

ABSTRACT: Mass rural to urban migration, authoritarian political rule and the neo-liberalist economy it allows have created an urbanity where the real estate developer rules and the individual becomes impotent in his ability to affect change in his own built environment. Endlessly proliferating without strategy, without regards to sustainability goals, this urban landscape can only be tackled by an intervention in its development process. I propose a new entity in the development process which enables the citizens to have control over their own built environment. Just as the design is an intervention in the process, the model I introduce is also fluid one. A multi-player role playing game models out physical and social changes over time.

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**IN OUR GENERATION,
2.9 BILLION** MORE
PEOPLE WILL LIVE IN THE CITY**



WHERE WILL THEY LIVE?

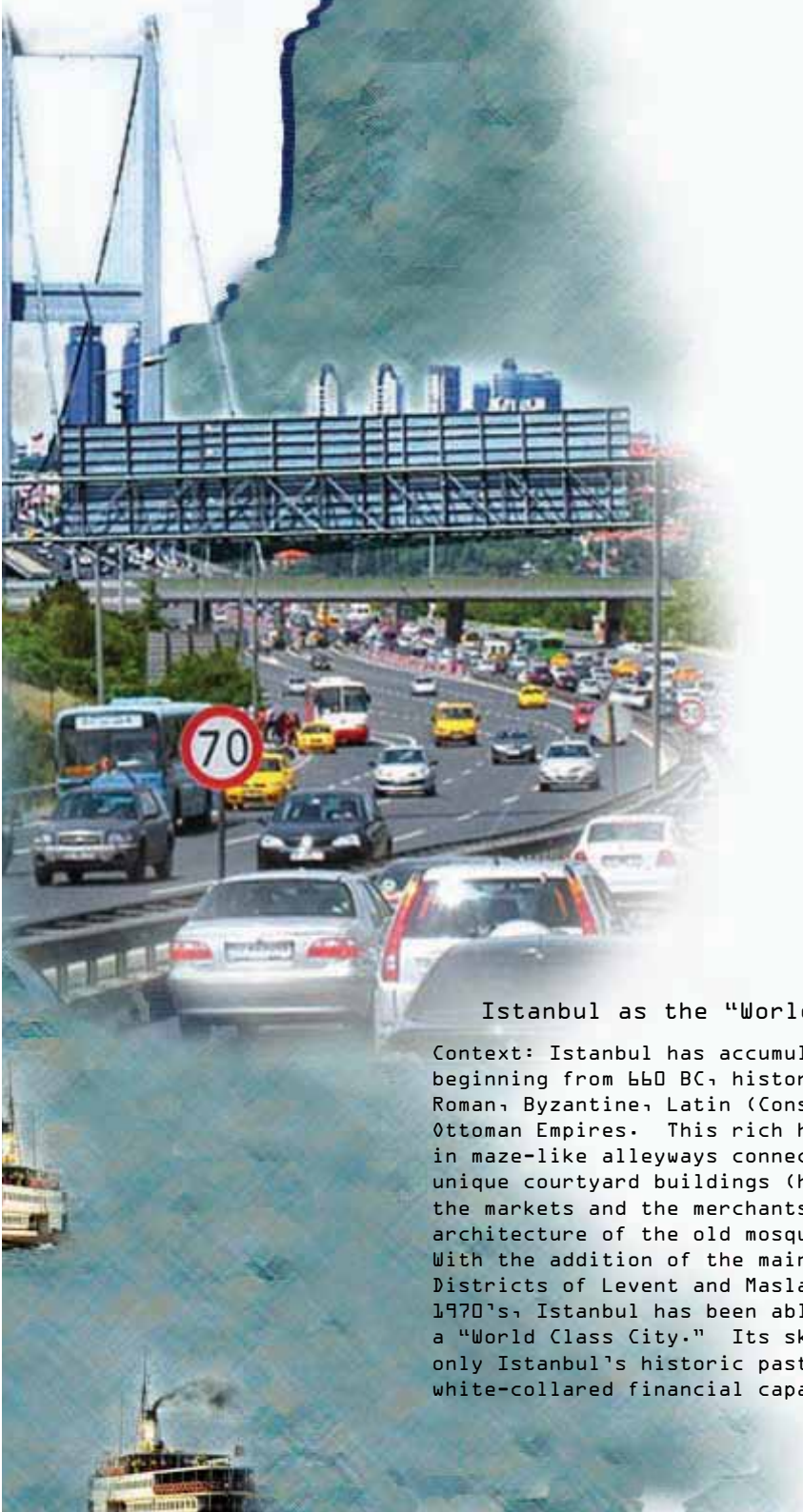
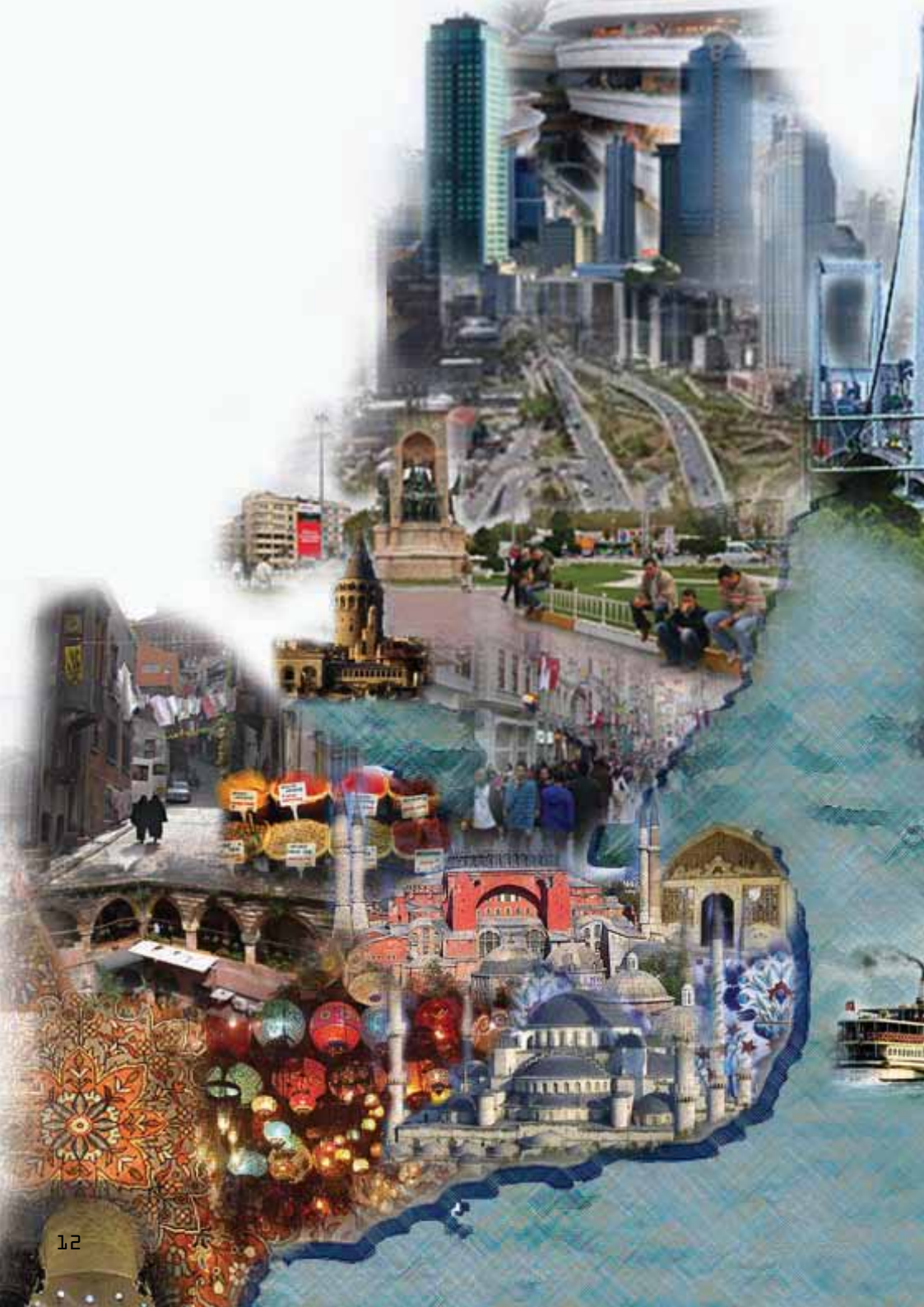


HOW WILL WE DESIGN FOR THIS MIGRATION?





