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Bridging and bonding social capital in gentrifying neighborhoods: "Yeldeğirmeni district in Istanbul"

Alp ARISOY¹ , Nurbin PAKER²
¹ alparisoy@gmail.com • Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey
² pakernu@itu.edu.tr   • Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract
This paper aims to evaluate spatial reflections of social relations and cross-cultural interactions in social-mixed neighborhoods from a social capital aspect. While social diversity has been praised as a possible tool for community development by many, more recent gentrification literature also questions whether different social groups actually interact with each other or not in social-mixed neighborhood settings. The research presented aims to contribute to this debate by analyzing the social ties and neighborly interactions of a small creative community in Yeldegirmeni; one of the gentrifying inner-city districts of Istanbul. Based on social network mapping and face to face interviews, the bonding social capital, which is constituted by close-knit homophilous relations within this group and bridging social capital, which is constituted by interclass heterophilous relations has been put under scope. Creating interaction opportunities between social groups is often suggested as a possible way to cope with devastating negative effects of gentrification. Therefore a better understanding of how more fluid mid-income classes interact with their surrounding local environment in gentrifying neighborhoods is important, as such social mixing can sometimes be unavoidable.

1. Introduction

When it comes to local community relations, one thing seems to be constant in time: every generation frowns upon how its values and bonding morality is diminished compared to how it used to be. From Tocqueville to Robert Putnam, the decline of social community relations has been denounced repeatedly. Quite contrarily, despite extensive connection possibilities, city wide networks, cyber public realms and a globalized world, a new understanding of locality, local relations and place identity comes forth. Therefore maybe it is more appropriate to suggest that neither the urban neighborhood nor the community is lost but they are rather transformed.

One of most significant transformation is in the social composition of neighborhoods. As different communities overlap in the same urban setting, interaction among social groups comes into prominence in academic literature. Social capital -more specifically bridging social capital- plays an important role within this debate, as it provides a useful tool in order to understand the dynamics and consequences of social relations from an integrated point of view.

While there is an extensive literature of social capital from many aspects and disciplines, empirical studies on its spatial dimension -particularly its relation with neighborhood- is rather limited. Questions such as: "How locally based identities and social networks are related?", "What is the role of the neighborhood setting in the generation of social capital?" or "In which ways do neighborhood setting have an effect on neighborhood composition and social interaction?" still remain under researched.

This paper aims to contribute to the debate by focusing on the community relations and neighborly ties of a creative class focus group, residing in one of the gentrifying social-mixed inner city neighborhoods of Istanbul. Based on field work analysis and face to face interviews the social network within and around this focus group is mapped and its spatial aspects are evaluated. Creating interaction opportunities between social groups is often suggested as a possible way to cope with devastating negative effects of gentrification. Therefore a better understanding of how more fluid mid-income classes interact with their surrounding local environment in gentrifying neighborhoods is important, as such social mixing can sometimes be unavoidable.

In the first part of the paper a brief selective review of wide ranging literature is covered, the second part includes explanatory notes on the research site and the research methodology and finally findings of the field work with its discussion is presented.

2. Debates on neighborhood, community and social capital

Debate on neighborhood, community and their relation to space has a long history in urban literature. Classical studies from the first half of the 20th century made no distinction between the two concepts. Throughout the urbanization literature of this period, community was pictured as the reflection of rural order and the opposite of "urbanity". Tonnies (1887) plainly distinguished gemeinschaft (community) that based on moral values and localized relation from gesellschaft (society) that rendered the new urban life of systematic, contracted relations. Gans (1962) referred to some working class neighborhoods as "urban villages". These neighborhoods nestled certain localized communities and provided milieus in which they can develop as sub-systems of urban society. Chicago School Sociologists had two important assumptions on the meaning of community; first of all, community was strictly localized and neighborhood was the natural habitus of it. The city as a whole was the mosaic of these homogenous small, distinct worlds. Secondly, the community and neighborhood life would eventually decline and disappear into the mass society (Hannerz, 1980).

On the other hand, more recent literature indicates that the community still constitutes a major role in urban life. Wellman's (1996) empirical studies suggest that urbanites have closely knit,

strong community ties within the social network. However these communities are liberated from the neighborhood and local space, since physical proximity does not play a major role in their constitution; *"personal community networks are rarely neighborhood solidarities"* (p.348). In this network model, while community represents a social entity, simply related to social ties; neighborhood defines a spatial entity and only represents an area in the urban texture.

One major consequence of this assumption is that the neighborhood nestles different groups of people belonging to different communities. Massey (1993, p. 66) defines such kind of neighborhoods as *"a construction of particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus".* As neighborhood space transforms to heterogeneous composition of communities, issues concerning social cohesion, social interaction and integration became more apparent in the literature.

The academic debate on community relations in the neighborhood scale has two key arguments. The first and older one promotes diversity of different groups/ communities/ classes for common benefit. According to "inter group contact theory; face to face contact between different co-existing groups would lead to inter-group tolerance and a more harmonious society (Allport, 1958). This hypothesis has been verified in many case studies (Green & Wong, 2009; Pettigrew, 1998). A similar argument can be traced in "defended neighborhoods", where it is claimed that spatial racial heterogeneity leads to more tolerance (DeFina & Hannon, 2009, p. 374). Literature on "neighborhood effects" illustrates the downside of living in homogenously composed -disadvantaged-neighborhoods; claiming that a class based spatial organization leads to social segregation due to the lack of socializing opportunities with more advantaged classes (Murray, 2008; Wacquant, 2008). The concept of "neighborhood effect" has also been discussed from a network access point of view, where it is suggested that close-knit homogenous communities are rich in ties sufficient to get by, but they lack the connections to get ahead (Briggs, 1998). Interaction among classes would provide opportunities for urban poor, necessary for social leverage (Rankin & Quane, 2000; M. L. Small & McDermott, 2006).

