has been clearly and irreparably changed, in sharp contrast to the following statement at the presentation:

> It is essential that the streets that form the traditional residential texture of Suriçi are used as pedestrian roads, except for vehicle entrances for compulsory service purposes (infrastructure repair, moving, garbage collection, patient transport, etc.). The areas proposed to be used as roads in line with the decisions of the Conservation Plan are generally composed of existing streets and avenues, and no comprehensive widening has been made on the streets. (ÇŞİDB, 2017)

Figure 8.12. Yenikapı Street, 2014 (Yandex, street navigation).

Figure 8.13. Yenikapı Street during street demolition and widening (Soyukaya, 2017, p. 6).

Figure 8.14. Yenikapı Street, from same vantage point as previous pictures (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 8.15. shows the classification of streets according to 2012 Conservation Development Plan. It is clear that the traffic inside the area was supposed to be kept low (most probably for monument preservation purposes). Today, things have changed a lot, and vehicle usage is prominent.
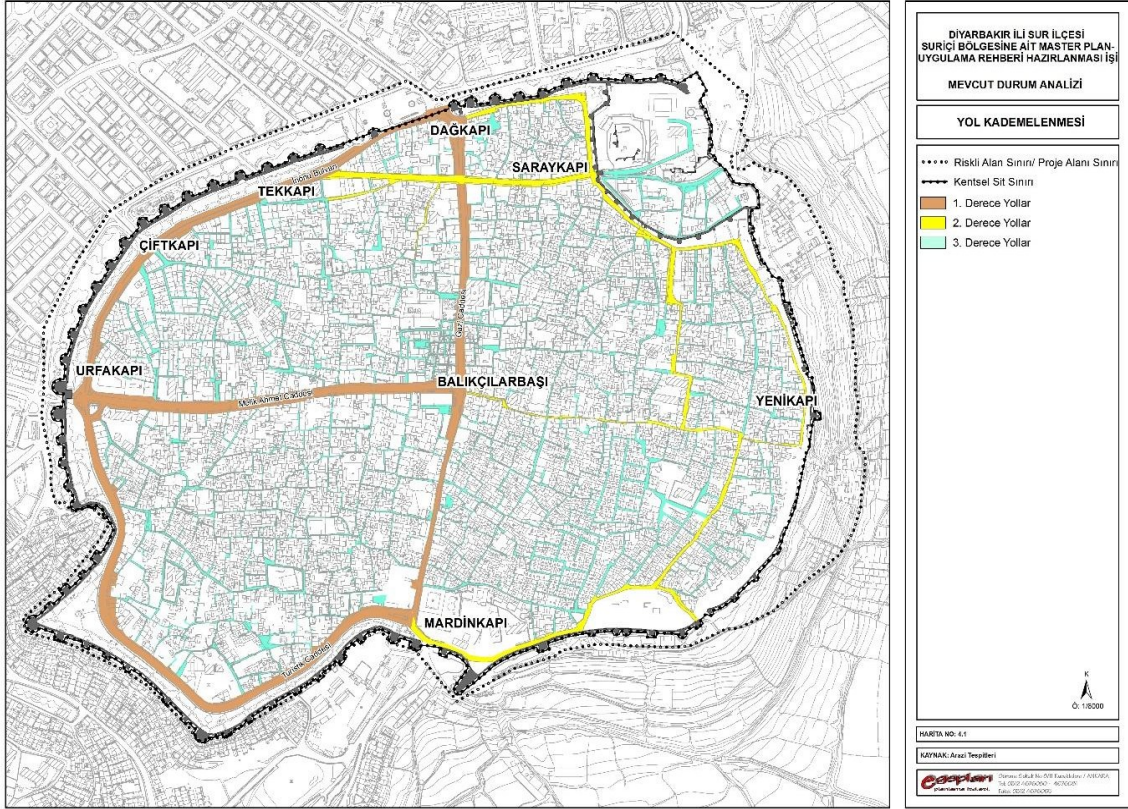
Figure 8.15. Classification of streets (2012). Brown: main roads; yellow: 2nd-degree roads; blue: alleyways (source: protected).

A map gained from the Ministry presentation (Figure 8.16.) showed the intended vehicle movement and, thus, the street and alley classification. While the north-south running Gazi Street holds a central and significant role, Melik Ahmet Street, which runs in a west-east direction, is not regarded as a primary thoroughfare. In the Ministry's map, which was created around 2017, Yenikapı Street was clearly not depicted as a 15-meter-wide boulevard, as transpired. Little information was provided for the inner parts of the historical peninsula, but the road encircling Suriçi alongside the historical walls was supported by numerous parking areas, which would support the then current and envisaged situation, in which eastern Sur had no main roads.
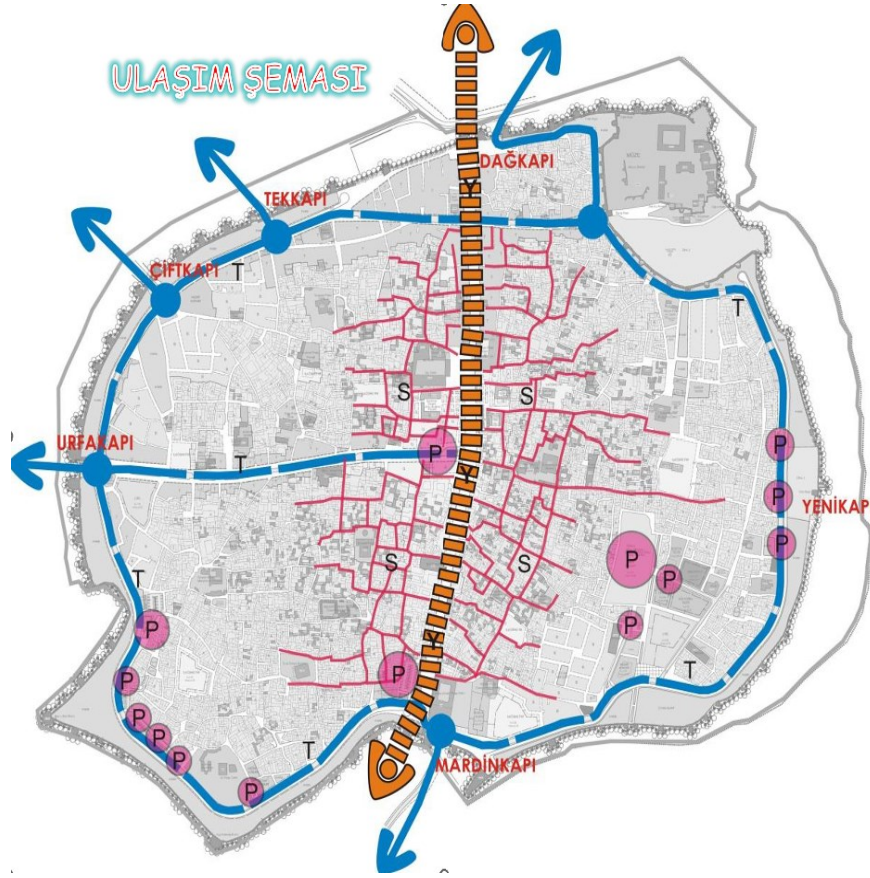
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Figure 8.16. "Transport Diagram" showing planned vehicle movement, thus street and alleyway classification (ÇŞİDB, 2017).

A former member of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Management Board (Interviewee No. 12) described the gradual implementation of the new street plan in great detail. She explained that a street had been opened starting from Keçi Burcu bastion, passing over Cumhuriyet Primary School and connecting to Surp Giragos church and Yeni Kapı Street through the street of the demolished Hacı Hamit Mosque. This road did not exist in the conservation plan. Another road was opened from Yıkık Kaya Street passing near Mardinkapı Primary School and ending at Yenikapı Street. More buildings than necessary were demolished to widen Yıkık Kaya Street; buildings around the school were destroyed and the area made into a square. The buildings around Hacı Hamit Mosque was demolished. Many buildings were demolished in the construction of a straight road from İçkale to Kurşunlu Mosque through the Küpeli Havuzu Gate,

which then ran from Kurşunlu Mosque to Süleyman Nazif Primary School and from there to the street connecting to Yenikapı; the area between the mosque and school was opened. A huge square was created between Süleyman Nazif School and Kurşunlu Mosque. And, as mentioned, Yenikapı Street, which was originally eight metres wide, was widened to fifteen. Thus, the new street arrangement appeared as an authoritarian form of planning – imposed top-down, uncommunicated, non-transparent, unregulated, subject to change – that focused on the state's spatial strategy for the recolonisation of Sur using racialised and socio-spatial methods to enforce control, including revanchist urban restructuring and military architecture (Genç, 2021; Taş, 2022a).

Interviewee No. 10, a professor at the School of Architecture, Dicle University, and an expert in restoration projects emphasised that the process of widening the streets was undertaken with the aim of accommodating vehicular traffic and, unfortunately, resulted in the demolition of various elements of the urban fabric. These, she explained, included external walls, structures, and, in some instances, entire buildings. As recorded by a Diyarbakır chamber report, for example, in order to achieve the street widening, parts of "Surp Giragos and Chaldean Churches and courtyard walls [were] destroyed, [and the] courtyard wall of Pasha Public Bath [was] removed" (TMMOB, 2020, p.13).

The professor emphasised that such actions do not align with the principles of preservation, as conservation entails safeguarding the integrity of the structures without resorting to demolition. The essence of protection lies in the removal or mitigation of any elements that pose a threat to a structure and not, obviously, its destruction and removal, its obliteration, or annihilation. Regrettably, the widening of the streets caused serious damage to the drainage system, which had originated from the Roman era. This invaluable piece of infrastructure, a testament to the area's historical legacy, has been irretrievably lost. The streets were widened to an extent that surpassed their original dimensions, disregarding their narrow historical character. Moreover, according to the professor's expertise, the decision to cover these historic streets with asphalt further detracted from their authenticity. Finally, she added that there was a conspicuous

absence of archaeological excavation or any visible efforts to document and preserve the historical significance of these areas during the street-widening process.

The last point was confirmed in the UNESCO's World Heritage List Report, which found that irreversible damage to archaeological layers had been caused by deep excavations (up to 2-2.5m) using construction equipment to install infrastructure systems (water, natural gas, electricity, telephone and sewage system) (Aydın et al., 2020).

Figure 8.17. Infrastructure projects and excavations damaging archaeological layers (Aydin et al. 2020).

8.4. The new constructions

The newly constructed buildings in the area are predominantly made from reinforced concrete and covered partly with basalt cladding. Representatives of the TMMOB (Interviewees Nos. 25, 26) argued that the main building technique is simply to construct reinforced concrete structures and indiscriminately apply stones of varying thicknesses, discarding the original stones and using them to create concrete joints. Interviewee No. 26, a member of the TMMOB, declared that the re/de-construction of buildings in the area was unnecessary: "If they wanted to, they could have

done a restoration with the same budget." This stark departure from the original architectural texture of traditional Diyarbakır houses is particularly evident in the absence of key features and the way that architectural elements have introduced completely new elements.

The use of basalt stone peel on the facades of these new structures, while seemingly an attempt to mirror the traditional Diyarbakır aesthetic, is not a Diyarbakır basalt stone.[50] Notably, large sections of painted plaster have been applied on the facades, significantly disrupting the visual integrity of the street setting. Since basalt stone is not obligatory in new buildings, in the future, cheaper (plastered, aluminium-clad, etc.) houses will become widespread, resulting in further disruption to the historical and architectural fabric of the site. As of May 2022, the newly built houses were completely deserted. Interestingly, the doors were not locked; in fact, they were generally wide open as if real estate agents were inviting people to look around to familiarise themselves with the built environment and perhaps feel less hostile about the new constructions.

In general, the quality of construction materials and workmanship is quite low. Some houses have laminate flooring in the lower sections that is already showing signs of swelling, and instances of shaky sinks and broken window ledges were noted in several houses. The materials look particularly cheap and the work done sloppy given that these 'villas' are aimed at the upper middle classes, who require good standards of quality.

One reason for the poor quality is that the state is assigning projects to construction firms (often those preferred by the government and not from Diyarbakır); also, it is common practice in Turkey for large construction firms to subcontract out parts of the project at low cost and thus maximise its share of the capital awarded in payment for the project as profit. That such a huge reconstruction project, in which the state has invested considerable effort and resources, is already showing signs of wear and tear may be taken to reveal the gap between state planning

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[50] Actually, it appears more like concrete tiling; only after long observation did I realise it was stone.

and market execution in the context of neoliberal (poorly/unregulated, capital/profit-driven) development under an authoritarian regime.

Figure 8.18. Large blocks of villas, southeastern Sur (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 8.19. Poor materials/workmanship: stone cladding is already collapsing, and black walls are fading (taken by the author, 2022).

Thomas Smith (2022, p. 407) characterises the "touristic-villas" as "handsome", but he also finds their homogeneity, "Ottomanesque style" and "individual honeycombed design" problematic. The courtyards, as shown in Figure 8.20., feature a small, centrally planted tree and seem to be intended as reminiscent of traditional courtyards. However, their rigid block design and colourless appearance with featureless walls and small windows seem more like encasements than enclosures. The new constructions rather resemble "prisons" (*cezaevi*), the word used most to describe them by interviewees and during unofficial discussions with locals. Since those spaces were so often characterised by interviewees and everyday encounters as 'prisons' then, regardless of the author's personal perception of the yards, it is evident that Diyarbakır people, this proposed house and way of living is entirely foreign, inappropriate and unaccustomed.

Figure 8.20. Shared courtyards (taken by the author, 2022).

Emphasising the sense of imprisonment, the yards are small and narrow compared to the tall concrete walls surrounding them. It is not exactly an imprisonment in the sense of isolation, however, since the second floor of each dwelling offers an unobstructed vantage point affording clear views into adjacent courtyards and the internal spaces of the neighbouring residences.

Whereas a traditional courtyard is an intimate, protected space, this arrangement can result in a diminished sense of privacy for residents, a vulnerability and feeling that they are observed. The windows of the houses are adorned with railings. While providing personal security in a space designed from scratch – ironically for state security reasons – these also contribute to the sense of confinement. This is completed by the inclusion of barbed wire on certain walls, which introduces an element of incarceration, akin to the associations drawn from conflict zones.