**OR DO WE NEED TO INTERVENE
IN THIS PROCESS IN ORDER TO
DESIGN FOR CHANGE?**

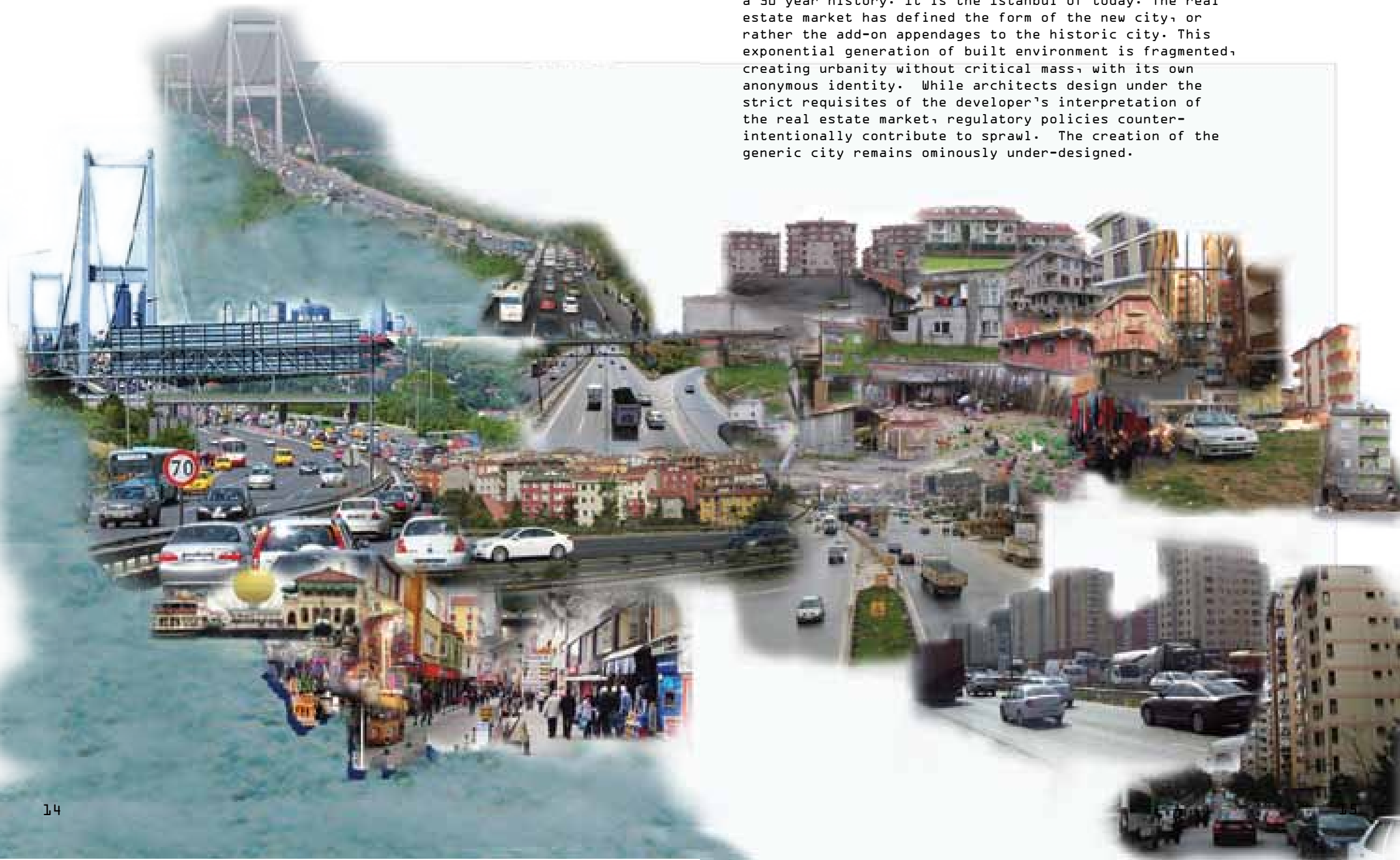


Istanbul as the "World Class City"

Context: Istanbul has accumulated memories beginning from 660 BC, historic throughout the Roman, Byzantine, Latin (Constantinople), and Ottoman Empires. This rich history has resulted in maze-like alleyways connecting bazaars, unique courtyard buildings (hans) which housed the markets and the merchants, and iconic grand architecture of the old mosques and of the palace. With the addition of the main Central Business Districts of Levent and Maslak beginning from the 1970's, Istanbul has been able to market itself as a "World Class City." Its skyline symbolizes not only Istanbul's historic past, but also its modern white-collared financial capabilities.

Istanbul as the "Generic City"

But beyond the skyline is an Istanbul that is outside of the global gaze, it is the Istanbul where 2/3** of its citizen's commute from, it is the Istanbul which has only a 50 year history. It is the Istanbul of today. The real estate market has defined the form of the new city, or rather the add-on appendages to the historic city. This exponential generation of built environment is fragmented, creating urbanity without critical mass, with its own anonymous identity. While architects design under the strict requisites of the developer's interpretation of the real estate market, regulatory policies counter-intentionally contribute to sprawl. The creation of the generic city remains ominously under-designed.



[Urban mush*]

urban fabric lacking cohesion and identity, the product of flash development and organic adaptation

Understanding:

Peripheral living is a standard element of the "world class" modern city. As workers who are unable to find jobs in rural areas arrive to the city, they latch onto networks of extended family or friends originating from the same village. In the past, this could have meant building a house in the same gecekondu (informal settlement). Now, with higher economic stakes as land values rise, the government has toughened its previously laissez-faire stance on squatting. Arriving to the city means renting a flat in a low cost peripheral area. The main function of this peripheral living is to provide the low-cost real estate needed to house the working class which supports the ever-growing concentration of service and cultural industries within the city.

Concern:

Mass rural to urban migration, authoritarian political rule and the neo-liberalist economy it allows have created an urbanity where the real estate developer rules and the individual becomes impotent in his ability to affect change in his own built environment. This "urban mush" is the manifestation of political and economic processes. In order to make a substantial impact on the built environment, we must intervene in the system of real-estate development. To enter this discussion we must fully grasp the capacities of neo-liberalism. Drawing of master plans or site specific architectural intervention is not going to stop this proliferation of this urban condition.



builder's investment in community



built by the landowner financed by personal/family savings and bank loans



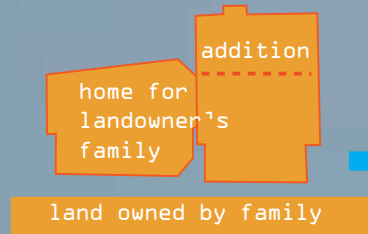
built by small-scale developer. landowner does not invest any money. in exchange, developer receives half the land rights and half the flats



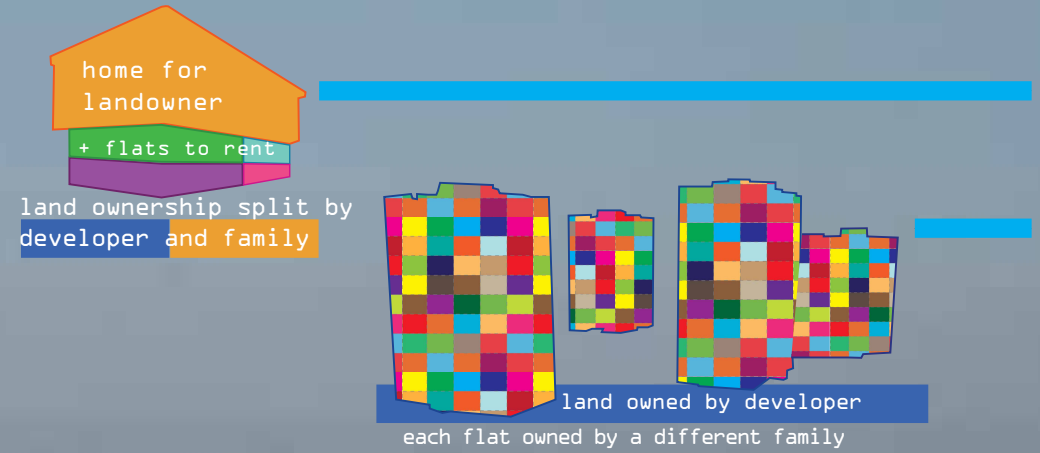
built by corporate developer investment comes from large entities such as the government, TOKI. buyers of each flat can pay in low rate long term installments.

While governmental entities such as Toki and KIPTAS have turned their attention and their financing to gated communities, plot by plot development (where each real estate plot is owned by one individual) still accounts for most of Istanbul's growth. Turkey has had a history of landowners building their own homes, but as the housing demand increased due to the influx of rural to urban migration began in the 1950's new zoning regulations raised building height limits allowing individual landowners to provide more rental housing. Individual landowners had been able to finance and manage the constructions of their houses before, but now as the ambitions of the buildings were larger, the financial and project help of a developer became necessary. This puts major decisions of building on the capabilities and the attitudes of the developer.



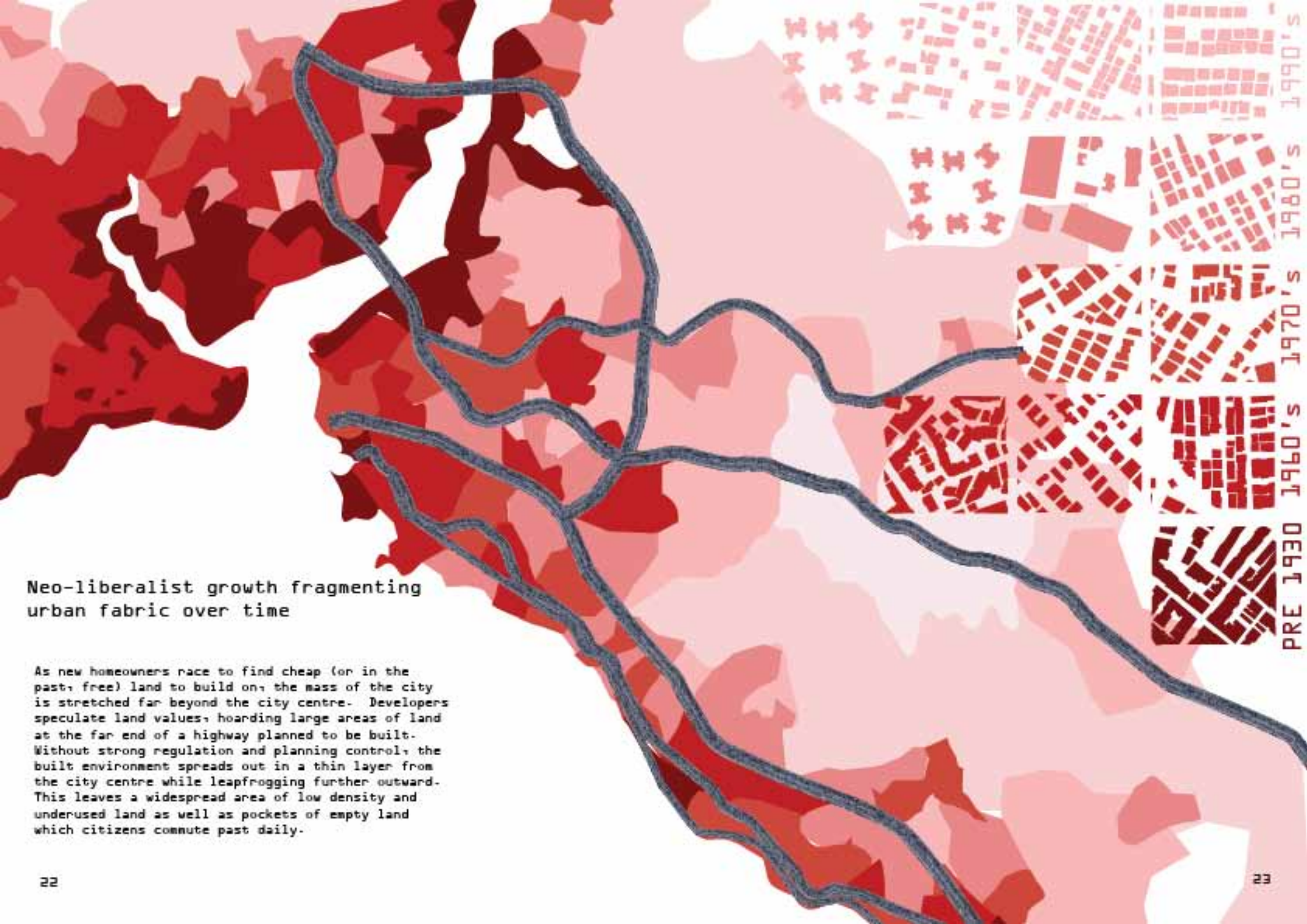


In this condition, the individual citizen's ability to make change is greatly diminished; how can citizens shift to an environmentally sustainable lifestyle, when all choices are made by the developer and the developer's perceptions of market trends? Neo-liberalist rapid growth of the built environment in developing economies is greatly compounding the consequences of this real-estate development process.