On the other side of the debate; a large strand of literature suggest that mixed-income and socially heterogeneous neighborhoods do not necessarily translates into leveraging inter-class relations. Numerous studies have found that mixed class, heterogeneous socio-spatial environments do not produce impact on social network as anticipated by the earlier studies; since only very limited interaction among classes occur in such neighborhoods (Curley, 2010; Kleinhans, 2004). This argument is most visibly evident in gentrification literature.

Gentrification broadly describes the process of residential movement of middle class to low income working class areas of the central city (Zukin, 2008). Gentrification literature questions; whether gentrifiers in fact form ties with individuals of other social groups/ classes or not. Several scholars have argued that integration of middle classes into disadvantaged communities would actually lead to segregation as it eventually displaces the poor (Atkinson, 2004; Lees, 2008). In their study on inner city London, Butler and Robson(2003, p. 127) suggest that there is little evidence of middle class, deploying its resources for the benefit of the wider community; as people socialize almost exclusively with their own kind. Other empirical studies also show that, gentrification process leads to decline in levels of social mix or diversity in long term in such neighborhoods (Walks & Maaranen, 2008).

Social capital plays a crucial role in this debate. The question of how "social mixing" between diverse neighborhood groups is going to be achieved has brought social capital to the forefront of numerous academic and policy discussions as a potential source through which neighborhood dynamics might be understood.

Social capital is the collective value generated by the sum of all social networks, social norms and behaviors,

which enable mutually advantageous social cooperation (R. Putnam, 2000, p. 19). With a broad example, individuals use social connections to secure a job, hire a professional or ask for practical help, as communities rely on social groups to gather resources and attain goals (Rogers & Jarema, 2015). Bourdieu (1986, p. 247) defines this asset as; *"the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition- or in other words, to membership in a group-which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various sense of the word."* Hence social capital is a form of resource which can be transformed to other means of capitals (Light, 2004); such as financial, cultural or human capital and trigger an integrated mode of development.

Emery and Flora (2006) suggest that growth or decline in one kind of capital impacts other kinds in a positive or negative way, creating a chain effect. Social capital plays a critical role in triggering such a chain as it is the easiest kind of resource available to communities. From this scope, there is an extensive literature on the outcomes of social capital development in sociology, political science, economics, public health, urban planning, criminology, psychology and architecture. Social capital has been linked to; micro & macroeconomic development, reduction of crime, improvement of public health, quality of local & regional governments, active civic engagement and even the general happiness of societies (R. D. Putnam, 2002).

It is important to note that the academic literature also emphasizes on the downside of social capital. As Portes & Landolt (1996) demonstrates; poor and segregated ghettos are high on social capital, with close-knit networks, high trust based on mutual benefit and social norms. On the other hand this strong social capital also restrains the community to establish ties beyond itself; as been suggested within the neighborhood effect

hypothesis. Emery and Flora (2006) exemplify how in societies with class or ethnic conflicts, each community has high social capital within. In these cases strong social capital works as the cause of otherization of the counter community. Therefore it is important to differentiate between the two types; bonding and bridging, social capital.

Bonding social capital is linked to social relations between members of a community that belong to a common social group, structured by the homophilous ties among individuals with similar social background. On contrary; heterophilous bridging ties, that constitute the bridging social capital are relations among individuals belonging to different social networks, groups or communities (Lin, 2001). The concept of a "bridge" can be traced back to Burt's (1992) theory of "structural holes"; which identifies the non-existing relations between different social groups or individuals. People related to each other with strong ties form clusters in the network. Each cluster acts as a social group or close-knit community. The inexistence of ties between these clusters are the structural holes, that indicate lack of intergroup interaction. In this schema of network, an individual with ties to different clusters act as a bridge, sustaining access to the other group's resources[1]. The structural holes theory can be adapted to community relations in neighborhood scale. The efficiency of the overall social structure is relevant with the bridges between communities. The Possibility of different communities to interact would increase proportionally to the number of bridges (Gittell & Vidal, 1998).

Therefore social capital research particularly stresses the importance of bridging ties for community development. While bonding capital might be necessary for social support, the lack of bridging ties would create "amoral familism" or an excess of community attachment in a way that discourages advancement (Woolcock, 1998). Social opportunities are created principally by extra-community ties.

Unlike the strong bonding ties relying on mutual high trust, the heterophilous

[1] *Therefore Burt refers these individual bridges as "resource brokers".*

bridging ties are most often weaker in nature. Granovetter's (1973) seminal work on strong and weak ties claims that weaker ties are more important than the strong ones in creating new opportunities. A weak tie implied here refers to indirect or very brief acquaintances based on familiarity. These secondary acquaintances have contact with networks outside individuals' network; hence provide access to new information/ source.

