Gendering Residential Space: From Squatter and Slum Housing to the Apartment Estates in Turkish Renewal Projects

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This article argues for the need to understand gendered dimensions of space in a contextualized way. It investigates residential space in three different types of housing settings of the poor, namely, a peripheral squatter neighborhood coded by rurality, a central slum neighborhood coded by criminality, and the housing estates in squatter/slum renewal projects coded by middle-class urbanity. Based on two field studies conducted in Ankara, Turkey's capital, it challenges the feminine–private versus masculine–public dichotomy: With women's presence inside the neighborhood, the squatter area was a "feminine space," whereas, with the violent control of neighborhood spaces by local men, the slum area was a "masculine space." Through its association with urban modernity, the public/private divide was enforced in the housing estates. While in the first housing estate, women's informal practices in its public spaces "feminized" and "ruralized" the estate, in the second housing estate, it made women feel safe inside apartments.

INTRODUCTION

This article investigates the gendering of residential space, contextualizing it in three different types of housing settings of the poor, namely, a squatter neighborhood in the city's periphery, a slum neighborhood in the inner city, and the apartment estates built by the state for the population displaced from their squatter or slum houses via renewal projects called "urban transformation projects" in the Turkish context (hereafter UTP). By doing so, it aims to reveal how women experience residential space in different contexts. It problematizes the gendered dichotomy of public/private space in which the public space is associated with masculinity and the private space with femininity. Consenting with Bourdieu, we consider this dichotomy not the result of biological differences as functionalist thinkers claim, but the result of the way in which the social reality is constructed: "The opposition between masculine and feminine coupled with the opposition between public and private are binary mental categories, unconsciously produced by

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myths and reproduced by social practices, based on which the person orders social reality” (Bourdieu 2003, cited in Rezeanu 2015, p. 11); and consenting with feminists, we maintain that “these gender oppositions have legitimated hegemonic masculinity” (Rezeanu 2015, p. 11).

Before we move to explore our theoretical question in the three housing settings, we need to define them in the Turkish context. Squatter housing refers to those houses built in the peripheries of cities mostly on state land, violating urban property laws and housing regulations, whereas slum housing refers to deteriorated houses in the inner city with mixed legal and illegal ownership. While in the former, mostly occupant-owners live, in the latter, owners rent their houses to the very poor or leave them abandoned. Due to the fact that Ankara has abundant peripheral land owned by the state, squatter houses usually have gardens; those squatter areas in farther locations have lower density compared to those closer to the city. On the other hand, slum areas are mostly dense areas of attached housing with narrow streets. The term *gecekondu*, which literally means “landed in the night,” was originally coined to refer to the structures built hastily by migrants from the countryside on lands that did not belong to them. It is a generic term used both for squatter and slum housing. In this article, in our intention to differentiate those residential areas built in the city’s peripheries by rural migrants from the rundown residential areas in the inner city controlled recently by criminal groups, we reserve the term *gecekondu* for the former and use the term slum for the latter. In the interview with the vice mayor of the district in which a big slum area existed (Altındağ), he described the differences between the *gecekondu* and the slum as follows:

The *gecekondu* is about unlicensed buildings built on land that is not part of the city’s master plan. It is like a village taken out and placed here; it is a replica of the village in the city. The *gecekondu* carries the same village dynamics of social control. People know about shame, sin, rules. But here (the slum), these values are long gone. People do not feel the need to observe social norms because its homogeneous structure is lost. Crime can easily take place. I mean, the “copy-paste” (of village life) in the *gecekondu* is not seen here.

Using this discourse, the vice mayor justified the UTP that would be implemented in the slum neighborhoods of his district. Since the early 2000s, squatter and slum areas are increasingly demolished in UTPs implemented by the municipality-TOKI (Housing Development Administration of Turkey) partnerships, which we define as radical interventions by the state into the spaces of the poor for rent appropriation.¹ Through the tabula rasa approach, the houses are torn down, clearing land for profitable market-based projects, and their inhabitants are usually relocated in apartment blocks built by TOKI. Research hints at the problems women encounter in their lives in the apartment housing estates (Bartu-Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008; Erman 2014; Schafers 2010). By theorizing the term “urban captivity,” Bartu-Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008) inform us about the restrictions brought on women’s mobility in a TOKI housing estate built in the periphery of Istanbul: Because of transportation costs, women would not go outside the estate, and if they did, this was to go to the TOKI office to delay their monthly mortgage payments or to the district governor’s office to get social assistance; and they were forbidden by the housing management office (a private firm linked to TOKI) to carry out their previous behavior in the *gecekondu*, such as sitting outdoors with neighbors; as the management office dictated, lawns should be preserved for aesthetic reasons. Accordingly, women became captive inside their apartments. Inspired by this research, we argue that women’s

relationship with their home environment changes radically upon their move from the informal space of the squatter/slum to the formal space of the housing estate, which is shaped by the norm of the private–public divide.

In our aim of understanding gender in relation to residential space, we move beyond the exclusive focus on women to include men. This is because of our contention that, although women’s experiences and identities are more deeply associated with the home (Tognoli 1980) and women are more affected by their home environment (Churchman and Altman 1994), if we approach gender relationally, we expect that men are also affected by the move from squatter/slum to apartment housing. Drawing upon Connell’s idea of “hegemonic masculinity” (2005), which is the culturally dominant and most visible one in a given setting and exists together with other forms of masculinity, often “subordinate” (Govinda 2013), we recognize different masculinities in different contexts. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as:

(A) set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men’s identity, men’s ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy. (Jewkes and Morrell 2012, quoted in Jewkes et al. 2015, p. 113)

The authors acknowledge that:

Some forms of destructive and exaggerated masculinities (or hypermasculinity, Herek 1987) often develop among socially marginalised men in urban slums and emphasise power and force. They are not entirely separate from hegemonic masculinity to the extent that they emerge out of the relationship between hegemonic ideals and (some) men’s ability to meet them. (p. 114)

In our interest in the gendered nature of neighborhood space and the changes brought by the move from informal to formal housing in experiencing residential space, we focus on the interaction between gender and space in everyday life, and we ask how space works through gender and how gender works through space.

