WASTE FIELD,
FRONT FIELD

Modular Incremental Re-cycling
of Waste and Fabric

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For years the body of Tarlabası community has been squeezed into a container to protect the neo-liberal socio-economical representation of Istanbul. Today a subject of Turkish regeneration policies its deteriorating architectural heritage is sunken in piles of waste and entirely cut off from the municipal waste management system.

Waste Field, Front Field proposes a rehabilitation of Tarlabası, preserving the collective memory and historical tissue and emerging as a mixed income district. The project adopts a strategy revolving around re-cycle, re-use and re-distribution circuit. The waste as the untreated component on neighbourhood level is seen as the urban trigger and major resource to be enclosed in a continuous loop. The architecture will be repurposed into structurally new typologies and will accommodate a waste management element - the chute. As a result the revitalized Tarlabası will boost up on site micro-economy, generate infrastructure, provide income and allow for a new collective mentality to emerge. The circuit can be perceived as cathartic, serve to the real owners of Tarlabası and therefore contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle and development.
Table of Content

Abstract

Table of Content

Acknowledgements

01 Introduction

1.1 Slums: How to make them sustainable?
1.2 Walking the Streets of Tarlabasi

02 Istanbul

2.1 Istanbul: the renewal agenda
2.2 Squatter Neighbourhoods: brief history
2.3 The Law 5366: Summery

03 Tarlabasi

3.1 A Landscape Of Oppression: to ethnic and religious minorities
3.2 The Boulevard: A ‘frontier’ - between two worlds
3.3 The Architecture: background and social tissue
3.4 The Tool House: typical features
3.5 The Street Network: car dominance and walkability
3.6 The Street Network: scales of Tarlabasi
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To my family who have been of great support in this academical journey and to whom I owe everything – the most loving and honourable teachers I have had in life.

I dedicate this work to the good and honest people of Tarlabası, to all those who have struggled in life and those who work tirelessly to fulfil their dreams of a more sustainable future for us all.
Introduction

I write this paper as a reflection of my investigation, exploration and substantive work both in Istanbul and in Lund University. It asks questions and seeks to find answers through the composition of an alternative design strategy for the site of my choice.

In 2013, during my Architecture education in the University of Edinburgh I had a placement period in Istanbul, when I composed a reflection report on the area of Tarlabasi through the concept of fieldwork. The study made use of variety of data collection techniques, namely, semi-structured interviews, document analyses, media analyses, participant and direct observation period. It is at this time that I became interested in Urbanism as a sustainable international movement undertaking many changes with the authority to reform and redesign, fix and infill cities. Since then I took liking in the country, its culture, history and mesmerizing architecture and I have been hopelessly finding my way back to Istanbul and to the streets of Tarlabasi on multiple occasions.

With this thesis work I have the chance to re-experience the site once again and with an updated palette of knowledge and skills – to try improve the health of the built form and revive the functions of its urban demographic tissues. I am hopeful that I have found at least partial answers and solutions to the challenges that currently have doomed the neighbourhood and its people to fail to exist.

You can see, can’t you?
How flimsy the city has become
As if from here and there
Suddenly another city will appear.

Edip Cansever, “Two Cities”
Fig. 1: An image of Tarlabası barriers or (Tar-luh-BAH-shuh) as the childer in the neighborhood pronounce it.
If all you are doing is to improve the good part of the city, then it is only natural that you are going to drive the poor people to the bad part of the city. One cannot stop urbanization, and every time there is urbanization the left over product is slums. People move to the cities for better life, better job opportunities, and better location which can minimize their living costs. However, poor people cannot afford the cost of market housing in the city. Therefore, they are left with one of three choices:

1. live far outside of the city; 2: live in unacceptable housing in the city or 3: government with incentive and regulations and an actual conscious strategy creates affordable housing that is a good quality.

Unfortunately, in most cases slum redevelopment processes are often related to institutional arrangements, in which financial profit is placed over the well-being and social needs of the communities being displaced.

I believe that slums and neighbourhoods in distress are part of the ecosystem of the city. They have a lot to offer in terms of diversity and heterogeneity, culture and rhythm – and thus, they should be seen as an opportunity and an asset for our cities. They are the place in which very poor people who do low-skill, unpleasant jobs can live in the city and do those jobs for the rest of the city. If you follow the real estate principals to their natural conclusion as a result you will drive away the poor people out of the cities. They, in turn, will migrate back to somewhere else because they are constantly seeking ways to be connected to it. To conclude, the strategy of displacing poor people in order to provide for a higher segment of society, is self-defeating.
How to make them sustainable?

As stated in Calvino’s book “The Invisible Cities”,

“.many decline and revival follow one another. Societies and tradition change constantly. What remains afterwards is merely the name, the place and things which are harder to be broken.”

Making cities safe and sustainable should involve all layers of society. It also means ensuring access to safe and affordable housing, investments in public transport and infrastructure, provision of green open spaces and alternative planning processes that are participatory and inclusive.

It is inevitable that cities need to change but they need to change with the population involved into the transformation. If governments decide that a neighbourhood is contempt that automatically cuts off capital out of it. As a result people cannot finance their houses. People who have been displaced should have the right to come back after the renewal.

Therefore, the nature of a renewal is to rebuild a neighbourhood for the population that belongs to it, rather than to clear it out and turn it into a dwelling for upper class people that municipality tends to favour for obvious reasons.
Almost four years ago I spent time living in a friend’s flat in Tarlabasi, getting to know the fabric, the routines and the sound of its streets. I had the chance to witness the physical changes that were taking place and I realized how the neighbourhood is a clear example of excluding the historical heritage and the human factor of urban regeneration for ‘an enhanced’ cultural and tourism based renewal strategy. And while the governmental pilot project has been strongly criticized both on national and international levels, five years later people’s homes will start being bulldozed again.
How to make them sustainable?

In my reconstructed version of Tarlabasi I am attempting to propose a rehabilitation of the neighbourhood that would allow it to be both kept as a historic area and emerge as a mixed income sustainable district. I believe there is an incredible, yet unrecognised potential in the architecture of this slice of land, so much mistreated and so much violated in the past, that can transform the area for the better.

I furthermore would like to add to the discussion that slums and/or run-down neighbourhoods with slum conditions such as Tarlabasi have to be treated as assets, have to be addressed with care, and ought to be reformed site-specifically. Now is the time for Istanbul to start recover its imperial glory of cultivating co-existence by new creative modes, but in such a way that it can offer to all its inhabitants equitable access.
Istanbul is haunted by a unique, multi-inhabited quarter located in the heart of the city. Standing at the edge of Beyoğlu district of European part of Istanbul, Tarlabası is sloping down sharply towards Dolapdere. It is within spitting distance from the dazzling Taksim Square, but it may as well belong to another universe. It is a worn-out ghost of a district, slumbering in gloom against the flashing hip lights out of the clubs of the chic Beyoğlu. It is a bastard child of a generation of Anatolian immigrants, who moved in after the original inhabitants of Greek, Armenian and Levantine craftsmen were forced out during the highly heated political climate of 1940s. And this atmosphere of unrest can be felt as far as one crosses the six-lane Tarlabasi Boulevard and descends into the impoverished backstreets of the neighbourhood itself.

After the first wave of industrialization cooled down, Tarlabası declared itself as the land of the nomad, the rootless, and the repressed urban population, a site of both physical decay and social scarcity. Today, dilapidated after years of neglect and due to its cheap rents and all accepting nature it is a sanctuary for the desperate poor, the transsexual sex worker, the prostitute along with Kurdish, Roma, African and other marginalized immigrants. It is a district actively suffering from child labour, extreme poverty and crime. However, many view it as the organic hope of a long lost chaotically multi-ethnic legacy of Anatolia, a harbour against Turkey’s state sponsored monoculture.

**Extracted from author’s personal report: Reclaim Tarlabası 2013**
A closer look at the neighbourhood easily gives away the reasons why. In spite of its urban decline and a wide spread of bad reputation, Tarlabasi beats with its own rhythm and is a culturally vibrant neighbourhood with a strong communal spirit. The neighbourhood never sleeps, its rich life unfolds explicitly! From the colourful dresses dangling over the long lines stretched in between the narrow buildings, almost shading half of all streets in the quarter, to local men playing cards while drinking tea at the cafes. Meanwhile the kids of Tarlabasi run around the streets, their elder sisters sit on the doorsteps gossiping and eating their sunflower seeds. An observer might see a street vendor carrying his rice cart and struggling along the crooked, steep streets; or a small boy carrying a huge tray of fresh simit on top of his head.

The neighbourhood is a shared space between both its people and stray cats of all colours and sizes. Cats can be found curled up on shaded rugs, escaping the midday heat or can be heard flirting and fighting during the long nights. The outline of the minarets; the sound of the prayer call rumbling in the cityscape; the chaotic Sunday street market is like a parade of colours and human activity that one cannot experience anywhere else! It is always lively in Tarlabasi! Its noise never ceases!
All this is beginning to change as the sound of the jackhammers starts echoing in the streets surpassing the local sounds. This is also the sound of a diverse social fabric fading. Since June 2011 the neighbourhood is under a heavy process of gentrification in line with the government plan for a city beautification. As a result many current occupants are forced to move out, as their households are being shattered, along with the memories of their recent lives. Entire chunks of Tarlabasi are being sold out to private companies to construct upper scale new residences for the monotype, possibly the last nail on the coffin of a long lost tradition remaining alive through a few nameless melodies that can be heard around the neighbourhood, played on local instruments the names of which are long forgotten by the people who play them.

With the Turkish economy booming and Istanbul developing at such a rapid pace, Tarlabasi’s world and people is under serious thread of gradually losing its domestic narrative, collective memories and social ties.

According to Lefebvre, space, which has a socially constructed nature, is not a dead, inert thing or object, but rather is organic and fluid and alive.³

** Extracted from author’s personal report: Reclaim Tarlabasi 2013 **
Fig. 5: The flight of the bow-windows.

Fig. 6: The current destruction at the area. December, 2012.
The Dream City
POPULATION: over 16 million *

PUBLIC AREA: 504 hectare (2010) **

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE: 127 m² per hectare**

DENSITY: 136 persons per hectare

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* official data, excluding unregistered portion
** data extracted from ‘Istanbul - Public Space Public Life’ study conducted by Gehl Architects for EMBARQ Turkey
Historical Evolution of Istanbul’s Urban Footprint

Age Pyramid

Distribution of Sectors

(London School of Economics and Political Science and Alfred Herrhausen Society Deutsche Bank, 2009), 24-33.
Cost of Living in Istanbul

Accommodation (per month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost (TRY)</th>
<th>EUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom apartment in city-centre</td>
<td>TRY 1450</td>
<td>EUR 363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bedroom apartment in city-center</td>
<td>TRY 3000</td>
<td>EUR 750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom apartment outside of the city-center</td>
<td>TRY 900</td>
<td>EUR 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bedroom apartment outside of the city-center</td>
<td>TRY 1600</td>
<td>EUR 400</td>
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Shopping

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dozen eggs</td>
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<td>EUR 2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk (1l)</td>
<td>TRY 3.50</td>
<td>EUR 0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (1kg)</td>
<td>TRY 7.30</td>
<td>EUR 1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaf of white bread</td>
<td>TRY 2.30</td>
<td>EUR 0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken breasts (1kg)</td>
<td>TRY 15.20</td>
<td>EUR 3.80</td>
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<td>Pack of cigarettes (Marlboro)</td>
<td>TRY 13</td>
<td>EUR 3.25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Eating out

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<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
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<td>TRY 18</td>
<td>EUR 4.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coca-cola (300 ml)</td>
<td>TRY 3.50</td>
<td>EUR 0.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cappuccino</td>
<td>TRY 9</td>
<td>EUR 2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle of beer (local, 500ml)</td>
<td>TRY 15</td>
<td>EUR 3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three course meal at a mid-range restaurant</td>
<td>TRY 40</td>
<td>EUR 10</td>
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Utilities / Household

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<th>Service</th>
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<td>Mobile call rate (per minute)</td>
<td>TRY 0.70</td>
<td>EUR 0.17</td>
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<td>Internet (per month)</td>
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Transportation

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<td>Taxi rate/km</td>
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<td>City centre public transport fare</td>
<td>TRY 2.60</td>
<td>EUR 0.65</td>
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</table>

The city of Istanbul is present in my mind, framing the thoughts and questions found within. Being a capital of two successive Empires, Byzantine and Ottoman, Istanbul was magnificent imperial city for the impressive 17,000 years (from fourth century to the early twentieth century). “A locus of cultural diversity, one of the merits of its urban culture” was to sustain “co-existence between different worlds” under one roof. A megapolis with population 16 million, Istanbul was not always the city it now is. Even six decades ago it was a secluded seaport with more or less one million residents. Turks’ desire to brand Istanbul as touristic city led to a transformation and a revival of locality, fuelled by rapid industrialization and uncontrolled urbanism. It was a miniature transformation of changing Turkey as a whole, on steroids.