While social capital of a community is not assumed to imply spatial proximity or necessarily a localized dimension; it tends to take a strong sense in local space. Henning and Lieberg (1996) define weak ties in a neighborhood setting as "unpretentious everyday contacts" (p6). These contacts can include basic acquaintances based on recurring visual encounters, small practical help or a limited shared interest in the locality which they jointly inhabit. The number of weak ties is naturally much higher than the strong ones. In this respect the neighborhood is a prominent setting for these weak ties to establish; since the strong ties are not dependent on space. Strong relations would be sustained no matter what; the physical proximity becomes less relevant as the ties get stronger. On the other hand weak ties are dependent on physical encounters; most of them would not even be sustained outside a particular space (Kleinhans, Priemus, & Engbersen, 2007).
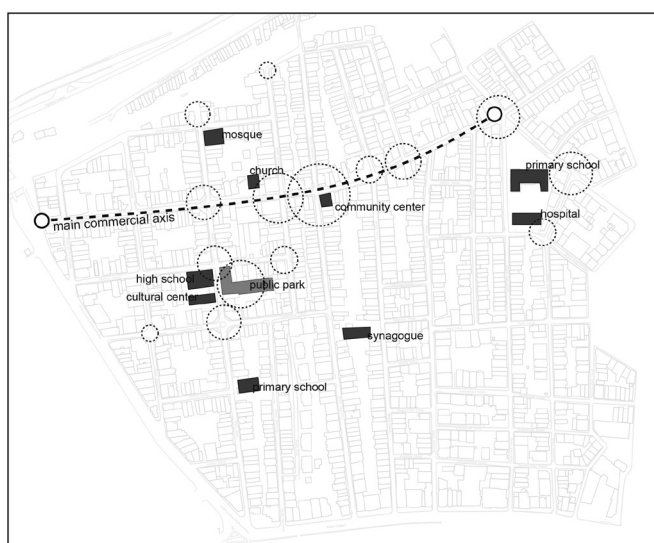

Figure 1. General urban setting of the neighborhood with prominent public spaces and institutions.

The neighborhood physically enables "opportunity" for such kind of unpretentious, cursory encounters (Blokland-Potters, 2003). Perpetual repetition of social encounters and obligatory existence of different social groups in the same public arena is suggested to evolve into social norms in time (Lofland, 1998).

In this respect; spatial aspects of bridging social capital provide new possibilities for practitioners and policy makers working on social-mixed neighborhoods and gentrification areas. As Curley (2009) suggests, public spaces and institutions can play a shaping role in generating social capital, hence; it is a possible area of intervention in social mix settings to ensure social sustainability.

3. Description of research site and methodology

Depending on the assumptions mentioned above, the field work and research presented here was conducted in Yeldegirmeni; a historical residential inner city neighborhood with a population of 16.000 in the Asian center of Istanbul. The neighborhood has a dense urban texture with 5-6 story, adjacent building blocks and narrow roads. The urban structure was planned as a grid layout in early 20th.century and is considered as one of the earliest examples of inner city neighborhoods formed by apartment buildings in Istanbul (Atılgan, 2017). This urban structure has hardly changed in the course of the century. Though most of the buildings were reconstructed; the general layout, public spaces and building ratios stayed unaltered (CEKUL, 2011). The grid plan allows backyards of the buildings to form semi-public courtyards. These courtyards constitute the largest open spaces. The grid plan also forms clear street intersections, which are historically pointed out as public interaction nodes. The neighborhood has a mix-use character due to small local shops and workshops on the ground floors. These commercial spaces are predominantly located around the central axis, which also can be considered as the main social space. Figure 1, illustrates the general layout

of the neighborhood and areas that have heavy public flow. As it is evident in the figure; the public spaces are coherent with either public institutions or plan intersections.

Yeldegirmeni had undergone a fast urban decay after the midcentury. By the end of the 90's Yeldegirmeni was considered a residual area, with high rates of crime, dilapidated housing stock and lack of basic social & infrastructural facilities. The neighborhood nestled mainly immigrant families from Anatolia, dock workers and students who choose the area for low rents (Türkmen, 2015). It was also reported that the neighborhood lacked adequate public spaces. The narrow streets, which can be pointed out as the only public spaces, were occupied by heavy traffic, and had no pedestrian sidewalks (CEKUL, 2011).

The physical fabric of the neighborhood did not change in the course of this period. Only minor urban interventions were made more recently in 2010. These interventions involve the constitution of pedestrian sidewalks, restrictions on car traffic and small public space designs. A small public park and a social/cultural center were also built through these interventions.

On the other hand, the social fabric of the neighborhood has undergone a greater transformation. Thanks to its central location and due to large scale urban projects around it[2], Yeldegirmeni came into prominence once again in the 2000's. The neighborhood emerged as a potential inner city gentrification area. It rapidly became attractive for a new cultural middle class, young professionals and the creative class.

The artists and designers were the pioneers of this transformation. Besides its proximity to major fine art schools, cultural centers and night life of the city, the neighborhood had potential low rent studio spaces available. During the 80's and 90's ground levels of most buildings were used as workshops for small production activities (most prominently printing shops) or depot spaces with high ceilings and un-separated volumes; which provided an ideal low cost solution for young artists seeking working/living space.

Beginning from the early 2000's small artist studios popped up around the neighborhood, followed by independent galleries and design studios. Yeldegirmeni emerged as an alternative art space to the mainstream, high-end art scene, hosting young rising contemporary artists. With its growing multi-disciplinary creative class population, the neighborhood is considered as one of the major creative hubs in Istanbul today.