The prison-like courtyards of the houses are probably a failure of architects and designers, but not necessarily. At least, that is, the new housing – and the yards of some shops and restaurants and the constructions and planning in general – may be and, in fact, *are* experienced as being purposefully designed to remind the people in the region of their close connection with incarceration. The architecture thus becomes symbolic of the new Suriçi itself as a restriction of freedom. If this were only the result of people being thrust into a brutalist modernity, the felt imprisonment would be quite real – and as an authoritarian architecture, it is certainly uncaring – but in the context of the ethno-political history, it becomes deliberate. Interviewee No.26, one of the Diyarbakır TMMOB Coordination Board members, put it vividly:

> "The biggest investment of the state in Diyarbakır [since decades] is prisons. Now, let's take a look at the new structures in Sur. What's the difference? Isn't it the same? If you look inside, it's always like a prison. There is a political answer here. The state says: "We erase all of your culture, history and past, and the place we see fit for you is prison. Your history is prison." There is a political message in these structures."

Figure 8.21. The 'prison' yards (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 8.22. Barbed-wire above villa entrance, behind the wall is the 'yard' (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 8.23. Blocks of new buildings (taken by the author, 2022).

Walking around the city, one cannot escape noticing the contradiction between the large concrete blocks and the World Heritage site of the walled city. As stated by the Diyarbakır chamber (TMMOB, 2020), the recently built structures are far from the traditional street texture, featuring a height, surpassing the average story height of the previous commercial buildings. As

a result of this mish-mash of styles and dimensions, the overall cohesion of the traditional urban environment is disrupted.

Another popular feature of the redevelopment is the mixing of old and new elements, resulting in what could be perceived as a faux old/original. For example, historical stones are used for some new constrictions inside Sur, mixed with new rocks to build 'new historical' buildings – and new memories. Avni Bey Konağı,[51] a fried liver restaurant built on the plot where a small health centre used to be located, is constructed with such a mix of old and new stones and stands as an 'original' structure producing what is sometimes critically understood as a fake history or memory (Aydın et al., 2020; Cengiz, 2022).

Figure 8.24. Restaurant constructed from mix of historical and new stones (Dilan Kaya).

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[51] High-ranking local politicians related to the government often eat there, according to Interviewee No. 20.

Despite the replication of some architectural elements, the newly constructed buildings demonstrate almost no coherence with the historical city fabric and traditional architecture of Diyarbakır houses. They are uniformly constructed with reinforced concrete, without the typical, traditional courtyards and organised in huge blocks with significant distances from one another. Moreover, "By destroying symbolic architecture that carries cultural identities, both the history and the present of the people gets denied and erased. It is only logical that one would lose all hope by this" (Mackic, 2014).

Contradicting what informants shared, the declaration of Minister Murat Kurum puts the blame on the conflict period events, with the Ministry coming to revitalise the area:

> "We have repaired and rebuilt anew 3,500 shops, we have renovated all the streets and avenues for our citizens to trade here and for our people to shop. They burnt the Kurşunlu Mosque, we restored it. They demolished 17 listed buildings like the Kurşunlu Mosque. We have revived all of them." (Yörük, 2019)

Incorrect applications of the new constructions that damaged the original and historical urban fabric were detected by the Chamber of Architects and announced to the public through a press release on 29th June 2017. According to their scientific expertise and as stated in their *Diyarbakır Province, Sur District Objection Report for Change of Protection Application Zoning Plan*, for the reinforced concrete residences – so-called "Diyarbakır houses" – built by TOKİ in Sur, the responsible parties for these wrong practices also included the administrators and members of the Diyarbakır Cultural Heritage Conservation Board who approved the projects (TMMOB MODŞ, 2017b). The chamber listed the design issues thus:

- No measures were taken to protect the traditional elements of the areas with the original pavements to emphasise the cultural value of the streets;
- The original materials and techniques, like the basalt stone masonry, should have been used on the street facades of buildings and courtyard walls, instead of stone cladding
- Dead-end alleyways, which were characteristic of this urban fabric were not protected;

- Courtyards, courtyard walls, doors, pools, wells, staircases and floor coverings under the protection of the previous Conservation Development Plan, were overlooked;
- According to the original typology, there was one bay window in each parcel, but currently there are more;
- In narrow streets and for privacy purposes, instead of one entrance that opens in front of the bay window, two smaller should be positioned to the right and left of the bay;
- Where original windows were arched with a clamp stone at the apex, the new ones are just covered with cladding;
- Basements have been added;
- The parcel boundaries should have been preserved and not merged;
- The courtyard sizes should have been preserved;
- Important elements of the courtyards, like trees, pools and wells, have been eliminated despite being under the protection of the previous plan;
- The old Diyarbakır houses have a typical marquise above the entrance door of the courtyard, which the new constructions do not;
- The new buildings have a parapet on their roof which is a completely foreign element;
- On the roof deck, instead of reinforced concrete, clay soil or a suitable/similar material should have been used (TMMOB MODŞ, 2017b).

Citing the irreversible damage to the historical urban fabric, the chamber has taken the case to court.

As mentioned in Methodology chapter, I contacted ten real-estate agents to ask for information about the properties that they were advertising for sale or rent in the newly constructed areas in Suriçi. In semi-structured interviews, the real estate agents responded with a range of prices, sizes and types of properties that were available. The majority belonged to private individuals and were for rent only. They were commonly two-storey buildings with yards. Those with four-to-seven rooms cost around 4-7.000 TL per month (equivalent to around 220-380 euros at the

end of October 2022 when I conducted this part of the research). Properties of 500 m^2 (about ten rooms) cost 15-30,000 TL. Most of these buildings were designed as houses, but have the potential – as the agents were suggesting – to be used as offices. In fact, several agents mentioned that most properties in the area are the headquarters of various NGOs. Lastly, according to the agents, the properties that were for sale were smaller (150-200 m^2, five or so rooms), located in the Alipaşa area and cost from 1,500,000 to 2.,000,000 TL (80-110,000).

Figure 8.25. Typical online advert for new 'villa' sold for two million TL (130,000 euros) (Özbal Emlak, 2022).

Figure 8.26. Housing advertising banners: "for sale & for rent" (taken by the author, 2022).

Before the conflict, "Commercial activity that had concentrated around the north entrance of Suriçi was beginning to spread towards the southern parts; the number of new investments like hotels and cafes had increased; [and] real estate transfers and renovations at a single parcel scale accompanied large scale structural renovations" (Genç, 2016). Hz. Suleyman Road connects İçkale to Gazi Street, creating a crossroads where commercial and service businesses are located (Kaya Taşdelen et al., 2021). Filled with commercial products for the middle classes, this street seemed to be one of the first parts of Sur that had been renewed. It is very close to Dağkapı Square (north Sur) and hosts an important number of newly renovated hotels, 'hipster' cafes and clothing stores that opened during my fieldwork period.[52]

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[52] The emergence of hipster cafes in Suriçi captured my attention, especially on Hz. Süleyman Street, where expansion is rapid. These cafes have a common architectural, morphological and aesthetic language, and their international uniformity is intriguing. In addition to the shared product types, such '3rd wave' style cafes express an international architectural dictionary of design. For me, these spaces were relatively familiar and accessible, and I noticed the difference between the comfort of these places compared to traditional ones; these felt more relaxed to a foreign woman. At the same time, this feeling was thought-provoking as I considered their place in the urban transformation and recognised their role in shaping neighbourhoods and dislocating locals. Whether they are

Figure 8.27. Cafe at Hz. Suleyman Road, north Sur (taken by the author, 2022).

While construction companies are expected to engage in project participation through a bidding process, interviewees (Nos. 5, 21, 24, 26) raised allegations that the transparency of this procedure was questionable. For example, Interviewee No. 24, a member of the Chamber of Architects, expressed his mistrust: "Of course, [the companies] did bid, but the ones that [the authorities] want would win the bidding," he said, adding "Not everyone can enter those

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located in Athens, Istanbul, Berlin or Suriçi, the setup of such stores is a signifier for the transformation of a (poor) neighbourhood and the beginning of the end of its unique character. Especially in the food and beverages sector and mainly in coffee services commerce, capitalism has established common forms, habits, aesthetical standards, experiences and techniques in terms of 'reading the space'. This is most evident with global brands, of course, such as Starbucks. "The worldwide spread of consumer commodities, of art styles in furnishing, of architecture and the visual arts, not to mention the mass media and tourism, is evidence of a global nexus of markets for similar products and the ability of consumer industries to mould shared tastes, in some degree at least. But even here, ethnic and class factors intrude. The appreciation and assimilation of Western styles and cultural products is generally adaptive: the audiences in Third World countries tend to interpret these products and experiences in ways that are specific to the perceptions and understanding of their own peoples." (Smith, 1999, p. 237)

bidding." The companies contracted by the state frequently delegate the projects they undertake to subcontractors – as reported by the same informants (and mentioned above) – particularly smaller firms. There is actually a chain of companies involved, where the bigger ones close to the government take the contract and then work with smaller subcontractors and affiliated offices. This is compounded by the fact that the signboards and shared information by experts on the construction site belong to companies from Istanbul, Ankara or other cities, not local ones.

Figure 8.28. On-site signboards; KALE and Gökalp are construction firms specialising in restoration projects; both are based in Ankara (taken by the author, 2022).

When projects were completed, the Ministry and TOKİ were responsible for distributing the newly constructed properties. As the principal executor, TOKİ promoted the subcontracting tender system and subsequent property transfer to privet owners (Taş, 2022b). Most of the new structures were designed as duplex houses. On the central axes, like Yenikapı Street, commercial activity was reserved for the ground floor of each building. Residential areas were distributed to local real-estate offices to organise the selling of properties. Commercial spaces were not sold to individuals but rented through a bidding process. Previous businesspeople were not given priority in this process, and since they had already experienced economic difficulties during to the conflict period, they had no chance to win in such a process. Thus, most of the properties

were claimed by Turkish or international chains and were rarely taken up by local brands. Interviewee No. 9, a high-ranking representative of the commerce chamber, commented on the status of the businesses and their potential to participate in the bidding process:

> Some of them were closed for 110-120 days. They were not destroyed but remained closed because they were in a conflict zone. We abolished the urgent expropriation decisions of those who remain closed and the areas that are not demolished. […] Unfortunately, the shops there were not given to the shop owners. Bids were made. Those with money would come and rent them [not the local shop-owners] because there were really small shops there. […] No help was given to businesspeople. We sued. I also filed a lawsuit. We lost the case in Turkey. We went to the constitutional court. They refused because it was urgent expropriation. […] There are still pending lawsuits. There are places that are destroyed, half destroyed. Nothing was given to the owners of these places either. We also did the repair. People repaired themselves. Everyone did their own repairs. The state did not contribute anything, especially to the destroyed businesses.

Figure 8.29. Bidding procedure announcement: store on Yenikapı Street, use purpose gastronomy, bidding at 13:30, 10 February 2022 (taken by the author, 2022).

8.5. Restorations on historical buildings

Listed buildings that were damaged but lucky enough not to be demolished went through a 'restoration' process. Experts from the Monitoring and Investigation Unit of the Site Management Directorate prepared reports and presented them to the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry, Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, Turkish National Commission for ICOMOS, and Turkish National Commission for ICORP with a request for the inclusion of the Directorate of Site Management in "all assessment, rehabilitation and adjustment processes" of the surviving buildings (Soyukaya et al., 2016, p.4). Unfortunately, the central government's failure to involve the Directorate of Cultural Landscape Site Management and relevant municipal bodies in the rehabilitation process disregarded the need for a more inclusive and holistic approach to the reconstruction and overlooked the significance of protecting a world heritage city with numerous listed structures and ancient history (Soyukaya et al., 2016).

Figure 8.30. Construction site of renovations; the new 'villa' blocks are visible towards the horizon, close to the walls (taken by the author, 2022).

In 2018, urbanisation Minister Murat Kurum stated the following on the main state television news channel:

> "We will quickly realise all of the projects in Sur. We will try to re-open our listed monuments here for the use of our citizens and our nation as soon as possible. Here, our Ministry of Culture and General Directorate of Foundations have renovated and restored many of our listed monuments. We will do the rest within our Ministry." (TRT Haber, 2018)

Before the war, restoration projects were carried out using partnership among the Foundations Directorship, the municipality and the governorship. At that time, there was no intervention from the urbanisation Ministry; this was not an issue under their remit, unless it concerned the culture Ministry. According to Interviewee No. 10, a professor of restoration in the School of Architecture at Dicle University, a bidding process was conducted for each structure slated for restoration, overseen by the Conservation Board from the Ministry of Culture Directorship/General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums. Research and reports were undertaken on the buildings that the board determined would undergo restoration. However, the selection criteria for these decisions were not disclosed. Even as a professor at the local university, my interviewee was unable to stay informed and involved in the proceedings.

Interviewee No. 24, a restoration expert and member of the Chamber of Architects, expressed concerns about the restoration and reconstruction of traditional structures in this region. While acknowledging that some efforts had been made, he stated that the current restoration projects lack adherence to restoration principles and that more than half of the work being done was incorrect. One reason for this, according to the expert, was that the restoration efforts had focused on 147 buildings in the same area, which posed a challenge for the delivery of the project in terms of time, labour and financial resources. The restoration team had claimed they would complete all the buildings within two years, but the expert believed that there were not enough experts available in the region to oversee such a massive undertaking.

This expert architect had been working on the restoration of the walls and seen first-hand the flaws in the process. The projects he was working on often included an eight-person committee of experts, such as university professors, monitoring the projects. Despite the presence of these experts, however, he found that the projects often had numerous mistakes. For example, one homeowner whose house was being restored at the time of writing brought to his attention that the restoration had lowered the ceiling and he could no longer enter the room without bending down. My interviewee emphasised that this was just one example out of many that he faced daily in his work. He argued that in order to properly restore a traditional structure, it is essential to

have a comprehensive understanding of the structure's history, including photos, documents and old historical references that describe the original materials and dimensions of the structure. Without this information, restoration efforts are not based on the original elements but on the restorer's ideas.