Regrettably, this unprecedented change came along with its own victims, Tarlabasi’s rich, multicultural heritage and a strong sense of identity being one of them. The neighbourhood is often realized as decaying physical environment, its people are entirely overlooked and came to be portrayed as ‘uncivil’. Solutions for urban deterioration come with side effects of inscription of acceptable behaviour patterns, which in turn usually leads to involuntary displacement of urban poor in order to establish gated ‘elite’ housing communities.
Turkey’s rehabilitation framework rarely includes any social mechanism, resulting in serious problem of property ownership, gentrification of inner-city slums and displacement of inhabitants. These processes may differ regarding their implementation methods, scale and location but all share the common characteristic of:

repurposing the land in favour of higher status, state favoured groups.

A discourse of urban redemption is on the mouth of the politicians, promising to cure the ails of earthquakes, segregation, petty crime and poverty, successfully shielding them from criticism and defacto justifying the change of the physical domain without a closer reexamination.

Perhaps the important question for us to think about is to what extend is gentrification linked into the renewal agenda?
2.2 Squatter Neighbourhoods

In Turkey the hasty formalization of informal squatter neighbourhoods, without any regards to local textures, is only one of the many instances, which contrast to the original purpose of sustainable urban planning as means to sustain collective memory and historical heritage.

‘Gecekondu’ settlements (literally translated as “sprouted overnight”) appeared in the 50s and 60s when unemployment in rural Anatolia raised up due to the mechanization of agriculture. With the increased land prices and unaffordable rents newcomers adopted ad-hoc solutions, building informally on detached parcels of steep slopes in the valleys adjacent to the city’s new industrial zones.

In parallel, an informal mode of transportation (the dolmus or minibus) appeared to “ease commuting between work-places and gecekondu”\(^2\) The self-built back-to back blocks created a narrow street pattern, following the orthogonal street grid.\(^3\) Gececondus became a wide-spread survival strategy, due to the stiffness of the state or market to adjust itself to this new situation. Thus, the unemployed rural-to-urban workers were forced to build their own houses through their own means and methods, creating the Gecekondu neighbourhoods.
**Brief History**

**WHY NOT A SHANTY TOWN?**

Gecekondu is a phenomenon specific for Istanbul. They are not exactly shanty towns for they are unlike the common low-rise structures in other places. They are fast to set up and easily transformed into consolidated neighbourhoods. These clusters of buildings gradually grow in vertical direction. Since the chance to secure themselves is close to zero, they often pay the price of state recognition with votes and support for the current leading party.

Owing to the country-wide rural-urban migration a demographic change was inevitable. The new informal inhabitants altered the social structure and the character of the physical sphere, which lead to a more fragmented society. In return those changes triggered the Istanbulians to express disdain for the severely ‘tainted’ public space and degradation of its urban culture and values. Today gececondus make for a distinct trait of Istanbul’s urban fabric and although their growth speed has slowed drastically, they are still getting built where there is need.

*Fig.2: Istanbul’s urban footprint. Evolution.*
The Law 5366

2.3

Fig. 3: Eviction Map of informal squatter areas around Istanbul.
The beginning of large scale changes in Gecekondu neighbourhoods can be traced to post 80s neoliberal evolution. This is also the start of the period where Istanbul entered the state of constant development with many old and central settlements starting to favour upper social classes and lifestyles, bringing a new, state sponsored culture along with much praised verticalism. And while “no one has denied the necessity of the urgent replacement of easy but vulnerable informal patterns”, no “reasonable formal mechanisms devised with the notion of ecological and social sustainability has been brought forth”.

“Urban Renewal Act”(Law No.5366 for the Protection of Deteriorate Historical and Cultural Heritage through Renewal and Re-use) of 2005 fed the furnace of this new-found opportunity by allowing the municipalities to work directly with private companies to rebuild districts of Istanbul. The law also imbues local authorities with the power to start a renewal project without taking the consent of all property owners, forcing them to 1.buy into the project if they can afford to pay the difference amount, to 2. sell in the price that government offers, or to 3. be expelled. The disagreeing stakeholders are not taken into any account at all weather they are tenants or local employees. Their voices go unheard.
Moreover, unlike the native-nationalities of the communities being gentrified in other cities such as London, Manhattan or Paris, the subjects in Istanbul often belong to ethnic or religious minorities. Kuzguncuk was one of the first areas to be gentrified in the mid-1970 because of preferences for Ottoman architecture. An area once dominated by Greeks, Jews and Armenians was slowly transformed into a Turkish, Muslim area under the pretext of preserving the "historically tolerant and cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhood". 
The historic Roma district of Sulukule, also on the European side and a part of UNESCO heritage list, is another living example of this process. Most than 1000 families were evicted from their homes and given new, mostly high-priced flats 45 km away (3 hours and 30 minutes away). The majority of these people remained homeless and the area’s historical fabric - ripped out and slowly replaced by faceless contemporary apartment blocks for upper-class families. At the same time the profit the developers are making is huge. This and many more examples confirm that ‘urban transformation’ in Istanbul aims at making the urban poor invisible.

It is in the spirit of many international neighbourhood improvement programs to strengthen and support the existing neighbourhood instead of wiping them away and building new structures. It has been tried many times and costs only a small portion of what the existing solution costs the country today. You have the Parrenda in Brazil, which is typically adding income-generating activities to the existing neighbourhood. You have the Oranji Pilot Project in Pakistan, or the multi-family housing in Agadir, Morocco. Another successful example of how slum dwellers and their community have been re-established is a project initiated by Cities Alliante, the Brazilian Government and the World Bank in Salvador, Brazil. The project used participatory and integrated approach and since then have been incorporated into state policy.
And while all these projects differ a lot from Tarlabasi, they all are based on integrated neighbourhood improvements and are much more community-based: starting, continuing and supporting the energy and what has been happening for a long time. This is something Turkey can learn from and I believe that it can happen by building a new relation with the government that could move beyond the delivery of tenement buildings.

Instead, one could have an approach that allows for the gradual and systematic improvement of the city, an approach the people are very friendly to. And if one looks at the international human right standards, I feel like they have the clear right to it. “The right to the city” is the most legitimate claim of every citizen to have equal access to opportunities the city offers and a basic condition for a dignified human life.
“The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. …The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is… one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.”

D. Harvey (2008), “The Right to the City”
BEYOĞLU district

AREA: 28,000/km²
DENSITY: 264 persons per hectare

TARLABASI mahallesi

AREA: 20,000/m²
DENSITY: up to 928 persons per hectare *

* data extracted from JICA Report
Translated from Turkish, ‘Tarlabasi’ means ‘front field’. It was covered with cherry trees and vineyards during the 16th and 17th centuries. After its former life as a field in the valley, Tarlabasi became a part of the 19th century urban domestic sprawl as a result of its key location - directly opposite the bustling Taksim Square in the Beyoglu municipality of downtown Istanbul. It was quickly discovered as an attractive area where many Jewish, Greek and Armenian architects designed houses and churches, shops and community centers for rather lower income level people.

It is an old, historically rich neighbourhood with strong architectonic character and vital community spirit. Predominantly Levantine and Non-Muslim neighbourhood in the past, today due to complex historical and political interventions, it has become a sanctuary for the urban poor, small-scale criminals, and generally excluded population of Istanbul. It was important area in the whole of Beyoglu municipality, where foreign diplomats and merchants were living in spitting distance from the consulates. Craftsmanship (wood, metal, leather etc.) was highly valued skill and the architecture of the area was adapted to the needs of the artisans (most houses constitute of underground or ground level composed for a workshop area and with accustomed flight of stairs leading to the entrance door for customer use). In 1993 the area was granted a historical status.
Today the site is mainly inhabited by Kurds (a result of the rural migration in 1950s and the Turkish-Kurdish civil war in 1990s), Syrians, and Afro-Americans and ownership is a complex issue. More than 65% of the inhabitants are renting, 30% have private homeowners and 5% are transitionary residents. Some of the abandoned houses are inhabited by fleeing refugees. The vast majority of inhabitants work predominantly in the lower stages of the service sector in the near Istiklal Street or at Taxim square (which is also economically beneficial).

In spite of its poor upkeep, throughout Tarlabasi micro economies exist, serving not only to its core, but also feeding back to the formal urban fabric. The community organizes their own local economy in rich street network. Small business spreads over the area (groceries, barbers, traditional restaurants, tea and coffee houses, etc.) and thus, empowers it to exist in self-sufficient manner.

Informal jobs flourish such as cardboard picking or cooking of food to be sold on Istiklal Street. In the local Sunday market one could buy on credit a loaf of bread or even a pinch of salt. Historically settled there craftsmen are still living in the area (mainly iron, textile, leather and wood) having their workshops and teaching their children or apprentices their savoir-faire to keep the tradition of small manufactures alive. As the neighbourhood does not have a single public place, life happens casually on the street – a main social catalyst and extension of people’s homes.
Tarlabasi occupies a unique space where the gentrification process is strongly interlinked with the minority and stigmatized identity of its residents. However this may be a symptom of a larger shift in the country for in 1923, Turkey was inhabited by 56% of minorities and foreigners (defined as non-Turkish or non-Muslim), in 2012 this number had drastically decreased to a population comprised of 99% of Muslims and 75% Turks (look at the historical timeline on p.31).

WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR THIS GREAT DECREASE?

The decrease in ethnic minority population is the result of three state initiatives, all reflecting their shadow on miniature but observable level on Tarlabasi. First one is 1942 Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi) which impoverished many minority enclaves. The second one is the 1055 Cyprus Crisis (September 6-7 Events) where as a retaliation against the Greeks, Istanbul saw destruction of the property of its ethnic minorities (mainly Greek but also Armenian and Jewish), which included private shops, churches and housing.
The last state initiative (Bloody Christmas) was the 1964 revision of 1930 residency permission of Greeks in Istanbul which saw the expulsion of an estimate of 40000 Greeks from Turkey. After these events the Greek population of Istanbul sunk to numbering only thousands. Most of the emigrants had lived their whole lives in Turkey. Only some of the owners managed to sell their property.

As a consequence, the neighbourhood developed its problematic ownership structure. Its inhabitants were Armenians, Jews and Kurds who became the majority of these groups with 70% and formed the new face of Tarlabasi. The abandoned houses, initially built for families, found new use as single room rentals, providing affordable housing opportunity for the working class of Beyoglu district.
they started to live in the old Greek and Armenian houses. Sections of the houses were ruined.

A new wave of Kurdish migrants, many of which forcefully displaced from the government from their villages in Anatolia.

Greeks deported

100,000 Greek, Armenian and Jewish left.

20,000-square-meter part of the quarter was proclaimed an Urban Renewal Area in accordance with the disputed Law No. 5366.

The tender for the planned project was awarded to GAP Insaat.

Demolitions begin and people start to leave the area.
to Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Fig. 4: Historical oppression in Tarlabasi. Timeline. Author’s illustration.