This was followed by an increasing flow of young new mid income professionals seeking a different habitat from traditional mid income families. Yeldegirmeni had a popular image of a safe haven for marginalizing young bourgeoisie of Istanbul in the aftermath of Gezi Events[3]. It is seen as a tolerant inner city neighborhood towards young opposition, LGBTI community and sub-groups of political activists (Kuru, 2015).

In recent years this social transformation became highly apparent with the high number of street cafes, design shops, street parties and a jazz bar. This kind of a transformation naturally raises questions about the gentrification of the neighborhood. For Yeldegirmeni, while some researchers find the change as the early signs of total disposition of traditional working class locals of the neighborhood (Atilgan, 2013; Simsek, 2017; Yazicioglu, 2016); some others argued that the nature of gentrification in Yeldegirmeni might have differences to the other examples in Istanbul (Tekin, 2010; Türkmen, 2015). While recognizing the obvious gentrification pattern in the neighborhood, these arguments pointed out that localized social relations between different classes are maintained and that the transformation process is not only based on the financial real-estate gap, it also creates cross-cultural interaction that all parties in the neighborhood benefit from.

The research presented here aims to perceive, verify and obtain empirical data on these cross cultural relations from the social capital aspect. The creative community of artists/designers was targeted as a focus group

[2] *Such as; large housing projects in Fikirtepe, Ayrilikcesme Metro Hub, projects involving Haydarpasa Central Station. Revitalization efforts by the Kadıköy Municipality can considered among the factors. See (Türkmen, 2015).*

[3] *Gezi event were a series of demonstrations and civil uprising, through 2013-14, which had major effects on civil movements, politics and sociopolitical dynamics in its following years.*

and the scope of their bridging & bonding social capital was examined in this direction.

The choice of the focus group is based on two reasons; first of all as mentioned above, members of this group can be considered as the initial gentrifiers in the neighborhood. Urban artists are commonly referred as the expeditionary force for the inner-city gentrifiers. Urban artists, having less economic capital but high cultural capital are claimed to shape the urban space by generating different understandings of culture which emerges as an alternative scene (Ley, 2003). Similar to many cases around the world, the artists acted as a transformative community in Yeldegirmeni. It is also assumed that the way social capital is formed within and around this group reflects the general tendencies of other new young mid-income residents. Secondly; it is a defined group of individuals. While it is virtually impossible to identify and categorize every individual of a certain group/community/ class in the neighborhood, exact number and location of every artist studio is known. This gives us the chance of creating a full scale social network map of the focus group.

Face to face interviews were conducted with the 98 of 103 studios in Yeldegirmeni, in June 2018. Though there are different sets of quantitative indicators available for social capital measurement; there is no commonly accepted consensus on the assessment or evaluation of the concept (Lin, 2001). For a defined and relatively small focus group, quantitative and qualitative methods were combined based on the basic notions of social capital; the social networks, social norms and trust. The interviews contain; semi-structured questions and a mapping exercise. Corresponding to the main objectives of the research, the interview has two parts:

The first part aims to map the social network within the artist community, strong homophilous ties among the artists and the structure of bonding social capital. A pre-prepared map of the neighborhood (with all the studios labeled) was presented to the interviewees. They were asked to show the ones they personally know, where social network based on homophilous relations is aimed to be illustrated. The strongest bonds (which they consider as close friends) and the ones which are professionally collaborated in the past (work relations) is drawn with different colors.

The second part of the interview aims to map the bridging ties between the artist community and other residents of the neighborhood. The interviewees were asked if they can list 10 individuals they personally know (who is not an artist) in the neighborhood. Different than the first part, only brief recognitions and weak ties are also accepted as an answer. For those who can list more than 10 people, only the closest 10 is listed. Interviewees were asked to show on the map where/ how they interact with these 10 contacts.

For both two parts, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The interview included questions targeting the social capital aspects (they were expected to explain in detail their relations with each contact; how they interact, how this relation is beneficial in their life, their relation with wider civic community…etc.) and the spatial aspects of these relations (where do they meet, how do they use the public space, do they feel safe in the neighborhood, why would they live here, would they live elsewhere…etc.).

The most difficult -but essential- aspect of social capital to evaluate is "trust". For every contact (both for homophilous and heterophilous ones) the interviewees were asked to rate "how much they trust the relevant individual on a scale of 1 to 5 . A rate of %20 to %100 is determined for every tie. This evaluation only allows us to compare different responders' idea of trust with different contacts by illustrating a relative ratio.

4. Findings

Findings for the each two parts of the interview are presented orderly below. A comparison of the homophilous and heterophilous ties is also made within these sections.

[4] *Though interviews were not conducted as a questionnaire, OECD and World Banks social capital assessment questions were used as a reference.(oecd, n.d.; World bank, n.d.) Every interview took approx. 1hour.*

[5] *Interviewees were offered examples here. 5 corresponds to "someone you can trust to leave your children with", 3 corresponds to "someone you can give your house keys for practical reasons" (eg. watering the plants, delivering a package), 1 corresponds to neutral "who you just know without any negative feelings".*

4.1. Homophilous ties

A high bonding social capital and close community relations within the creative class residents of Yeldegirmeni has been anticipated prior to the research. Findings truly confirm that there is a close knit network of artists and designers in the neighborhood; which as some of the interviewees suggest resembles; *"…a village community"*, *"…a university campus"* or *"…a commune"*. Figure 2 illustrates the network of strong homophilous bonds among the studios. Average trust towards these contacts is high (%62.38), with every interviewee having at least a couple of contacts whom are described as close as a family member.