He also noted that the restoration team was not using authentic materials, such as the proper stone, sand, cement and wood, and that they were not using them in the correct way. For example, the appropriate sand to use for traditional houses was from the Tigris River basin, he explained, but the restoration team was using sand from 35 kilometres away, from Mardin or Ergani, because it was cheaper and more readily available. In his opinion, this is not a restoration but a fixing. The expert further noted that equipment was being used wrongly and that the bidding for the new projects and the restorations were being done separately, which was not practical for such a large-scale project. He believed it was not possible for one company or three companies to handle such a massive undertaking at once. A proper restoration requires experienced architects and engineers with a comprehensive understanding of restoration principles, which the committee overseeing the restoration lacked. Most of the architects working on the project were from the local area, he said, and even the head of the urbanisation Ministry lacked experience in restoration work. Although there were experienced companies in Turkey that have completed restoration projects in other regions, he believed that there were no experienced companies available in this region. Overall, one might summarise, the restorations provide more evidence of a process that was shadowy, dysfunctional and distorted.

Figure 8.31. Poor restoration to historical wall; foreign architectural elements cause inaccurate match and disrupt overall coherence (taken by the author, 2022).

In the architectural academic milieu, views were divided. According to Dr Murat Çağlayan from Mardin Artuklu University and a Member of the Board of UNESCO (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022), the damage to the urban fabric was caused by the "terrorists" and restorations were "made in accordance with the originals of the buildings." However, for Interviewee No. 10, a professor of restoration at the School of Architecture, Dicle University, the priorities were the preservation of the walls, followed by the historical houses and structures, which were not safeguarded. Similarly important were the boundaries of the parcels, which should have been respected.

In restoration work generally, it is imperative that efforts adhere to strict guidelines, such as using the same materials and techniques employed in the original structures. Elements such as specific types of stone, wood, and window materials must have been accurately replicated to achieve an authentic restoration, but they did not. Furthermore, attention to the dimensions of the original buildings is crucial, and thus, one cannot disregard the width of the masonry. The size and dimensions of the original buildings should have been meticulously followed, avoiding the use of inappropriate cladding or alterations. The unfortunate employment of modern plaster instead of

the appropriate materials further undermines the authenticity of the restoration. The decision to cover the buildings with basalt cladding resulted in an "ugly" and "sad" outcome (Interviewee No. 10), since the machine-cut material resembled concrete.

The observed deviations from these principles are striking. The new constructions fail to harmonise with the historical context and display a gross inattention to detail. The presence of foreign architectural elements disrupts the overall coherence of the historical area. If the walls were crafted from basalt stone, any attempt to introduce a novel material would be incongruous. A laboratory analysis of the plaster on the walls should guide the replication process, ensuring an accurate match. Similarly, the selection of wood for windows should have been faithful to the original choice, using the same species that once graced the structures. Preserving the original elements is indispensable in upholding the historical accuracy of the restoration.

As the professor (Interviewee No. 10) pointed out, the primary objective of the restorations and new constructions was to develop the city as a tourist attraction. As such, the granting of permissions for new constructions within the area of listed buildings was conducted swiftly, she stated, ultimately resulting in the loss of crucial structural details, while significant elements of Sur's cultural heritage were inadvertently destroyed in the process. For her, while restoration was often talked about, the implemented interventions did not, in fact, intend to restore historic monuments to their original state; rather, they were interventions that constantly introduced new elements and new materials, demolished parts of the built environment, such as walls, and transformed the boundaries of monuments to fit the new, redesigned street layouts. The monuments and examples of traditional architecture that remained and had not been completely demolished, she explained, were subject to interventions that do not respect their historical value in any way. The report of the Housing and Land Rights Network confirmed that many protected buildings (…) and other historical civil buildings and historic shops (…) were partially or totally destroyed" (HIC, 2016, p.4). The same was true for the walls, said the professor, which were being subjected to dubious interventions.

Figure 8.32. Building under restoration or demolition? If there were no timber forms on the windows, it would be hard to distinguish (taken by the author, 2022).

All in all, for the listed structures located in the transformed areas and that were not demolished, processes that can hardly be considered restoration were applied. According to the interviewees (Nos. 8, 10, 12, 13, 24), the restoration efforts were not adhering to proper restoration principles. There was a lack of experienced professionals, and the use of incorrect materials and methods was contributing to flawed restoration projects. By way of critique, one may assert that the extensive demolition and eradication of elements tied to the former urban fabric obfuscate the recognition of the locale as a cultural heritage monument. The preservation of a few historical remnants, such as architectural vestiges and religious graves, serves as a validation of the historical character of the space. However, if the state intends to present the area as a monument to newcomers, then attention to details – the retention of minor elements attesting to its historical continuity – becomes imperative.

Notably, the surviving vestiges predominantly bear Islamic associations. This signals a contrast between the historicism and pluralism that once positioned Sur as a World Heritage Site, as a

cradle of civilisations that had coexisted for centuries, and the exclusive aspect of (Muslim) religion that ignores this and is embedded nowadays with contemporary politico-economics, focusing instead on what is required for the city to function for property development, as a magnet for tourism, as a source of potential yield.[53] The former have been claimed but also overlooked and sometimes outrageously violated and attacked by the Turkish state. The fortress's extensive historical value, the beauty of the fertile Hevsel Gardens, the local architecture and the diverse urban fabric collectively define Sur's identity. Despite their significance and importance for the city, these elements face erasure. Paradoxically, therefore, Sur is advertised to future investors using characteristics to promote it as a historical city, when these are precisely what have not been valued. The project is marketed by first erasing *en masse* and then rebuilding only the historical elements of the city that offer an obvious surplus value through trade. And only characteristics which could never harm the sovereignty of the government's imagination of the Turkish state are resurrected, denuded from any social or any resistive meaning.

Figure 8.33. Construction worker in Cemal Yilmaz area (taken by the author, 2022).

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[53] Religious exclusivity: e.g., no churches are shown or mentioned in the *Sur Anew Introductory Film* (see below, 9.2.2).

Chapter 9

The Symbolic Reconstruction of 'Sur Anew'

9.1. Introduction

There is a strong correlation between the ideological background of policymakers and the way they create and enact plans that benefit the most powerful groups in society. In this case, immediately after the conflict, the government paid special attention to announce important projects that would heal the scars not only of the conflict period but also from before. For example, Prime Minister Davutoglu, right after the conflict in 2016 announced the reconstruction of the Dağkapı, Mardinkapı and Yenikapı parts of the wall that had been demolished for sanitation reasons in 1932 by Governor Hasan Faiz Ergun. The state would work with historians, he said, and would use original material to restore the monument entirely (Kıvanç, 2016). Yet, in retrospect, it appeared that the idea was only floated as a way of opening the subject to spark debate about the historical walls of Sur, and no such project was initiated. Perhaps, therefore – and regardless of intentions – the real function of Davutoglu's move was to initiate the symbolic contestation of what had previously been fought for with weapons.

Inspired by the notion of Pamela Colombo's (2014, p. 50) "spaces of confrontation" referring "to the fact that what also happens therein is a struggle for control over the representations of this space," this chapter views Sur as a space in which state sovereignty and the local people confront each other. This confrontation is performed in rival claims to hegemony on the material and the non-material aspects. This has already been touched on, for example in how locals widely regard the design of the 'villas' as a prison, both literally and metaphorically. This chapter takes that further, exploring the narratives and understandings of the two sides through discourses,

representations and signifying materialities in order to investigate the case of Sur not only through the physical control of the place but also through the "symbolic domination" of space (ibid.).

The re-branding and re-imagining of a city cannot be complete without the essential associated representations that frame and visualise its new identity and its desirable future. Similarly, in the case of Sur, representations play a pivotal role in re-imagining the historical city, both as a tourist destination but also, crucially in this case, as a 'peaceful' place where 'terrorists' and 'terrorism' have been eradicated, including their cultural heritage. Fırat Genç (2021) illustrates how "marketisation and securitisation" reveal the class and ethnicity aspects of the struggles over Sur. The ethnic dimension should be highlighted by the revanchist policy of the Turkish state (Sen, 2016), which associates the Kurds generally and the Kurdish movement especially with violence and thence the (need for the) securitization and Ottomanisation (Smith, 2022) of the applied polices.

Although TOKİ urban renewal projects all over the country that have resulted in displacement and the diminishment of the everyday culture of marginalised local groups, the particularity of the Kurdish aspect in the foremost Kurdish city required different strategies of placemaking (Genç, 2021). For the justification and promotion of the projects, there were contradictory references to the 'authentic' life (which has undeniably embedded some elements of Kurdishness) by "re-valuing monumentality" through a selective reading of material culture and concurrently de-valuing of the "collective urban experience" produced by the people of Sur (Genç, 2021). The place renewed is one transformed into a tourist-oriented "souvenir city" or "*biblokent*," essentially stripped of its Kurdish identity and organised for consumption (Yıldız, 2018). Thus, in outlining and analysing the new imaginaries for Sur, this chapter investigates the diverse forms of representation employed in this context of the de/re-constructed environment.

9.2. Discourses and representations

Doreen Massey (2005) defines space as the outcome of societal actions shaped by interactions, which is subject to constant progress, reconstruction and modification. In contemporary southeastern Turkey, an ongoing political struggle that produces and manifests as "spatial tactics (Jongerden, 2009) has moved through periodically bloody and relatively peaceful periods. In order to comprehend the conflict that led to Suriçi's annihilation, it is essential to consider the notions and processes generated during the preceding phase of urban regeneration, when Suriçi was endorsed as a monument and heritage site.

The AKP government and the pro-Kurdish municipality had very different perceptions of the spatial identities to be maintained or inscribed, the memories, history and cultural capital, rendering Suriçi "a monument to be seized" (Genç, 2021). Decolonisation efforts by the side of the municipality introduced counter-hegemonic narratives and brought to the forefront also other cultural traces like the Armenian and Syriac (Gambetti, 2009; 2010). In this regard, the reconstruction following the conflict featured an imaginative dimension in which the national government sought to reanalyse Suriçi's turbulent history and construct a fresh collective memory by redefining its physical setting. Fırat Genç (2021) introduces the notion of "securitization through marketization" as one more aspect of "ideological struggles" in Suriçi's space that actually commenced before the recent warfare. In this struggle, the government's re/de-construction endeavours "produced spatial models and representations" that made the annihilation of the city and dislocation of the locals inevitable (ibid.). This approach altered urban perceptions, devaluing the experiences and memories of lower-class Kurdish residents and their attachment to place and thence deprived their right to the city.

Following this argument, one can judge that in Sur, the "neo-liberal urban hegemony" failed to enable the "capacity to produce consent" through a dominant discourse; thus, the state "enforced a project-based law as a coercion of state power" (Penpecioğlu, 2013, p. 166). The capacity to produce consent is connected to the spatial hegemony of the state. Various

hegemonic actors generate and promote neo-liberal narratives centred around "growth" and "competitiveness" using the mass media (news, articles, advertisements) along with public statements from influential figures as two methods of dissemination that go to shape perceptions of project development, which is carefully "manipulated through the images, themes and messages disseminated by these" (Penpecioğlu, 2013, p. 178).

<u>9.2.1 The Toledo model</u>

The first perception-changing statement from an influential figure to be considered here refers to a reference to Toledo by then Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. On 20th January 2016, Prime Minister Davutoğlu compared Sur in the future to the Spanish city Toledo, thus:

> "We will reconstruct Diyarbakır's Sur just like Toledo, so beautifully that it will become
> a tourist attraction, and everybody will want to visit and see its architectural texture."
> (Sözcü, 2016)

Selahattin Demirtaş, co-chair and leading figure in the HDP, responded angrily to Davutoğlu's remarks, thus:

> "They're the ones who burned and destroyed Sur. You've turned those places into hell.
> What Toledo?" (Cumhuriyet, 2018).

The topic of 'Toledo' was discussed extensively, and interviewees (Nos. 17, 27, 30) commented sarcastically on the comparison between the Spanish model and the new Sur. They expressed a belief that there was no rationale behind the use of Toledo as a measure of comparison and that this specific city was randomly mentioned by the prime Minister, but they also noted an association between the Arabic past of Toledo and, thus, Islam and further suggested that Toledo's history and the way it ended up – as an open-air museum and a musealized city – reflected Davutoglu's vision for Suriçi. Indeed, it is true that both cities have gone through a civil

war period and then a process of re-symbolisation of the sovereign power over the local identity of the place.[54]

Figure 9.1. "No to Toledo" (Refik Tekin).

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[54] As Almarcha Núñez-Herrador and Sánchez (2011) explain, at the start of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, a group of nationalists holding hostages barricaded themselves in the historical Alcázar castle in the city of Toledo. The castle was surrounded by republican forces demanding they surrender and held under siege for two months, when General Franco's army attacked the city of Toledo and 'liberated' his supporters. As a historical event, the Battle of Alcázar contributed very powerfully to the construction of the patriotic, martyred and heroic national narrative of the Franco dictatorship and was not only embellished with new fictional elements but also highlighted as the castle was made a cultural icon through dozens of texts and works of art that redefined the history of the entire city. Alcázar came to operate as the symbolic narrative of Franco's regime and function as a touristic pilgrimage for Spanish nationalists where they could pay homage to the dictatorship (Vega, 2017). The touristification and museification of Toledo's historical centre led to the loss of the local population (Solís et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the current condition of Suriçi suggests that even if there was such an intention to 'manage' the restoration and re-branding of Sur as in Toledo, it could not be accomplished with the mass erasure of historical elements – at least, that is not what has transpired. In the words of an architect scholar and activist who used to live and work in the city but is now based in Istanbul,

> "There surely is something... I mean, Davutoglu isn't stupid. I'm pretty sure, in his mind, there was this association. But at the end of the day, his project was not realised, either."