Fig. 5 and 6: The neighborhood in the 50s and 60s.
In 1980 the municipality destroyed 1100 19th century building (368 Levantine buildings, 176 examples of qualified architecture), destroying the historical texture of the region, to construct a six-lane boulevard to become an important artery of Istanbul traffic system. This intervention within the scope of “making Istanbul a city of the world” shaped Tarlabasi’s today socio-spatial situation and current economical polarization. It is possible to argue that it was a calculated governmental strategy to physically divide the growing slum area from the chic Beyoglu district, which resulted in the urban space being violently rewritten.

The decision presented two main aims – to transform Beyoglu into a cultural center in Istanbul; and to connect the historical and touristic center of Fatih district to the newly transformed Taxim square, which today is the only green and proper square in Istanbul city center. This manoeuvre was not without consequences as over 5000 people were displaced during the expansion of Tarlabasi Caddesi (Street). (look at the historical maps on p.37-38.)

The boulevard was seen as a controversial construction, as the effective separation of Tarlabası to Beyoğlu, which expedited the social, economic and physical decay of the neighbourhood. Tarlabasi was pushed behind to the “other side” of the boulevard and the city was rearranged cutting-off what was considered a stain for the image of Istanbul. The river of vehicles assured the continuous flow of heavy
A ‘frontier’ - between two worlds

traffic, making this boundary three dimensional and tangible. Today Tarlabası people are struggling to cross it every day to go to work or while caring their street goods to Taxim square. The boulevard is designed to delineate and be hard to cross from both sides. Only two formal crossings exist on the boulevard, which leads to informal ways of crossing (look at the illustration on the next page). One have to sprint through the first three high-speed lanes of the boulevard, find safe opening in the central gate, and wait for a suitable moment to cross the remaining three lanes. It is very dangerous as well as highly inefficient, especially for those who pull carts with piling goods.

I see the boulevard as the physical boundary, a ‘frontier’ - drawing a sharp economical abyss between two realms. The visible, glamorous and rich Beyoğlu and the veiled, gloomy and poor Tarlabası. Through the edge of the boulevard, the unlawful and segregated neighbourhood has become effectively paralyzed. It has become also a token of what a modern city ought not be: the dwelling of disorder, petty crime, poverty, child labour, and danger.
The Boulevard
Fig. 8: Enlargement of Tarlabası Boulevard in 1986-89.

Fig. 7: Informal crossing points in Tarlabası 2017.
source of maps: archives.saltresearch.org, google maps
Fig. 9: Enlargement of Tarlabasi boulevard in 1989.
The Architecture is described as unique Levantine 6, 18-19th century houses that are very slim (3.5 to 7m wide), and usually range from two to four story. Most of them are bow-fronted or have small Venetian style terraces - a characteristic feature for this type of architecture. The plots are given minimal street frontage area and are of narrow, deep proportion (usually four to six meters wide, 10 to 30 meters deep.) In the past 150 years, these ‘tiny slivers of land’ 7 have endured the test of time. “Adding floors, cantilevering over the streets with cumba bey windows, or even redeveloping the land, building often remain just one room wide” 8, huddled along the narrow streets.

“A city of Rooms, Beyoğlu is composed of the most basic of building blocks.” 9 But what a building block it is! Heavy of past!

The streets are narrow (3-4 m) and very steep, going constantly up and down. As the site is pretty hillock there is no shortage of good viewpoints, with buildings descending gradually or popping up dramatically.

In this train of thoughts it is vital to emphasize on the fact that Tarlabası is not a typical slum area. Only 60 years ago it was upper-middle class neighbourhood and even today most of the houses have the proper ownership documentation. However, it is a neighbourhood where no one can afford the price of property renovation without incentives from the government and thus, currently its historical patina is crumbling away.
Background and Social tissue

Fig. 12: In a typical workshop.
Small business spreads over the area and thus, empowers it to exist in self-sufficient manner. There is awareness of who is an insider and who is an outsider.
The Tool House

The typical unit has 20-50 square meters floor area (different cases can vary up to 80-100 square meters) per floor plan and has usually three or four (and in rare cases up to five) floors. With the years additional floors have been added at places by the residents themselves as ‘gecekondu’ extensions, and gradually the historical courtyards have been built up or used as storage area for waste and left over materials.

What makes the typology specific is its historical metamorphosis - a shift from horizontal one family house structure to a vertical system of today’s single floor flats. The houses are used as homes on the upper floors, while the ground floors and basement are used as workshops, small manufacturing businesses and stores. A very large percentage of the furniture in Istanbul came from carpenters in Tarlabası.

Nowadays the apartments are mostly rented by families between 2 to 14 people per family, 2-4 people per room. The mean value for household range is 4.97. The tendency of living together with relatives is a usual strategy to cope with the harsh conditions of urban life. A common budget in the same household is a way to deal with low income and employment rates. It provides security and reduces living costs. Yet, the area is not only popular for low-income families but also for students, artists and people who fancy the comfortable location and richness of local culture. Coal stove, wood stove and electricity are the three main heating systems used.
Typical features

“There used to be about 60 carpenters in our neighbourhood. Today only very few are left. Furniture, shoes, belts – most of these things are now produced in big factories. Tarlabası was a very different place then.”

An owner of carpentry workshop

It is curious that the functions of the buildings differ according to social and temporal uses (day or night) and location (close to main axes or internal). While the ones near the big roads are used for retail and the basements for storage, the pattern changes once one moves into the small street network. The floor and basements located in these areas are mostly used as production ground and warehouses belonging to family businesses (stuffed mussels, chicken pilaf etc.). Furthermore, the craft of these enterprises also vary according to the mahalleler. For instance, while the workshops located in Bülbül Mahallesi specialize in furniture and textile, the workshops located in Sehit Muhtar Mahallesi work with auto repair and light fixtures.
Tarlabası likewise most of Istanbul has a unique and dramatic topography. Surprisingly it is one of the first regions where Istanbul’s first urbanization work was carried out. The plan was designed originally as a radial plan type overlooking the sloping structure of the site, but after strong opposition from the community a second grid-type plan was developed and implemented.¹⁴

Today Tarlabası is mainly car dominated area with no public transportation link. There is no clear pedestrian routes and it is hard to get a sense of orientation due to the many intersecting streets and lack of visual landmarks. Even though, there is a clear hierarchy of streets the character and usage purposes differ much depending on the location. There are two main commercial streets which are also main axes for car traffic. They vary in size (between 7-10 meters wide) and are lined with commerces and vendors selling local food, while pedestrians struggle to get by.

Off the main links the street network becomes more chaotic, streets narrower (3.5-5 meters), blocked by carcasses of long gone cars and waste. To the East of the area there are two artisans’ streets that have not changed in the last 60 years.
Car dominance and bad Walkability

The variety of street-scape and the scales composes a rich grid of places with different levels of public-private relations. There are medium sizes and small alleyways curving at the corners, going steeply up or descending by a flight of stairs. The landscape always changes and one can never get tired of exploring. However, this makes the area difficult to navigate and even find your way through, as well as unsafe.

Fig.15: Lack of proper infrastructure.
The Street Network

3.6

The smallest residential alley varies between 3.5 to 4 meters with 3 to 4 floor row buildings on both sides. Most of the built form is Laventine architecture, others had emerged later on, following the same grid and scale but with less complicated facade work. The ground is poorly treated with often less than 1 meter wide sidewalks or none to be found at all. Drainage system is corrupted with pipes flooding the streets directly or water dropping down straight from the roofs. There is hardly any trees or greenery in Tarlabası, which combined with the hot climate makes it a very difficult environment during summertime.

The medium sized alleys vary between 4.5 to 5.5 meters width. They perform as an extension of the homes, to hang laundry or as a parking place. Stairs and underground workshops entrances interrupt the continuity of the sidewalks, forcing the inhabitants to walk on the pavement. The neighbourhood lacks open space, so the alley becomes a playing ground for local children. Stairs and bow windows are the architectural elements where social life happens.

Located on one of the main axes of the site the Commerce and Retail road transforms every Sunday into a farmers market, descending down its length and closing off the way for cars. On regular days ground-floors are used for retail, while basements for storages and small scale manufacturing. The main commercial uses are extended to the first floors, the higher floors are used for residence. It is also used as a social space where people chat, sip cay and sit on stairs or chairs they brought from their shops. The impermeable paving, the natural topography and the lack of proper drainage system calls for flood problems during short but heavy Istanbul showers in autumn and spring.
A similar road with commercial functions and used predominantly by cars goes parallel. The lack of designated parking spots urges the users creativity in marking no park areas. Additionally, many of the cars occupy the walkways and thus disturb the logic of pedestrian movement. While most of the Tarlabasi people do not own a car, they ought to wander around the vehicles while performing their daily routines. Walkway is narrow (1 meter) and often the space is occupied by the local stores displaying their goods, causing additional trouble to pedestrian moves.

Generally the fabric of the neighbourhood is very dense and clearly was not planned to offer more social space than the currently built up with extensions courtyards. Today the area lacks physical spaces where social and cultural activities can be provided. If a vacant spot comes to existence, due to demolition of a dilapidated building, then it is usually beautified by the community by bringing stools, furniture and plants in pots. There are no public seats or designed shadow structures, no playgrounds, sport facilities, municipal street infrastructure or community buildings.
“TARLABAŞI IS RENEWED”

This is written on the first page when you open the glossy Tarlabasi Project Booklet. The project coordination office, just on the opposite side of Tarlabasi Boulevard is framing the huge metal barrier enclosing the area. After a formal rejection for an interview in 2014 the author of this report was graciously granted a copy of the Project Booklet and sent away.

The Tarlabasi Project (called Tarlabasi 360) was the pilot project started by the municipality in 2006 with the ambition to regenerate the historical heritage and clean the image of the neighbourhood. The project redevelopment spreads over 20,000 m² area and includes all the buildings, streets and infrastructure in the area, a total of nine ‘building islands’ composed of 296 stocks in Tarlabasi quarter ¹ (approximately 3 % of Tarlabasi). It aimed to build up a mixed-uses area with luxury housings, cafés, hotels, office lots and a shopping mall. The glossy brochures published by the municipality display multi-storey constructions with glass smokescreens and blond occupants scrolling down on clinical avenues with trees in pots.

This is a distant realm for the regular tenant here. The program modifies not only the function of the buildings, but moreover it interrupts with their structural system, spacial limitation, scale, and interior/exterior relations by joining plots (look at the illustrations on p.55-58). It ignores the actual needs of the inhabitants and lacks any constructive analysis of the social dimentions of the area. ²

The official website claimed that “the current decayed building stock will be renewed”, and that the municipality aims at “preserving the historical urban fabric on one hand”, while “bringing houses up to contemporary needs and modern standards”. ³
Conflict points and notions

And yet two key concerns lingered unresolved: Will the area architectural heritage be preserved? And perhaps more pressingly – will the current residents go to the way of Selukule’s?

Additionally a four-story underground car park was planned by the developers. How could a modern standard underground car park be implemented to each block, while preserving and stabilizing the heritage architecture and at the same time keeping its original limits?

Few years have past and now the results from the state-led gentrification project are evident. Up-to-date state of the demolitions in the already expropriated plots of the site show that although historical, 18 out of 20 buildings are turn to dust. The new law gave expropriation rights, which as a result violated the right to private property and victimized the land owners, who were forced to leave their homes and community behind. Thus, it seems like, the municipality regeneration project turned out to be simply a smokescreen to commercial and political profit.
Fig. 3: Project area block islands: plans.
Fig. 4: Project area block islands: sections.
Fig. 5: Municipal proposal before (up) and after (bottom).

Fig. 6: Tarlabası Boulevard Billboards enclosing the torn down plans. December 2013.
DECEMBER 2013

FIG. 7 and 8: Author’s personal photography

APRIL 2017

FIG. 9 and 10: Official municipal drawings

EXPECTED

FIG. 7 and 8: Author’s personal photography
FIG. 9 and 10: Official municipal drawings
WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE PROPOSAL ‘TARLABASI 360’?