The work and friendship relations are meshed, since in most cases artists work together or professionally support each other. There is a strong social and professional collaboration within the community. Most of the interviewees believe these social contacts have a leverage effect in their work and life. Practical benefits of living in a close knit community has also been frequently mentioned but the main motivation behind the formation of such collectivity was explained as; *"being together with likely minded people"* or *"…because; people here are like me!"*. Being together with similar people to one's self seems to be the main motivation in the community; hence the creative community covered in the research is highly homogenous with very similar demographics and social backgrounds. The responses reveal that this close circle is almost conservatively exclusive to a particular type of social group.

The contemporary view on community and neighborhood often disregards spatial value of the community, it's been suggested that the neighborly relations constitute only a small part of strong community relations (Mario Luis Small, 2006; Wellman, 1996). The findings reveal that, this is not necessarily valid for the case of Yeldegirmeni. Most of the interviewees either had already known or had recognition of each other through small art community circles or university before moving to the neighborhood. But they claim
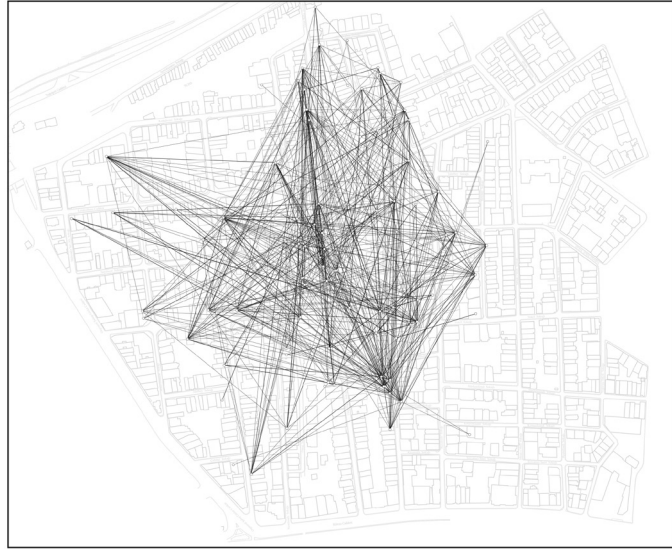

Figure 2. *Network of Homophilous bonding ties within the creative community.*

that these recognitions turned into strong relations and collaborations after they were reintroduced in the neighborhood. Therefore although the existence of community is not necessarily affiliated to space; the strong bonding social capital within it is associated with the neighborhood.

Most of the interviewees intentionally choose to live in the neighborhood basically due to the community. They acknowledge that it is also possible to maintain these relations elsewhere; *"still it is more valuable to be physically together with friends"*. When it was asked; what percentage of all their contacts from the artist community lives in the neighborhood, on average, it was suggested that almost half of their network live in or around Yeldegirmeni. This is a surprisingly high amount, considering that the interviewees are a part of a very fluid creative middle class. Hence while community relations are independent from space, neighborly strong bonds are not "occasional" as Wellman suggests (op.cit.), they constitute an important role in community life for the case of Yeldegirmeni.

The spatial identity and neighborhood attachment is also relatively high. Most of the interviewees describe themselves as "locals" of the place, and that they would not consider living anywhere else in Istanbul. On the other hand; this attachment is mostly due to the existence of the community.

Figure 3. *Network of creative community's heterophilous bringing ties with the neighborhood.*

"I would consider living elsewhere if only there were a similar neighborhood, with the same people in it". The findings also suggest that the place attachment is very relevant to the number of strong ties. Those who expressed that they could also live elsewhere were the ones with less homophilous ties.

The bonding, homophilous relations are sustained in private space; occasional meetings in studios or backyards are a regular part of social life. Some of the studios are especially prominent in these meetings and they act as social foci points. Little events such as exhibition openings, organized gatherings or just coming together for the sake of fun also occurs predominantly in private studios. These gatherings constitute an important part of bonding social capital, since most often is seen as an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and discussion on the works.

One significant exception to this is the case of café shops; since they stand out as semi-public social interaction spaces for the community. The café shops in the neighborhood are indicated not only as recreational places but a place for professional meetings, a daily gathering space and *"a place where you always find someone you know"*. Relevant to what Oldenburg's (1989) "good places", the café shops act as the important social foci that the community life gathers around. More importantly the interviewees

have very strong ties with the owners of these cafes, that owners usually know customers by name. Since these café owners have strong ties with both artists and other classes within the neighborhood, they act as "brokers" (Burt, 1992) or "bridges". Hence cafes are considered as significant interaction spaces in formation of both bonding and bridging ties.

It should also be noted that; historically the traditional coffee houses (kahvehane) acted as social focies for the older residents of the neighborhood, with similar content. Therefore; the traditional and contemporary spatial attributes of bonding social capital seems similar to each other. Every café and traditional coffee house acts as the "good place" of a certain social group, while also providing a possible heterophilous interaction opportunity.