GENDERING SPACE

To make sense of the relationship with the residential space in everyday life, the public/private dichotomy could be a guiding theoretical tool. “(Lefebvre 1994/1991) distinguished the ‘level of singularities’ on which space is experienced sensually by endowing places with opposing qualities, such as masculine and feminine, or favorable and unfavorable” (Goonewardena et al. 2008, p. 65). Feminine and masculine spaces are discussed by the public/private distinction in Western modernity (Slater 1998). Based on the separation of gender roles, they are defined in opposition to each other in modernist thinking (Spencer-Wood 1991, cited in Rotman 2006). Feminine spaces are associated with the private sphere of reproduction and unpaid labor, and masculine spaces are associated with the public sphere of productive paid work and politics (Rezeanu 2015). In this separation of spaces which connotes hierarchy, the former is rendered inferior to the latter (Landes 2003). As space is demarcated in terms of private and public, the distinction in gender norms and roles is reinforced. In the construction of gendered roles associated with gendered spaces, the family model in which the husband is the provider

and rational decisionmaker and the wife is the homemaker and emotional caregiver is presented as the ideal; it is a bourgeois phenomenon that reached its peak in the suburbanization process of the 1950s, in which the father was defined as the one who would bring home a wage and the mother, an expert in consumption (Slater 1998).

The public/private distinction has been criticized by both feminists and postcolonial scholars. In their criticism, they argue that posing opposite and mutually exclusive terms is problematic; it is empirically irrelevant and politically ineffective; and it is a liberal and white concept (Bargetz 2009). This dichotomy describes the experience of white middle-class women and especially those living in the suburbs under the “cult of domesticity,” excluding poor women and women of color (Gardiner 1993; Landes 2003). Moreover, the experience of the Third World is ignored where “public and private divisions intersect with dichotomous notions of modernity/tradition and West/East” (Landes 2003, p. 29), as well as that of Muslim societies where public/private division is negotiated through Islam and the modernist state (Asdar 2012).

The neighborhood destabilizes this binary opposition of the public and the private, that is, “the world of the neighborhood as opposed to the totally private world of the household and the completely public realm of strangers” (Spain 2001, cited in Rotman 2006, p. 667). In his study of a neighborhood in Paris, Michel de Certeau defined the urban neighborhood as “the link between public and private space created by specific social actions” (de Certeau 1998, quoted in Mills 2007, p. 337). Gendered use of neighborhood space is observed in contexts that divert from the mainstream western society. In the Greek and Lebanon cases, women take active role in creating their communities and neighborhoods (Hirschon 1985; Joseph 1978). In the Turkish urban context, the traditional *mahalle* (neighborhood) signifies a space in which women, in their practices of “sharing, support, and reciprocity,” are actively present as they spend their time dictated by their traditional gender roles as wives and mothers (Mills 2007, p. 340). Being a space of collectivity and familiarity, the *mahalle* promotes the extension of the private space of the home into the public space of the residential street, and by demonstrating the fluid nature of the boundaries between the two, it disrupts the dichotomy between public and private space. When women are at home during the day and doors are kept open for the visits of neighbors, the formality of entering the private space of the home disappears, and the home and the *mahalle* blend into each other (Mills 2007). However, under the transformative effects of modernization, which creates the possibility for women to have access to professional life, the traditional *mahalle* tends to disappear.

Women are also visible in the neighborhood by forming their self-help networks and home-based workshops such as in the Fener, Balat, and Ayvansaray neighborhoods of the Golden Horn, Istanbul (Soytemel 2013). Doing their production for the informal market “in front of their houses or sitting together on shaded street corners” (Soytemel 2013, p. 81), women transform the neighborhood’s public spaces into their work place, and by doing their production inside their homes, they also transform their private space into their work place. By their practices outside the home, “women are constantly viewed as privatizing the public” (Ghannam 2002, p. 91). In the case of women living in *gecekondu* neighborhoods, the proximate spaces around the home are used as the extension of the home that belong to women rather than men, challenging the spatial model of public/private distinction (Erman 1996). Yet, under the urban norm of the public/private split, these spaces are stigmatized as belonging to the rural.

This fluidity between the private and public space vanishes upon the move to apartment housing. In her study of the relocation of the urban poor from central Cairo to modern apartments in the project of creating a “global city,” Ghannam (2002) demonstrates that, while in their previous lives, neighbors were connected socially and spatially, they lost it when they were moved to the modern spaces of the rehousing project; it promoted “increasing restrictions on interaction with neighbors, more separation of work from residence and *private from public space*” (italics added) (p. 51).

In the following section, the case studies are introduced, discussing the gendered neighborhood space in the *gecekondu*, the slum, and the two UTPs.

CASE STUDIES: A *GECEKONDU* TRANSFORMATION PROJECT AND A SLUM TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

One of the research sites was a *gecekondu* settlement in the city’s northern periphery, which was transformed into high-rise apartment blocks via a UTP, and the other one was a slum neighborhood close to the city center, which was in the process of transformation into apartment blocks via another UTP (Figures 1 and 2). In the former case, an ethnographic research was conducted in the housing estate of the relocated families (April 2010–December 2013), during which in-depth interviews with residents were conducted in two intervals (63 and 55 respondents, respectively), along with questionnaires again in two intervals (222 and 217 respondents, respectively). It was complemented by

FIG. 1. The map of Ankara (Google Map). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

FIG. 2. The aerial view of Ankara (Google Earth). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

participant observation during which extensive field notes were taken. This research was supported by prior research carried out in 2007 and 2008 with residents living in the municipality housing allocated to families waiting for relocation (95 interviews). In the slum transformation project, in-depth interviews were conducted with 32 women, 17 still living in slum houses and 15 who had moved to TOKI apartments (June 2012–May 2013). The women were selected from the Ministry of Social Assistance and Solidarity's list of those receiving social aid. The interviews were complemented by participant observation, which was a bigger challenge compared to the first research site, given the highly criminalized environment. In the interviews, respondents were asked to compare their previous lives in the *gecekondu*/slum and their present lives in the housing estate in terms of their socio-spatial relations with their home environment that included neighborly relations, the use of outdoor spaces, feelings of safety/danger and freedom/restriction inside the neighborhood/estate, and the meaning of *gecekondu*/slum and apartment living. The TOKI president, the mayor, and the vice mayor of the district in which the slum neighborhood was located (Altındağ), the public relations manager in the *gecekondu* UTP, and the *muhtars* (the elected head of a neighborhood) were also interviewed.