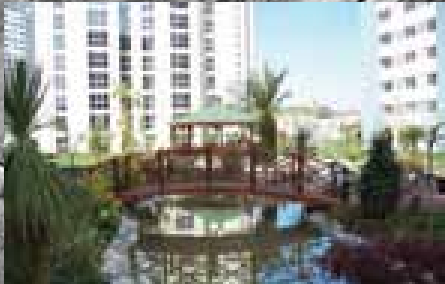
individual's capability to change own built environment based on ownership





Neo-liberalist growth fragmenting urban fabric over time

As new homeowners race to find cheap (or in the past, free) land to build on, the mass of the city is stretched far beyond the city centre. Developers speculate land values, hoarding large areas of land at the far end of a highway planned to be built. Without strong regulation and planning control, the built environment spreads out in a thin layer from the city centre while leapfrogging further outward. This leaves a widespread area of low density and underused land as well as pockets of empty land which citizens commute past daily.



These gated communities are marketed heavily as a modern and western and most importantly social status symbol.



252 m

Concern:
[The developer's increasing role in built environment]
Market driven development defers the bulk of decisions made about the build environment to the developer. The gated community, either towers or villa, is an example of an urban typology which manifests the impotent landowner, where housing consumers can only choose to buy into a pre-determined system. Outside of the gated communities, developers still have a heavy hand in forming the urban fabric at large.



During my field research, I had the pleasure of living with a family residing in Acibadem. A residential neighborhood close to Kadikoy, Acibadem was one of the earliest areas to be upgraded by the small scaled developer. Elif Özkaya reminisces of her childhood home which had been built by her grandfather. She described the house which her grandfather had hired an architect to design, as quirky and unique. The L shaped house was "2 ½ levels" and had three sections, one for her grandparents, one for her parents, and additional one to rent out.



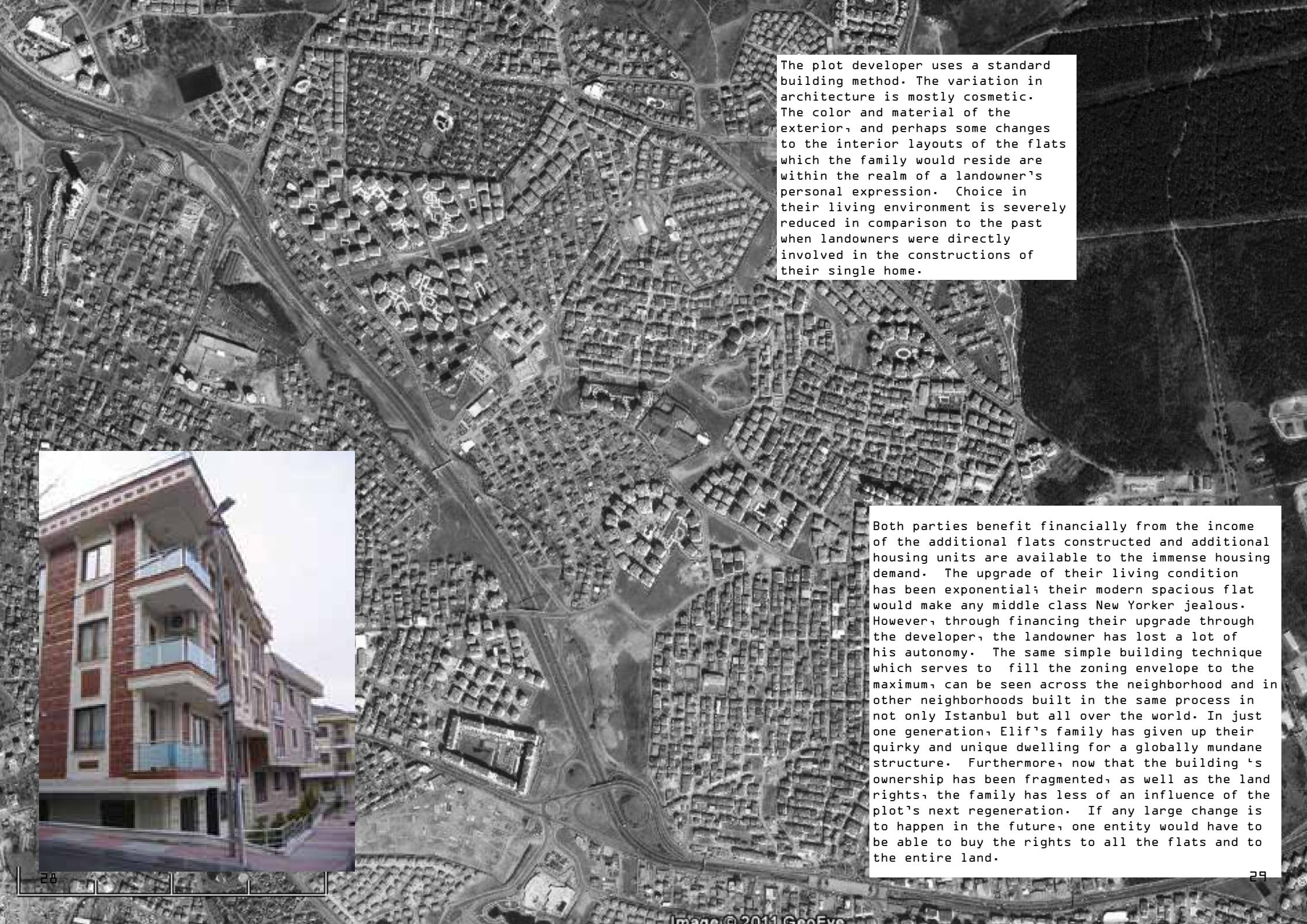
Beginning in 1994, the first houses in the area were being upgraded from houses into apartments. In 2000, her father was approached by a developer who had just completed the construction of another unit in the neighborhood. Her father, impressed with the work of this developer, agreed to the upgrade of their house. Following a standard contract agreement, the developer built a new multi-story apartment building on the plot of Elif's old house without charging a construction fee. Elif's family lived in a nearby rented flat paid by the developer during the three years of construction work. In exchange, the developer received half the flats in the new apartment as well as half the land rights.



Her grandfather had gone into debt despite saving up for years to buy the land and built the house. Elif remembers the house had been crowded but it was surrounded by a garden which has now been paved over to be a parking lot for the many tenants who live there today. When her grandfather bought the plot of land in 1962, people warned him that buying real estate so far away from the city was a huge investment mistake. Plots in the neighborhood had been given away by bank lottery; two generations ago the potential value of the land had not been apparent. Then the Q-1 highway and the Bosphorous Bridge was built in 1973, connecting Acibadem directly to the city center.

The developer, who had built a little office hut on-site for the duration of the 3 year long project had become close with the family. Elif's father had visited the site daily to check in on the progress. However, there was not much for Elif's family to make decisions about. Their new apartment was essentially a replica of the developer's previously constructed unit. The family was able to make some adjustments of the interior of their own flat.