4.2. Heterophilous ties

The findings suggest that the focus group have sufficient amount of bridging ties with the other social groups, particularly the initial working class locals of the neighborhood. Despite the close homogenous nature of the artist community, these weak ties constituted an important aspect of the neighborhood life for the interviewees. As seen in figure 3 the network of bridging ties concentrate on particular areas and is more dependent on urban public space. Unlike the homophilous ties, interviewees associate and only have contact with their heterophilous ties in a specific place. Therefore the spatial attributes of heterophilous ties are more essential. The average trust toward heterophilous ties is medial (%55.68), though the findings show that the trust is widely dependable in each individual case and it is difficult to make a general assumption.

The most prominent type of bridging ties are the ones correlating with the local shop owners. The local shop owners have the highest number of heterophilous ties with the creative class and act as "brokers" bridging different networks in the neighborhood.

First of all, the interviewees noted that they provide almost all of their

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daily services and products from the local shops in the neighborhood. Thus, it only seems natural that they have regular personal contact with the shopkeepers. Local shops have been extensively pointed out as social focies throughout the literature. Jacob (1961, p. 47) describes local shop owners as "bridges" who have a status beyond classes. Social capital research also emphasizes the local shops as bridging institutions through the formation of social ties (Lamore, Link, & Blackmond, 2006; Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000).

Furthermore, findings indicate that the bonds between shopkeepers and artists do not only rely on a simple customer-vendor relation. As a matter of fact, the interviewees do not necessarily shop from their contacts. Most artists stated that they find their roles within the neighborhood very similar to shopkeepers and consider themselves to be -a sort of- local craftsmen. Therefore a natural relation between neighboring shops and artist studios emerges in time, based on practical help and companionship. At this point it is important to underline that both shops and studios spatially occupy ground levels, have direct access from the street and are neighboring each other, thus they share the same semi-public interfaces. Besides that, artists strongly rely on local craftsmen such as carpenters, blacksmiths, CNC mechanics for their work. Mutually beneficial professional collaborations have been established over time.

Parties spend most of the day together but almost never meet elsewhere. Therefore these ties are very much depended on space. The interaction (playing games together, chit chatting, drinking tea etc.) most often occurs in front of the shops/ studios, on the sidewalk.

Most of the artists stated that the shopkeepers are their key contacts to the neighborhood networks, since they; *"know everyone", "have been here for a long time", "people trust them in the neighborhood"*. Shopkeepers would be the first to contact, if the interviewees have any problems within the neighborhood; *"It gives me confidence even just knowing him, I am*
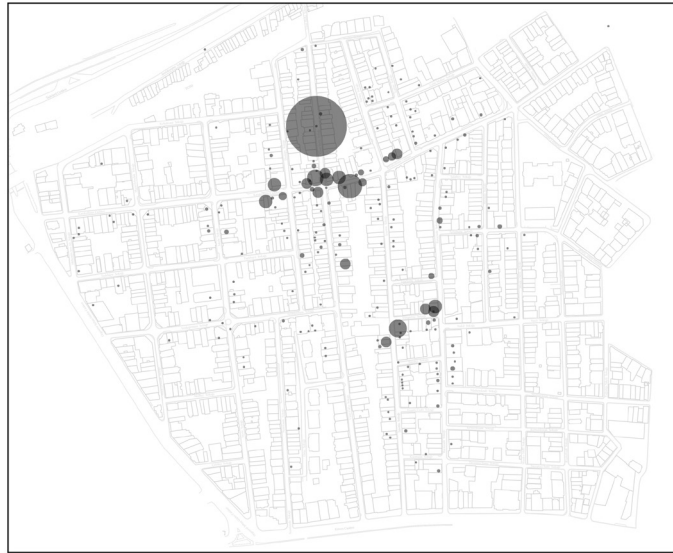

***Figure 4.** Bridges and resource brokers in the neighborhood. The size of every bridge is relevant to the number of heterophilous ties he/she has with the focus group.*

sure he would help me if I ever have a problem here", "I think the main reason I feel secure at night is I have friendly relationships with all the shops around here". The interviewees also stated that this relation is mutual since they also help shopkeepers in occasions such as; helping their children's homework, recommending doctors or lawyers, sharing resources. Therefore it can be assumed that these bridging ties give each party access to a different social network.

The heterophilous relation with shop owners is reflected on the urban space. As demonstrated in figure 4; the most prominent bridging nodes within the neighborhood are concentrated on the main commercial corridors. These corridors can be identified as social spaces with strong public character, generating urban vitality.

On the other hand, major social interaction spaces in figure 4 are not necessarily defined by spatial features of the neighborhood. Not all of the recognized public spaces pointed out earlier (in figure 1) correspond to figure 4. Contrarily; most prominent bridging nodes have no significant spatial attributes. From a planning or design point of view, some of the major nodes seem almost random in the urban texture. Therefore daily habits and usage of urban space seems more important in the formation of these nodes.
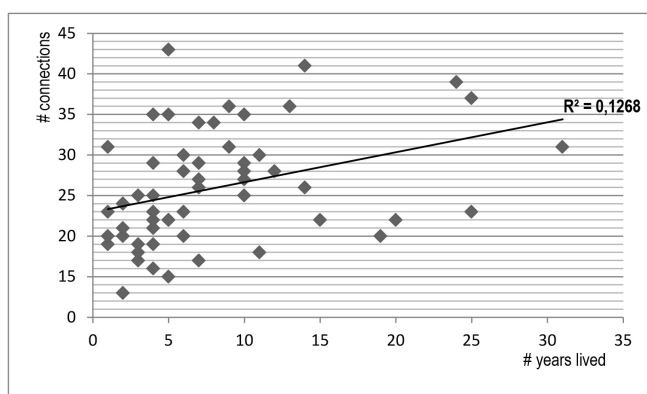
Figure 5. Amount of neighborly ties relevant to years lived in the neighborhood.
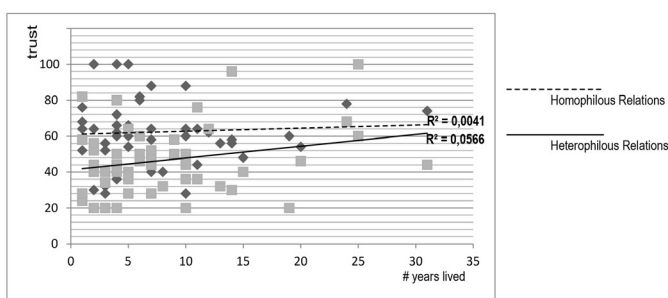