The *gecekondu* UTP in Ankara's northern periphery was implemented by the metropolitan municipality-TOKI partnership (Northern Ankara Entrance UTP), in which some 7,000 houses were demolished between July 2005 and December 2006 (Figures 3 and 4), and the slum UTP in the inner city was implemented by the Altındağ district municipality (Akteş UTP), in which some 1,000 houses were demolished, first in 2006 and then in 2011; and other houses remain, waiting for demolition (Figure 5). In the first project,

FIG. 3. *Gecekondü* area before demolition, 2004 (Google Earth). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

while those with title deeds were relocated on the same site (“rightful owners housing”) with an asphalt road separating them from the upmarket real estate development (“financing housing”), those without title deeds were relocated in a housing estate built by TOKI on a site away from the highway (Karacaören TOKI, hereafter K-TOKI) (Figure 6); it had high-rise apartment blocks (nineteen 12-story blocks and twenty 15-story blocks) along with four-story buildings (42 in number) (Figures 7 and 8). The relocated population would be entitled to the titles of their apartments after they paid monthly mortgage

FIG. 4. *Gecekondü* area during demolition and Karacaören-TOKI construction, 2007 (Google Earth). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

FIG. 5. Aktaş neighborhood with slums and Aktaş-TOKI (Google Earth). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

installments for 15 years. And in the second project (Aktaş-TOKI), the displaced families were relocated in twelve blocks of 10- and 12-stories built by TOKI in two different stages (2008 and 2011–2012) (Figure 9). The relocated population would again be entitled to the titles of their apartments after they paid long-term mortgage loans, the amount depending on the size of their titled land. In the first project, the apartments had 90 m²

FIG. 6. New real estate development on the former *gecekondu* site and Karacaören-TOKI (K-TOKI), 2017 (Google Earth). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

FIG. 7. Karacaören-TOKI (K-TOKI) (Google Earth). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

gross area with two bedrooms and a living/guest room (*salon* in Turkish), and the initial price of the apartments was 50,000 Turkish liras (14,300 US dollars), and in the second project, the apartments had 120 m² gross area with three bedrooms and a living room, and the initial price of the apartments was 90,000 Turkish liras (25,700 US dollars). The fact that the second project was built in an inner-city location increased the apartment price and size, which hints at a possible gentrification, the original inhabitants moving

FIG. 8. Karacaören TOKI Housing Estate (Photo by T. Erman). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

FIG. 9. Aktaş TOKI Housing Estate (Photo by T. Erman). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

out when they cannot afford mortgage loans and middle classes who prefer to live in a central city location moving in.

In the first project, families were rural-to-urban migrants; and when they lived in the *gecekondu*, they preserved to a large extent their traditional way of life built upon the strict gendered division of labor in the family. Women were housewives, and most of the husbands were breadwinners, a significant number employed in the informal sector. Most of the families owned their houses but lacked titles to their land; tenants were approximately one out of 10 (670/6,500). The owners either had built their houses or bought them with a tendency to improve them after their purchase. They lived in one- or two-story houses, many with gardens (Figure 10); they grew vegetables and fruit trees in their gardens, some kept livestock (mostly chickens), and several families built additional houses on the same land for their married sons. The houses had electricity and running water but not natural gas; they were heated by stove. Women spent much of their time inside the neighborhood, carrying out house chores and socializing with neighbors in the spaces around the houses. The belief that they would keep their *gecekondus* in the future made families invest in their houses, going so far as building reinforced concrete houses, and placing solar energy panels on roofs and ceramic tiles on kitchen floors. There were also houses built at hazardous locations such as hill tops and houses in poor condition.

In the second project, families were poor tenants dependent on the state's social assistance. Most of the women were married (20); there were several divorced women (4), widows (3), and single women living with their families (5). Husbands were mainly unemployed or precariously employed, and those few who were employed regularly would not be committed to their economic provider role. Accordingly, it was the women who

FIG. 10. The *gecekondu* area before demolition (Photo by TOBAŞ). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

were active in finding access to social aid. The houses were the early *gecekondus* built during the mass rural-to-urban migration in the 1950s and 1960s and had limited municipal services; they had turned into slums as the local authorities kept the area neglected and recently allowed it to fall easy prey to criminal groups. As the original inhabitants moved out to better houses and poor families moved in, the social profile of the neighborhood had changed; and as criminal groups crept into the neighborhood, it had developed a stigmatized identity. The Altındağ mayor talked about the slum area in his district that included this neighborhood as follows: “Invaders live in the houses left by their owners, these are troublemakers. Crime dominates the neighborhoods. [...] Husbands are drunkard and lazy. Wives struggle to obtain aid.”

In the following sections, we explore the issue of gendering neighborhood space in the three housing settings of the poor, with a focus on women’s experiences.

FROM THE FEMININE SPACE OF THE *GECEKONDU* NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE FORMAL SPACE OF THE APARTMENT HOUSING ESTATE

In Turkey, women move from villages to big cities accompanied by their families. They are eager to get rid of the hard and filthy village work (Erman 1997); and in their desire to become housewives in the city, they do not carry the intention of finding jobs to work outside the home (Dedeoğlu 2008; Erman 2001). Especially young women want to be homemakers in their nuclear families, which is not possible in the traditional village life in which patrilineal extended families are common (Erman 2001). Ironically, upon migration to the city, they establish their lives usually in a *gecekondu* neighborhood, which

replicates village norms to a large extent. As women's traditional gender roles are reproduced, a feminine environment of community building is created, described below.

WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE *GECEKONDU* NEIGHBORHOOD: SEMI-PUBLIC/SEMI-PRIVATE SPACES AS EXTENSION OF HOMES

Gecekondu life is community-oriented (Duyar-Kienast 2005; Eroğlu 2011; Gökçe 1993), and women are the major actors in it. The male breadwinner family is the ideal in rural migrant families in the city albeit challenges under economic difficulties. In their role as housewives, women are visible in the neighborhood, sitting in front of the houses with neighbors or doing house chores outdoors. They are the local agents of social control, much like in Oscar Newman's idea of "defensible space" (1972). Yet this socio-physical arrangement "laid bare of all its 'private' elements [...] and, in its porosity, to the gaze of 'others' within the community. Within restricted physical environments, norms of family privacy and intimacy are laid bare" (Datta 2016, p. 328). And yet still, feminizing the public spaces in their neighborhood by their active presence, women create places where they have some autonomy from male control. Thus, women simultaneously become the bearers of social control in the neighborhood and the agents of producing neighborhood space that is out of male control. Moreover, grounded in the informal social life of the *gecekondu* in which women visit each other without notice in advance, and in the semi-public/semi-private spaces around their houses that assist their gendered role of social reproduction, women create their networks of cooperation: They collaborate with their neighbors for house chores that include winter provisions and food preparations for special occasions (Erman 1996).

Due to the fact that *gecekondu* neighborhoods are not part of the regulated urban life, it is women who set the rules to regulate their housing environment, and by doing so, they define how to be a proper woman. For example, they expect each other to keep the public spaces in front of their houses clean; this makes sense in a context in which municipal services are minimal. As women spend their time with their neighbors inside the neighborhood, it reinforces their primary identity as housewives. This feminine environment of the *gecekondu* based on village norms of cooperation and mutual help among neighbors does not appeal to those women who aspire to privatized middle-class lives (Erman 1998).

The *gecekondu* area in the Northern Ankara Entrance UTP contained such neighborhoods. The fact that the houses were mostly single-family buildings with gardens in an unplanned/irregular environment enabled women to extend their daily activities beyond their homes into outdoor spaces (Figure 11). They would spend their time with neighbors inside the neighborhood. In the interviews, they said: "We would always eat and drink together. Right after our husbands left for work in the morning, we would start asking each other, 'where are we going to meet today?' We would chat while knitting or doing needlework" (Şükran, 51); "After we finished our house chores, we would go out and sit under the trees, drinking tea" (Şefika, 40); "There was an oak tree, we would gather under it, chatting, eating and drinking tea. Only after dark, we would get inside our houses" (Pembe, 62); "We would sit in front of the houses, knitting. We would make dish using stale bread and eat together" (Nermin, 41). As these quotations demonstrate, women were actively present in the spaces of the *gecekondu* neighborhood, making it their

FIG. 11. Women sitting outdoors in the *gecekond* neighborhood (Photo by T. Erman). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

own place. Having their own space outside the home that they shared with other women brought them a sense of solidarity and gave them some freedom from the strict control of men. Yet, women's agency of producing their own residential space did not defy the hegemonic masculinity in rural communities that required submissiveness to men; on the contrary, through their constant presence in the neighborhood spaces, exerting social control over local women on behalf of men, it made women the agents of reproducing it. Interestingly, different from other studies, they would not complain about it, and this was probably because of their longing for *gecekond* neighborliness.

MOBILIZING *GECEKOND* WOMEN IN THE UTP

This feminine space of informality was deemed unfit when the *gecekond* area was chosen by the metropolitan mayor for his project of creating "the new Ankara." He introduced the UTP using the world city discourse, presenting it as the solution to the undesirable view of *gecekond*s located along the highway to the airport. The project was also framed by the discourse of apartment life providing the opportunity of living in "clean" and "comfortable" places in the housing estate equipped with social amenities and improved infrastructure. In an interview with the president of TOKI, he said that people developed new aspirations for quality housing, and UTPs were responding to this demand. When we interviewed people in their new apartments, contrasting with this discourse, many said that they were happy with their lives in the *gecekond* and were not thinking of moving out before the introduction of the UTP (53.2 percent).² There were few exceptions: The promise of a modern life made the project attractive to younger women who felt entrapped in their "rural" lives in the *gecekond*; and the low quality and problematic location of some *gecekond*s made their owners prefer apartments.

The discourse of apartment living appealed especially to women. In their gender role that defined them via the home and the family, they were active in the implementation of the project. A male respondent said that he was surprised to see so many women at the TOKI office; almost 90 percent of those who had come to inquire about the project were women. We were told by some men that women were the ones who took the initiative to apply for the municipality housing: They were very interested in the mayor's promise of free stay in apartments with 24-hour hot water, which would be on a first-come, first-served basis; they formed queues in front of the TOKI office to apply.

Women were again on the agenda during the temporary stay in the municipality housing composed of high-rise apartment blocks and run by the managers hired by the municipality. In the research conducted when they lived in the municipality housing, we found out that the managers used the housing environment as the means to "train *gecekondu* people," teaching them how to live in an apartment setting regulated by rules, which affected women deeply. Ayşe (42) said:

When we lived in the *gecekondu*, we would accept our guests in our balcony. I would serve them food there. But here Fikret (the male housing manager) says that we cannot do it here because we now live in an apartment block. It was yesterday, he shouted at me when he saw me hanging the laundry on my balcony. He said, 'They should go immediately. You are creating ugly scenes in the estate.'

The fact that the managers held the power to evict families upon their misbehavior put women under much stress. Their gendered responsibility for controlling their children so that they would not harm the lawns, trees, and elevators intensified their stress. After the "training period" in the municipality housing, they were ready to move to their apartments in K-TOKI.

WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE HOUSING ESTATE: CHALLENGING/ACCEPTING REGULATED PUBLIC SPACE AND INDIVIDUALIZED LIVES IN APARTMENTS

The feminine environment of the *gecekondu*, which was defined as a problem by the (male) management in the municipality housing, was radically unsettled upon the move to apartments in K-TOKI where the public/private distinction was forced on the residents by both the design and management of the housing estate. In this socio-spatial production, women were the most disadvantaged. First, the rules dictated in a top-down fashion by the management brought new restrictions on women's daily activities such as gathering with neighbors in front of the entrances to the blocks and carrying out "*gecekondu* activities"³ in the public spaces of the estate. Second, the size and design of the apartments caused problems for women: The apartments were too small (one guest/living room and two small bedrooms); they did not have storage space (this had a critical importance to rural migrant families who brought various food items from their villages to save daily consumption in the city); and they had American kitchen (i.e., open kitchen; it violated women's privacy by exposing the space to outsiders). In the interviews, women complained:

The apartments are really small. Our children play in the hallways of the building, and it causes problems with neighbors because of the noise. If you buy a new refrigerator, there is

no room for it in the kitchen. My *gecekondu* was very large. I would not exchange it for ten apartments like this. (Zeliha, 42)

The size of apartments gives us trouble. We are jammed in one and a half rooms and a very small balcony. Go backward, it is the same space, go forward it is the same space. There is no storage room, which we much need. (Melek, 60)

Women also acknowledged the masculine character of the apartment design: "The design of the apartments do not carry the touch of women. It is so obvious that men designed them" (Fatma, 36). Being a conservative woman working in the ruling Islamist party's women's branch, her concerns were about privacy: "The door of the bathroom faces the guest room. Such a shame. Our men are conservative. We cannot go to the bathroom when we have guests in the room. The master bedroom is next to the children's bedroom. This is also wrong." In sum, as the semi-public/semi-private spaces of the *gecekondu* were taken from them, women were constrained inside the apartments, which failed to respond to their needs and conflicted with their conception of a proper home.

And third, monthly mortgage payments and the increased expenses in apartment life brought new difficulties for women to manage the family budget. The new economic conditions challenged the family model in which the husband would be the economic provider and the wife, the homemaker. Women actively responded to these challenges; some started working for the municipality's landscaping firm. As they spent time out of the estate, working, they were no longer present in the public spaces of the estate.

The private spaces of the home came to substitute for the loss of socialization with neighbors in the residential public spaces. Despite architectural challenges posed by high-rise apartment blocks, many women tried to create intimate relations with their neighbors, just like in their *gecekondu* lives. Contrasting with the middle-class norm of formal neighborly relations built upon the public/private divide that ensures privacy in the private realm, they would visit each other without notice in advance, just knocking on the door. More importantly, fighting against their isolation inside the apartments via the imposed public/private divide, some women, mostly housewives, were active in reappropriating the public spaces inside the estate, sitting outdoors with neighbors and carrying out "*gecekondu* activities" on the sidewalks, in the block gardens, and around the blocks (Figure 12). They tried to gain control of their proximate home environment via their daily activities of informality (for the discussion of the contextual conditions that facilitated the informalization of the estate, see Erman 2016). Güllü (48) said: "See, we are simply sitting outside. We still do it despite the fact that it is prohibited. The boredom is overwhelming inside the apartment." While sitting in a group of women fluffing up mattress wool on the sidewalk, Emine (50) said: "When I went down to take the garbage out, I saw these women sitting here and I joined them, helping them with their work. I was depressed before, now with my neighbors, I am fine."

In the formal environment of the estate, practicing "*gecekondu* activities" always carried the risk of interference, demonstrated in the following quotation:

There was an empty space next to the health center that we used to dry vegetables. But the nurses and doctors do not let us do it anymore. We used to hang our wet carpets on the iron bars around the health center. Again they do not allow us.

FIG. 12. Women washing carpets on the estate's public space (Photo by T. Erman). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

As the apartment life, which is coded by privatized middle-class urbanity, destroyed the public spaces of rurality in the *gecekondu*, this created the conditions of contestation among women (Erman 2016). In the mutually constitutive relationship of space and identity in which reconstructing home evolves into reconstructing identity (Avan 2003), women struggled to create a home environment that fit with their personal identity, real or aspired: While those who defined themselves as rural insisted on reproducing their *gecekondu* lives in the estate, those who identified with urbanites struggled to keep women's *gecekondu* activities from the estate. Moreover, women's agency to transform the estate's public spaces by their presence was curbed in some instances when, in their concern for the family honor in the crowded environment of strangers, husbands prohibited their wives' sitting outdoors.

To conclude, regulated by rules grounded in the public/private distinction and designed as high-rise apartment blocks, the housing estate, unlike the *gecekondu*, was not originally a feminine environment. Yet, it was "feminized" by some women who tried to recreate the *gecekondu* life in the estate, using the spaces around their blocks to sit in groups with neighbors and to carry out some household chores. This feminization of the environment by the visibility of women in the estate's public spaces, however, was challenged by other women who aspired to the middle-class urban family model in which, observing the strict distinction between the private and public spaces, the wife would refrain from using the public spaces of the estate as the extension of her home. Thus, in addition to gender as the core identity of women, class came to shape women's relationship with their home environment, of which rurality/urbanity was an integral part.

FROM THE MASCULINE SPACE OF THE SLUM NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE FORMAL SPACE OF THE APARTMENT HOUSING ESTATE

Built close to the commercial center of the time, the first *gecekondu*s in Ankara turned into rundown houses over the years, accommodating diverse groups of people, all very poor: They included older migrants who failed to succeed economically in the city and newcomer migrants, as well as gypsies and other excluded groups. Owing to the fact that the peripheral urban land was largely consumed in the early waves of migration and was commodified during the liberalization of economy in the 1980s, they would rent deteriorating houses in the inner city. These neighborhoods of the very poor and the excluded have recently become the place of illegal activities. The second case study of this article, Aktaş neighborhood, is typical of this development. The criminalization of the locality, both in reality and discourse, affected women's everyday lives, presented below.

WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE SLUM NEIGHBORHOOD: RESTRICTION TO PRIVATE SPACE, CRIMINALITY, AND AGGRESSIVE MASCULINITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Sharply differing from the *gecekondu* settlement in the first case study, the women in this neighborhood kept themselves inside their homes. The neighborly gatherings in front of the houses had long disappeared as the rundown houses were occupied by homeless drug or alcohol abusers and those linked to criminal activities; the neighborhood had become the cultural habitus of male aggression. The masculine space in the neighborhood was produced by local men as they controlled the spaces around the houses, isolating women inside (Figure 13); and grounded in the local definition of masculinity, they engaged in acts of violence, using physical strength both to control their women and to control their territory against other men. The control of the neighborhood by criminal gangs created serious concerns for women when they used the public spaces of the neighborhood, especially walking in the winding streets and narrow alleys, which could not be visually monitored (Figure 14). Mothers expressed their anxiety about their grown-up daughters who might easily be harassed by men outside the homes. Hanımelı, a woman of 42, who lived with her husband and her seven children (three daughters 13, 15, and 16 years of age, and two twin sons, 4 and 2 years of age) in a single-room shanty, which she recently extended by connecting it to the old vacant house next door, said:

This place is fucked up, I am afraid for my daughters. So many things happened here. They abducted a family's daughter. These scumbags, they can do anything. I always tell my daughter (who goes to school), don't let them deceive you. Anyway my daughters do not go out much. My husband has a temper, I try to make sure that they do not do anything that annoys him.

The relationship of women with outdoor spaces had an age hierarchy: While older women had less restrictions on their use of outdoors, younger women (newlyweds, grown-up daughters, young mothers) suffered from strict control since they represented the family honor (*namus*). Reyhan (18), who lived with her young child (2), her husband, and her mother-in-law in a house of 70 m², said that she paid special attention not to be seen too much outdoors because she was the young daughter-in-law in the household:

FIG. 13. Woman inside a slum house (Photo by B. Hatiboğlu). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

FIG. 14. A winding street in the slum neighborhood (Photo by T. Erman). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

They would gossip, 'Look, the daughter-in-law is always outside the house. What is she doing? Whom is she looking at?' So my mother-in-law never lets me go out. I agree with her. To keep the peace in the family, I should not be seen outside, I should not put myself at the center of gossip.

Different from the *gecekondü* women in the first case study who were integrated into the support networks of neighbors, these women were isolated inside their homes, carrying out their gendered roles of caregiving and home maintenance in old houses that did not make much difference whether they were cleaned or not. As Appadurai asserts, "the slum home can be seen as [...] structurally violent in its 'houseless domesticity'" (Appadurai, 2000, quoted in Datta 2016, p. 328). Staying inside the home and carrying out housewifely duties was particularly challenging because of the houses described by women as "ruins." Defne, who had young children, complained:

When it rained last night, I asked myself, 'Will the house collapse?' In the morning when I woke up, the floor was all wet, water dripping from the nylon that we had placed on the roof. This is no house. We live here without a proper roof, without a chimney.

The mutual support among neighbors had dissolved in the lives of the slum women. This was mainly for three reasons. First, neighbors were perceived as a source of gossip, carrying ungrounded news to husbands, which might end up with beatings. This made women calculate carefully with whom to speak and what to share. Second, the collective preparation of food (winter bread, dried soup, stripped pasta, tomato paste, etc.) among neighbors was not needed anymore because such food items were distributed by the municipality (packed macaroni, canned tomato paste, bread, etc.). Although this lessened women's workload, by dissolving women's solidarity networks, it caused their isolation, depriving them of some breathing space in the culture of masculinity. And third, being aware of the scarcity in the resources of social aid, women opted for not sharing the news about, for example, where children's clothes and shoes were distributed. The solidarity of the women that was needed in the *gecekondü* environment was replaced in the slum context by competitive positions.

The culture of criminality affected the men in the families, creating the propensity for aggressive masculinity; especially the youth would look up to it. Differing from the male breadwinner model, husbands were either unemployed or irregularly employed. Some were connected with the drug business; young men starting doing drugs in their teenage years and selling drugs in later years for easy money. On the other hand, those men who rented old houses because of poverty kept themselves out of the aggressive masculinity that dominated the locality. Few women had connections with criminal activities, and many others just struggled to raise their families in this dangerous place where gun wars among drug gangs were not uncommon. Aggressive masculine identity that was reinforced by the criminal character of the locality created the conditions of submissiveness for women. To protect themselves from domestic violence, they would not challenge their husbands' wishes. And to protect themselves from male violence outdoors, which would affect the young single women the most, they would come up with some tactics. For instance, if they were alone at home, they would pretend that they were not at home. Sevgi, a 19-year-old single woman who moved to TOKI housing three years ago with her mother, put it as follows: "The slum men are bastards. If they mess with you, you cannot get out of it. [...] Not to let them find out that I was alone, I would not get out of the house. I was

afraid that they would cause me trouble.” Particularly divorced women were the victims of men’s harassment. Lale, a young woman who recently moved to TOKI housing with her young child, narrated about her life when she lived in the slum:

They pointed a gun at me in the middle of the road when I refused to get in their car, and they did this when I was with my child. If I had been willing to comply with their wishes, they would have kept me perfectly nice, providing for me, but I rejected them. This is why they never let me live in peace with my child.

In Aktaş neighborhood, many families relied on the social aid that they received from both the central and local governments⁴; many women were listed as aid receivers, some as caregivers.⁵ As the *muhtars* said, wives rather than husbands were targeted by authorities in their belief that women would be more committed to their families than men. Accordingly, in their obligation to search for social assistance, women entered the public spaces outside the neighborhood, challenging the conservative norm of women staying inside their home environment. They would come up with some tactics, for instance, taking their children or older family members with them.

To sum up, aggressive hegemonic masculine cultural codes characterized the slum neighborhood. Violence and masculinity intersected, masculinity defined via physical strength employed against both women and other men. The streets became the spaces in which men defined their masculine identities. Violence was normalized and became part of men’s gender identity, marginalizing those who were obliged to reside in the neighborhood because of their poverty yet were not part of the culture of hegemonic masculinity. Men’s control over the local space and their control over women (wives and daughters) intersected, circumscribing women’s use of the neighborhood spaces. Yet it was challenged by the need of women to be present in the public sphere in their search for social assistance. All in all, this created a type of masculinity that diverted from the male breadwinner model that is idealized in the first case study.