9.2.2. (Audio)visuals

It may still be too properly early to judge the 'success' of Davutoğlu's Toledo project – or the closeness of the comparison with Diyarbakır's Sur – but that also rather depends on quite was envisaged for the city and its historic eastern area. A good insight into this is afforded by the (first) promotional YouTube video made by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation and launched by the Prime Ministry, *Sur Anew Presentation Film* (*Sur Yeniden Tanıtım Filmi*). Released on the 1st of April, less than a month after the end of the conflict and just ten days after the decree of urgent expropriation. *Sur Anew* portrayed a multicultural Sur developed with authentic constructions that would rise from the ashes, mainly emphasising how beautiful and peaceful the future will be:

> Families will find *peace* again. Those *beautiful* sofas and carpets will continue to arouse *admiration*. Each courtyard will turn into a *family* story. Each step of those *historical* stairs will inspire the *future*. The famous four-legged Minaret will continue to remind everyone of our *unity* and *solidarity.* Hz Süleyman Mosque and the tomb of the 27th Companion will cry again. Our citadel and city walls will be *festive* again as before. The city walls will *smile* differently to those who come. *Beauty*... *Visitors* will find the *historical* porticoes again, and the identity of *peace* will wander the streets. *Friendships* will *flourish*, and we will be ourselves. Sur will be your *future* again because the most *beautiful future* comes from the past. Sur anew. (ÇŞİDB, 2016b; italics added)
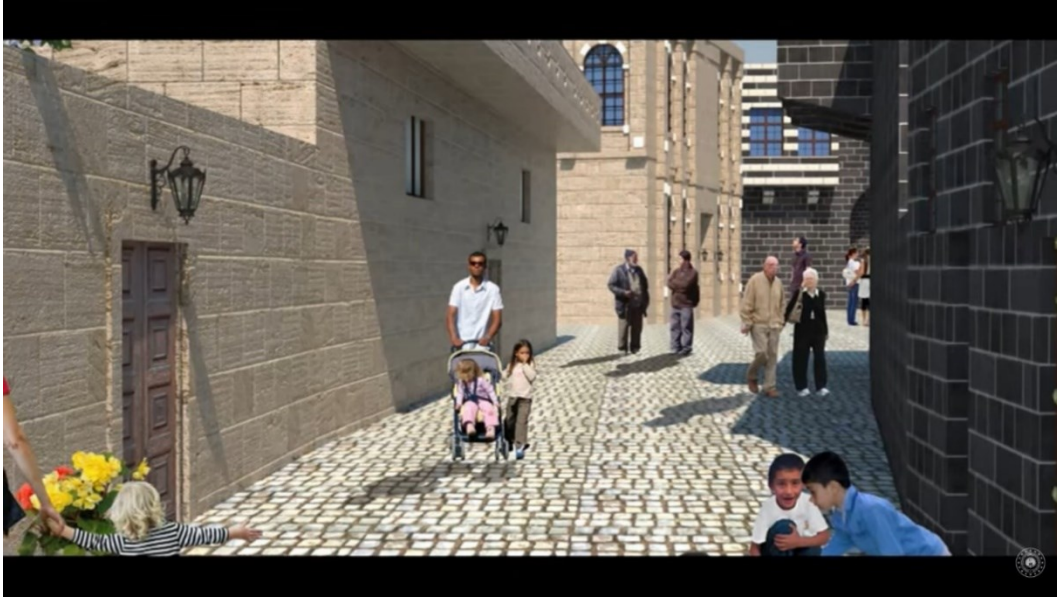
Figure 9.2. Screenshot from *Sur Anew Presentation Film* (*Sur Yeniden Tanıtım Filmi*), promotional YouTube video launched 1st April, less than a month after the end of the conflict (ÇŞİDB, 2016b).

The promotional video *Sur Anew* opens with a pageant to nature and history expressing rebirth in heroic tones and stirring cinematic music. This is followed by a message from the Prime Minister Davutoglu referencing authenticity, and then the viewer passes through the open gates to the city to be met by a tranquil urban environment. The historicity of the area is promoted as the relationship between the past and future, while the modern setting is presented as calm and sociable, with a pleasant atmosphere and warm and happy home environments. Lastly, the four-legged Minaret is promoted as a landmark that should "continue to remind everyone of our unity and solidarity," before a closing sequence in which the old is compared with the new.

Figure 9.3. Screenshot from Sur Anew Presentation Film, of tourist activity (ÇŞİDB, 2016b).

The film is well crafted – and heavy with irony from a Kurdish reading. Not only is it the historicity of the area and relationship between the past and future precisely that has been so damaged by the re/de-construction, and warm and happy home environments are exactly what have been uprooted by the dislocation, but the promotion of the four-legged Minaret in the name of "our [sic] unity and solidarity" ignores the fact that this was the place where prominent Kurdish lawyer Tahir Elçi[55] was assassinated in November 2015 – an event that signalled the violent conflict to come (HRW, 2015) – ignores it or specifically points to it, like the timing of the *Newroz* timing for the date of expropriation.

While Sur, at that moment, was heavily damaged, the video introduces a touristic and religious area. Men are walking around mosques and enjoying coffee, women wearing hijabs and tourists engaging in leisure activities. This juxtaposition of traditional and modern coexistence is further

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[55] Elçi was representing the Diyarbakır Bar Association when shot dead a few minutes after delivering a press statement in front of the minaret (Baysel, 2018). Various indications pointed to it as a 'false flag' operation organised by the state, probably to stoke the conditions for conflict for ulterior political motives – including, one might speculate, the Diyarbakır re/de-construction; see Forensic Architecture: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-tahir-elci

exemplified in scenes of young women observing sights and men pushing baby prams, along with the presence of tourists (Figure 9.3). Apart from public spaces, insights into Diyarbakır households and the reproduction of social relations and behaviours are also presented. The video portrays a man being served coffee by a traditionally dressed woman in a historical house's living room (Figure 9.4), followed by the same woman sitting with a girl/daughter on another couch (not next to the man/husband).[56]

Figure 9.4. Screenshot of 'typical' Diyarbakır house and family moment (ÇŞİDB, 2016b).

The depiction of civil life – the entire endeavour, in fact – is based on an idealised 'neo-Ottoman' concept of harmony among "people of the book," romanticising a past that is suffused in the modernity (order, capitalism, etc.) of 'political Islam' while disregarding actual present conflicts; the result is a superficial portrayal of diversity (Smith, 2022, p. 408). Through this project and its branding strategies, the state aimed to reshape social and economic dynamics, altering political

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[56] Interestingly, the woman in the picture wears the white hijab, which is more related to Kurdish women; it is not Kurdishness per se that is to be erased, only a certain type (irreligious, leftist etc.).

identities, and Diyarbakır, in particular, was intended to shed its Kurdish identity, thus erasing the city's bloodshed history in favour of a Neo-Ottoman tourist attraction (ibid.).

The images below (Figure 9.5) are similar. Sourced from the website of Arkiteam, an architecture office in Istanbul, they showcase the Sur Anew Project (*Sur Yenileme Projesi*).[57] These images also portray the new Sur as both historical/Oriental (and possibly exotic) and modern. Clean, well-paved streets and squares, new cars, fountains adorned with delicate bridges, exotic flora and trees, and Western-style (hipster) cafes fill these visuals, like the film.

However, the presentation of scale and size and the locations of proposed buildings and squares shown are confusing. Perhaps this is because the design, almost completely detached from the still existing physical facts of the place, produces a space that functions for everywhere in general and nowhere in particular. The presumably awkward presence of the Chaldean Mar Petyun Church right behind the Four-legged minaret – was omitted from the image created (Figure 9.5, top). Where the church is standing, the plans seem to place some tourist shops. This design omission certainly seems to testify to the rebranding of Sur without its multireligious elements. The (primarily Islamic and at least non-Christian) historical element is retained through the black-and-white patterns and the distinctive basalt stones, but, as mentioned before, it appears more like a movie set than the world heritage site of Sur.

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[57] The website lacks further details, leaving the office's exact association with the project unclear; the office did not list this material on its website at the time of writing, and the last visit and screenshots were saved in October 2019.

Figure 9.5. Images prepared Arkiteam Ankara based architecture firm. Top: area around four-legged minaret (random structures are depicted behind it, where actually the listed Chaldean Mar Petyun Church stands); middle and top: imaginary square with no identifiable location (the fountain with the bridges was never realised (Arkiteam. n.d.).

Overall, although the disjunct between the imaginary and the reality is generally striking in architectural representations, the gap seems wider here; it is not just about the social life presented, which may be viewed as typically quite anaemic, but also about the structures and the imagined constructions. The gap between the presentation and reality actualised in this respect (substandard quality of materials, designs, renders, etc.) can be attributed to the expeditious announcement of the project and its objectives. The presentation of a billion-dollar mega project with apparently hastily created plans, paralleled in the examination of real-estate agent operations, underscores the absence of meticulousness and attention to detail in promoting the project to attract potential investors.

The scale of the demolitions and of the destructive reconstruction of Suriçi has endangered its historical character and special atmosphere – even in tourism terms. As Ronay Bakan (in her forthcoming PhD dissertation) argues, through the construction of religious tourist attractions, such as the new big mosque right outside Suriçi, and development of a religious tourism destination profile, visitors in the religious tourism sector are motivated to visit Diyarbakır and its 'historical' centre. She argues that the government has been bolstering Islamic characteristics of old Suriçi through heritage-making efforts, which are aimed to be ensured via religious heritage tourism. So they bring forth the religion, which then forms the basis of the way they promote tourism activities in the city as "The City of Prophet and His Companions." (Bakan, fourthcoming)

A significant part of the remaining Suriçi has been described by several interviewees (Nos. 3, 5, 17, 27, 30) and in casual discussions with local people as a 'movie setting', an 'open mall', a 'Playmobil city-model' or like 'Disneyland' – signifying a space that is primarily designed not to be inhabited but for its usefulness as a façade and a commodity. In the academic discourse also, Sur is "a soulless, Disney-ised image of Ottoman space and experience" (Smith, 2022, p. 408). Regarding the loss of 'soul', the new constructions and their lack of dialogue with the older urban fabric have radically altered some areas and transformed them into rather indistinct residential neighbourhoods that can be found in many other cities.

The newly designed streets and schools of the area are given quite conservative names, just like many parks and roads in the rest of the city that, under the previous local administrations, had been given names of important figures of the Kurdish struggle which are no longer accepted (Jongerden, 2009; Smith, 2022). At the same time, while signs of the conflict remain on the 'facade' of the city, even these indicators, which show how recently the conflict occurred, are vanishing, as though it didn't. While walking on the central streets of Sur in the spring of 2022, it was difficult to observe marks and recall that there had been a major violent conflict there; it had been more obvious during the 2019 fieldwork. Bullets on facades covered by plaster, ruined concrete and broken glass were gradually replaced. Thus, "A 'modern' and 'gentrified' new city without an identity that is a stranger to the original structure of the city of Suriçi" is emerging (TMMOB, 2020, p. 14). This modernity is, in fact, the key feature of the occupation and transformation of the area; modernisation is a justification that brooks no argument.[58]

9.2.3. Terminology

> "Names are not fixed entities, of course: as symbols, fluid (or at least viscous) carriers of meaning, they also are subject to historical processes and undergo changes of reference and the shifting dynamics of politicized interpretation." (Jongerden, 2009, p. 8)

Terminological issues are revealed in texts and context beyond the words used in a promotional film and the naming of public locations. The following sub-sections extends consideration of this topic first with regard to advertising, officials' declarations and project and communication materials and then for the fieldwork interviews conducted and for the specific case of Suriçi.

Adverts and officials' declarations

It is interesting to examine what some representatives of the state say about the projects being carried out by reviewing their statements or and through the project taglines and slogans and

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[58] Similarly, "The representation of Jewish colonization as modernization was a tenacious stratagem, and many politicians used it, then and since, to legitimize the dispossession of the Palestinians" (Gregory, 2004, p. 81).

communication materials. This method, "attachment of values and meaning given to space by means of naming practices," can be understood as a "method of attaching national values to public space" (Jongerden, 2009, pp. 2-3). In the urbanisation Ministry's first promotional video (ÇŞİDB, 2016b), the term "building anew/reconstruction" (*yeniden inşa edilmesi*) is introduced. The term is quite accurate about what was happening, even though it was used at the same time for restoration, and in fact, these concepts contradict each other because one cannot both build from scratch and restore. That is, the naming of what was being done was really quite ambiguous, an excellent example of political 'doublespeak', indeed. Davutoğlu and Erdoğan had used the previously established term 'urban transformation' (*kentsel dönüşüm*) when declaring their future plans for the area to the press (140 journos, 2017; Haberler, 2016; Sözcü, 2016). In mid-February 2016, however, when the conflict was ongoing, Fatma Güldemet Sarı, then urbanisation Minister, stated,

> "As soon as possible, the operation will end in Sur, as in Silopi and Cizre, and life will be normalised. We will carry out revival (*yeni ihya*) and construction work (*inşa çalışması*) in terms of social and economic sense and space. With this work, the people of the region will regain peace, trust and stability." (Yeni Şafak, 2016)

The word 'revival' or 'being born anew/reborn' (*yeni ihya*) used the former urbanisation Minister – and his successor (Yeni Şafak, 2016; Yörük, 2019) – signifies an important point insofar as words related to birth and life give to the city the connotation of a living creature. Later, the term 'revitalising' (*canlandırma*) entered the discourse, which etymologically derives from the word '*can*', meaning 'life/soul', first introduced (non-transitively) through the presentation video: "And now, this historic land of thousands of years is returning to life" (*Ve şimdi, binlerce yıl bu tahrili topraklar canlanıyor*). This kind of lexicon became very successful for communication of the project. As a slogan on posters promoting the projects, it animated the walls themselves: "The walls of İçkale (citadel) will live with [the] restoration (*restorasyon*)" (Figure 9.8). And since then, this concept of life has been encrypted into the space as a political gesture or framing.

Figure 9.6. Adverts promoting project: "History revived [reborn/revitalised]" (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 9.7. Billboard images: Erdoğan and promotional poster, "The walls of İçkale [citadel] will live with restoration". 'Sur' is used here in meaning of 'wall', from which the locality name derives (taken by the author, 2022).