Figure 6. Amount of trust in Homophilous and Heterophilous ties relevant to years lived in the neighborhood.

Most significant bridging ties were found to be those correlating with the close neighbors. The findings show that majority of the heterophilous contacts are situated within 10 mt range to the subjects. "Proximity" has been addressed as a key obstacle in social interactions to occur. In his classical study on effects of distance on social relations; Festinger (1950) found that closer the students live to each other, they are more likely to form a relationship, in a dorm setting. Different empirical cases also illustrate the effect of proximity in social interaction as it increases the chance of encounter (Carrasco, Hogan, Wellman, & Miller, 2008; Hipp & Perrin, 2009); therefore creates "opportunity" to form bridging ties (Cabrera & Najarian, 2015; Skjaeveland & Garling, 1997).

In this respect, findings confirm such kind of an interaction due to proximity in Yeldegirmeni, since Interviewees stated they often only interact with close neighbors. This relation is based on small talk and solving practical daily needs. These kinds of interactions are more relevant to space, since it is stated that they most often occur in common

areas of the buildings, shared gardens/ backyards or in front of the buildings. Some of the interviewees suggested that the neighborly relations they had are very much a result of dense urban texture; since the buildings are very close and facing each other, gardens are small and semi-publicly used, most importantly; "sometimes it is almost impossible to avoid people".

The findings illustrate that strength and quantity of bridging ties vary among individuals. Some of the artists have stronger heterophilous relations with higher trust, while some have hardly met even closest neighbors. Two factors; "length of residence" and "daily routines", is found to be primarily decisive in this distinctness.

Social capital research suggests that, trust and social ties are positively associated with the length of residence; the longer one lives in a place, the more likely one acquires relationships (Bridge, 2006; Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Formation of trust & social norms is directly correlated with encounters and reputation of these encounters is proportional with time (Blokland-Potters, 2003). The findings in Yeldegirmeni confirm that the average amount of social ties rise accordingly to the number of years lived in the neighborhood (see figure 5).

A more interesting interpretation can be made by comparing average trust and length of residence (see figure 6). While in both homophilous and heterophilous ties, the amount of trust increases over time; ratio is much higher in heterophilous ties compared to homophilous ties. The findings suggest that after 15 years of residency, heterophilous ties can become stronger than homophilous ties with a higher amount of trust.

Since most of the members of the creative community already had familiarity with each other through common networks prior to their arrival to the neighborhood; the length of their residence is not crucial in the formation of bonding social capital. They already have a certain amount of trust, unallied from space. However neighborly relations rely on spatial coexistence and therefore the length of residence plays a decisive role in the

formation of bridging social capital. This is especially effectual for neighbors in close proximity. Some interviewees who have been living in Yeldegirmeni for more than 10 years remarked that; they used to have more problems and prejudgments against them, in the first years of their arrival. These problems and prejudgments were resolved in time; *"people got used to us and our way of life as the time passed. We had enough time to observe each other and don't have reasons to be threatened by each other anymore"*. Some of the older artists refer to their neighbors as; *"closer than a family…"*

Difference in "daily routines" also determines the formation of bringing ties. Those whose daily routines obligate them to spend more time in public spaces had significantly better neighborly relations. The most evident example is the dog owners, who need to take their pets walking, had remarkably stronger and more intensive relations with their neighbors. By walking the same route twice a day, these interviewees both develop a daily habit of having small conversations with locals on their path and they have more opportunities for regular casual interactions. Their social ties are also highly dependent to urban space; such as parks and public arenas which function as social focies for daily neighborly interaction.

Festingter(1950) noted in his classical study that "required paths" are major determinants of brief and unscripted contacts, which constitute the formation of new relations. The distribution of commonly visited places and the overlap of paths during the course of daily activities create such opportunities. According to Kaboet. al.(2015), overlap of paths would more likely result in interaction, share of information and development of collaborative relations.