From my personal standpoint, the urban renewal project imposed upon Tarlabasi by the local authorities is not sustainable. In contrast, the project has shaken up the life of a community with deep roots into the historic urban texture of Istanbul, while additionally it has destabilized the adjacent communities. Over 4000 people were displaced and offered housing almost two hours away in unaffordable multi-story buildings. And whereas there is no master plan for the rest of the neighbourhood it has created pressure on the remaining community.

When you put people in high-rise buildings you actually cut off the same connections amongst them, which make that community a whole. This ruins the high-rises, it ruins the places where you put them and it ruins the people’s lives themselves.

So far the physical transformation of the area destroyed all but the façades of 243(of 278) historically registered buildings. The spacial configuration of this 16th century neighbourhood of three and four storey slim buildings following narrow alleyways will be adjusted to resemble a 21st century gated zone for the newly rich, where ‘historical has to be brand-new and squeaky clean’. So what is actually wanted
Conflict points and notions

is the illusion of history – It has to be historical, but it is not allowed to carry any baggage of the past, or any of history’s patina, there can’t be anything about it that creates unease.”

The bottom line is that what is executed under the definition of ‘preservation’ in the area is merely a masquerade. The sole components of ‘restoration’ are the façades of the buildings, seen as capital gain. In a historical area that holds such cultural heritage, it is certainly improper to proclaim transformation that will destroy its building typology or drastically increase the density. Local culture and texture should always be a main focus of preservation and thus the project should revolve around them rather than trying to undermine them. Although the project claims to be enrichment for Istanbul’s residents, it does not thoroughly consider the effect of the relocation of former inhabitants. Rather than a sensitive upgrading it reminds more of a drastic make-over of the entire structure of the area.

The effects of the demolitions are not simply to the physical and socio-economical fabric of this neighbourhood with slum-conditions, but also disturb the entire local life causing rise in crime alongside the renewal zone. Additionally, it has created new conflict points as many of the abandoned buildings have become sanctuary for illegal refugees. There have been multiple lawsuits and resistance to the Tarlabasi 360 project in the last ten years both by home owners and Istanbul Chamber of Architects. It is apparent that the people of Istanbul are not ready to let go of Tarlabasi, regardless of the social ills that still need to be addressed.
Therefore, there is a need of a new strategic plan:

1: **that would** put at the main focus the preservation of the existing culture and texture;

2: **that would not** simply relocate already existing problems such as impoverishment, low income and marginalized circumstances but treat them locally incorporating sustainable solutions and systems;

3: **that would** incorporate income mixing, so that a new vibrant Tarlabasi can rise as a substantial asset for the municipally and for the old and new inhabitants to be.
In the shadow of the prominent north and south areas, Tarlabasi exists as the social gap in Beyouglu - neglected and deemed dangerous by the general public. The perception of poverty, crime (pickpocketing), and immigration are the unpleasant social ills that spread throughout the area ‘infesting’ the otherwise luxurious image of Istanbul.

The site is divided by two multi-lane highways, which further contribute to the site’s isolated character. All sorts of transportation modes run through these arteries making it almost impossible for pedestrians to cross. Consequently, the risk of accidents is high and a sense of anxiety and uncertainty is hovering over the slum. Two main roads in north-south penetrate at the borders of Tarlabasi and provide short-cuts from one highway to another. The pressure on the locals is furthermore applied by the constant police presence on Tarlabasi Boulevard (see author’s illustration on the right).

There is no public transportation through the urban settlement and no designated pedestrian roads. Disconnection and distress lead to disturbed social fabric.

The topography of the site is dramatic and ever changing. At places the gradient is steeper than 1/10 and creates a similar to a sunken plateau landscape. This makes the site invisible, very difficult to walk through but at the same time creates a sense of surprise due to the versatile nature of the urban forms emerging.
Transportation Routes and Communication Links

With the current urban gentrification policies, Tarlabasi’s colourful image is slowly becoming desaturated. Intended to evict the marginalized population and become an extension of Istiklal Street, the boundary between ‘slum’ and high-class leisure quarter will dissolve. With that the community will be pushed away in distant parts of the city, while its problems will simply change their location. These mental and physical barriers are refuge for those who wish to escape the political and police control in Turkey during riots (including the famous Gezi riot in 2013).
Tarlabasi is only 212,000 square meters (2 km) in size, but very compact, congested and rich in experiences. One can walk from Tarlabasi Road to Kurtulus Road for around 10 minutes and it is only a few minutes walk from Taxim Square and the most famous street in the city - Istiklal Street. According to the census data (SIS Census 2000) there are 31 004 people living in Tarlabasi (78% of whom are migrants), though estimations raise the number to 35-40 000 people due to the abundance of unregistered residents. The density differs in the different quarters, but is much higher than the one in Beyoglu district (264 person/ha). The highest rate is registered in Çukur quarter with 928 person/ha and this quarter has the largest household sizes as well.

Although Tarlabasi is very close to the centrum of Istanbul, there is quite tangible extend of deprivation in the neighbourhood. The area is inhabited by disadvantaged social groups of various kind and has no proper infrastructure or community space. Therefore, the majority of people meet in the çay and coffee houses or just in front of their doors.

Most of the dweller also do not have access to social security. There is no proper public healthcare and there is only a single primary school that does not have capacity to accommodate all the children from both Tarlabasi and the neighbouring impoverished regions. On the other hand, many Kurdish children are used for labour which paves their way to physical abuse and further leads to mental and/or physical problems.
Demographics

Fig. 12: Site Analysis Diagrams. Functions and uses. Author’s illustration.
Next to the urgent need for security, health, infrastructure and employment opportunities, is the necessity for places for women to gather and be educated. Level of education in Tarlabasi is that of the lowest strata of society. Many of the women in the area cannot find job or work for low wages because they do not speak the language and/or are illiterate.\textsuperscript{11}

Here, the young population percentage is remarkably large. Common opinion is that facilities for play, education, sport and general activities for children are of utmost importance. Such facilities would direct them to spend their energy in productive way and would provide socialization in violent-free environment. Furthermore, potential involvement of youngsters in illegal activities or manual labour could be prevented.\textsuperscript{12}

On another note access to good education, digital training, and other resources for the youngsters would contribute to alleviate poverty and push upward individual and social development. It would provide for secure jobs in well-paid sectors, allow for better quality of life and thus empower independent and settled individuals - an asset for any country.

As remarked earlier, Tarlabasi is short on sensible public spaces where all of the above-mentioned and more social services (including cultural events) can be performed. It is perceived by the author that a new Community Center is of vital importance as the catalyst - provider of basic services - to give rise to social and urban integration.
Demographics

Fig. 13: A Kurdish boy serving cay.

Fig. 14: Local children playing on the streets.
With the new urban agenda the Beyoğlu Municipality let Tarlabası deteriorate to justify the new upper class gated area. Most of Tarlabası 360 project is implanted to the Mahalle now, its owners have been evicted. Some of the buildings have been stripped out of their architectural elements, gazing emptily and causing overall sense of insecurity and danger. Built in 16th century those buildings have been occupied by foreign diplomats, Non-Muslim minorities, and eventually marginalized groups. Today the area is in decay since the government wouldn’t help the owners to fix their properties due to heavy bureaucracy. Regardless of all the urban issues of the neighborhood, Tarlabası beats with its own rhythm and its people have deep connections within the local social texture. The municipal waste collection in the quarter have stopped due to the unwillingness of property owners to sell their houses. As a way of protest the dwellers pile the garbage around the project fence. All is rotting apart from the paper which is picked up by the local waste pickers. The neighborhood is organized around a vibrant network of local craftsmanship and small scale enterprises. It works with its own pace and with regards to the needs of the dwellers. Local food products (simit, mussels, rice etc.) are being produced by the dwellers in order to be sold on İstiklal street. Pulling the heavy carts their daily route passes at least twice through the dangerous Tarlabası Boulevard. Local artist use the abandoned buildings and project fences to express their position about the on-going state-led gentrification. Every Saturday morning the market is a place for socialization, meeting of friends and celebration of communal spirit.
With the new urban agenda the Beyoglu Municipality let Tarlabasi deteriorate to justify the new upper class gated area. Most of Tarlabasi 360 project is implanted to the Mahalle now, its owners have been evicted. Some of the buildings have been stripped out of their architectural elements, gazing emptily and causing overall sense of insecurity and danger. Built in 16th century those buildings have been occupied by foreign diplomats, Non-Muslim minorities, and eventually marginalized groups. Today the area is in decay since the government wouldn’t help the owners to fix their properties due to heavy bureaucracy. Regardless of all the urban issues of the neighborhood, Tarlabasi beats with its own rhythm and its people have deep connections within the local social texture. The municipal waste collection in the quarter have stopped due to the unwillingness of property owners to sell their houses. As a way of protest the dwellers pile the garbage around the project fence. All is rotting apart from the paper which is picked up by the local waste pickers. The neighborhood is organized around a vibrant network of local craftsmanship and small scale enterprises. It works with its own pace and with regards to the needs of the dwellers. Local artist use the abandoned buildings and project fences to express their position about the on-going state-led gentrification. Every Saturday morning the market is a place for socialization, meeting of friends and celebration of communal spirit.
WHERE TO START FROM?

In order to push for a change in the neighbourhood one must first look at what works best in it and what existing assets can be strengthened. Tarlabasi people have built up a unique climate and a strong well connected community. The region produces its own employments structures and relations, hierarchies, its own justice and values, obtaining rights and changes in mobility, including the informal sector. There is an awareness of who is insider and who is outsider. That is part of why illegal activities forge in places like this. It is part of the community and it is protected inside it. If a community like this is simply picked up and moved somewhere else it is as if one cut off an old tree and tried to replant it. The issues would not go away, but will simply be moved around together with the people and this is contrary to sustainable.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT TARLABASI?

Tarlabasi is a place in Istanbul where newcomers with low or no education can have a place in the city. It is also a living, breathing reminder of the past glory of Istanbul as a place where minorities were an integral part of the society. Furthermore, the outstanding architecture gives Tarlabasi a special character as one of a kind residence, as a network of on-going craftsmanship, in an age of mass production and prefabrication. The streets,
Understanding Tarlabası

the staircases and the little shops is where life happens. People continuously interact, collaborate, bargain with their goods, make jokes and are happy at their quiet lives. The close family connections, respect to the elderly and the traditions is what gives structure to their lifestyle.

WHAT IT COULD BECOME?

I imagine a sustainable neighbourhood as place of spontaneous meetings and familiar interactions. A place that is well-served with functions and facilities in walking/biking distance. A place where all citizens have fair living conditions, legal acknowledgements and also have equal opportunities to take part in entrepreneurship or any social or individual initiative. It is a place not of silent stakeholders, but of people free to express their right to the city and the space they inhabit. Even though most of the people in these distressed neighbourhoods that have undergone the way of Tarlabası and beyond did not have equal rights during the gentrification processes, I believe that the rest of the factors to make a sustainable neighbourhood are already there, merely waiting to be polished up.
The spirit of Tarlabasi is tangible and should be celebrated! With certain investment and governmental incentives for professional and domestic incremental development, the living conditions and lifestyle of its dwellers can be revitalized. New infrastructure that copes with the geographical location and climate specificity, good health care and education, sustainable local economy and legal rights are what Tarlabasi needs to flourish once again and revive its past splendour as integrated, profitable and valuable quarter for the city of Istanbul.