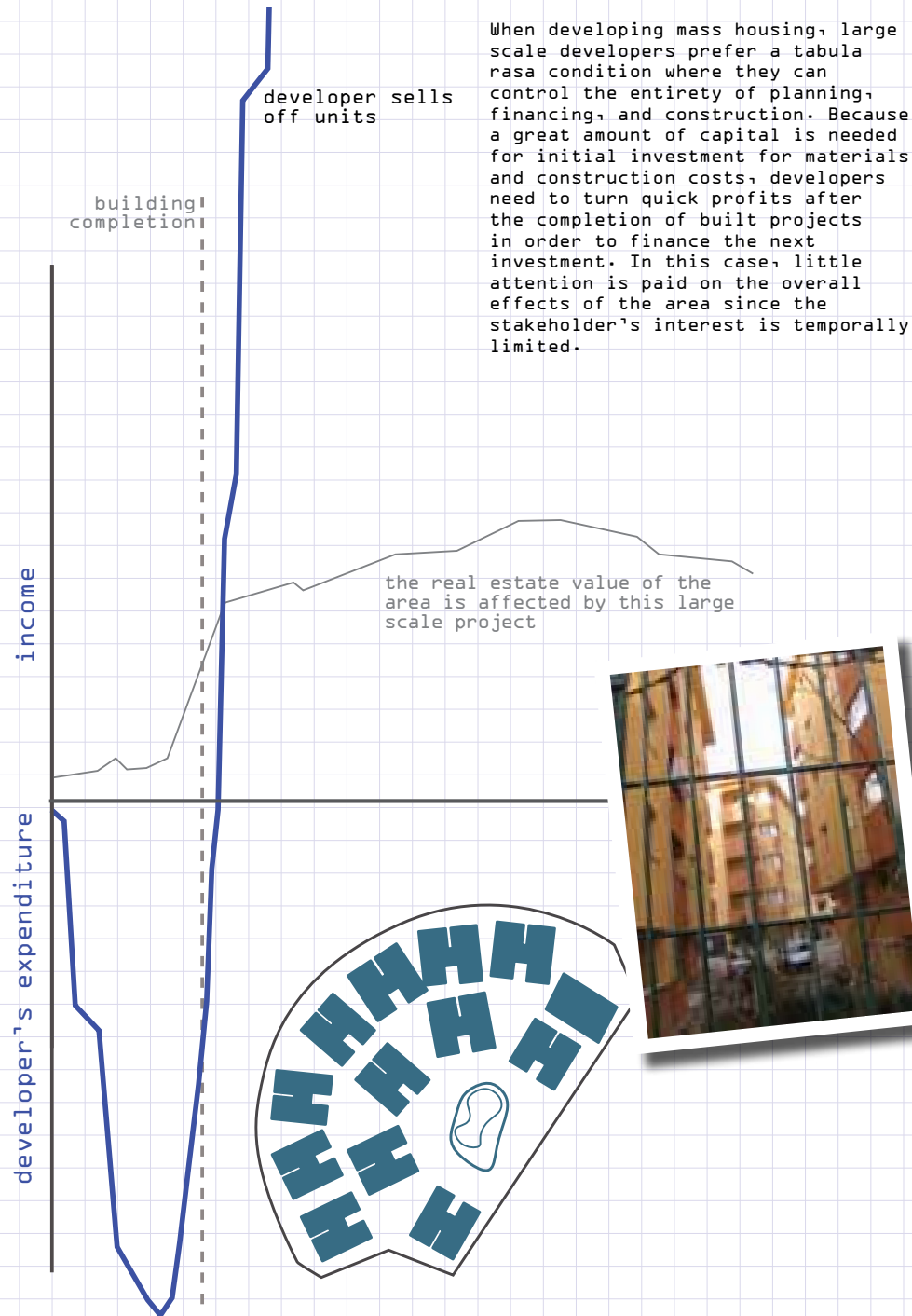


The plot developer uses a standard building method. The variation in architecture is mostly cosmetic. The color and material of the exterior, and perhaps some changes to the interior layouts of the flats which the family would reside are within the realm of a landowner's personal expression. Choice in their living environment is severely reduced in comparison to the past when landowners were directly involved in the constructions of their single home.



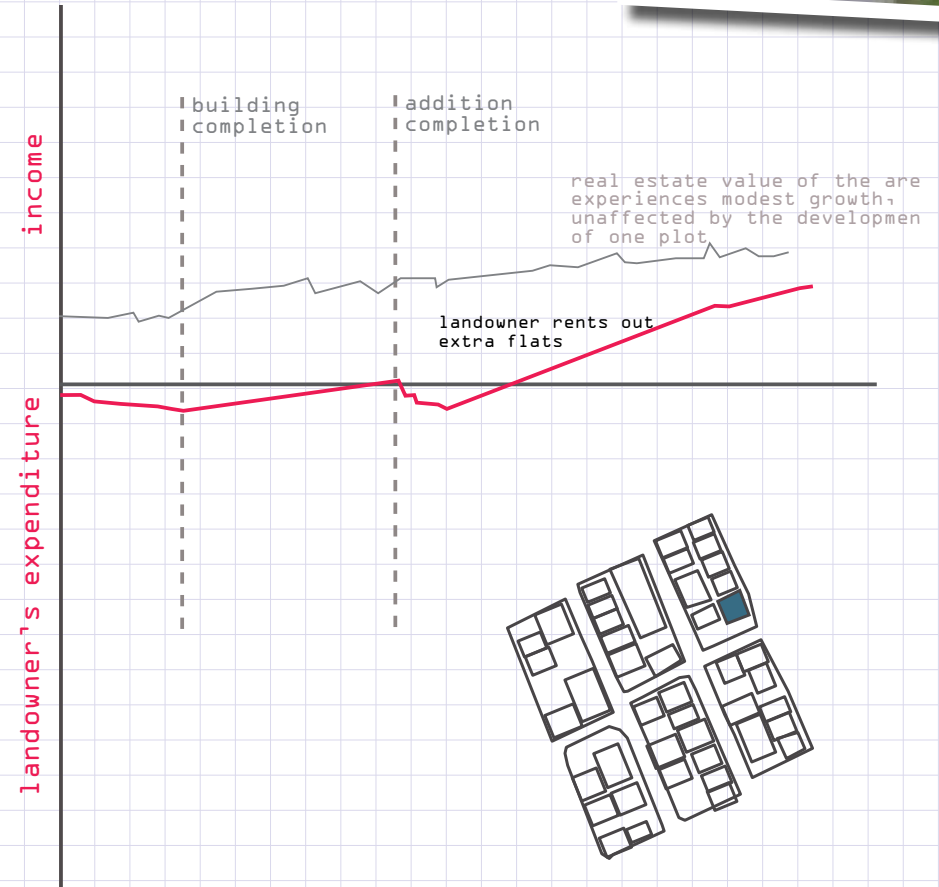
Both parties benefit financially from the income of the additional flats constructed and additional housing units are available to the immense housing demand. The upgrade of their living condition has been exponential; their modern spacious flat would make any middle class New Yorker jealous. However, through financing their upgrade through the developer, the landowner has lost a lot of his autonomy. The same simple building technique which serves to fill the zoning envelope to the maximum, can be seen across the neighborhood and in other neighborhoods built in the same process in not only Istanbul but all over the world. In just one generation, Elif's family has given up their quirky and unique dwelling for a globally mundane structure. Furthermore, now that the building's ownership has been fragmented, as well as the land rights, the family has less of an influence of the plot's next regeneration. If any large change is to happen in the future, one entity would have to be able to buy the rights to all the flats and to the entire land.

[[large scale developer]]

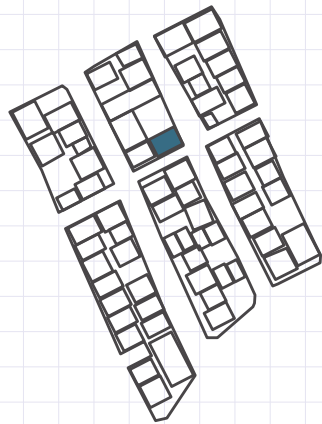
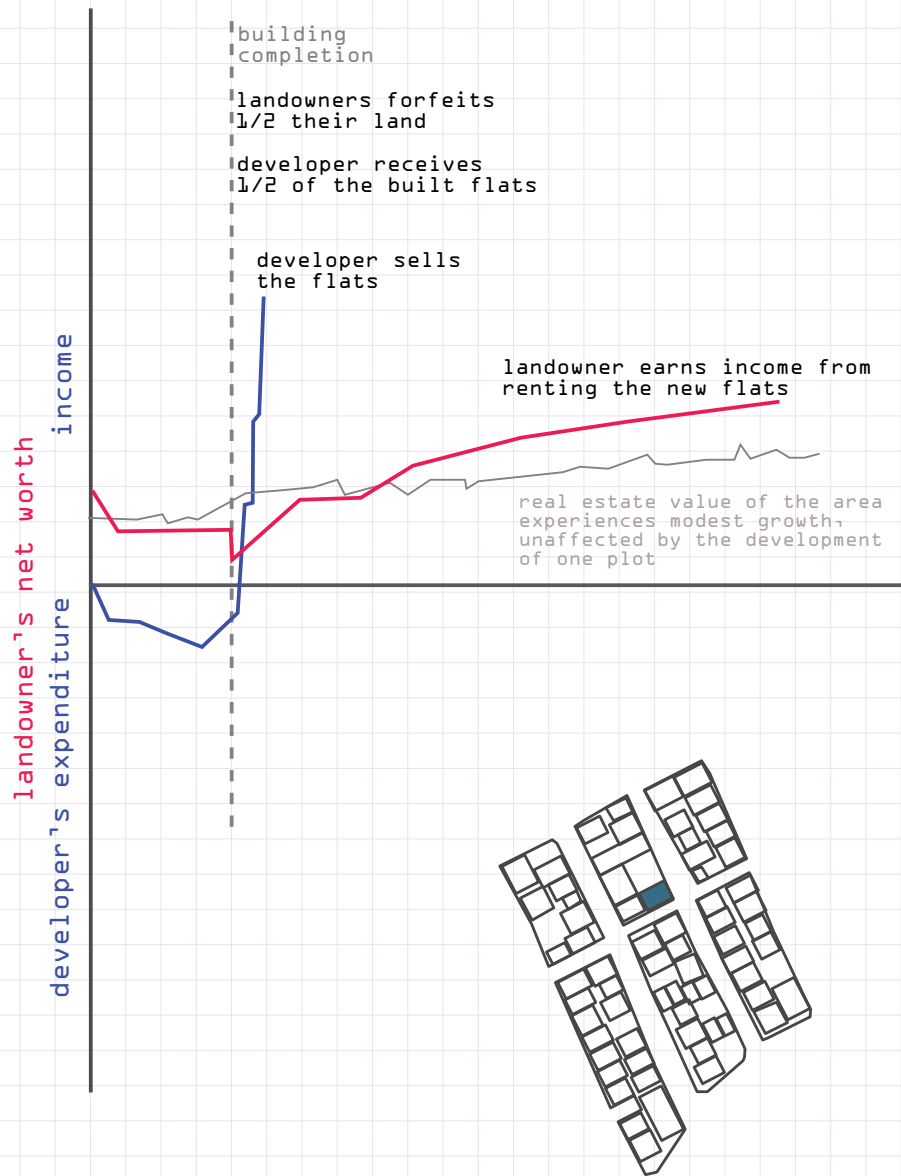


[[DIY development]]

Landowners who are building without the help of a developer are left to bank loans and family savings to finance construction. Because of tighter cash flows, the scale of building is smaller. The initial house may be only one or two levels with the potential of future additions. Though the landowner is directly in control of architectural decisions, limited finances reduce the landowner's design capability.



[plot developers]



The generation of new urban fabric follows the laws of real-estate: profit and profit alone. The market and its actors adjust accordingly, finding a niche for every economy of scale. While governmentally backed development corporations such as TOKİ and KIPTAS have a large hold on mass housing developments, small scale developers have found a way into the market. When zoning regulations were changed to allow taller building heights, homeowners had the potential of replacing their single homes with a multi-story apartment with extra flats to rent for additional income. Small scale investors saw the opportunity to profit from this investment possibility.