MOBILIZING SLUM WOMEN IN THE UTP

In such a masculine context of violence and crime, the UTP meant for women freedom from men’s oppression, putting an end to their lives in fear. The mayor defined the UTP as the project of civilization; by his emphasis on a civilized life, he promised safe streets, as well as services and amenities that included parks, health centers, and markets that would make women’s lives easier. In a press conference, he said:

I have a dream of Altındağ as a decent district in the Turkish capital where people will live modern lives in modern homes, where, freed from getting lost in the darkness of the slum, women will live comfortable lives and have peace of mind. I will continue working for an Altındağ that has modern buildings, social amenities and sports facilities. (Hamıacıbaşı 2017)

The discourse further addressed the differences between the slum and the apartment: The UTP would give women the chance of getting rid of their unhygienic and dangerous shanties and attain comfort and cleanliness in their TOKI apartments. The mayor said about women living in the slum: “Poor woman, she has to carry coal up to her house. She is so tired of it. But the UTP will save her from it” (the apartments in the UTP are heated by natural gas). The TOKI president was also keen on this issue: “The people in

Altundağ will finally have homes with a proper balcony and a nice kitchen with hot water; it will be a healthy environment.” In an interview with the Aktaş *muhtar*, he said that the UTP would bring “clean lives” to his neighborhood; what he meant was a neighborhood cleaned from crime and street violence. He had a gendered discourse:

Here our women, our girls wanted to be at the front of the project. Why? Because they knew that they would be the ones who would benefit from the change it would bring. They would get away from the dirt, from the filth of the slum.

The active presence of women in UTPs repeats itself in other societies, such as India. In the “politics of patience” (Roy 2009), women are favored by the state because of their assumed obedience and nonaggressive behavior, which reproduces the “ethico-politics of gendered domesticity” (Doshi 2011). Yet in Aktaş, this assumed obedience of women worked against them when they were depicted by their husbands as naïve enough to be manipulated easily; in the talks of the local men who were discontent by the UTP, they blamed women for signing the papers that conferred to the municipality the right to demolish the houses. Accordingly, in their discursive practice, men transferred the responsibility of moving to apartments to women. Women also took responsibility for it, as shown in Akasya’s comments (she recently moved to TOKI housing; her husband is a porter at the local open market):

My husband was not at home. They came and made me sign it. My husband still asks why I signed it. But nobody had told me that I should be on the alert. Of course, people were talking that we would be contacted by the municipality, but I did not expect it so soon. You see, they came when my husband was not at home, they tricked me and I signed it.

Women perceived the UTP as their only hope of living in apartments under the conditions of civility: They would have clean homes that would be very different from their slum houses, which posed a big challenge to keep clean and warm: “I will live in a warm and clean house. No longer will I need to make so much effort to keep my house clean.” Here the term “clean” was used literally and metaphorically; it meant both physical cleanliness and cleanliness from crime. They would be able to get out of their homes in the safe environment created by the UTP: “Like other women, I will have the freedom to go out to the park with my child”; “I will be out without the fear of harassment.” Some of them also emphasized the self-esteem they would have by living in their new housing: “In our self-confidence, we will walk our heads up.” This made sense in this particular site of crime and violence, promising women “liberation.” In their gendered roles, they associated the opportunities promised in the UTP with their caregiving roles, envisioning better lives for the family members for whose care they were responsible. Nihal, a woman of 29, who would soon move to TOKI housing with her two young sons and her husband, a taxi driver, elaborated on this issue:

In the TOKI project, we will have good roads. Here we have paths made of irregular stones. My children want to play outside, but they cannot because of the rough street surface. This would not happen in TOKI housing. [...] They are very young. We are afraid for them. Especially in the winter, we are much afraid. They run inside the house, they may fall on the stove and get burned. A couple of times, we had to take the younger one to the hospital for this reason. I have to check on them all the time so that they would not touch the stove.

Yasemin (41), who lived in an old house with her three sons and her husband (although he had a job with a regular salary as a cleaner in a government office, he would not provide for his family because of his drinking problem), envisioned TOKI housing as an escape from the physical disadvantages in the slum:

The living conditions here are very bad. In the winter, we cannot use the big room, the water from the roof dripping. Last winter, we lived as if we were in the midst of a pool. [...] But the TOKI building is not like that. It is dry and warm, it is very clean. I won't lie, I envy those who have moved there.

Yasemin was also concerned about the harm that might come to her sons (24, 19, 17) as she observed the escalation of violence in the neighborhood. In sum, the "civilized life" trope was well-received by women, and they led the way to the implementation of the UTP.

WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE HOUSING ESTATE: DECREASING THREAT OF VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC SPACE, INCREASING RISK OF VIOLENCE IN PRIVATE SPACE

Upon their move to apartments, women encountered new problems as well as new opportunities. Escaping the slum life, they felt relief, expressed by Gül, a single woman who provided care for her disabled brother and invalid mother: "In our old house, the toilet was in the garden. It was so hard for me. I would carry my brother from the bed to the lavatory, all sweaty. It was also very difficult for my mother. Now we have left all this behind." Sevgi, the single young woman living with her mother, felt safe in her new housing, believing that the apartment door would protect her from outside danger: "Here we only hear the noises of gun shots, but we are inside our apartment and we keep the apartment door locked, so we think we are safe." The sturdy apartments overlooking the asphalted and lightened road with traffic running on it gave them some sense of being part of the civilized urban life and the feeling that they now had the opportunity of accessing public services. Lale, the divorced woman in our research, expressed her feelings:

In the slum, I kept myself inside. No car could come in times of emergency. Here I feel like I could reach whatever I need. I can get to the hospital even at night if my child is sick. I don't know, maybe because I lived under so much pressure for so many years that I now feel that I am finally free. I don't know, maybe this is not the reality, but this is how I feel now.