**INGREDIENTS FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD**

- **Architecture** – fine examples of historically rich style from a certain time of Istanbul’s development
- **Heterogeneity** – people from different backgrounds, religion, language
- **Location** – in the centrum of Istanbul near the most famous touristic area
- **Scale** – small dimensions that minimize the privacy levels but account for robust community spirit and sense of belonging
- **Workshops** – adapted through the architecture according to the needs of the craftsmen/merchants and keeping the tradition of small manufactures alive
- **Live/work environment** – living close to work is convenient and diminishes time, distances and fees spent in commuting
Understanding Tarlabası

CHALLENGES

As mentioned earlier Tarlabası has plenty of social ills that await maintenance but also numerous problems concerning the physical realm. From the predicaments that the topography puts forward with steep slopes and unexpected flights of stairs to the lack of public seating areas. From the narrow streets and inadequate pedestrian pathways to the lack of permeable surfaces and seasonal flooding. From the plants in pots instead of planted trees to the lack of open spaces. All of these are not simply problems that Tarlabası has to deal with. These are everyday issues in some of Istanbul’s structure en mass and it is high-time for them to begin being addressed.

For Tarlabası as described by both its inhabitants and according to author’s personal experience there are five challenges that make for the hazardous and decaying environment, currently experienced (refer to author’s illustration on p. 77-78). This master project lays under a magnifying glass each one of them and tries to propose the right kind of solutions, which could eventually allow for the area’s rebirth to take place.

It is important to clarify that while all of the challenges are of importance, the deteriorating historic texture and the extreme amounts of waste, which envelops the space, are the two big inspirational drivers for the project. They are the instrumental extension of the design progression that will allow for the rest of the illnesses in this neighbourhood to be healed.
5.1

Where/ What/ How

STEEP STREET
NO PUBLIC SEATINGS
LACK OF PERMEABLE SURFACES AND SUITABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEM
NARROW STREETS 3-4 M
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT
LACK OF PUBLIC SPACE
NO SHADING MECHANISM IN OPEN SPACES
LACK OF PLANTED VEGETATION
NO MAINTENANCE AND GENERAL DETERIORATION
LACK OF PLAYGROUNDS

THE WORST OF THE SPACE
THE WORST OF THE WASTE
CHALLENGES IN TARLABASI

**Deteriorating Historic Texture and Urban Environment**
- 300 year history, declared historical site in 1993
- Buildings: 53% bad condition, 20% total destruction, 27% good condition
- The on-going renewal project has destroyed over 243 (of 278) historically registered buildings
- From a socially diverse community, Tarlabasi will become bedroom zone for the newly rich

**Trashed Landscape / A Land Gone to Waste**
- Open dumping on streets, no designated bins
- Only 39% out of 65,000 t p/d is disposed properly
- Garbage is not collected regularly: only 18 municipalities out of 300 regularly collect solid waste
- At any given time 60% of waste collecting vehicles are out of order

GOALS

**Built Onto the Existing and Preserve the Heritage of the Past for the People Today**

**From Readjustment of Buildings’ Functionality to Re-use, Re-cycle, Re-distribution Economy**
ALTERNATIVE GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED BY THE DESIGN!!

WEAK INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING TO URBAN FLOODS
- ground and surface water contamination from run-off
- potable water treated by heavy chemicals; people highly dependent on bottled water
- climate change (towards semi-arid climate) combined with bad sewage system
- lack of rural areas and not enough permeable surfaces
- lack of greenery and recreational areas

SOCIAL STIGMA
- the neighbourhood: deemed to be dangerous with a reputation of high crime
- 60 year history of opposition to ethnic and religious minorities
- cut-off by the rest of the city
- 65% tenants, 35% private homeowners, 5% occupiers
- since 2006 the renewal project has evicted over 4,000 people added to the homeless population of Istanbul

CHAOTIC PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- poorly maintained footways
- difficulty crossing or no crossings
- no street hierarchy and no public space
- disconnection and distress
- cars over people

INTEGRATED WATER CYCLE

SAFE AND SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTED URBAN REALM
The first part of the diagram above depicts the existing condition present in any chosen plot of the site. It is a visual summery of the shared problems on block-level. By modifying the functions and proportions of the existing urban fabric and incorporating strategies for sustainable waste and water management on block and neighbourhood levels a different condition emerges as a palpable possibility for Tarlabasi.

**Glossary:**

**Shaft** - Author’s own personalization of a ‘wasted’ enclosed space, a void, a corridor (both on plot and building level) in Tarlabasi.

The concept revolves around the dying courtyards that have been gradually built up by gecekondu extensions and have been transformed into garbage (waste) shafts, purposefully useful for nothing more than daylight.
Thus, **the Shaft** in its current state - as the neglected component - becomes the silent agent and architectural element of change, around which a new typology can be created and later on dictate the remaking of the area.

**The Waste**, its current companion and the untreated component on block level - is seen as the urban element to trigger new re-use/re-cycle/re-distribution system.

It is aimed that the change will not only be of the physical position of both the Shaft and the Waste in the neighbourhood. It is believed that the whole production - waste management cycle can be perceived as cathartic for the neighbourhood and allow for a new social mentality and therefore a sustainable lifestyle.

*Fig. 19 (left) and 20 (right): Author’s illustration.*
The Concept

5.2

The new typology will be informed by using as a starting point the existing historical plans and sections of current buildings in Tarlabasi coupled with the new concept and urgent physical needs of the slum. Where the condition of the buildings allows and depending on the protection status in name, façades will be merged in the new typology structurally, thus keeping the layers of time intact. The change in morphology would compensate for the density by building higher.

The empty warehouses/industrial buildings will be transformed into a recycling plant area, thus providing for Tarlabasi’s own resources and boosting a small-scale economy. All the materials from the un-making will be reused in the re-making of the neighbourhood, while the left over materials will be processed in the Waste Plants and later on redistributed.

Empty spaces and buildings beyond repair will give more social space. Some ruins will be preserved as witnesses of the previous state of Tarlabasi - medium of expression for local artists. The reconstruction will allow for reshaping of the pedestrian/vehicle network in new improved street-scape through prioritizing and encouragement of the historical craftsmanship practice. New links to and from Taxim Square will be established by extension of the historical tram line.
Design principles and mechanisms

49% IN BAD CONDITION
24% ABANDONED
27% IN GOOD CONDITION
4.92 MEAN VALUE FOR HOUSEHOLD RANGE

Fig. 1: The tool house. Author’s illustration.
“Currently Turkey’s waste management system is not a priority policy area. It is estimated that the ratio of the household waste containing organic and recyclable materials is approximately 80%. However, the recycling rates are very low. Through not separating the source and disposing the wastes without caution, Istanbul

**TIMELINE OF GARBAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Dumping garbage into the sea was banned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until 1980s</td>
<td>Municipalities kept tossing garbage into Bosporus (commercial and residential waste).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during 1980s</td>
<td>Makeshift dumps were set up at number of locations (lead to multiple problems: fires, bugs, deseases, methane explosions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Istanbul Environmental and Waste Processing Corporation (ISTAC) was established. It was responsible of garbage transfer stations, dump sites, compost and recyclable facilities, medical garbage collection. It was handling 10,000 tons of solid waste every day by 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>In Umraniye, a violent explosion of methane killed 37 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 2007</td>
<td>Turkey’s total solid waste amount was over 31 million tons per year and 17.5 million tons of industrial waste (no entries for recycling; no incineration with E+ recovery). Of that 84% were collected, 98% of the collected waste was landfilled either in sanitary fills (54%) or dump sites (44%), while around 0.2 million tons were biologically treated. There is no available information regarding the fate of the uncollected amount of MSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Sustainable Material Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>As of 2009, municipalities are required to collect frying oil waste from homes. Many of them still do not have necessary investments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Turkey imposed no landfill tax.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Source of background image: recyclinginternational.com]
Where is Turkey?

and the rest of Turkey is landfilling a tremendous wealth and a significant opportunity. Thus, the economy is deprived of a very important input, the self-renewing capacity of the environment is put under pressure, and the country is falling ahead of its objective to create a livable world.”

### GARBAGE STATISTICS

- Only 43% of the waste generated by Turkey’s population are stored in sanitary landfills and the other 57% of the population receives waste removal services that are not within regulations.

- The amount of wastes produced per person reaches to 2 kg daily and each person produces waste equal to 10 folds of his/her weight.

- 4.9 million TL worth of bread goes to garbage annually (1.07 million EU)

- 25% of the greenhouse gas produced in the country is due to the methane gas at the waste land-filling areas.

- Between 1999-2011 Turkey’s GHG emissions related to waste alone increased by 120%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waste Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic material</td>
<td>54.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>15.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bags</td>
<td>9.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nappy</td>
<td>5.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>3.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bottles</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CURRENT WASTE TRAFFIC SYSTEM

Istanbul has a very well installed centralized municipal structure. It has also well distributed central waste facilities. However, by law each individual municipality is responsible for the collection, transportation, separation, recycling, disposal and storage of waste services. This constitutes a challenge in a city where only 18 out of 3000 municipalities regularly collect the solid waste. As a result only 39% of 65,000 tons p/day of MSW\(^2\) is disposed properly.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE REST OF MSW?

THE CURRENT SYSTEM WORKS LIKE THIS:

1: put your trash on a corner or in large receptacle (if available)

2: dogs and cats arrive to scavenge for food scraps

3: human waste-pickers gather recyclable material (mostly cardboard, plastic and glass)

4: municipality collects the remains at nigh (mixed wet + dry)
This whole process comes with environmental repercussions. In Istanbul the groundwater and surface water are highly contaminated from run-off. Since the groundwater is the only potable water source it needs to go through heavy chemical treatment and thus, is not suitable for consumption and cooking. This is why plastic bottle businesses are thriving, which multiplies additionally the amount of materials not being recycled.

Although the institutions has the capacity to recycle at least half of the waste generated, this processes are never delivered to ends due to weak policies and lack of punishment/encouragement system. Along with poor funding and reporting, recycling sector in Turkey also suffers from poor environmental consciousness on both public and industrial level. For instance, 6,5 million m² area of street and public place is daily cleaned by sweeping in Istanbul.
SO WHAT HAPPENS IN TARLABASI?

Official Collecting (LEGAL/ILLEGAL):

Tarlabasi is one of the neighbourhoods that are entirely cut off from the municipal waste traffic management due to its bad image. The closest transfer station is only 7 km away but currently the site is a trashed landscape with no designated bins or spots for garbage disposal. This causes a huge waste-management problem for the neighbourhood and its residents.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier everything works in its own intertwined network in the area.

Waste picking is a common but illegal profession in Istanbul. There are around 100,000 street pickers in the city and some of them live in Tarlabasi and circle the district performing the informal waste collecting. They alone are responsible for 10% of the solid waste and 30% of the recyclable waste of the whole city. However, since the process goes through a chain of mediators, their profit is extremely low when compared to the difficulty of the job (refer to author’s illustration on p. 91).

Once a waste picker based around Tarlabasi fills his cart he goes to one of the 100 indoor depots around Tarlabasi (usually lying on the
underground floor of a flat) to sell his collectables by kilogram. From there, they are sold to a half closed depot in Beyouglu municipality area. After a basic process of sorting the materials (paper, e-waste, metal, plastic, and glass) are transferred to a bigger open depot, where they can be further separated and sold to the recycling centers and manufacturing facilities, who on paper appear as the official collectors. Regardless of this partial waste collection, most of the waste still is mounting and rotting around the streets of the area. The current system is not only unsustainable, but also unfair to the people of Tarlabasi.

WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE?

Proposed Waste Traffic System:

The projects adopts a strategy that looks at the waste (domestic and construction) as a resource to be enclosed in a continuous loop. The change will be triggered by repurposing the functionality of the existing buildings and accommodating an architectural waste management element – the chute. Thus, the garbage from the homes, Sunday market, streets and shafts together with the garbage from the demolition of buildings beyond repair can be converted into usable forms of energy in a new waste-management and redistribution system that will take place on site.
The new official collecting will be performed by a social agent – kapaci (janitor) who will upkeep the building’s hygiene and transfer the waste to the local garbage station with an electrical bike. Kapici is usually an existing social figure in Istanbul, a member of a family with special needs or disabilities that is granted a social housing flat in exchange of services. (see diagram on the next page)

In addition, 7 local waste stations will serve to the neighbourhood for storage and sorting. The unused warehouses located in the lowest part of the topography will be repurposed into the civil agents of the system (see diagram on the next page).