Other synonyms referring directly to the idea of the soul of the city appeared in the public discourse. Speaking at the 2020-2024 strategic planning meeting of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, Mayor Dr Selçuk Mızraklı stated "The city should be a city with a soul (*ruh*)," he declared, adding that "Its walls should talk to you, its streets should tell you something, it should have a story" (Haber Turk, 2019). Interviewee No. 30, a scholar from the field of architecture who had worked for a long time in the region and now lives in Istanbul, commented thus:

> "They were simply able to destroy the walls so that they could destroy the political willingness of the social structure and get rid of the people there. And now they are using the idea of rebuilding the walls, and they can actually get rid of the people, they can also get rid of the social structures and the political events in the area."

On the walls of Sur and as coverage to all protected construction sites, there are many posters with the slogan, "At the walls, the resurrection continues" (Figure 9.8). Thus, the word for resurrection (*diriliş*) came to the fore with its metaphysical and religious tone, as if the city had died (murdered by the terrorists, presumably) and the state was coming to resurrect it, all powerful, omnipotent. The use of this word aims to cultivate faithful and hopeful feelings about the works and the results they will bring to people's lives. The word also references Turkish nationalism through the popular, state-television, historical drama series *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* (Resurrection: Ertuğrul) about Osman I, founder of the Ottoman Empire.

According to the municipality YouTube channel, the 'urban transformation' eventually became the 'Sur Resurrection Project'. And as posted on the municipality website, Münir Karaloğlu, the (state-appointed) provincial governor, used the same term when he visited the site:

> "Resurrection (*diriliş*) continues on the city walls. We have examined the ongoing works on the city walls and the civilisation heritage of our Diyarbakır. Our most important heritage between the past and the future, the revival (*ihya*) of the city walls, is very important to us. In order to protect our heritage, we are working and will work."
> (DBB, 2021)

Figure 9.8. Wall covering: "At the walls the *resurrection* continues" (taken by the author, 2022).

The terminologies employed in characterising the projects undertaken within the Suriçi area, encompassing their academic context and employment in discourse and promotional materials were revealed through the fieldwork. Throughout my interviews with professionals in the engineering domain, representatives from chambers of commerce and individuals engaged with local NGOs, a consistent inquiry they expressed pertained to what they considered the most appropriate term to name and with which to convey this project. The interviews yielded novel terms that potentially offer a more precise depiction of the circumstances that underlay the rapid and forceful transformation of the urban environment.

The expressions that emerged during the interviews did not necessarily align with the terminology found within the literature. Some were phrases that vividly demonstrate the context, and others were technical terms. The popular term by interviewees (Nos. 4, 12, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27) was the counter-discursive 'gentrification' (*soylulaştırma*). Two (Nos. 3, 30), however, felt that what has happened in Suriçi goes far beyond gentrification and that this term was thus inadequate. This term has been used extensively in the international (and Turkish) academic environment for many areas in contexts that did not face such violence and destruction. The term that I extensively use in this thesis, is 'urban transformation' (*kentsel dönüşüm*), which was also prominent in the interviews (especially among Interviewees No. 4, 17, 20, 21, 22, 30). Again, though, this was not enough for some (Nos. 3, 13, 14), as it is also broadly used as a vague phrasing for 'change' and not necessarily the specific conditions of an imposed change. According to Interviewee No. 22, a local political scientist and member of the civil society, "When we look at urban transformation projects, the main idea is gentrification because they are implemented in areas where the people are poor, and the quality of buildings is low."

What happened in Suriçi was also related to the built environment and its connection with memory and history that place carries. This is why, despite the spatial definitions, informants prioritised the issue of the intangible heritage. Interviewees (Nos. 4, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24)

used the word '*hafızasızlaştırma*', which means 'erasure of memory' or 'memory loss', and similar expressions like 'new creation of memory', 're-memorification' or 'create new memory' (*yeni hafızalaştırma*), 'to make memory not exist' (*hafızanın yok edilmesi*) and 'annihilation of memory' (*hafıza kırımı*). An employee from the municipality (interviewee No.15) explained: "Suriçi is a historical place related to the memory of Diyarbakır, [and by demolishing it, this is how] they punished Diyarbakır."

Another apt term that caught my attention and was discussed at length was the phrase '*kent kırımı,* which translates as 'urban genocide' or 'urbicide'. In fact, the word '*kırım',* which means slaughter, decimation or massacre extending to genocide, was often used, along with multiple adjectives and suffixes (Interviewees No. 3, 8, 12, 16, 17, 25, 26) that translate as, for example 'cultural', 'social' and 'historical genocide'. At the Diyarbakır TMMOB coordination board, two interviewees (Nos. 25, 26) analysed the importance they give to words and their struggle to define what happened in Suriçi:

> "We only wanted to write 'genocide' here [in their report], but headquarters did not approve. […] We had to publish two articles, one as the Diyarbakır Coordination Board and the second on behalf of headquarters. They said 'destruction', we said 'genocide'."

The word 'annihilation' significantly featured (Interviewees No. 12, 14, 15, 24) through a powerful phrase loaded with multiple contents; '*yok ediş*' or *'yok etme*' could also be understood as eradication, elimination, destruction, termination, the process of 'not being' or 'making non-existent'.[59] Also, the similar term yıkım was mentioned by interviewees Nos.3, 13, 14, 16 which literally means destruction.

Disagreement regarding 'regeneration' (*yeniden oluşma*) was noticeable. Some interviewees (Nos. 8, 22, 24, 30) highlighted that what happened was different from urban regeneration. Similar comments were made for the terms 'urban renewal' (*kentsel yenileme*), 'redevelopment'

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[59] The word '*yok*', signifying 'nothing', 'no', 'there isn't/aren't', is also understood in Greek as '*not have/not to exist/not to be'.*

(*yeniden geliştirme*), and *renovation* ('onarım/yenileşme'), which were thought inadequate. Notably, some interviewees (Nos. 9, 13, 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30) stated that the term 'securitisation' defines the main purpose and motivation of this project. Interviewee No.22, a local political scientist and member of civil society, explained that

> "There's a long-lasting, you know, motivation for urban transformation in Turkey and its capital, basically. But in Diyarbakır, I don't think it's the first one. It's a complementary one. In fact, it's second. But the complementary motivation of the state, the first is securitisation because during the urban conflict, the state saw that, you know, it's an area that can be a space of conflict."

While informants were developing their approaches, they often distinguished themselves from what the state declared. For example, they found no common ground with 're-creation' or 'renovation' (*yeniden yaratma*, *onarım*), 'resurrection' (*diriliş*), 'development' (*kalkınma*, *geliştirme*), 'redevelopment' (*yeniden geliştirme*), or 'regeneration' (*yeniden oluşma*), but rather indicated the mentality of demolishing, dislocating, expropriating, changing and transforming (*değiştir*, *dönüştür*) far from any protection and conservation principles. They saw deconstruction rather than reconstruction, no doubt in large part.

Finally, various other terms were referred to generally just once and so cannot be considered as significant indicators. These included 're-formation' (*yeniden oluşum*), 'demographic transformation', 're-formation of space/ground', and 'structuring' (*inşa-*, *ifaallet*), along with profanation, de-humanisation, and plunder (*talan*), and destroying the whole, socially, psychologically and physically. Sometimes, the interviewees, including experienced professionals, were unable to choose only one word to describe what had happens in Suriçi. An chamber architect specialised in restoration made the frustrated commented:

> "I can't think of a technical term to give. If it has to be one thing, I would say 'Allah'a emanet' (Leave it to God)."

In the literature related to this topic and in reviews, one comes across terms like 'gentrification', 'urban renewal' and 'redevelopment', terms that, during the research, I found, like the interviewees unsatisfactory, as simply insufficient to capture the different aspects of the Suriçi projects. They failed to address the brutality, colonisation, suppression of Kurdish identity, the various forms of inequality and violent displacement. Nor do they highlight land-grab, (especially) of small-scale properties, its forcible expropriation and redistribution of wealth is such a scale.

The term 'gentrification' (*soylulaştırma*) appears in reports (Arslan et al., 2016; Soyukaya, 2017), academic writing (Gül Köksal, 2021; Sen, 2016; Smith, 2022), at local initiatives announcements (PNDS, 2018) and in the international press. For David Lepeska (2016) writing for *The Guardian*, the 'destruction of Sur' had as "a secondary objective" the city's remaking into "something more profitable and more amenable to state control" – it was "gentrification by military force"; and for Martine Assénat (2016) in France, the projects would result in a "gentrified city centre in a touristy Diyarbakırland." Back in Diyarbakır, meanwhile, Arslan et al. opined that "Gentrification, another dimension of the transformation in Sur in general and Alipaşa and Lalebey in particular, is a cultural as well as a spatial neoliberal urban policy" (2016, p.22). Interestingly, the neighbourhoods where no conflict took place, Alipaşa and Lalebey and which had been a target of such projects since 2009 were understood as areas "destroyed within the context of gentrification" (Tan et al., 2020, p. 20).

Further to 'gentrification', the usage 'urban transformation' may be understood as attempts to concretise the multidimensional definitions of the concept.[60] Like 'gentrification', 'urban

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[60] The earliest reference I found to 'urban transformation' as well as 'gentrification' in Suriçi after the conflict was written by Nilay Vardar and published in English through the Bianet news agency on 21st December 2015, while the conflict was still ongoing. Vardar raised fears about projects that could be relaunched in Suriçi following on from those initiated in 2010 in Alipaşa and Lalebey (see below). Far before the urgent expropriation decree, this article had been concerned about the instrumentalisation of hostilities, touristification and gentrification though urban

transformation' (*kentsel dönüşüm*) is frequently used in reports (DITAM, 2018; HIC, 2016; Sala and Schechla, 2016; SAMER, 2017; TMMOB ŞPODŞ, 2020; TMMOB, 2019) in academic journals (Çatalbaş, 2016; Ercan, 2019; Karaarslan, 2018; Rebrii et al., 2019) and also in the press (140 journos, 2017; Aydın, 2019b; Gungor, 2019). For this reason, it seems to work well as a technical and multimodal definition that can be broad enough to contain other approaches, too, per Arslan et al. (2016, p.8):

> "Therefore, urban transformation cannot be considered only as the renewal of buildings in a certain area or neighbourhood. In a broader framework, urban transformation can be considered as the sum of processes that follow or run parallel to economic transformation in the context of the capitalist/neoliberal city, transforming all urban uses such as housing and working spaces, public spaces, and all urban uses through exchange value by subjecting them to a class reassessment."

The term 'urban transformation' is used especially for the Alipaşa Lalebey neighbourhoods, as they had been under the scope of such projects from 2009, as mentioned in Chapter 5. These projects were organised through a collaborative agreement involving the Diyarbakır governorship, TOKİ, and Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality (Arslan et al., 2016). TOKİ demolished 330 out of 850 structures in these neighbourhoods in 2010 to this end, drawing community backlash and ultimately halting the operation by the end of 2013 (Vardar, 2015).

Additionally, the Diyarbakır municipality request in 2012 for the central government to declare Sur as a 'risk area' in order to make use of the newly launched law on the *Regeneration of Areas under Disaster Risk* corresponded to the state's power to designate an area as under 'urban regeneration' (Hakyemez, 2018) or 'urban renewal' (Ay and Turker, 2022; Genç, 2021; Özyetiş, 2016; Soyukaya, 2017). A range of terminology using phrases like 'urban regeneration' (Amnesty International, 2016; Genç, 2016; Özyetiş, 2016; Sen, 2016), 'urban redesign' (Ercan, 2019) and

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transformation, confiscations and demolitions with hopes pinned to the Conservation Development Plan revised by Diyarbakır Municipality in 2012 (Vardar, 2015; see also Taş, 2022b).

'redevelopment project' (Adalet, 2018; Amnesty International, 2017; Ay and Turker, 2022; Reuters, 2018; Tas, 2023) was also used in reports, papers and the media.

Regeneration projects are routinely orchestrated by political and business elites towards a touristification intended to attract foreign capital and domestic investment by providing first an image of stability rather than granting solutions to the social and spatial issues of the population living there, resulting often dislocation, demographic change and other expressions of control (CUCR, 2012). For this purpose, a marketing of Diyarbakır as a 'liveable', 'safe', and 'beautiful' city had to be cultivated, as in the presentation film, which had first to be enabled by the deconstruction. The motivation to radically deconstruct in order to begin anew was many-layered, and certainly involved than planned extinction of a local urban culture, or urbicide.

Nevin Soyukaya, the former head of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, publicly introduced the term 'urbicide' with the bald statement, "it is precisely an urbicide" (Pehlivan, 2021). This word was prominent during the fieldwork interviews and also appears in other texts (Kaya Taşdelen, 2020; Smith, 2022; Taş, 2022a). The visit of the Swedish ambassador, Staffan Herrström, on 20th October 2021 raised awareness outside Turkey regarding urbicide, his characterisation being reported by the Diyarbakır Chamber of Architects as "urbicide (*kent kırımı*) and the annihilation of collective memory (*toplumsal hafıza yok oluşu*) in Suriçi Urban Protected Area" (TMMOB MODŞ, 2022, p.59).

Overall, the local experts with whom I conducted interviews also gave considerable attention to terms related to memory and its erasure. As an urban planner myself, I wouldn't first observe memory as the primary loss in the area, but interestingly, they do. Indeed, memory is more important than structures, even historical ones. Collective memory is prioritised as the essential characteristic of this space by local people, and it is this, one might say, that expresses the 'urbicide' at a human level. Not only does the old daily life and its thick mesh of social relations disappear, but also the memory that goes with them, the memory in place. Ultimately, then, this analysis suggests a progressive conceptual journey – or rather slide, or fall – that starts with a

superficial gentrification and descends through the deeper promise of regeneration and to then the dangers of complete urban transformation until reaching bottom with urbicide and the loss of memory, or erasure.

9.3. Symbolic Materialities

9.3.1. Empty areas

One of the most intriguing elements that caught drawn my attention regarding the spatial configuration of Suriçi was the existence of large vacant areas. Occasionally resembling parks or green areas, they are located within the demolished part in the eastern part of Sur, adjacent to the walls, situated by previously inhabited neighbourhoods and amidst the newly constructed structures. Owned by TOKİ – since everything in the area was expropriated – these open spaces are particularly evident within the newly built segments of Sur, but as the master plan for the areas remains undisclosed, their specific future development or utilisation remains uncertain. For Thomas Smith (2022, p. 407), these areas are desolate; they resemble an "empty moonscape."