These developers are very small companies, sometimes comprising of only one or two people, and have only the financial capability to invest in one unit at the time. As he is concerned with only one unit at a time, he develops a personal relationship with each family he is building for. This relationship insures a level of quality in the construction. The landowner is present during much of the constructions and make many decisions about his house. However, the choices the landowner have are restricted to the developer's limited design capabilities.

Just as the plot-by-plot developers created their own niche in the real estate market by formulating their own role as both financiers and contractor, new types of actors on the real estate development market will evolve when the financial incentive is evident. True to the neo-liberalist economy, action is based on profits alone. Personal relationships and customer satisfaction are also important for long-term business sustainability. The developer had the incentive to do well not only because of this relationship, but also for possible future clients in the same neighborhood; this is the beginnings of the expansion of his network within the community.



WHAT IF?

[proposal] What if developers invested in neighborhoods rather than just small plots of land. I want to question the possibility of a developer role which focuses his capabilities on turning profits by increasing the real estate value of the neighborhood. For the developer to be interested in the long term growth of the area, he would be involved in the development of several plots in the same area. By creating a network of projects within the community, the developer could capitalize on the synergy of densified plot by plot development. What if we can combine both long and short term investment strategies so that the neighborhood has both the financial muscle of short term investment as well as the longevity and overview of the long term investment?

[community development facilitator] (CDF)

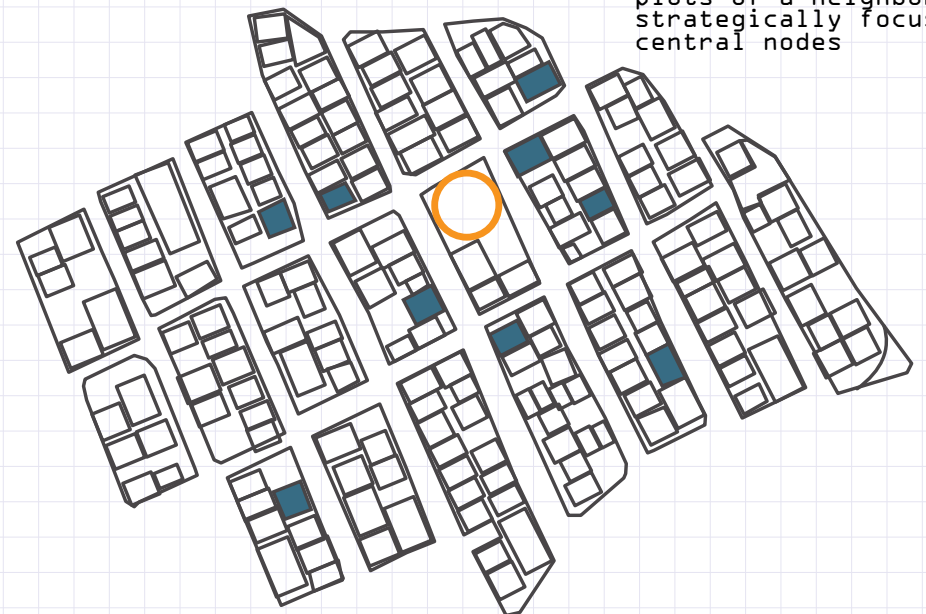
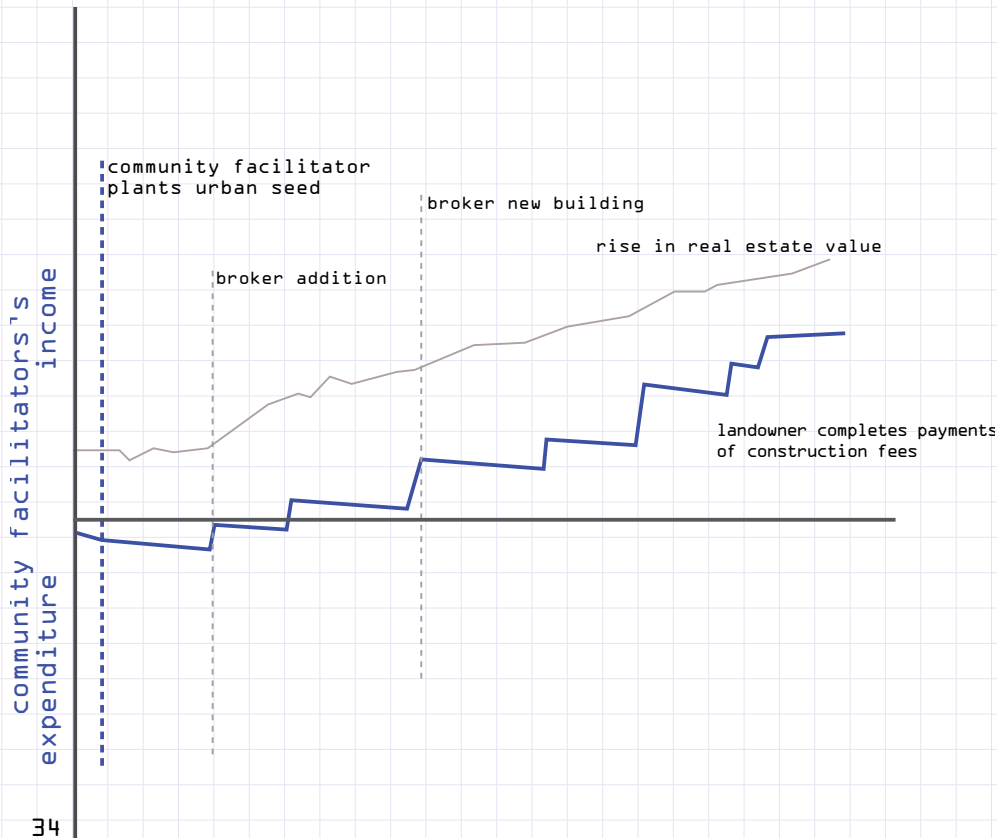
a for profit entity who invests in an area over a long period of time; a broker between the community and investors

Beyond the current situation of small plot development, I propose a third party actor, a "community facilitator" who would act as the long term investor and mediate short term investment. This entity would be as its title suggests, concerned with community growth and development, but most importantly it is a for profit company whose success is based on the amount of investment it can attract and cultivate in the area.

The "community facilitator" would offer its services to the neighborhood as a broker to find financing for the landowners in the area. While the community facilitator is not directly a developer itself, its main role is to attract and coordinate short term investment while maintaining an overall growth trajectory. Because the community facilitator is a private business entity, he has no capability to regulate the use and development of the area. Instead, he finds profits in transactions made.

By encouraging growth strategically, he will be able to stimulate more overall growth. There are two main tools of which a community facilitator has in order to promote growth according to his strategy. The first is placing an urban seed* in a location along the corridor he is planning to encourage. The second is the strategy in which he would seek investment for the area.

CDF is involved with the development of several plots of a neighborhood, strategically focused on central nodes



1.

Find an area of good return



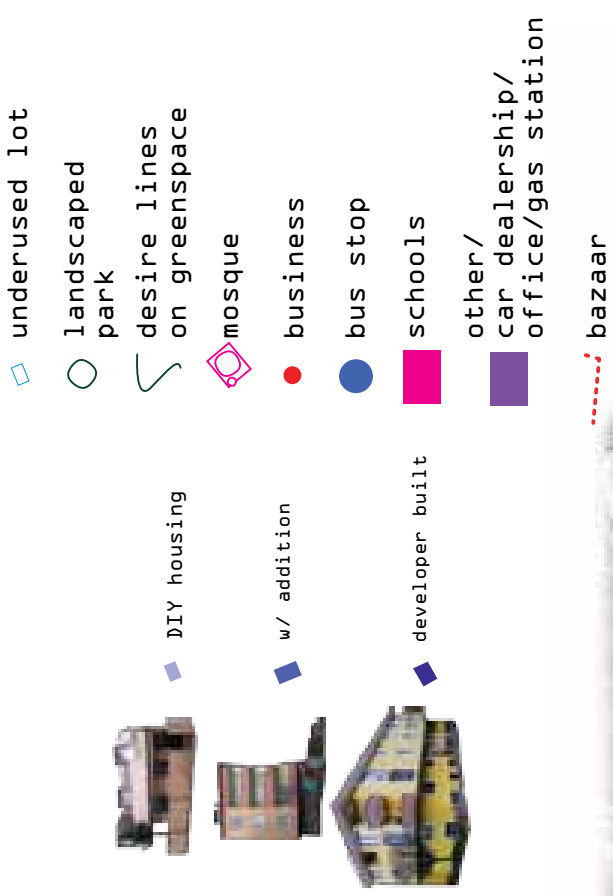
how to be a community development faciliator... (CDF)



area between gated communities



2. initial analysis of neighborhood



Çekmeköy today



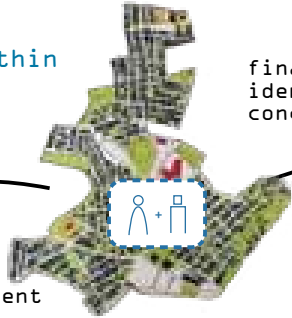
3.

establish self within the community

financial facilitator identifies investor's concerns



CDF community development facilitator identifies community's needs



[[Community engagement as a tool of the community facilitator]]

To have an understanding of the area, the community facilitator must engage with the community to fully understand its needs. It is to the benefit of the community facilitator to employ useful and innovative techniques of community engagement. While developers commonly view "community engagement" as a de facto exercise required in order to receive approval to build, it is a missed chance to both understand what the community needs and gather ideas of what the future could be. By no means should the requests of individuals be taken as direct instructions. Rather the successful community facilitator will have the ability to synthesize the vast and varying information to make overall strategic decisions such as corridors along which commercial growth should be focused on and areas which can be used as nodes or locations of the urban seeds*.