Difference in commuting habits is another example of such path overlap, evident in the study. The interviewees who do not live/work[6] in the same space (and naturally obligated to walk to work space), have a higher amount of heterophilous ties (see figure 7). Most of such interviewees suggested that, they know shop owners and
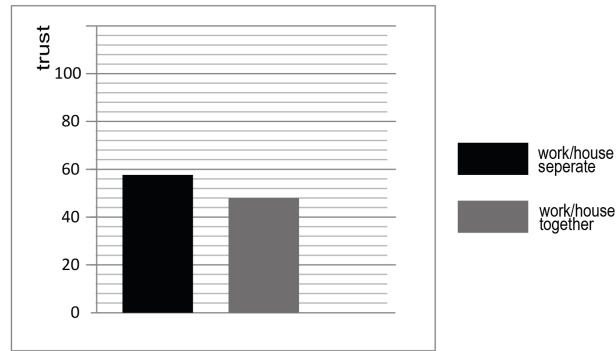

Figure 7. *Amount of trust in Heterophilous ties for individuals live/work at the same space or walk to work.*

neighbors on their walking route to studio and have the habit of having small conversations or greeting each other during the course of this journey. As one interviewee expresses; *"I am familiar to everyone on my way home, it makes me feel like I am only surrounded with people I know, which gives a sense of belonging to the neighborhood"*, the overlap of paths due to daily routines has a significant effect on the weak ties.

The most significant effect of the bridging ties can be seen in place attachment, general comfort and security. The interviewees with little amount of heterophilous ties described the neighborhood as "unsafe". They remarked that they have to lock their doors, even when they are in the studio. Those with higher amount of heterophilous ties believed the neighborhood is very safe and secure. They felt protected due to the fact that they can ask for help from neighbors when needed and did not feel threatened of individuals seen as a security threat (alcoholics, drug abuser or street tugs) since they personally knew them.

Those with better bridging ties also had more place attachment. A particular notion narrated by most of the interviewees was that, because of their positive relations with the neighbors, Yeldegirmeni is considered different from other similar gentrifying neighborhoods where there are occasional conflicts between cultural groups[7]. In a city with political tensions, the neighborly relations are also narrated as a tool for social compromise; *"This place is out of Turkey's political arena, It is the only*

[6]*These interviewees both live and work in the neighborhood, but in separate buildings. They walk to work. Artists living outside the neighborhood were not included in this comparison.*

[7]*Interviewees particularly refer to Tophane district; another gentrifying neighborhood in the European part of Istanbul which infamously had media attention when locals attacked and vandalized art galleries in several occasions. Some residents were injured in those events.*

place where I really feel comfortable when I walk around. Of course I don't know every individual, but it somehow feels like that. No matter what their (locals) political or social status is, I feel like I am treated as a neighbor, not as a representative of a certain political tendency"

5. Conclusion

From the creative class' point of view in Yeldegirmeni, the relationship between neighborhood and community neither corresponds to the ""liberated community" of Wellman, nor the "Urban Villages" of Gans (op.cit.). Spatial identity is not lost and locality does constitute an important role for the existence of this community. But this identity is not completely limited with the borders of the neighborhood either.

It is hard to claim that the research site is a melting pot for all the different classes and communities. We do witness the social barriers of cultural and economic differences and it would be misleading to suggest social groups are totally integrated. Individuals truly prefer socializing with those similar to them. On the other hand we also see that the neighborhood setting creates a different kind of environment for co-existence. The groups cultivate the ability to rely on each other without forming strong relationships. This reliance constitutes the foundation of place attachment and forms locally dependent collaboration for mutual benefit. The bridging ties formed in public space play the essential role throughout this process.

The case study confirms previous assumptions that spatial entities of urban texture are effectual in the formation of bridging ties and bridging social capital. The semi-public interfaces such as building entrances, shops, neighboring backyards and daily routines entailing individuals to use public spaces make significant contribution in that sense. On the contrary; it is also observed that the lack of public interfaces has a contribution in the formation of bonding social capital, since individuals are forced to spend their free time in private spaces with only those chosen to be with.

The narratives and daily experiences of interviewees also indicate that high density and constricted urban texture has a positive effect to bridging social. Colliding/ intersecting semi-public spaces and undefined borders between private and public realm increases the chances of cursory encounters. The physical density and close proximity of buildings make social interaction between residents unavoidable, even obligatory. However, more empirical studies are necessary for further evidence in this assumption.

The findings also help us to reconsider the constitution of public space. It was evident in the research that, social interaction was not necessarily a result of spatial setting. On the contrary; the public character was rather a result of social interaction. This gives a lefebvrian understanding of urban space. As in the case of Yeldegirmeni, the physical setting of the neighborhood did not radically change in the course of history, but the daily habits and mediums of social interaction did. While some public spaces (such as shop-fronts or commercial nodes) seems to be constant social interaction focies, as they still inhabit similar daily practices; some new daily habits (such as dog walking) create self-developed public spaces. These public spaces are not results of a design choice, plan or urban feature, but barely results of social interactions and different forms of social production.

Furthermore, the case also shows us that the strength of heterophilous bridging ties is relevant to time. Social groups develop a mutual tolerance towards each other in time and weak ties can turn into stronger friendships with the perpetual repetition of interaction.

This also gives us hope of a possible third way for the gentrifying inner city areas. As in the case of Yeldeğirmeni, gentrification is not always a result of forced social mix policies, but rather a consequence of social dynamics and cultural choices. If the flow of new middle class is unavoidable for these inner city neighborhoods; is it still possible to avoid social conflicts, segregation or dismissal of classes? Via

a slowly building bridging social capital through public space, we can assume that it is possible to both preserve close community ties which support disadvantaged classes to get by and engage them to a mutually beneficial co-existence to get ahead at the same time. This study has been constructed around one focus group, hence it shows one side of a gentrifying neighborhood setting. Further empirical research and comparative studies can shed light for more sustainable urban policies and revitalization models.

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