Figure 9.10. Empty areas (taken by the author, 2022).

At the same time, the current decision to leave these areas vacant despite their previous density as residential neighbourhoods also serves as a potent reminder of the removal of the former residents and their homes from Suriçi's landscape. The ghostly memory is maintained as a remnant, as an uninhabited space where everyday human life once used to flourish, like a grave to state power controlling life and vitality – that which is *not* revived – and condemning it, *without* resurrection. Thus, when Pamela Colombo (2014, p. 58) describes the annihilation of villages in

Argentina she claims that the "presence of the state can operate and exist on the basis of this emptiness," that the state is "also constructed in these spaces that it leaves unoccupied."

Figure 9.11. Empty areas: some parts are used for animals (taken by the author, 2022).

The symbolic but also material dimension of these empty green lands was extensively discussed during my fieldwork conversations, but my discussants could only make guesses about the underlying reasons or future plans since nothing was known, no communications were shared by

the authorities. Almost all the interviewees assumed that the 'public' spaces would not remain empty forever, especially if there was additional value to be extracted from them. Some interviewees (Nos. 3, 4, 15, 20, 22, 29, 30) thought they would be developed according to how the project as a whole would evolve, so the state was now in a wait-and-see mode. According to other interviewees (Nos. 12, 17, 21, 29, 30), however, the state was currently facing very serious financial issues that had almost halted new production of the built environment in the area. Interviewee No. 30, an architect scholar and activist living in Istanbul after spending years in the region, suggested the following:

> "There aren't any people who actually want to invest in those places, yet. When there will be, I'm pretty sure they're not going to remain empty. I'm pretty sure that something else is going to be built there. [...] Because if the state was not indebted, I'm pretty sure they would have done something there."

For other interviewees again (Nos. 17, 24), the fact that these areas were not yet developed was an indicator that even the state was disappointed by this development project. The fact that it had failed to accomplish its goals because, according to the single plan yet published, they were not supposed to be vacant. Also, the notion that an empty space is easier to manage and control implied the state's apprehension, possibly indicating a decision to keep these spaces vacant for the foreseeable future. At the same time, the state's ability to prevent the occupancy of these spaces by its citizens, even though it isn't doing anything with them, is also connected to the imposition of force. Interviewee No. 20, an active member of the Chamber of Urban Planner's, commented thus:

> "The emptiness sometimes also gives some meaning because they say they erased all our marks, they erase all the Kurdish marks. [...] Maybe it's also giving some meaning. They're saying, 'We don't want you. We can also even keep them empty to not let you come back'."

Whatever the reason for the vacancy, it is not without a certain symbolic irony. In the struggle for the place, what has been created is space – but just that, a space, a nothingness. It is not a sweet irony.

9.3.2. Flags and the paraphernalia of state

The manifestation of dominance by the Turkish state, as well as the reinforcement of Turkish national identity, is distinctly observed through an extensive display of Turkish flags throughout the cityscape. These flags, ranging in size, are strategically positioned on streetlights, buildings, and other urban elements. They serve as potent symbols of national pride and government authority, or at least, its power. Where it does not merely oppress or provoke, this pervasive deployment of the Turkish flag reinforces a sense of the country's unity and people's loyalty to the state, seeking to foster a collective civilian identity among the Kurdish people of the region.

Similarly, numerous advertisements and informational panels endorsing various activities related to governmental initiatives and construction projects effectively serve as channels for disseminating information about the functions and accomplishments of different ministries and state institutions. By showcasing these activities publicly, the government means to assert its visibility and relevance in the daily lives of the citizens, aiming to reinforce the perception of an active and engaged state apparatus. Inspired by the work of Billig (2010), who explores the role of flags as national symbols, emphasising their dynamic nature beyond mere representation and highlighting their capacity to evoke patriotic and identity-related emotions, we may assert that despite their often unnoticed presence, such symbols of state actively uphold sentiments of allegiance in everyday life by reiteratively signifying belonging, thereby normalising and strengthening the unconscious force of the would-be dominant identity.

Figure 9.12. Decorative flags used to mark grass borders (taken by the author, 2022).

Figure 9.13. Damage done to the historical walls to install a flagpole (DBB, 2016a).

The urban landscape of Suriçi is marked by an array of symbolic elements, including flags, images of President Erdoğan, and posters denoting the struggle against the 2016 coup (*milletin zaferi*). Museums dedicated to Atatürk exposing his visits to the city and monuments and sculptures commemorating the unknown soldier or the dependence war and Çanakkale Victory further contribute to this landscape. Notably, according to my observations in 2019, flags were pervasive, while images of Erdoğan were increased later. That may have related to upcoming elections. First the need was to establish sovereignty, then to establish whose.

9.14. Left: urbanisation Ministry and TOKİ logos; images of Erdoğan and Atatürk (in the middle) and Turkish flag. The abundance of Turkish flags visually reinforces the idea of a united nation (taken by the author, 2022).

The police presence in Suriçi's central streets has decreased compared to 2019, exemplified by Gazi Street's transition to a quieter atmosphere. However, the city is marred by conflict-related infrastructure, such as concrete walls, barbed wire, and checkpoint fortification, signifying the military and police presence. As well as panoptic technologies like cameras, security points and towers, cement barriers, armoured water cannons (*toma*) and tank vehicles are ubiquitous (Smith, 2022). These structures and 'services' expand or shrink over time according to the phase or the era. Overall, the contribute to the creation of an intolerant public space with lasting spatial, social and economic consequences.

As witness by the takeover and makeover of its 'capital', Turkish Kurdistan is a land where the orchestration of symbolic representation is now engrained into the territory. This is a strategic approach employed by the Turkish state to communicate and solidify its legal authority and control in the urban environment. The deliberate placement of Turkish flags and state-promoting materials throughout the urban space signifies an intentional effort by the Turkish government to visually manifest state power, shape the public and reinforce a sense of Turkish national identity in the region of Kurdistan. This has been performed by an erasure in the form, of a re/de-construction of an urban space, or urbicide. How Kurds will respond remains to be seen.

Figure 9.15. Panoptic tower with lights and cameras in the middle of a green (empty) area with tables and chairs for tea (taken by the author, 2022).

Chapter 10

Conclusive remarks

"The truth is that the only sure way to hold such places is to destroy them. If you conquer a city accustomed to self-government and opt not to destroy it you can expect it to destroy you. Rebelling, its people will always rally to the cry of freedom and the inspiration of their old institutions. It doesn't matter how long they've been occupied or how benevolent the occupation, these things will never be forgotten. Whatever you do, whatever measures you take, if the population hasn't been routed and dispersed so that its freedoms and traditions are quite forgotten, they will rise up to fight for those principles at the first opportunity"
(Machiavelli, 1513, pp. 19–20)

In order to sum up the most important events marking the degradation of Sur after 2015, twelve milestones can be identified, as recorded in an extensive report made by three experts, provides a useful guide. The three experts were Şerefhan Aydın (Chair of TMMOB Diyarbakır Chamber of Architects Branch), Dilan Kaya Taşdelen (Secretary of TMMOB Diyarbakır Chamber of Urban Planners) and Nevin Soyukaya (Former head of the UNESCO World Heritage Site). According to these experts, the first milestone was the conflict, the second was the destruction and the unauthorised removal process of debris that started in February 2016 (Aydın et al., 2020), and the third was the evaluation process of listed buildings that occurred after the destruction of most of them. The fourth was the urgent expropriation decision, the fifth was the revision of the Urban Conservation Development Plan, and the sixth was the forced migration, as elaborated in the previous chapters. Then, the seventh milestone was the irreversible damage to archaeological layers done by the deep excavations of up to 2.5 meters made using construction equipment for the installation of water, natural gas, electricity, telephone and sewage systems. Eighth was the creation of a park on top of the archaeological site in the Inner Castle (İçkale) area by demolishing listed structures and irreversibly damaging the archaeological layers there. The ninth milestone was the new structures erected in the demolition-affected neighbourhoods. Tenth was the Gazi and Melik Ahmet Street Renewal Projects, eleventh the Tigris Valley Project,

intervention projects in the Tigris River ecosystem and the unauthorized implementation of the "Nation's Garden" under the eastern walls of the site. Twelfth was the constant, unpunished and uninvestigated activity of historical stones removal and illicit trafficking.

The intentions behind the declarations of the Disaster Risky Area, Urban Transformation Project and Urgent Expropriation decisions for Suriçi and its neighbourhoods are enabling the changing political and ethnic composition of Sur, the altering of its historical and cultural fabric and memory loss, the targeting of traditional solidarity living cultures, the pursuit of economic gains through expropriation and urban transformation, and the restructuring of the area based on a security concept, as evident from the construction of police stations, a heavy police presence, armoured vehicles and various security practices (SAMER, 2017). The main motivations of the project were also summarised by Interviewee No. 16, a dismissed official from the Diyarbakır Municipality in exile in Europe:

> Politically, the aim is to demolish these places and send them [the people] to more organised places, to send them to TOKİ areas, to send them there by deceiving them. In other words, to kill three or five birds with one stone. I always look at urbanisation in Kurdistan in this way. In other words, they wanted to catch two or three birds at once, both economically, by tricking people into debt, and by establishing control over people, and by creating people's habitats themselves, they wanted to create a control mechanism in this way.

In this thesis, I have suggested that the project has encompassed two critical aspects. Firstly, it entailed the displacement and dispossession of local residents, resulting in the dissolution of the unique social cohesion prevalent among the inhabitants of Sur. Secondly, it was a catastrophe for the walls, edifices, repositories of archaeological significance, architectural heritage, urban fabric and historical elements of Sur and the collective memories enshrined in them. With regard to the latter, despite assurances from political figures (such as the prime minister and cabinet ministers) and a standing commitment to adherence to UNESCO guidelines for their safeguarding, there was disregard. Instead, they were dismantled and overtly supplanted by constructions that flagrantly violate most of the architectural and urban guidelines. Nevertheless, even if architectural preservation and adherence to restoration principles had been prioritised,

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if archaeological treasures had remained intact, if the urban layout had been maintained and even in the absence of the conflict with its associated weaponry, the project would remain deeply problematic. This is due to its colonial, market-driven nature, poised to engender deprivation and dislocation for the majority of the area's impoverished residents. In the words of Adalet (2018, p. 38), "The reconstruction of Sur was thus an opportunity that brought together the commodification of land with the dismantling of Kurdish command over the cityscape."

This concluding chapter emerges from the aforementioned concerns and endeavours to generate reflections centred around the following key arguments:

- The first argument explores the interlinkages between profit and security, identifying them as the fundamental pillars of the project; where the re/de-construction of Sur is portrayed as both a colonial/security strategy resulting in the destruction of the community and a profit-making mechanism;
- The second argument delves into the conceptualisation of urbanism as a methodology to wage war through other means and additionally seeks to redefine the damaging of cultural heritage, considering it not merely as a side effect but as a core attribute (intention) of the warfare in Sur.
- Lastly, this chapter aims to pose probing questions that invite a deeper understanding of the methodologies involved in the re/de-construction shaping Sur's transformation and potential connections with the broader bibliography.

Ay and Turker (2022) suggest a shift away from the neoliberal urban development model with an entrepreneurial state. Instead, they suggest that Suriçi should be seen as an *internal colony* under the ethnocratic regime of Turkish state as framed by Yiftachel (2006).[61] Similarly, according to

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[61] The bases of ethnocratic regime structures include demographic control, land and settlement control, armed force and securitisation of land, capital flow, constitutional law and the reformulation of public space around ethnonational symbols to reinforce dominant groups and suppress contesting cultures (Yiftachel, 2006). Utilising the

Taş (2022a, p. 57), "urban restructuring in Sur primarily seeks to increase militarized state control in the neighborhoods." Evidently, considering the available data and examining the plans, there has been a discernible shift in emphasis, from cultural heritage preservation before the conflict to state security after the conflict (Hakyemez, 2018). For most scholars the city is seen as "an inter-locked defensive system of urban zones, built around design principles that include securing the state against a restive population" (Kilcullen, 2013, p. 20) – this in the context of a "de facto politics of colonization" that the Turkish state has been applying in the south-east region along with a decade-long state of emergency since its formation (Gambetti and Jongerden, 2011, p. 376).

The interviewees and informants for this research expressed their views that all the projects in the region, Diyarbakır included, are security oriented. A local political scientist and NGO member, Interviewee No. 22, said: "When you look at the transformation project, in Sur, Şırnak, Cizre, the main idea is to build an area that can stay controlled by the state. It's managed easily and securely". He believes that when the urgent expropriation legislation was introduced along with the revision of conservation plan, security was the main motivation and most important principle. According to Interviewee No. 27, a member of the Chamber of Architects: "It's not my personal opinion that the project is about security, it's an inference from police chief's request of building police stations and roads to connect them."

As indicated by the prevailing consensus, therefore, the primary impetus behind this project revolves around security concerns. Interviewees emphasise its ideological and security-driven nature, while also acknowledging certain economic facets (meaning the prospect of extracting profit) that differentiates the case of Sur from the other cities (e.g. Şırnak, Cizre, Nusaybin) decimated during the conflict and reconstructed anew according to security principles, as observed in the field during 2019. Later, in my 2022 field visit, I noticed that the elimination of

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framework of *ethnocracy*, Ay and Turker (2022) analyse how ethnonational dominance of Turkishness serves as a governing mechanism in the reconstruction of urban spaces under the authoritarian rule of a hegemonic state.

security points and a decrease in police presence have coincided with a notable rise in commerce, along with the emergence of cafes and restaurants throughout the area – both in newly constructed zones and those unaffected by demolitions.

Without any intention of rejecting the abovementioned security and control argument, I will attempt to take this work one step further. I would contend that this argument appeared especially pertinent immediately following the conflict and persisted during and after the pandemic, a period when construction was in a state of limbo. Now, in the post-COVID period, Suriçi is entering a new era. It is an era in which the police and military presence seems to have less presence (compared to before) in Sur (the same can not be assumed for the rest of the city). At the same time, the financialisation of the area, with commercial streets, is being established, while some initial traces of touristification can be identified. Since the state has achieved eradication of everything threatening to its dominance, it can now move to and reside in unobtrusive forms of discipline, such as a cultural assimilation through the consumption culture.