The new mechanism will include integrated water management on block, street and neighbourhood levels. All the surplus products will be redistributed in the area in form of infrastructure (new road surfaces), biogas and electricity (homes), fertilizer and rain water (greenhouses, gardens and landscaping), valuable building elements (workshops), etc.

Essentially, the inhabitants will be involved in the process from the very first stage attending educational workshops so that public awareness for waste management can be improved.

The new re use/ re cycle/ re distribution cycle will additionally allow for a direct relation and better profit for the informal waste collectors in Beyouglu and will provide jobs for the Tarlabasi inhabitants. All materials not fit to be dealt with in the area will join the official municipal collection.
**Management System**

**WHAT WILL BE ACHIEVED ON A BIGGER SCALE?**

Tarlabasi can set an example for Istanbul. There is a big potential for waste as rich resource for production in areas such as employment. Recycling can generate income and thus enrich the district welfare. In case it becomes widespread it can reduce the financial load of Beyouglu municipality since it allocates 40 % (according to data obtained from Ministry of Environment and Forestry) of its budget for waste management. This will lead to waste minimization and landfilling and so, to a more sustainable environment and better human health. Some changes that are required for this serious transformation to be materialized on larger scale are: prevention of waste production in the first place, separation of wastes, strengthening the institutional capacity, establishing of punishment/encouragement system and covering educational needs.

**TIME TEMPORALITY**

The diagram to the right explains the importance of time perspective in the new re cycle/re distribute system. Residential waste will be collected on daily basis, the waste products from commerces, market and workshops - on weekly basis, while at nights the waste from the local transfer stations will join the centralized municipal structure.

*Fig.2: Time Perspective. Author's illustration.*
Policy Strategy

Fig. 3: Current vs proposed waste traffic. Author’s illustration.
The Architectural Strategy

HOW WILL IT WORK ON BLOCK LEVEL?

As briefly mentioned in the concept it is of utmost importance for the composition of the new typologies to start with the author’s collected plans and sections from the area. This allows for better understanding of the structural principles and space limitations of the existing mass. Throughout this process different staircases, shaft sizes and positions were studied and a total of 8 types of houses were defined as most common (refer to the references in the typology appendix).

Furthermore, the process progressed into combining and redrawing units in order to achieve better proportions, bidirectional light access, flat flexibility, entrances, and a common circulation system. The main purpose of the study, going from surface to core, was to guarantee that the concept can be translated logistically in practice.

Fig. 4: Please see the precedents in the typology appendix at the end of this thesis.
Precedents/ Composition/ Process

Fig. 5: Study of shafts and staircases. Types.

Fig. 6: Combining and redrawing of units. Author's illustration.
The Architectural Strategy

HOW WILL IT WORK ON BLOCK LEVEL?

Thus five typologies are developed as main for Tarlabasi:

Typology 1 Historical (protected by law)
Typology 2 Recycled double-unit
Typology 3 Recycled triple-unit
Typology 4 Vertical greenhouse unit
Typology 5 Garden unit

The waste (wet and dry) will be collected through the newly repurposed into a waste chute shaft and thus delivered straight into the basement. All other waste will be taken to the designated waste bins positioned in the basement by the residents themselves.

Some of the units will incorporate atrium for light and ventilation purposes. This configuration will further allow for more even distribution of sun access (windows from two or three sides) and a variety of flat sizes (studio, two-people, family (44-65 m²)). There is possibility of flat extensions on the first few floors in the case when adjacent to typology number four.
Precedents/Composition/Process

**TYPOLOGY 1**
*historical (protected)*

- singular units
- witnesses of previous state
- medium for expression for local art
- community centers
- restoration by ateliers/craftsmanship

**TYPOLOGY 2**
*recycled historical units 1.1*

- 2 units
- shaft transformed into a garbage chute
- common circulation system
- position: internal/corner
- sun access: 2 sides (E/W or N/S)
- number of flats: per floor: 2

**TYPOLOGY 3**
*recycled historical units 1.2*

- 2 units + atrium for light
- shaft transformed into a garbage chute
- common circulation system
- position: internal/corner
- sun access: 3 sides (E/W or N/S) + from atrium
- number of flats: per floor: vary (2 to 4)

**TYPOLOGY 4**
*vertical greenhouse unit*

- strip down the building to framework
- agriculture production + laundry space
- reuse of materials
- position: internal/corner
- flat flexibility
- ground floor (workshop/commerce)

**TYPOLOGY 5**
*garden unit*

- singular unit
- janitor's garden
- different entrances
- position: internal/corner
- flat flexibility
- ground floor (janitor's flat)

Fig. 8: Typologies. Author's illustration.
This diagram depicts author’s thinking process while designing the master plan. With pink colour are marked the new infill units which will replace already missing/ruined buildings. The existing/kept units are coloured in black. In green are shown potential greenhouse units that also allow for flat extensions on the first floors or can accommodate commercial and office functions.

Roofs are tilted to the south to incorporate solar panels and to ease the rainwater collection. Their design can vary according to the extent of existent mass and type of street. In the more narrow streets for light purposes roofs will be offset from the main building facade.

Some of the units will undertake processes of adding or extracting to standardize the proportions and open up courtyards.
Precedents/ Composition/ Process

Fig. 9: Variations. Author's illustration.
The development strategy of the site is based on the design tools of how to sustain historical matter and create a self-sufficient recycling system, while improving the infrastructure (ground and water) and connectivity through the site. The strategy is thereby divided in three parts:

1) Protect and Renovate, of how to build into the existing and preserve the heritage of the past for the people today. 2) Clean and Reform, of how to readjust the building’s functionality to create a re-use/recycle/re-distribution economy while integrating water cycle. 3) Connect and Integrate, of how to overcome the disconnected urban realm and create a safe socio-economically sustainable living environment for the distressed population.

Protect and Renovate

The site is currently in great risk of losing its local culture and textures, since the intensive gentrification processes touched its urban tissue. Therefore, the first step is to develop the site with respect to the historical buildings today and in the future. The proposed strategy is a combination of measures that will turn the area into a financial asset for the locals and the municipality. It seeks to
create a network of defending moves to upkeep the site. At first participatory renovation teams (both local and institutional) will be composed to renovate the damaged heritage buildings. Once the buildings are revitalized they will be used for hosting a mix of public programs and for social housing. Condemned buildings can be transformed into greenhouses or extensions for art, residential and office need. Last but not least, the strategy seeks to minimize the amount of buildings to be sacrificed during the transformation of the three main roads.

**Clean and Reform**

Since the existing fabric is currently one of a polluted landscape the second part of the strategy seeks to turn around the unfortunate situation by setting up an example for integrated recycle economy. To achieve such a development a part of the strategy consist of repurposing the industrial warehouses into civil agents of change, where waste is seen as an energy supply and a generator of income. The proposed strategy physically reinvents the urban element of the shaft into a waste chute and combines old and new units, improving the quality of the built environment through reform and redesign, fix and infill approaches. By creating a fine grained network of waste traffic connected to the improved lifestyle of the residents, Tarlabasi can emerge as a historical sustainable neighbourhood in the heart of the city. The strategy respects the collective memory of the site by keeping as many as possible of the original buildings’ façades and footprints. All buildings in bad condition are replaced with new housing and public areas (squares, a green stretch, semi-commercial space) to attract new denizens in the area and thus fashion a mix-income district.
Connect and Integrate

For years the body of Tarlabası people has been suppressed to preserve and protect the exclusive representation of Istanbul. The physical boundary of Tarlabası Boulevard, the broken up street pattern and the lack of accessibility and public space are present-day problem of the quarter. Consequently, the third part of the strategy consists of widening main roads into streets prioritizing bike and pedestrian accessibilities and thus connecting the site within the site and with the surroundings.

The re-established connections on the site with respect to the historical grid meet the existing street patterns, while creating a continuity from south to north. A newly introduced Pedestrian path is the big connector from and to İstiklal Street and Taxim Square. The remaking of the surfaces will not only enhance the site permeability but will also redirect the sewage towards the Garbage Plant area. The proposed extended track of the Nostalgia Tram is adding another layer of time that can unify the two separated areas in a safe loop. Adding on, the revived craftsmanship of workshops and small scale production will stabilize the community.

In the connecting strategy additional link between green and blue is created to endorse the connectivity and to allow for a green space to be found in the area. The green strip works together with the streets and courtyards creating a mix of an urban and green network, collecting and redirecting storm water on site. At the same time it provides breathing green refuge and an attraction for the adjacent areas.
for Reclaimed Tarlabası

By connecting and integrating, a several hierarchy of streets and a sense of orientation are formed. The main street connections being Tram, Car, Pedestrian and Park Road follow different typology through the site enhanced by different kind of storm water collection and treatment.

To conclude, the strategy hopes to emphasize on the importance of sustainable urban design as means to sustain collective memory and historical heritage, while combating present-day physical challenges and involving the community’s own needs and expectations. As a result, it will serve for the real owners of Tarlabası and will make a more sustainable change and development.

Fig. 13: Transportation Map. Nostalgia Tram proposed connection. Author’s illustration.
The master plan (*see p. 106*) proposes a historic mixed income development connected to the surrounding commerce and tourism area. It reconnects existing fabric by **1. Allowing the owners to keep their ownership** and by **2. Putting their labour to work to gain profit**.

It keeps most of the historical grid intact with slight modifications, a necessity for the introduction of the improved infrastructure. The design takes into consideration the community unique social links and the restoration of the corrupted buildings. Occasionally tracing techniques are applied to rebuild the sacrificed or missing units.

The design tries to re-purpose existing buildings or to form new ones respective of the community needs, aiming for creation of local hubs which can strengthen the link between the inhabitants and their environment transportation opportunities and ease of access (*see list on p. 110-112*). They are mainly located along the Pedestrian link and the new tram line - which coexist with a cycle network for fast and easy transport (*refer to the diagrams on p. 107-109*). Two squares at the entrance to the west and in the centrum of the site alongside with the recovered courtyards penetrate the new urbanity. They function as central places for meeting, gathering and common neighbourhood activities. The idea is that the new public functions will be in service of the inhabitants but attract ‘outsiders’ to the area as well.

To overcome the physical boundary of the Boulevard official new bus stops, tram stops, crossings and an underpass connecting to the Pedestrian link are established. This will connect Tarlabası to Beyouglu and make the area one whole with the exact same texture,
To be added in Tarlabası

transportation opportunities and ease of access. The closest transport (bus, tram or metro) will always be maximum 10-12 minutes away. With the new tram stops more ‘outsiders’ will have a reason to stop at the area, make errands, look at the historical architecture and workshops, or simply change transport.

Fig. 14: Facade and footprint calculations. Author’s personal mapping.

HOW MANY RUINS? -> 24%
HOW MANY PROTECTED BUILDINGS? -> 16%
HOW MANY FACADES SAVED? -> 47.5%
HOW MUCH FOOTPRINT KEPT? -> 55.5%
HOW MANY NEW? -> 37%
HOW MANY RECONSTRUCTED? -> 12%
The plan proposes income mixing with 45-50% market housing and 50% rent controlled housing (It is estimated that 25-30% will be low income groups and 20% will be very low-income groups). The abandoned and ruined buildings in the area will give a solid 24% of completely new flats. That coupled with the vertical slum upgrading along the widened streets will contribute for up to 35-37% of new inhabitants in Tarlabasi (11-16,000 people).

In addition, I would like to add to the discussion that since Tarlabasi is already a very dense area, increasing the density was never a goal for the project as well as for the municipality. Instead, the backbone of the proposal is to transform the cast-away neighbourhood into a healthy and vibrant entity that can be celebrated.