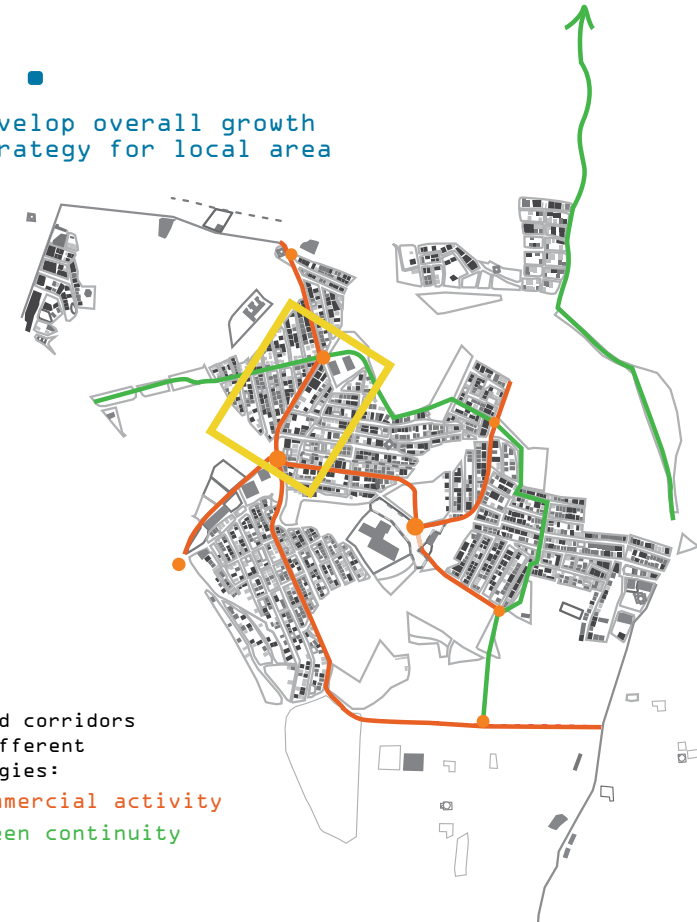
It is also important for the community facilitator to understand the reasons why the investors have not been interested in the area previously. The community facilitator must understand what elements of the area must change in order to encourage future growth and attract interested developers. As a business entity, the community facilitator must also have access to a network of investors and foster relationships in order to bring resources into the neighborhood.

[[Fostering local identity]]

Though outside investment is important to the economic growth of a neighborhood, another strong factor which is commonly overlooked by developers is the local identity of the community. By fostering local businesses and a strong community of long-term residents, the area will be able to develop its own identity. It is this unique character which can distinguish the neighborhood from others in its competition to attract both outside investment and active residents. In order to augment this community building, the community facilitator will promote and expedite incremental growth by creating an investment fund for the neighborhood. By drawing on his network of investors, the community facilitator will set up a large fund which will act as a community bank which residents can draw from to make incremental additions to their buildings or businesses.

4.

develop overall growth strategy for local area



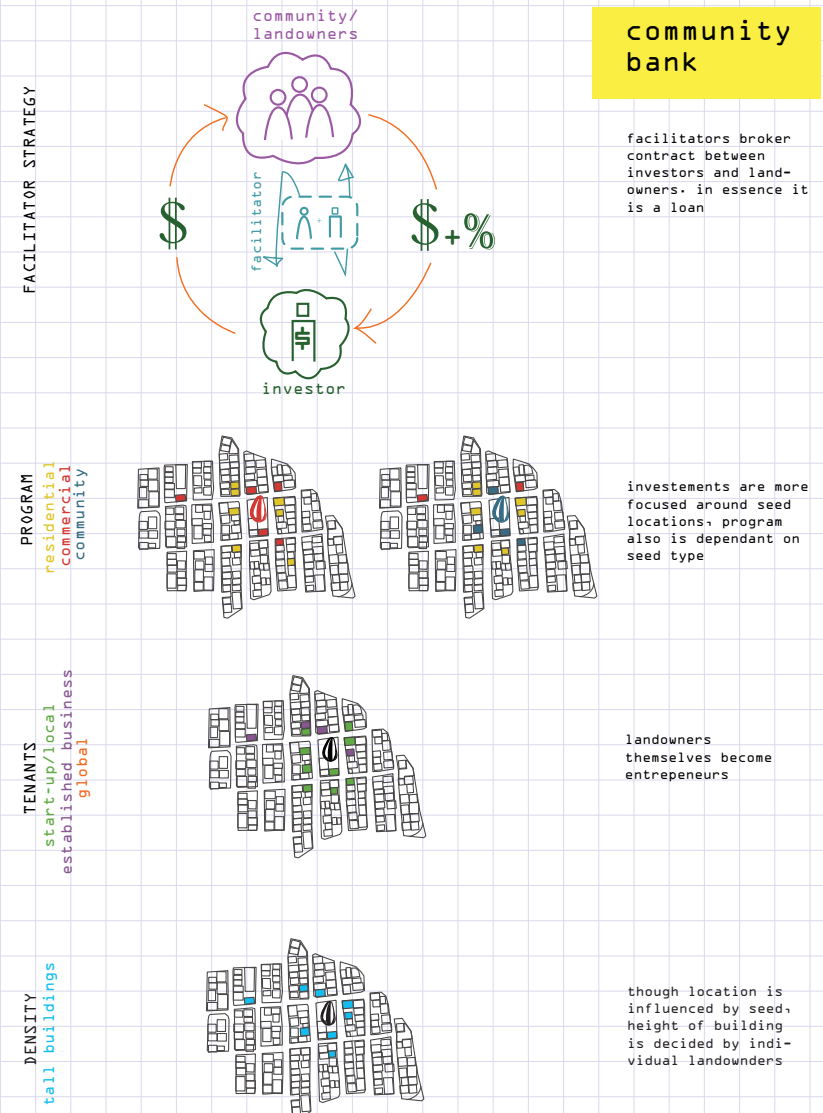
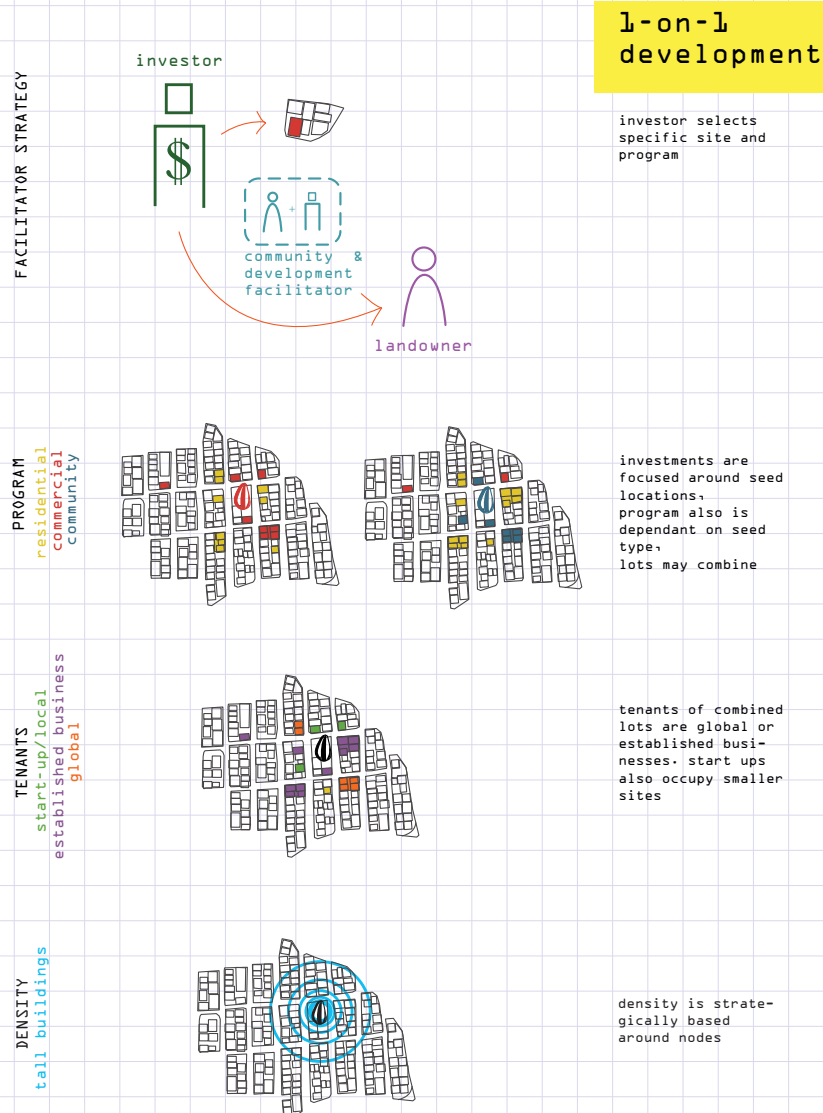
defined corridors for different strategies:

commercial activity
green continuity

Tools of the CDF




For plots along his strategic commercial corridors, he would employ a "1-to-1" method of marketing a plot by directly seek out specific investors for a specific plot which the landowner would like to upgrade or to build on. These investors would be introduced to these sites after the urban seeds have taken place and have generated some successful uses in the immediate area. Investors with greater financial capabilities allow for quicker and larger scale change, a change which would be outside the landowner's financial capabilities.

By consolidating the loans of the neighborhood, it increases everyone's borrowing capabilities. Effectively, the coordination of the loan cycles will allow for earlier loans or short term loans to be paid back as new loans are taken out. All the while, investors who have contributed to this fund will earn interest off their shares. Funding for projects through the community bank will depend on a ratio of risk to benefit towards overall investment. As the community facilitator is an actor within the free market, landowners whose plots were not selected to be funded by the community bank can pursue other lenders or banks. For those landowners whose plots were selected to be funded, they are not bound to the community facilitator and may choose another entity to finance their upgrade.