The way that Sur is currently developing shows that, over time, the Turkish state has shifted its approach to applying security through armed militants to commercial avenues. Interview discussions thus centred on the question of whether the motive behind this situation – i.e. the re/de-construction as a whole – was primarily profit-driven or security-oriented. The prevailing view among most participants is now seen as a balanced combination of both aspects. The two perspectives are not less opposed or contradictory than mutually reinforcing. Interviewee No. 20, a key figure in local civil society and an urban planner stated the following:

> Now it's more profit because they kind of… you know, regarding security, people won't move back to the area so now it's more commercial area… they probably won't care anymore about security.

Now that the commercial area of Yenikapı street is fully operative with restaurants and cafes full of clients, it illustrates that the economic extraction from a valuable area is coming to the forefront. My research since that last field visit in November 2022 indicates that the neoliberal marketisation of Suriçi is now clearly prominent while the security aspect exists as a foundation

planning element. For Nevin Soyukaya (2017, p. 13), the former head of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the commercialisation of the area is a long-expressed desire for the Turkish state. The notion of securitisation through marketisation seeks to shape a *governmental urban regime* in which ethnic tensions are more overtly intertwined with class antagonisms, reflecting a strategy in Suriçi in which *neoliberal urbanism* incorporates everyday forms of 'urban militarism' (Genç, 2021).

In this thesis, one of the main claims is that *this case can be understood through the lenses of both neoliberal urbanisation and colonial politics of spatial control*. The concept of '*new revanchism*' (Smith, 2002) can be employed to explicitly frame the Diyarbakır re/de-construction as a case study in *ensuring the city's safety for urban transformation projects*. This involved violence, war and of course repression against any voices resisting these processes (like grassroots activism, the elected mayors, the bar association and the chambers). This project was aimed at dismantling the Kurdish movement but also ensures through authoritarianism that the presence of the local – poor Kurds, who struggle – is vanquished and excluded – to secure the environment of Sur for investments and the continuation of transformation projects.

Critical research on large-scale urban development projects indicated how neoliberal political power is exerted through the production of space (Swyngendouw et al. 2002). Such megaprojects and place-marketing strategies represent neoliberal urban governance and exacerbate social exclusion and polarisation since they — additionally to security — function as tools for future growth and the competitive attraction of investment capital. These changes in urban policy involve the emergence of new legislation, tools, actors and institutions, with consequences for urban policy-making methodologies and local democracy and a shift of policy-making powers away from local government and towards other agencies – all of which have been shown in this case study. The 'Sur anew' project has been carried out within the framework of the neoliberal forms of urban governance, in which, manifestly, the state plays a prominent role. By using the five main characteristics of the 'New Urban Policy' (ibid.), it is clear that the case of Suriçi meets all the criteria of neoliberal urbanisation processes. The first characteristic is the *context of*

exception in which the project is operated. Urban development projects often operate outside formal planning structures, characterised by a framework of "exceptionality" in which the state justifies its exceptional management for reasons of scale, time pressure, efficiency factors and – in this case (mainly) – security factors. The urgent expropriation process for the whole of the area and the revision of the conservation plan were just two examples of the exceptional measures taken that were not conducted under standard, official procedures but rather through specific (targeted, ad hoc) legislation. This is, in fact, a new form of governance, effected with outrageous impunity for the annihilation of such a large historical area and driven by "less democratic and more elite-driven priorities" (Swyngendouw et al. 2002, p. 547). This is evident in how the state trespasses national and international law (Appendix B). The condition of a state of a exception can be seen through the "the strange relationship of law and lawlessness, law and anomy" (Raulff, 2004, p. 609). The second characteristic is that this project revealed a *new landscape of elite powers* in the region. This was performed through the emergence of referential stakeholders – including subcontractors, businesspeople, local agencies and real estate agents (and their clients, even) – by excluding the main prior stakeholders – such as civil society organisations and the local people. By dismissing mayors and prosecuting activists in order to thus serve the interests of local and national elites, the "local democratic participation mechanism" (Swyngedouw et al., 2002, p. 547) was certainly not respected. The third characteristic concerns *non-integration into the local urban environment*. Neoliberal urbanisation processes tend to be conducted as one-offs, without any clear thought for the overall future development of the town or city. The Suriçi plan and the new conservation plan have not been and most probably will not be integrated into the total planning of the city's cultural and historical heritage. As is evident from the visual material, what has been done is more like a patchwork of diversified, segregated and fragmented socio-economic urban sites. The fourth characteristic is the aim of *profit-making*. Further to the security-orientation end, the re/de-construction process examined here has clearly been market-oriented, aiming to create urban rent, and inevitably resulting in (more) dislocation, polarisation and economic and socio-spatial injustice. In order to increase the 'rent gap', this project expropriated people's properties at low prices and now intends to sell the new

expensive structures by targeting high-income segments of the population[62]. This has affected the land use functions in obvious ways, such as introducing hotels and luxury housing into the area. For the continued and ultimate success of the project, there is a reliance on the dynamics of the real estate sector and, it seems, a rebranding of the area, too. The last characteristic is that all the above reflect a series of processes that are associated with a *changing scale of governance*. As a top-down approach from the ministry, apart from bypassing comprehensive and regulatory master planning tools or consultation processes, this project (according to the available data that were analysed in the empirical part) has shifted the "geometry of power in the governing of urbanisation." (p.548) This process is also related to a flow of capital from the public to the private sector through the built environment. Despite the authoritarian state interventions, extensive violence, brutality, dislocation and annihilation of the built environment, the case of Sur still operates in favour and under the regime of the New Urban Policy, and all the above are mutually reinforcing. This work aims to acknowledge the different contexts where colonial domination is a vital force, but I find it interesting that the applied policies uncompromisingly serve all the dictates of the neo-liberal urbanisation model. In the words of Derek Gregory (2004, p. 253):

> "If global capitalism is aggressively de-territorializing, moving ever outwards in a process of ceaseless expansion and furiously tearing down barriers to capital accumulation, then colonial modernity is intrinsically territorializing, forever installing partitions between 'us' and 'them'."

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[62] Regarding the 'profile' of newcomers in the area, almost all interviewees commented on the significantly higher social profile of those who can afford the prices of the buildings (either for rent or for sale). While talking to interviewee No.27, a member from the chamber of Architects who lives close to Sur, estimated about new buyers: "These will be people with capital. For example, today I cannot buy in Sur. Or even if I do, it will mean that I am a white-collar […] As a Diyarbakır citizen, I cannot live in Suriçi today. Although they try to create a new profile, what happened there will not be erased from my memory, at least for the recent past. I can't go there as if nothing happened and get the feeling of buying a property and living there comfortably. I think that everyone who is a little sensitive and follows that process will feel like this. But if you don't have such concerns, if you have a commercial point of view about it, or if you don't care at all, if all you want is to live in an 'old' historical house, you'll go and get it. The people who will probably be there will also be people with capital and people who have money and no worries other than living an 'authentic life'."

Another important task of this case study is to demonstrate how Urbanism has been a very effective method for the continuation of war against Kurds. In that sense, the term post-conflict used in my research needs to be defined—one more time. It refers to the time when heavy artillery confrontation between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement was over, marked by the defeat of the latter. 'Post-conflict Diyarbakır' is not an era characterised by peace but rather an era of oppression with different methodologies and strategies. It is not irrational to assume that an urban transformation project can be seen, in fact, as an extension of the war; it is actually a continuation of war with other means. In that sense, war was not over once the armed clashes were seized, yet it continued applying its effect on the people of Suriçi by reshaping its nature through urban transformation projects that re/de-construct the city.

If I could paraphrase the notion of Clausewitz (1976) that war is politics conducted through other means, then I would dare to state that in this case, we can see how urban planning and architecture can be the continuation of war through other means. There is indeed an essential role of spatial sciences in the ways cities and war are changing and reshaping societies. Scott (1998) proposes that state planners favour a recently cleared site and the abrupt relocation of a "shocked" population to a new setting where the planners can exert maximum influence. An alternative approach would involve reshaping, in its current location, an already established and functioning community that possesses greater social resources to resist and alter the planned transformation. But eventually, after the areas are designed, it doesn't mean that the war is over. It has to continue silently. In the case of Sur, it all comes down to the state's efforts and initiatives to assimilate and pacify a population in ways which can be more efficient and effective than an armed confrontation. Some examples are the commercialisation, legislations, discourses and representations, terms and symbolic materialities such as flags and the paraphernalia of the state. Consequently, this research aims to demonstrate that the 'Sur anew' transformation project was a continuation of the war in different ways. Undoubtedly, the instrumentalisation of urban planning can explain why—if I may paraphrase the words of Weizman (2012)— war is over because now it is everywhere.

As this thesis is based on Yiftachel's (1994) theoretical perspectives about planning as a tool of control, he introduces the territorial, procedural and socioeconomic as key dimensions of planning. The territorial dimension encompasses the spatial and land use aspects of plans and policies, serving as a potent instrument of control to decide on who and what is located somewhere. They involve measures such as limiting land ownership, monitoring and control, thereby fostering segregation and exacerbating intergroup inequalities within the city. In the case of Suriçi, those "Territorial policies can be used as a most powerful tool of control" (p.220). The procedural dimension pertains to the formulation and implementation aspects of the plans and policies, where planning directly influences societal power dynamics by also regulating access to decision-making processes, potentially leading to the exclusion of certain segments and groups, contributing to their marginalisation and repression. In the case of Diyarbakır, the exclusion of the civil society, institutions and professional chambers (like the commerce, urban planners, architects), NGOs, initiatives, and the elected local governments proves that the dislocation of the Suriçi people is not collateral damage but one of the main goals in the project. The performed strategies of dislocation and dispossession are the objectives of the decade-long war against the Kurdish people (Jongerden, 2007) that is also currently taking place. The socioeconomic dimension of planning (Yiftachel, 1994) encompasses its lasting effects on societal economic and social relations, with the capacity to yield positive or adverse outcomes for neighbourhoods and communities. It serves as a means of socioeconomic control, shaping and possibly widening disparities by strategically allocating development costs and benefits in line with the interests of dominant groups, fostering the dependence of the deprived ones. Some years later, he (Yiftachel, 1998) added also the cultural dimension. That "includes planning's impact on the various cultures and collective identities that exist within city and state. A central component of the nation-state's order is the development, maintenance and reproduction of national and ethnic identities" (p.402).

Unfortunately, the implementation of the new constructions has resulted in the destruction of significant architectural elements and forms that should have been preserved to protect the

authentic vernacular architecture of the region. Elements such as walls, doors, fountains, wells, facades, courtyards, roofs, and staircases have either been entirely lost or not adequately integrated into the new designs. This disregard for preserving the architectural heritage of the area reflects a lack of attention to the cultural and historical significance of these elements, ultimately leading to a loss of Diyarbakır's unique identity. By destroying the historical part of the city, the state also destroys the condition for further exploitation of the cultural heritage (if I need to think with a neoliberal state of mind), as there will not be so much cultural heritage left to brand Suriçi as a 'historical area'. A professor from Dicle University (Interviewee No.10), while commenting on the potential clients, believes that, for example, it cannot be addressed to people from abroad because this clientele would ask for a historical peninsula—not a demolished one. Indeed, the transformation projects following the conflict initiated with widespread demolition of the urban fabric that eradicated Suriçi's historical heritage and hence reduced the economic viability of the newly constructed real estate in the region (Ay and Turker, 2022). Maybe this could also be related to what Lefebvre portrays as a contradiction of space:

> Let's see the city now. There was also a historical reality, a pre-capitalist social formation: think of the ancient city, the medieval city. And capitalism got rid of them, it handles the historical city according to its economic, political and "cultural" requirements. The city, more or less broken into suburbs, into regions, into outlying satellites, becomes at the same time a center of power and a source of great profit. [...] At the same time, what remains of the historical city is degraded; the consumption of the historical space corresponds to the production of the capitalist space, but capitalism thus destroys its own condition, which is the city itself as a center of decision, which, as I said, is a contradiction of space (Lefebvre, 2007, p. 323)

If the Walls of Suriçi have functioned for years "as receptor, container, and reflector of intention, meaning, and emotion" (Sørensen and Rose, 2015, p. 9) of Kurdishness, then no wonder why they have been the target for physical and symbolical re/de-construction. The historical aspects of this monument are highlighted, and the ways they are presented or excluded are undoubtedly a political choice (Ashworth, 2002).

Kaya Taşdelen (2020), in her work on Suriçi, observes that the demolition of a heritage not only results in the obliteration of collective memory but also anchors the site's memory to the physical

destruction process, effectively erasing what existed before it. This argument posits that the Turkish state has employed its heritage of the 'other' as a means to validate prevailing or officially sanctioned nationalist cultural assertions, subjecting it (them) to a politics of recognition and derecognition, which has resulted in substantial losses (hence social memory, meaning, etc.). The Turkish state has, after all, utilised sites of heritage to promote, (re)produce, (re)brand heritage sites their identities and symbolisms (Pekol, 2021) like the Roman fortress of Sur, the churches and the examples of local vernacular architecture. Besides the fact that for the reconstruction of cultural heritage, there should be a prime adherence to architectural and museum conservation guidelines (like the Venice Charter) emphasising technical aspects but, there is also the nuanced guidance on the intricate role of symbolism and its connection to societies through "associated ideas, beliefs, and traditions" (Sørensen and Viejo-Rose, 2015, p. 10). Through this thesis, I attempted to explore the role of the Suriçi Walls monument in (re)producing nationalism (Pekol, 2021), urban citizenship (Novoa, 2022), and narratives of exclusion. While places can serve as instruments for both the dismantling and the reconstruction of society, encompassing transient elements like a sense of belonging, meaning, intrinsic worth and concepts of integrity (Sørensen and Viejo-Rose, 2015) or recovery (Barakat, 2007), this is not the case. The destruction of a cultural heritage monument, even one recognised by UNESCO[63], without facing any sanctions and its subsequent restoration without adhering to fundamental protection guidelines has posed a significant concern for the local community. The way heritage is used can be decisive in the

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[63] For the role of UNESCO in this story, Interviewee No.27 commented: "There is a very famous word; There is a sentence used by UNESCO in the United States and by the Council of the European Union for whatever bad happens in the world: 'We are concerned'. Today, for example, in Ukraine, they use the same sentence when people are dying. It is just a word to say for the sake of saying something. The process of entering UNESCO was a very exciting process for us. We attached great importance to the promotion of Diyarbakır to the world protection of Suriçi, but we have seen that it has no meaning. […] Frankly, we had expectations from UNESCO in the first period. […] We expected UNESCO to say, 'Stop! You can't do this destruction', but unfortunately, that didn't happen either. For me, UNESCO has no meaning, frankly. UNESCO says that it does good things while continuing the rotation and reproduction of the capitalist system within itself, and it is self-advertising to seem sensitive. [...] We don't have any hope for UNESCO, but maybe we can have a good process by supporting each other."

future of cultural expressions, identity, place, and memory (Smith, 2006), hopefully also of the Kurdish people in the region.