Fig. 15: Master Plan Proposal. Author’s illustration.
Fig. 16, 17, 18, 19: Master Plan Design Diagrams. Author's illustration.
Fig. 20, 21: Master Plan Design Diagrams. Author's illustration.
LIST OF BUILDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE NEEDS OF THE INHABITANTS

- **Tarlabası Community Center (A)** – to encourage social and urban integration; to receive relevant information related to procedures and institutions; counselling services that can help dealing with alienation, discrimination and traumatic experiences accumulated during people’s migration processes.

- **Development Center (B)** – monitors and guides the processes during the incremental development of Tarlabası.

- **Culture House (C)** – for practical education and workshops, studios, lecture halls and meeting rooms, cinema and theatre scene.

- **Semi-private courtyards (D)** – gathering green places for the community with rain-gardens hidden from the streets.

- **Community Square (E)** – to provide gathering place at the intersection of the new North-South pedestrian link.

- **Tram Interim Square (F)** – marking the new entrance to the quarter and breaking the container that Tarlabası was framed in.

- **A library (G)** – access to books, paper, magazines, computers.

- **Tool Warehouses (H)** – for the locals to rent/buy tools.
• **Museum of Garbage (1)** – an educational museum that: 1. Focuses on waste produced and discarded in Tarlabasi; 2. Provides information how people can better manage their domestic waste; 3: Allows the visitors watch the sorting process of recyclables; 4: Delivers youth education workshops; 5: Has on display – pieces of garbage, along with explanation of their life cycle and use value.

• **Waste stations according to quarters(2,3,4,5,6,7)** – to ease the new collection and redistribution of waste.

• **Eskici (second hand)Center (8)**– where more valuable materials can be redistributed.

• **Waste to energy Plant (9)** – the plant will affect the whole life of the neighbourhood in a positive manner, reforming the space, providing work opportunities and resources in a new self-sustainable manner. It will co-exist with recycling, sorting out material and burning only non recyclables. Thus energy is produced.

• **Anaerobic Digester (10)**– to treat food waste and sewage sludge. Methane rich biogas is drawn from the tanks and converted in renewable electricity and heat using CHP gas engines. Suficient E+ and heat meet the demand of the entire Recycling Center, while surplus E+ is exported to the quarter. Fertilizer is also produced. The process creates sustainable circular economy and shrinks CO² footprint ( with 0.5 and 1.0 tonnes less Co² for 1 tonne of food waste).

• **Granule/Rdf plant (11)** – where all the plastic from Tarlabasi can be recycled to create the new urban plastic roads of the neighbourhood(shred + mix polymer); 1.prefabricated and modular; 2: smaller carbon footprint than a traditional road; 3: incorporates a hollow space that can (temporary) store water, thus preventing flooding; 4: can be used for the transit of cables and pipes thus preventing excavation damage.
To be added in Tarlabası

- **Meeting places for women/ Women’s center (12)** – to interact, work together, be educated.


- **Food Hall (14)** – where local food can be served at low price.

- **Closed (Sunday Market) and open markets (Farmer’s Market/ Textile Market) (15)** – to support the local production of food and goods.

- **Health care and Emergency Room (16)** – providing essential first aid.

- **Commercial studios and office space (17)** – to attract new businesses to the area.

- **Education facilities (18)** – more schools for children, high schools dedicated to practical studies, language school and a night school.

- **Kinder garden and playgrounds (19)** – for the youngest members of Tarlabasi.

- **Sport facilities and green area (20)** – for sports and recreational use
HOW BIG IS THE UPCOMING WATER PROBLEM IN ISTANBUL?

Today Istanbul faces a huge water scarcity. In Thrace region one has to dig as far as 200 meters deep. The booming industry is part of the problem. While currently it is putting huge pressure on water resources, it is expected to grow four to five times more, and thus exhaust a large portion of the remaining water supply. At the same time the climate change in Turkey has become more evident. Today drought, whirlwinds and downpours caused by excess heating of the surface threaten urban life.

Prof. Orhan Sen (Istanbul Technical University) claims that the cause of heavy rainfalls causing flooding is not due to global warming alone but also because of the urban settlement of Istanbul. The rural agricultural areas around the city have shrunk drastically due to brutal implementation of concrete projects. Thus, flooding occurs, the drainage system lacks the capacity to carry the excess water and overflows, and the water drags everything along its way.

Hence the on-site water management in Tarlabasi is designed in a couple of connected cycles. One is the rainwater harvest from the rooftops of the buildings. Each house is equipped with an underground rainwater tank for grey-water recycling. In this way the freshwater consumption can be reduced in autumn and winter (up to 20-25%). During heavy flows the rain gardens, swales and park area can collect and convey rainwater to the Anaerobic Digester in the Recycling Center, where it can be further treated. In case of redundant rainwater, there are two big storage water tanks in the area.
The greywater system is implemented in both private and public buildings. The water undergoes slight treatment on site and therefore can be used again for secondary purposes (such as washing, irrigation, toilet flushing). Reusing the greywater will reduce the overall freshwater consumption in the area even further and release the pressure from the sewage network. The sludge is conveyed to the Anaerobic Digester where together with the organic neighborhood waste it can provide for sur-plus daily resources (fertilizer, biogas, E+, heat). Thus also meeting the demand of the Center itself. The rest of the non-recyclable and non-hazardous waste will be burned in the Waste to Energy Plant and produce electricity for the tram and houses, whereas putting a stop to the electricity cut-offs in Tarlabasi.
The transportation system is designed for a walkable and permeable street pattern. The design takes advantage of the natural topography to address the water run-off problem on site. Different typologies are used in case of the streets - depending on the location and gradient of the individual street - bioswales, open channels, pervious strips; and in case of squares and green areas - rain gardens, ponds and rainwater harvesting tanks. This aims at easing the stress from the drainage system, while accumulating and directing water to the Recycle Center area. Furthermore, the new permeable plastic roads incorporate a hollow space that can (temporary) store water, thus preventing flooding.

The improved main (Tram, Car, Pedestrian, and Park) streets feature enough trade opportunity with their first floors and frontages, ranging from large stores to small workshops, designed as an artery for local commerce. This strategy allows for a reintroduction of micro economy and a stimulation of overall employment. Apart from the main two roads (refer to the illustration on the right) the area will be drivable only at strategic places and for special occasions such as emergencies, deliveries or waste-traffic collection.

The new tram and bus stops will give equal transportation opportunities regardless of the exact location the residents live in. The closest transport (bus, tram or metro) will always be maximum 10-12 minutes away. ‘Outsiders’ from adjacent areas can make use of the new qualities in the quarter: shop, perform errands, use the public buildings, look at the historical architecture and workshops, or simply change transport.
As the only green stretch accessible in the area the narrow park and its recreational patterns is connecting the site with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Fig.25: Watter traffic. Diagram. Author’s illustration.
The Phasing

5.10

Development Phase 1

5 years

Development Phase 2

7 years

Development Phase 3

10 years

Redefine the Political Scale

The Community Center

The Community Center will be established at the core of the Pedestrian Link, creating a new political level, an important pillar of urban integration across wider social sectors.

Muhtar with Citizen Council

Muhtar is an existing political figure, watching the well-being of the neighbourhood. Hence, he will be the political figure to settle at the new community center and deal with the local issues.

Clean the Shaft

Repurpose & Activate

The Pedestrian Link

Establish the new pedestrian connection to south and north, starting from the empty plots.

Improve Existent Fabric and Start Rebuilding with the New Re-cycled Typologies, Develop Urban Public Space

Waste Management Training Programs

Start education the community on waste management cycles.

Start Cleaning on Block and Neighbourhood Levels

Transformed into agents to develop re-cycle economy

Start Cleaning on Block and Neighbourhood Levels

Start collecting the accumulated garbage, position temporary waste stations.

New Pedestrian Connection Through the Boulevard - Underpass, Crossings, Designated Bus Stops

Redistribution and Re-use of Materials from the Abandoned, Restavrated and Unused Buildings into the Existing Structures

Start Building the New Section of the Historical Tram

Improve the Streetscape and Its Use Including a Stormwater New Green Connection Through the Site

Stimulate Historical Craftsman Ship Practice by Including It Into New Building Processes. Provide Educational Facilities for Artists

New Touristic Route

Position Permanent Waste Stations
The project progression can be phased as: the preservation stage, the development stage, the activation stage, and the water/waste collection stage. These stages are expected to overlap and work interconnected for a realization of a re-imagined and a more sustainable Tarlabasi.
The Phasing

The project undergoes four development phases.

**The first development** stage starts from the empty plot by creating an alternative and safe pedestrian route from south to north and through the heart of the site where a new square lies. Thus, a physical and mental connection is established, from Istiklal Street, under passing the big boulevard and through Tarlabasi.

In this stage the **local political scale is redefined**. The community Center is established at the core of the Pedestrian/bike route creating a new political level – important provider of urban integration across wider social sectors. Muhtar (local mayor) with Citizen Council (*refer to author’s illustration on p. 117*) is the new political figure to deal with the local issues.

The existing industrial buildings are transformed to compose the local Recycling waste center with Waste to energy plant, Biogas digester, Compost and Sorting facilities, Granule plant and Pulp warehouse. They act as agents to develop the new recycle economy and provide new jobs for the community. Temporary waste stations are placed and waste management training programs begin. At the same time the cleaning on block and neighbourhood level launches to a) **clean the environment** b) **restore historical units** c) **start buildings’ transformation** and d) **start redistribution and reuse of materials**. Two of the informal bus stops are designated permanent positions.
Step by Step

The second development stage concentrates on building the first arm of the new section of the historical tram to the west, including a high speed cycle pathway. That includes improvement of the streetscape by widening up the road, while incorporating storm water system and redirecting the sewage towards the Recycle center area. Tram interim square is establish at the west entrance of the neighbourhood along with new public facilities. Space for the Sunday market is provided by re-purposing a two floor empty factory. Permanent waste stations are positioned. Two new tram stops and one informal bus stop are designated permanent positions. The rebuilding of the recycled typologies continues.

The third development stage completes the second arm of the new section of the historical tram to the east and connects to the pedestrian Taxim Square. The development opens up to a narrow stretched park area that becomes a new destination node with recreational patterns. New educational facilities for apprenticeship are built in order to stimulate the historical craftsmanship practice. Permanent waste stations are positioned. Three new tram stops and one informal bus stop are designated permanent positions.

The fourth development stage consists of the development in-between. The rest of the plots are redesigned and rebuilt when needed. Additional public space and more social activities are provided. All 7 permanent waste stations are positioned. All new infrastructure aiding to safe movement culture on the Tarlabasi Boulevard is completed. The neighbourhood is ready to withstand the challenges of time!
This is how the neighbourhood will look like in recycled Tarlabasi. Waste traffic processes and more urban meeting places sit together. Old, new, and recycled fabric will co-exist in the new typologies and dictate the new lifestyle in this reclaimed land. Semi-private courtyards will allow for glimpses at the local lifestyle. The different types of street will give structure and ease of access to the area. The community will organize the space in a rich street network with small businesses spreading over, and thus empowering the quarter to exist in self-sufficient manner. The brand new tram-interim square will welcome the newcomers to the neighbourhood while the bell of the nostalgic tram will guide them through the site.
Urban and Architectural strategies combined
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE STREETS

There will be five types of streets in Tarlabasi. (see typology location map to the right).

The already established links are widened (on one side only), sacrificing some decaying building mass in order to establish the new hierarchy. The street typologies are designed to give back space for public activities, while dealing with traffic, water, and shade issues. These can be used by cars, but the space is shared with bikes, tram, and pedestrians, while compensating for the lack of open public spaces.

The extended tram line creates a direct physical connection to Taxim Square but also connects the local squares, park and Recycle Center area along its way.

The pedestrian link extends from Istiklal Street through new underpass and provides social space with parklets for small commerces and bike corals. It is meant to be a gathering place for the community; a promenade hidden from the more busy streets. The bike path is an important new inner link in Tarlabasi, which will make it easier for pedestrians and bikes (electrical and regular) to get by the area.