5. specify financial mechanisms in direct area of investment

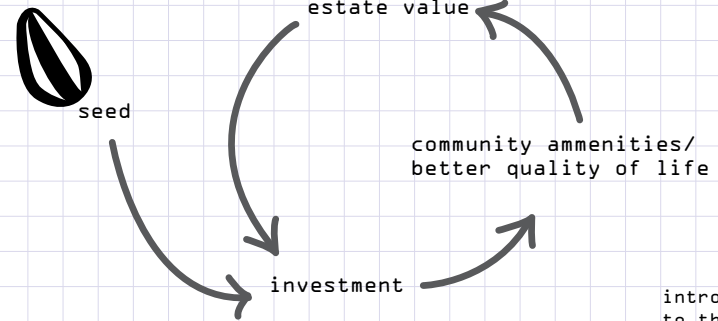


-  **Community bank**
targeting under developed residential areas, allowing for incremental growth
-  **I-1 Development**
used to stimulate commercial activity along main corridor
-  **Area initially affected by seed**
placed on both ends of the corridor

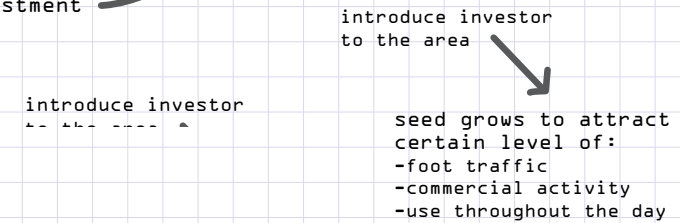
An initial strategy for attracting investment in an area which has been under-developed would be to plant an urban seed* in a tactical location. The location of the seed would correspond to the area in which the community facilitator plans to focus development first. The purpose of the seed is multi-fold. First, the seed will act as an attractor for activity in the area. An area which is more active will be more attractive for investors. The second purpose of the seed is to test the appropriate use of the area. By finding the best fit use by testing informally, investors will be more confident in financing in a location which has already enjoyed a certain level of success.

[[urban seeds*]] temporary spaces to test uses, investment attractor

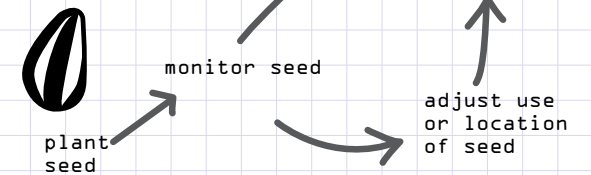
CHAIN OF EFFECTS



The urban seed will be either a temporary structure from recycled materials placed on an unused plot. To ensure the profitability for the community facilitator as a long term entity, the capital invested should be minimal in order to alleviate pressure to turn profit immediately.



CDF ROLE





Though the financial technicalities are exceedingly rudimentary in my proposal from the school of architecture, the main intention is to predict the changes in the built environment based on an intervention in the economic process of development. The main subject of the scheme proposed is the possibility of a mid to long term investor on a neighborhood-wide scale and the impact such an actor would have on the built environment.

There is of course no guarantee or agreement between the Community Development Facilitator (CDF) and the residents that the (CDF) will be the only entity handling any upgrades or redevelopments. However, the (CDF) has the advantage of an extensive relationship with residents of the community and investors. Neighbors would be able to share information such as the contracts the facilitator was able to broker, and investors would recognize how the facilitator's expertise in the area could significantly streamline investments as well as accurately calculate risks and benefits.

By earning a reputation as a knowledgeable actor within the community as well as a capable contract broker will insure that both the residents and the investors understand the benefits of including the middleman in the transaction.

[[design that is not a masterplan]]

As my design intervention is the creation of a new entity in the real-estate development process and not a masterplan, the resulting built environment is heavily based on the reactions and interactions of many characters along and around the process of building. Thus, a traditional architectural model would not be able to represent the changes which would occur with the implementation of the community facilitator.



[[fluid models for urban design]]

To simulate the decisions which cause and are affected by the development, I have created a multi-player role playing game. Each player assumes a character which is either a landowner or investor, and the game is moderated by the community facilitator. Character sheets for each the landowner and the developer will reflect the financial capabilities of each role. Landowners will have the option of incremental growth and excel in creativity, leading the community's way to developing their own identity. However, landowners lack the capability developers have for quick growth. Growth driven by developers also tends largely to include commercial uses, especially franchises. Incremental growths such as floor additions or the addition of street level shops are not at a large enough scale to be of interest of developers.



CONCLUSION:

In order to effectively deal with the macro scale of generic city generation, the role of urban designers must shift from the hardware of architecture design, into the software of economic and political processes.

Following suit, urban scale models must also address the conflicts of a site where multiple actors inevitably make their own decisions about inhabiting their own space. Just as traditional architecture models are used to test in a hypothetical manner spatial decisions an urban designer makes for the site, this dynamic multi-actor role-playing game will test the sum of the actors spatial decisions based on a new process of development.

Systems created under authoritarian rule common to developing economies are infatuated by Neo-Corbusian products (and not the philosophy). The resources to support this type of proliferation are expiring. The citizens are weary.

As the political and economical machines march on, designers must find their role outside of allocated redlines. In our generation, the scope of "Urban Design" must broaden in order to efficiently address the multiplying built mass of social and physical disconnections.

Urban Design can no longer afford to be a singular vision. It must be humble and soft at times. Though not always form based, urban design is not about regulations, but rather of new potentials. The new urban designer's success is not in polished renderings. The urban designer's effect is not a product to sign one's name to, but rather a city to be lived in.

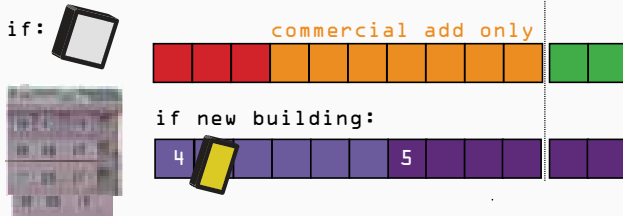
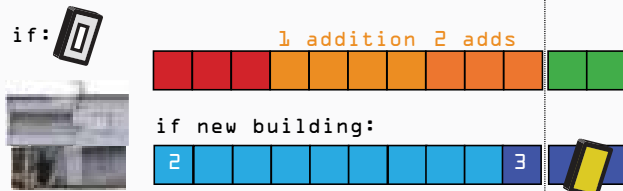
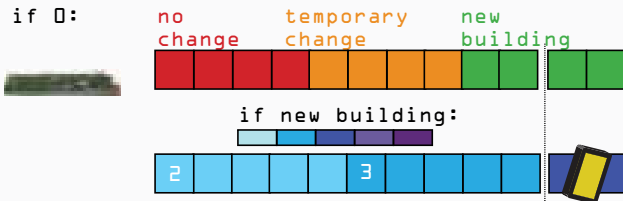
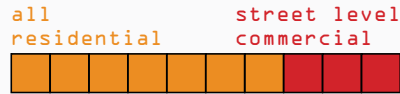
Character sheets

cards illustrating the probability of accomplishing any task an actor may choose to attempt. The probabilities are reflective of their capabilities.



landowner

STRENGTH: local knowledge, inter-communication, creativity
SPECIAL PROGRAM: long term financial and personal interest in the area
GOAL: continuous, low-risk, steady increase in real estate value, and improvement of living conditions
TOOLS: local networks
WEAKNESSES: financial capabilities, no overview

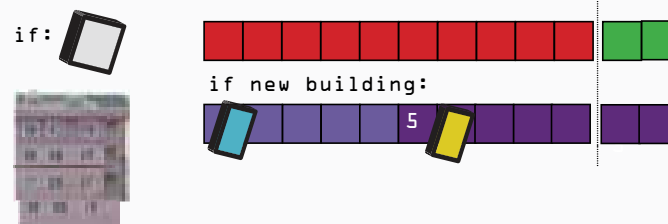
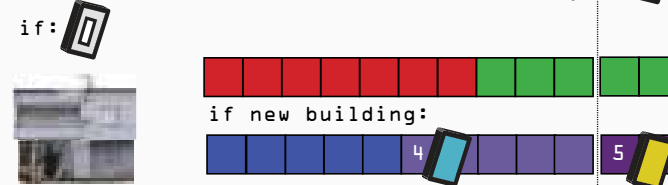
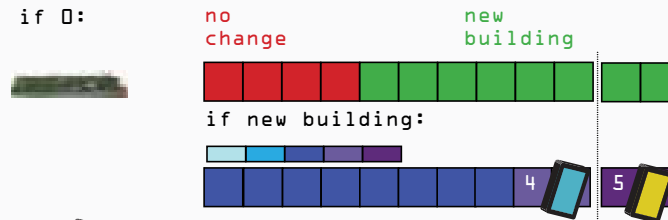


Players roll the dice to determine their financial capabilities. Extra points can be added to the rolled number if the plot wished to be developed have access to financial mechanisms the (CDF) Community Development Facillitator coordinates.



developer

STRENGTH: financial capabilities
SPECIAL PROGRAM: short term financial interest
GOAL: quick, low-risk, financial gains renting/selling plot for more
TOOLS: can acquire and conglomerate
WEAKNESSES: less flexible



how to play the game

Players are preselected to be either a landowner or developer (3:1 ratio)

Players should understand the needs and motivation of their characters to make the following decision.

Player states intension of which plot they would like to develop

Roll dice to determine what actions the financial capabilities of the player will allow for

If there is a shop addition:
player rolls again to determine characteristic of the shop

If a new building will be built:
player rolls again to determine what type of building will be built

Player rolls dice again to determine if there will be a shop in the building

local
startup
business

low end



high end



franchise/
chain



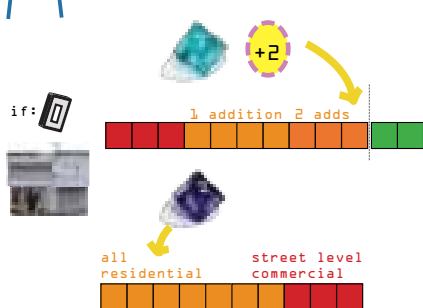


+2 for landowners

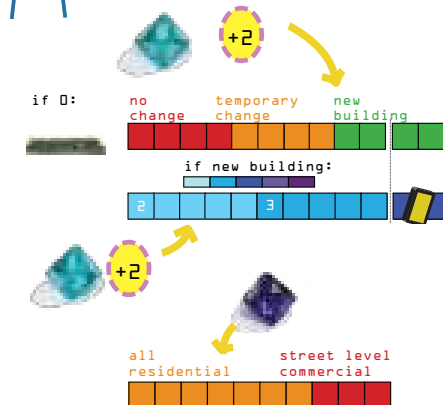
Community bank
targeting under developed residential areas, allowing for incremental growth