These positive feelings about their new lives made women commit to their apartments. Yet the requirement of paying monthly mortgage installments brought new financial challenges. This changed women's attitude toward their husbands. In the masculine environment of the slum, they would not blame their husbands for failing to bring home money; instead, in their access to social aid, they would act as economic providers. But in their new lives in apartments, as they lost the possibility of managing the family budget solely by social aid, they started demanding their husbands to get jobs to contribute to mortgage payments. Under the financial burden in apartments, as women abandoned their submissive behavior, blaming their husbands for being lazy, it created the conditions for male violence against women. Fulya (38), whose husband, an irregularly employed house

FIG. 15. Women in front of the *muhtar*'s office, going to seek aid (Photo by B. Hatiboğlu). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

painter, was not violent in the slum, complained: "Before coming here, I would never fight with my husband, we would get along quite well. But here, all these financial problems, payments. Everything is going for the worse." In apartments where the middle-class view of family privacy was accepted as the norm, neighbors would not intervene, leaving women to cope with their own victimization. When husbands could not or did not find jobs and women felt the need to use public spaces more often, seeking social aid (Figure 15), it again increased the risk of domestic violence. Moreover, the continuing danger in the neighborhood prevented women from actively using the estate's public

TABLE 1. Summary of the Findings Regarding the *Gecekondus* and the Slum

The <i>Gecekondus</i> as “Feminine Space”	The Slum as “Masculine Space”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulated by residents, mostly women - Coded by rurality - Semi-public/semi-private spaces for women’s outdoor gatherings and domestic chores, creating women’s support networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controlled by criminal groups, always men - Coded by criminality and “aggressive masculinity” - Women restricted to inside of the homes that are in bad conditions

TABLE 2. Summary of the Findings Regarding the Two Apartment Estates

The Apartment Estate of the Relocated Population from the <i>Gecekondus</i>	The Apartment Estate of the Relocated Population from the Slum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulated via design and management - Coded by middle-class urbanity - “Feminized” and “ruralized” via women’s informal practices in its public spaces - Women with <i>gecekondus</i> identity confronting women with middle-class aspirations over the division of public/private space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulated via design and management - Coded by middle-class urbanity - Through the public/private divide, women protected from the danger and crime in the public space yet facing the risk of male violence in the private space - The danger in the neighborhood preventing women’s presence in the estate’s public spaces

spaces. In sum, they mostly remained inside the apartments, enjoying safety away from the male violence in public space, yet facing the risk of male violence in the private space of the home.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored the gendering of residential space in three different types of housing settings of the poor, namely, a peripheral squatter area coded by rurality whose residents were migrants from the countryside, a central slum area coded by criminality whose residents were the very poor, and the housing estates built for the relocated squatter/slum populations in UTPs coded by middle-class urbanity. It is framed by the intersectionality of space and gender, articulated further by urbanity associated with apartments and rurality associated with *gecekondus* in the Turkish context. It has investigated the role of the local context in defining the gendered nature of neighborhood space, and specifically it has addressed the question of how women’s relationship with their home environment is affected by the move from the informal environment of the *gecekondus* and the slum to the formal environment of state-built housing estates. We have demonstrated that, first, the *gecekondus* neighborhood was “feminine space,” women using the public spaces around their houses as the extension of their homes and so challenging the public/private divide in modernist thinking by producing semi-public/semi-private spaces;

and second, the slum neighborhood was “masculine space” developed into the cultural habitus of aggressive masculinity and criminality, keeping women restricted to the inside of their homes (for the summary of the findings, see Table 1).

The move to the TOKI housing estates, which were characterized by the public/private distinction imposed on everyday lives via the design and management of the estate, and by apartment living defined by rules that regulated behavior in line with urban middle-class norms, had the potential of transforming women’s relationship with their home environment. It was responded to differently in the two housing estates. In the first case study (i.e., the *gecekondu* transformation housing estate), some women who identified themselves with the *gecekondu* challenged it as they encroached into the spaces around their blocks via daily activities of socializing with neighbors and carrying out some domestic tasks. On the other hand, in their aspiration for middle class urban lives, other women opposed to it. Thus, through such agency of women, the estate was “feminized” in contested ways grounded in the rural–urban distinction. On the other hand, in the second case study (i.e., the slum transformation housing estate), as transitional spaces disappeared in accordance with the middle-class norm of the separation between the public and private space, this benefited women, protecting them from the danger and crime in the public space, yet it created vulnerabilities to male violence in the private space. Moreover, different from the *gecekondu* transformation housing estate, the danger in the neighborhood prevented women’s presence in the estate’s public spaces (for the summary of the findings, see Table 2).

To conclude, this article has contributed to the literature by demonstrating the significance of contextual specificities in understanding gendered dimensions of space. In our investigation, the public/private distinction as a theoretical tool has proved to be helpful, demonstrating how it is challenged in some contexts and enforced in others, revealing the meaning attributed to it in the Turkish context. In the transformation of cities in which squatter/slum neighborhoods are increasingly replaced by apartment housing estates, how the move from informal to formal housing affects the gendered use of residential space is a significant question that needs to be explored in different societies, which would inform us about the meanings attributed to the dichotomy of public/private space, and its gendered nature. Urban transformation policies should be reconsidered with a multilayered approach that critically questions the socioeconomic and political conditions that produced “slums” and “squatter settlements” in the first place and does not assume a simplistic relationship between “physical upgrading” and “social welfare” in the context of the urban poor. They should move beyond a gender-blind approach and should take into consideration women’s daily needs and strategies of women’s empowerment.

Notes

¹Violent state intervention is a common practice in slum areas, causing displacement and dispossession (Weinstein 2013).

²In the questionnaire conducted in the first project, 52.7 percent preferred the *gecekondu*, whereas 47.3 percent preferred the apartment; 69.7 percent said they missed their *gecekondu* gardens; and 86.1 percent said they preferred *gecekondu* neighborliness. In the interviews, 45 said they missed their *gecekondus*, whereas 15 said they did not.

³“Gecekondu activities” refer to such activities as fluffing up woolen mattresses and washing carpets during the spring cleaning ups, and baking bread in large quantities, making tomato paste, stripped pasta, and dried soup during the winter preparations.

⁴By providing free housing and cheap livelihood, *gecekondu*s acted as the informal welfare system in Turkey until recently. Following the economic crisis of 2001, a formal welfare system was established. The system works with a neoliberal mentality embedded in conservative values. The state pays women in poor families for care-giving to the elderly, the sick, and/or the disabled; and in the conditional cash transfer scheme, it pays women for children’s school attendance.

⁵In the research, there were disabled persons (mentally and/or physically disabled) in seven families. In four of them, the children of the respondents were disabled, in one case, it was the respondent’s older brother, and in two other cases, it was the respondents’ younger brothers.

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