While considering the terminological aspects beyond the words employed in promotional materials and official statements, it becomes evident that the discourse surrounding the transformation of Sur is fraught with nuanced connotations. The discourse surrounding the comparison between Diyarbakır's Sur and the Spanish city Toledo became a focal point in discussions about Sur's transformation. The statement envisioned a tourist attraction with a transformed architectural texture where the Kurdish identity has been uprooted, and commerce and consumption are assimilating anything that reminds the old Suriçi. Despite potential intentions to emulate Toledo's re-branding, the current state of Suriçi indicates that this vision could have never been realised due to the mass erasure of historical elements. The initial use of the term 'urban transformation' by political figures shifted during the conflict, with terms like 'revival' and 'being born anew'. The concept of 'revitalising' gained prominence, intertwining with notions of life and soul in the city, symbolised by phrases like "The walls of İçkale will live with restoration." This narrative of revival became a powerful political gesture embedded in the public space through slogans and posters. Synonyms like 'resurrection' and 'revival' took on metaphysical and religious tones, reinforcing a narrative of the city's supposed demise and subsequent resurrection by the state. This carefully curated terminology not only shapes public perception but also reflects a deliberate effort to instil faithful and hopeful sentiments about the ongoing transformation, invoking historical and nationalistic references. The 'Sur Resurrection Project' highlights the strategic use of language to frame and communicate the state's objectives in the rebuilding process.

A last point I would like to introduce more as a future consideration rather as a conclusive remark is the relation of this case study to the 'Boomerang effect' introduced by Foucault (Foucault, 2003). The transplantation of European models to different continents not only influenced those regions but also had back a significant repercussion on power mechanisms, institutions, and techniques (ibid.). This notion explains the implementation, refinement and normalisation of

security, surveillance, and military technologies in civilian/urban contexts, firstly in colonial and frontier warfare operation settings, thereafter, the application of those methodologies at the territories of the colonisers (ibid.). "A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization, or an internal colonialism, on itself." (Foucault, 2003, p. 103)

I thus realise that the case of Diyarbakır might be more that an exceptionally violent and militarised example of planning or spatial governance but a well-tested method that could potentially take place (if needed and maybe slightly modified) in other cities, as well. Maybe we will soon see boomerang effects that will introduce "security and military doctrine in the cities of the West" (Graham, 2009, p. 391). Taş (2022a) also gets inspired by this concept and supports that the 'neocolonial' system, by continuously fostering warfare, security measures, and militarism in the Kurdish region, is progressively expanding these dynamics to encompass the entirety of Turkey, resulting in a shift towards a permanent state of exception under an autocratic rule.

"Through such processes of imitation, explicitly colonial models of pacification, militarization and control, honed on the streets of Global South cities, increasingly diffuse to the cities of capitalist heartlands in the Global North." (Graham, 2009, p. 390) The revival of overtly colonial strategies and methods encompasses not only the utilization of new military urbanism techniques in foreign war zones but also their spread and emulation through the securitization of life in Western urban settings (ibid.). If this case study creates a boomerang effect, should we expect to see the 'Sur anew' methodologies being operated in the future with the same amount of brutality also not just in Istanbul and Ankara but in cities' of the old colonial powers? Is it possible that the example of Suriçi is a glimpse from the future of our cities and our lives?

Last words…

This case study is the story of an inconceivable catastrophe that has damaged the history of a city and the memory of the local population inversely. While writing this book, I found myself feeling hopeless, yet those people have tirelessly and persistently struggled. They have persistently employed literally every means to prevent the further destruction of their city, region and lives. Even when a significant part of the historical centre was lost, they used scientific and institutional methods, grassroots movements and civil society to stop the brutal onslaught of the Turkish state. They did not capitulate and did not give up on this process, taking a few painful and dangerous steps forward for every hundred steps back. The courage and fortitude to fight for justice in the face of disaster can save both their cities and their people. It may not be apparent in the near future, but surely, it is only with so much will and effort that collective memory is preserved. I am grateful to have been in touch with them and to have been inspired and encouraged for much more beyond this PhD thesis.

Appendix A

Images (28) retrieved from Google Earth Pro (accessed August 4, 2023) showing the evolution of the Suriçi re/de-construction process between 2012 and 2023.

13/2/2013

22/6/2013

22/6/2015

4/7/2015

23/9/2015

8/11/2015

10/5/2016

23/7/2016

329

26/7/2016

29/7/2016

330

8/11/2016

25/6/2017

331

11/7/2017

23/7/2018

31/7/2018

10/11/2018

333

30/10/2019

11/11/2019

335

9/2/2020

28/2/2021

336

3/12/2021

18/6/2022

337

24/4/2023
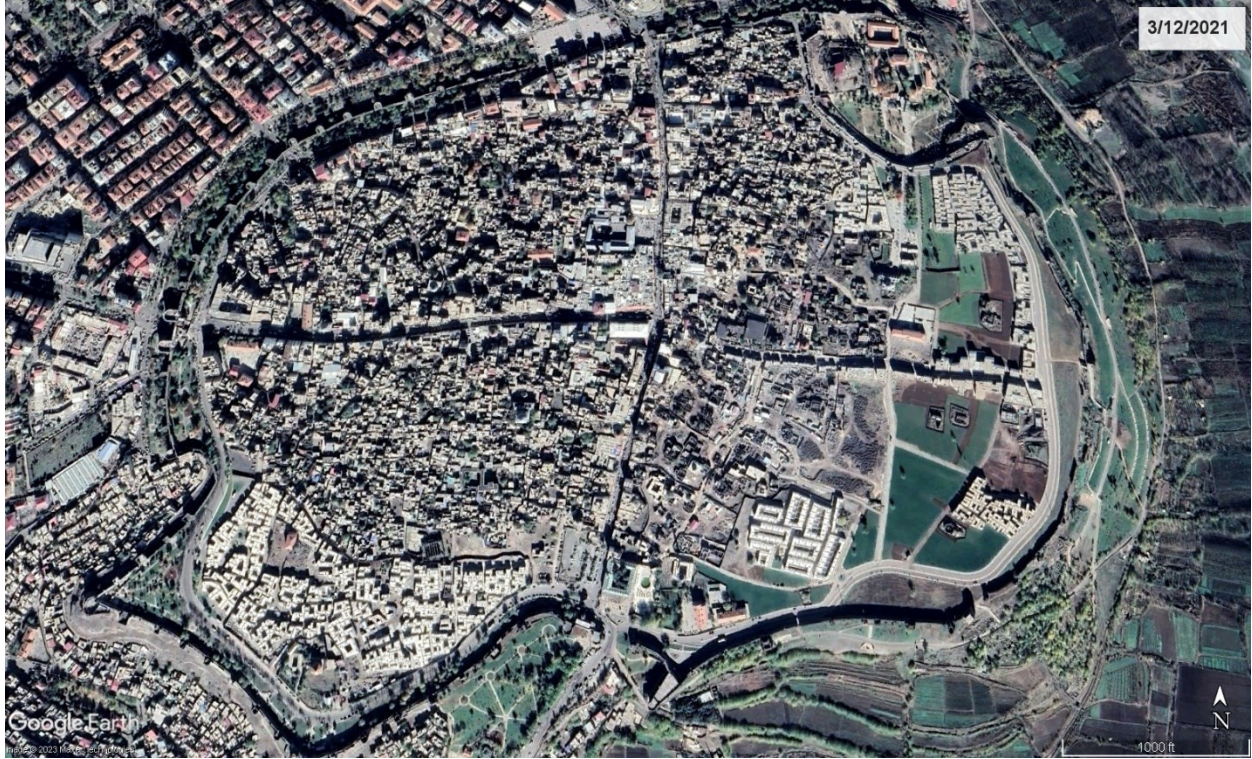
Appendix B

According to **Housing and Land Rights Network Habitat International Coalition** the violations of Turkish state: (HIC, 2016)

- Turkish Constitution (Articles 56, 57) - Institution: Republic of Turkey
- Protection: Recognition of the "right to decent housing" for Turkish citizens and the state's "responsibility to help meet those needs and rights".
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) - Institution: United Nations
- Protection: "The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions."
- General Comments No. 4, No. 7, and No.9 of the ICESCR - Institution: Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Protection: Guidance "on the right to adequate housing" and forced evictions, ensuring compliance with the ICESCR.
- European Social Charter, Article 31 - Institution: Council of Europe
- Protection: "Guarantees the right to housing".
- European Convention on Human Rights Protocol 1, Article 1&17 - Institution: Council of Europe
- Protection: The right to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions, with limitations only in the public interest and subject to legal conditions.
- UN General Assembly resolution 43/181 - Institution: United Nations General Assembly
- Protection: "The fundamental obligation [of governments] to protect and improve houses and neighborhoods", and the protection of people by law "against unfair eviction from their homes or land".
- 4th Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 49 and its 1977 Protocols
- Protection: Prohibition of "the displacement of the civilian population and the destruction of private property outside of strict military necessity".
- CESCR recommendations for adequate compensation and relocation - Institution: Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Protection: Ensuring that those affected by forced evictions receive adequate compensation and alternative accommodation.
- 3rd Geneva Convention (Articles 26 and 67)

- Protection: "explicitly ban collective punishment"
- 1996 International Law Commission (ILC) Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind, Article 20(f)(ii) - Institution: International Law Commission
- Protection: Prohibition of collective punishment, such as destruction of dwellings and forcible eviction.
- 1974 UN Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict - Institution: United Nations
- Protection: "destruction of dwellings and forcible eviction, committed by belligerents in the course of military operations or in occupied territories shall be considered criminal".
- 4th Geneva Convention, Articles 33 and 53
- Protection: Prohibition of collective penalties and "destruction of personal property".
- 4th Geneva Convention, Article 147
- Protection: Prohibition of "extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity", as a grave breach.
- CESCR General Comment No. 9 - Institution: Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) & Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969)
- Protection: Domestic application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
- CESCR General Comment No. 4 - Institution: Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Protection: Interpretation of "the right to housing" as "the right to live somewhere in security, peace, and dignity".
- CESCR General Comment No. 7 - Institution: Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Protection: "recognizes that forced eviction often takes place in connection with forced population transfers, internal displacement and forced relocations in the context of armed conflict."

According to **Amnesty international** the following are violated: (2016, p. 10-11)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) ratified by Turkey, Article 12: "guarantees freedom of movement", Article 17: "protects the right to freedom".
- European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), Article 8: protects "the rights to family and privacy".
- European Court of Human Rights, Article 3: "arbitrary house destruction can violate the prohibition of inhuman treatment".

- United Nations Guiding Principles on Forced Displacement developed by the UN Special Representative on IDPs (1992), Principles 6, 18, 21, 23, 28, 29

List of interviewees

No. 1 - Man, age 40-50, former professor of Urban Planning at Dicle University and former advisor of the Mayor of Diyarbakır

No. 2 - Woman, age 40-50, scholar from France, specialised in the Roman archaeological findings of the city

No. 3 - Man, age 30-40, member of the board at the Chamber of Urban Planners

No. 4 - Woman, age 30-40, member of the Chamber of Urban Planners

No. 5 - Man, age 30-40, member of the Chamber of Urban Planners

No. 6 - Woman, age 30-30, member of the board at the Chamber of Urban Planners

No. 7 - Man, age 35-45, ex-member of the board at the Chamber of Urban Planners

No. 8 - Woman, age 40-50, board member of Dicle Social Research Centre (DİTAM)

No. 9 - Man, age 55-65, businessman and member of the board at the Chamber of Commerce

No. 10 - Woman, age 50-60, professor at the School of Architecture, Dicle University, expert in restorations

No. 11 - Woman, age 35-40, ex-worker at the Municipality of Diyarbakır

No. 12 - Woman, age 55-65, former member of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Management Board

No. 13 - Man, age 40-50, architect and shopowner in Suriçi

No. 14 - Man, age 40-50, former member of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Management Board

No. 15 - Man, age 35-45, officer at the municipality of Diyarbakır

No. 16 - Man, age 35-35, exiled former officer at the municipality of Diyarbakır

No. 17 - Man, age 30-40, ex-member of the board at the Chamber of Architects

No. 18 - Man, age 35-45, scholar based in the UK who has worked in the region

No. 19 - Woman, age 30-40, member of an international NGO assigned to work in post-conflict Suriçi

No. 20 - Woman, age 30-40, member of the Chamber of Urban Planners and DİTAM

No. 21 - Woman, age 35-45, activist and member of a local NGO who has offered legal support to deprived families

No. 22 - Man, age 40-50, scholar in political science and member of the local civil society

No. 23 - Man, age 35-45, scholar based in Istanbul expert in TOKİ

No. 24 - Man, age 35-45, member of the Chamber of Architects, expert in restorations

No. 25 - Man, age 35-45, member of the Provincial Coordination Board of the Chamber of Engineers (TMMOB)

No. 26 - Man, age 40-50, member of the Provincial Coordination Board of the Chamber of Engineers (TMMOB)

No. 27 - Woman, age 30-40, board member at the Chamber of Architects

No. 28 - Man, age 40-50, professor of Urban Planning at Mimar Sinan University

No. 29 - Man, age 65-75, member of the board at the Armenian foundation of Diyarbakır

No. 30 - Woman, age 35-45, activist, scholar in the field of Architecture who spent years in the region

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