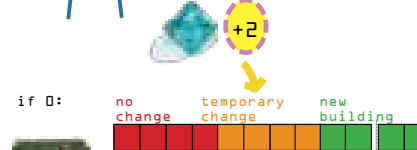
landowner's increased financial capability allows him 2 levels of residential addition



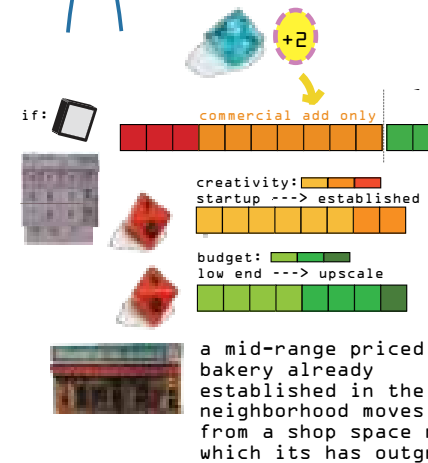
landowner's increased financial capability allows him to build 2 story residential building



landowner's increased financial capability allows him to make temporary changes

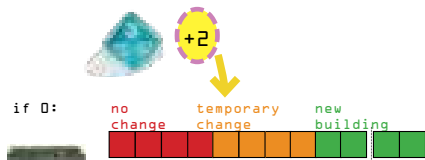


local entrepreneur opens business

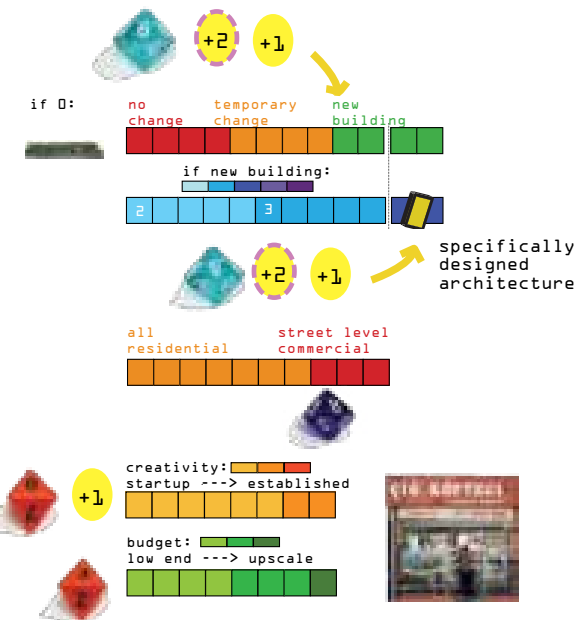




landowner after still is not able to finance the construction of a building, but continues to grow his informal business on the plot



After building up a popular informal business hub, this landowner attracted the attention of the CDF who found additional financial support to allow a new building with storefronts to be built in order to house the growing business which have been steadily establishing itself in the community





popular local eatery
which attracts customers
outside of neighborhood

chain store

local bakery



urban garden

gathering of
informal business

propane gas vendor
low-end start-up business

outdoor seating

high-end coffee chain





CDF plants urban seed

+2 for developers

1-1 Development
used to stimulate
commercial activity
along main corridor

Area initially
affected by seed




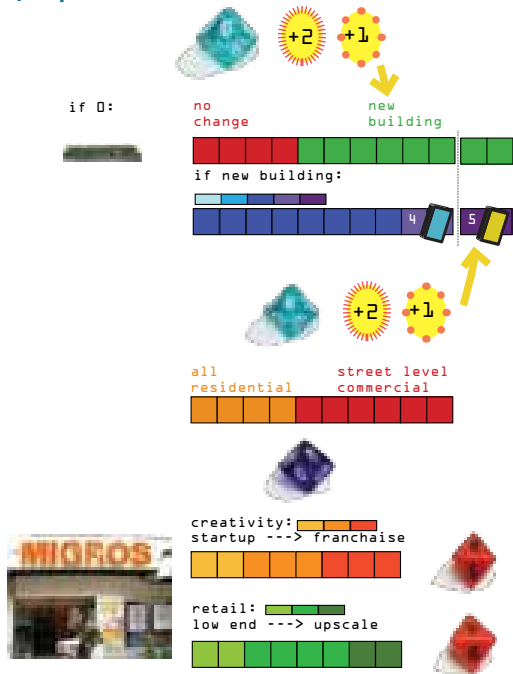
urban seed attracts informal businesses




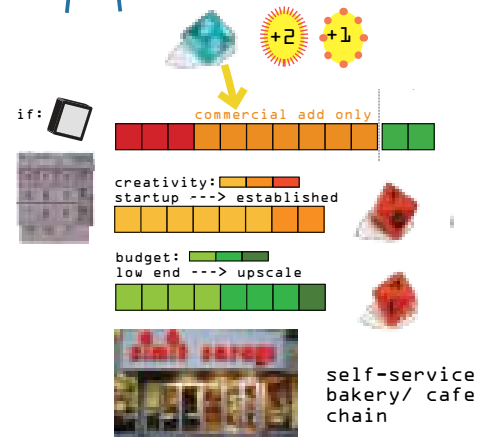
activity around urban seed encourages
investment from developer




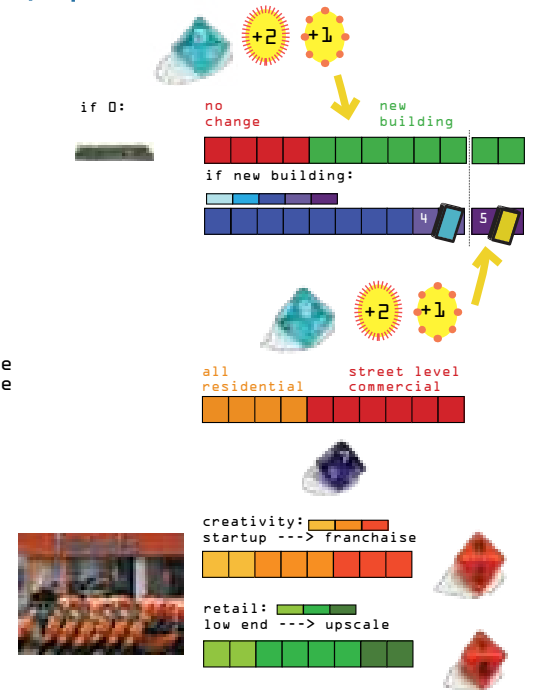

 a developer attracted by the commercial activity around the urban seed invests in a newly designed building which houses a large grocery chain




 landowner opens business




 continuing to infill the commercial corridor, a developer invests in a newly designed building





the popular hub of informal businesses accumulating around the urban seed has attracted the attention of a developer who builds a commercial centre to house the vendors



quicker development with the help of outside investment

10 years of improvement with the CDF...and beyond

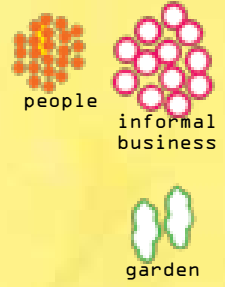
Çekmeköy today



architecture beyond current financial capabilities

developments and its effects

building w/ new style of facade newly designed architecture



There is an increase in density in the area. With more access to financing, many landowners make additions to their buildings. There are also cases of newly designed architecture. Along with its growing number of local businesses, many specializing in cuisine from the Black Sea area, this area of Çekmeköy is starting to define its cultural identity.

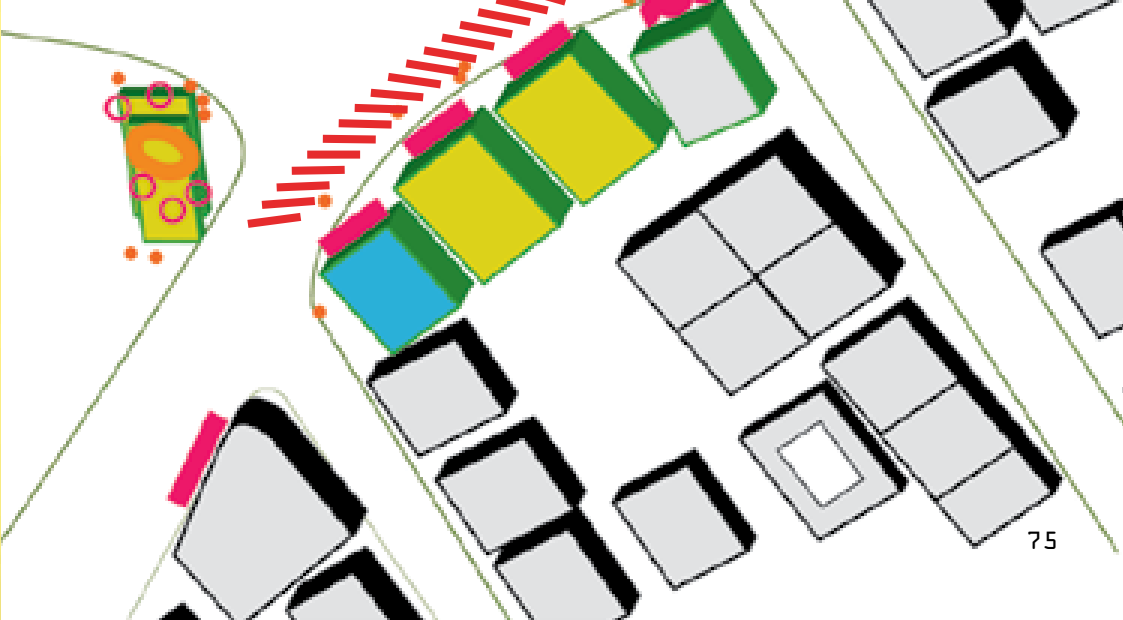
The streets are activated with an increase in street level shop fronts, informal businesses, and semi-public gardens.

As development continues, the CDF's investments and influences increase. Larger interventions and change can happen in the area.

The number of CDF's in surrounding areas will increase with the financial success of initial CDFs. Competition between areas will stimulate new evolutions in financial mechanisms for the market.

The Generic City around Istanbul will be taken over by an urban growth where the citizens make the decisions for their built environment; where citizens have the ability to make change.

Çekmeköy in 10 years





YINs MISSION

to examine PROCESS &
IMPLEMENTATION of design in
dense developing areas, to
explore design from human
organization, to learn
solutions from the other
half of the world



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