The main access road concentrates the car traffic in one main axes and thus leaves the life in the rest of the area undisrupted. It accommodates much wider swales compared to the rest of the streets and provides for parking opportunities.
Urban and Architectural strategies combined

The road by the new green stretch or else the Park road is one way road (car and tram) that accommodates an open channel to direct excess water from the slightly elevated green area to the Recycle Center area.

In between the smaller streets a slower pace of life is taking place. The idea is that in these alleyways the living space can be rearranged by the inhabitants and according to their needs. Some streets will provide sitting opportunities and pervious strips with trees and greenery, others can incorporate centrally positioned swales as a strategy to prevent cars from entering.

Fig.28: Street Typology Location Map. Author's illustration.
Fig. 29: Kurdela Street today.
Source of images: https://yandex.com.tr

Fig. 30: Kurdela Street: Currents street vs Proposed street. Author’s illustration.
A. Main Tram Street

Fig. 31: Tram Street Axonometric. Author’s illustration.
The New Street Hierarchy

Fig. 32: Çukur Street today.
source of images: https://yandex.com.tr
Author photography.

Fig. 33: Çukur Street: Current street vs Proposed street. Author’s illustration.
B. Main Pedestrian Link

Fig. 34: Main Pedestrian Link
Axonometric. Author’s illustration.
Fig. 35: Kalyoncu Kulluğu Street today. 
source of images: https://yandex.com.tr
Author photography.

Fig. 36: Kalyoncu Kulluğu Street: 
Currents street vs Proposed street. 
Author’s illustration.
C. Main Access Road

Fig. 37: Main Access Street
Axonometric. Author’s illustration.
The New Street Hierarchy

Fig. 38: Kapanca Street today.
source of images: https://yandex.com.tr

Fig. 39: Kapanca Street: Current street vs Proposed street. Author’s illustration.
D. Park Road

Fig. 40: Park Road Street
Axonometric. Author’s illustration.
The New Street Hierarchy

5.11

CAR FREE ALLEYS
5-7 M

Fig. 41: Alleyways today. Author photography.

Fig. 42: Alleyways: Current street vs Proposed street. Author’s illustration.
E. Car Free Alleys

Fig. 43: Car free Alleyways
Axonometric. Author's illustration.
Climbing Up The Hill

LET’S CLimb up the TarlabAsi LandsCape TOGETher!

In this ‘dream’ of Tarlabasi the new proportions allow for life to take place on different levels. On basement level, where the Kapici performs his daily duties, further separating the residence’s waste and loading his electric bike trailer. He is in preparation to make his first daily course to the nearby Waste transfer station. On street level, where the vibrant Tarlabasi life is boiling with loud functions and enterprises, where local dogs and cats lie untroubled by the small shops that take care of them for years. Inside the historical tram, while going back home from a long day at work. In the revived courtyards, where women are using the laundry sheds and children are playing. In the public square where neighbours are chatting and sipping their afternoon cay and there is always something to do and discuss. In the bow-fronted windows of the new bright flats, observing the everyday peculiarities down there, and yet with a pinch of difference compared to yesterday. In the greenhouses watering one last time the vegetables that will be sold on Sunday’s market. And on rooftops enjoying the view of the multicultural vibrant new Tarlabasi.

(Please notice that in the two sections on the next pages water traffic is explained in blue, while the buildings are colour coded according to their state.)
Community Development

Fig. 44: Master Plan Proposal. Author's illustration.
Fig. 45: Sections AA’. Author’s illustration.
NORTH-SOUTH (AA')
Fig. 46: Sections AA’. @ original scale 1:175. Author’s illustration.
Fig. 47: Sections BB’ @ original scale 1:175. Author’s illustration.
Fig. 48: Sections BB’ @ original scale 1:175. Author’s illustration.

Fig. 49: Trash chute details at original scale 1:10. Author’s illustration.
Residential real estate can be one of the most reliable means to allow urban poor to gain wealth and by engaging the local stakeholders in the process, a new partnership procurement model can be set up for the development of Tarlabasi. A Neighborhood Housing Association that will include the property owners, community support and tenant aid associations.

This coalition between the developer and the resident can ensure locality, protecting the development from the hungry bureaucracy. Thus in exchange of land and floor space, without beginning capital, the landowners will be able to regenerate, repair, expand and maintain their properties. This kind of voluntary transformation can also lead the developer to work on a building to building level, which can greatly reduce the costs included in the rehabilitation initiatives and therefore allow the dwellers to stay in Tarlabasi.

The law (act.5366) designates the quarter as a renewal zone and allows for financial capital to be infused by actors on all levels. The law (act.775) allows for a general amnesty and integration into municipal infrastructural services along with allocation of national housing funds. To conclude, this combination seems to be the optimal solution to allow both private and public investment on an urban level, while stabilizing the existing community.
Fig. 1: Water square. Author’s illustration.
What’s happening in Tarlabasi is not a first and neither will it be the last. It is rare that rapid urbanization in a developing country arrives without a price tag to be paid by the vulnerable and the unprivileged, bringing a fresh wave of social injustice and urban decay.

This thesis is an attempt to ground a specific place in space and time into a form that can be recognized in different places and times. It is only by this method of recognition that we can recollect and measure "value", something so deeply ingrained in our judgment and yet rarely taken into account when it comes to large scale change or the idea of progress. From the security of our childhood homes to the comfort of the community in a shared neighbourhood space, the attachments that we experience towards urban spaces are not so distinct from their own memory. A memory of a place lies in its history, culture and architectural heritage. Through replication and disneyfication, the wide spread obliteration of local identity has a far greater impact on the DNA of both the present and the future social consciousness than its immediate socio-economical victims who are also to be recognized.

People are born with a sense to belong – to a family, to a group, to a social class, to a race, to a nation. What lies under these identities is a shared collective memory and consciousness. Local culture and texture should always be a main focus of preservation and thus any change to come should revolve around them rather than trying to undermine them. While there are different means, incentives and
partnerships to aid regeneration of historic cores of our cities, many of them exclude the human factor. It is a drawback our generation needs to overcome in order to create fairer, more sustainable, and more unique cities.

From architectural heritage standpoint, I believe Tarlabasi is the right place to take the first steps towards a new, socially-inclusive uplift. By treating such a mistreated and violated quarter as a valuable asset by its own virtue, addressing and solving its problems using site specific solutions rather than applying textbook reformation, Istanbul can finally redeem itself and atone for its denial of its culturally rich past. This seems to be the only way for it to reground itself in history and wear the mantle of the city where the east meets the west at the intersection of Europe and Asia Minor. Tarlabasi can be a stepping stone to recognize another kind of imperial glory, one that rests on cultivating state sponsored co-existence rather than a monolithic profit machine that feeds on star projects. This is also something that will create a larger profit on the long run because it will create a marketable locality, a currency very much desired in this day and age in a world that is getting exceedingly similar.

Waste Field, Front Field is a project that explores how through cautious strategies and respect to the local heritage and collective memory, challenges could be transformed into opportunities. These ought to be based on integrated neighbourhood improvements for new circular economies, creating better living conditions, and creating resilience and sustainability.
Today’s Tarlabasi is sunk in piles of waste literally as much as metaphorically due to it being entirely cut off from the municipal waste management system. *Waste Field, Front Field* project adopts a strategy revolving around re-cycle, re-use and re-distribution circuit both on architectural and urban level. The waste is seen as an opportunity for a new urbanity to take place and a major financial resource to be harvested. It is aimed that the revitalized Tarlabasi will boost up on site micro-economy, generate infrastructure, and provide employment, sowing the seeds for a new collective mentality to emerge. This type of redevelopment can enable the residents to be able to carry the responsibility of their own neighbourhood, creating a local partner that the state can rely on in terms of resource, ideas and practical work. Since the funding is limited, community engagement and incremental building process seems to be locomotive for making the real progress. This ‘dream’ of Tarlabasi is the way to secure its future and help it proudly reclaim its place as a mixed income district in the heart of the city.
Appendix - typology research and precedents

Tarlabasi House type I:

source: https://www.cati-mimarlik.com
Appendix - typology research and precedents

Tarlabası House type II:

source: http://www.nomarcimimarlik.com/restorasyon.html
Appendix - typology research and precedents

Tarlabasi House type III a:

source: http://www.bkmim.com
http://nettavip.com
Tarlabasi House type III b:
Tarlabası House type IV:

source: https://www.arkadmimarlik.com/
Appendix - typology research and precedents

Tarlabasi House type V:

source: http://www.nomarcimimarlik.com/restorasyon.html
Appendix - typology research and precedents

Tarlabasi House type VI:

source: https://sea-architects.com
Tarlabası House type VII:

source: http://www.nomarcmimarlik.com/restorasyon.html
Appendix - typology research and precedents

Tarlabasi House type VIII:

source: https://sea-architects.com
01 Introduction


02 Istanbul


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5. ibid.


5. Oktay Ekinci, *İstanbul’u Sarsan On Yıl: 1983-1993*(The ten Years that have shaken Istanbul), (İstanbul: Anahtar Yayınları, 1994).

6. Architectural style referring to European influenced, predominantly used in Pera.

8. ibid.

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7. Data extracted from TUIK 2000 population census data.


10. ibid

11. ibid.


5. ibid.

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7. Ömer Köse, Sait Ayaz, Burak Koroglu, “Waste Management in Turkey- National Regulation and Evaluation of Implementation Results”, Turkish Court of Accounts [online, 2007 ],pp 32,


Interviews

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List of Figures

01 Introduction

Figure 1. Author’s personal photography.
Figure 2. Retrieved <https://www.weloveist.com/streets-children-tarlabasi>.
Figure 3. Author’s personal photography.
Figure 4. Author’s personal photography.
Figure 5. Retrieved <https://www.timeout.com/istanbul/tr/goeruelmesi-gereken-yerler/istanbulun-terk-edilmis-binalari>.
Figure 6. Author’s personal photography.

Cover Photography by the author of this thesis report.

02 Istanbul
Cover Photography by the author of this thesis report.
Figure 1 and 2. Retrieved April 14, 2017 <https://archives.saltresearch.org/>.
Figure 4. Author’s personal illustration.
Figure 5. Retrieved April 14, 2017 <http://gundemaktuel.com/haber/1755/tarlabasinda-yok-edilen-hayatlar-rezan-has-muzesinde>.
Figure 6. Retrieved April 14, 2017 <http://www.istanbulguide.net/istguide/quartiers/tarlababa.htm>.
Figure 7. Author’s personal photography.
Figure 9. Retrieved April 14, 2017 <https://archives.saltresearch.org/>.
04 Mapping

Cover Photography by the author of this thesis report; middle image
Figure 1. Scanned from Tarlabasi Project Official booklet.
Figure 2. Retrieved December 7, 2016 <http://www.beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/tarlabasi/detay/Avan-Projeler/29/34/0>.
Figure 3. Retrieved December 7, 2016 <http://www.beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/tarlabasi/detay/Avan-Projeler/29/34/0>.
Figure 5. Scanned from Tarlabasi Project Official booklet.
Figure 6. Author’s personal photography.
Figure 7. Author’s personal photography.
Figure 12. Author’s personal illustration.
Figure 13. Retrieved December 11, 2016 <https://52suburbs.com/suburb/tarlabasi/>.
Figure 14. Author’s personal photography.

List of Figures

05 Design Narrative

Cover illustration by the author of this thesis report.
Figure 1., 2., and 3. Author’s personal illustration.
Figure 31. Author’s personal illustration.
Figure 34. Author’s personal illustration.
Figure 35. and 36. and 27. Author’s personal illustration.
Figure 40., 41., 42., 45., 46., 47., 48. and 49. Author’s personal illustration.
06 A Rework Through the Golden Mean

Figure 1. Author’s personal illustration.

07 Thoughts and Reflections

Figure 1. Author’s personal photography of detail model at original scale 1:1 00.

Front Cover and Back Cover: Illustration and photography by Author.
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All artwork and photographs presented in this book are
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WASTE FIELD, FRONT FIELD

Modular Incremental Re-cycling of Waste and Fabric