COLLIDING URBAN TRANSFORMATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF HISTORICAL PENINSULA, ISTANBUL

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Keywords

Abstract

Over the last three decades, the disruptive quality of urban and social restructuring processes in Turkey has been intensified by the government's decision to embrace the concept of urban transformation as a tool to boost the Turkish economy and development. In this respect, many cities have experienced a rapid urban transformation, practicing more of a top to down approach in implementing an urban planning and design, and at the same time undervaluing the potential of a participatory process for a common future and for the improvement of the quality of social and urban life. The article examines the process of "social and spatial restructuring" for the old-city housings of the city of Istanbul, as part of a larger urban transformation phenomenon. The research comparatively analyses three different urban transformation projects from the city of Istanbul's historically valued Golden Horn area and focuses on missions, actors and roles of the projects in terms of the social and spatial restructuring phases. As all three cases in this respect reclaims an upgrading of the quality of urban environment of the historic neighbourhoods; the mission is to expose the local multidimensional structure of these transformations via comparative discussion of their potentials, capabilities and limits in respect to the dynamics of urban transformation and community participation.

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Istanbul, along with the worldwide neo-liberal economic and political drift, faced an intensive urbanisation process. The city has gone through rapid changes of social and physical context together with emerging urban economies that have catalysed the transformation processes immensely. While new forms of urban development and transformation practices brought out a sprawling city of Istanbul with its new settlements, the same practices revealed a change in spatial and social contexts of the multi-layered and multi-dimensional structure of the city. With the powerful effects of the neo-liberal policies, the city had been perceived as a powerful potential -as Harvey (1989) stated- of the "urban entrepreneurialism" and a subject to transform (Mutman & Eryıldız, 2014). While the city started expanding to the peripheries with the lead of the urban sprawl, the historic neighbourhoods started facing the displacement of the small-scale local production and businesses, whilst gaining attention of the new urban trends based on consumption and tourism. This new trend ended up with the process of gentrification especially within the historical neighbourhoods of the city of Istanbul.

With the global capitalist force over many large-scale urban transformation projects, the city of Istanbul, as one of the infected cities of the neo-liberal economy, faces the capitalist forces heavily through new urban transformation projects such as creation of waterfronts, public spaces, shopping malls, inner city developments, and public transportation projects becoming the new symbols of the city. On the other hand, the city of Istanbul as a representing figure of the neo-liberal face of Turkish Republic, connectively hosts many critical implementations of non-participatory planning approaches. For a more vigorous life, the city's devastated urban settlements are being redesigned under an economically driven motto and new visages are popping up as new old town centres, remade urban cores and traditional textures (Mutman, 2010). In this rapid transformation process, many large scaled transformations or renewal projects have evolved targeting to boost the current economy.

These changes are becoming leading driving forces of a restructured social and physical environment of the city of Istanbul. Similarly, historical neighbourhoods of former inner city residential areas of the Golden Horn, Bosphorus villages or the Galata region started to face sharp transformation waves and gentrification. Former socio-spatial characteristics of these historically and culturally valued areas -which was already facing social and economic deformations due to the political shifts- started to face the current trend through a direct or an indirect urban transformation.

In this context by focusing into the transformation processes of the city of Istanbul, through the two historic neighbourhoods of the Golden Horn -Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye- this paper intends to analyse and critically discuss three different urban transformation methodologies that have been implemented. By focusing on these processes, the paper aims to evaluate comparatively the overall missions of the transformation phase, their methodologies, participant actors and their roles within the process, and finally exposing the potentials and/or the complexities that have emerged through the projects. As a process of social and spatial re-structuring, the overall mission of the paper is to develop a critical reading on the transformation methodologies within the local context, and additionally question the potentials for a collaborative and participatory planning approach, by overlaying the implementation processes and methodologies of the transformation taking place in the historic neighbourhoods of the city of Istanbul.

Urban transformation methodologies in this manner started to expose a local projector from the Turkish practice. Forms of transformation projects and their processes brought up with their own first hand and projected focuses and outcomes. Process of revitalisation for example would develop a positive impact for a neighbourhood upgrading, however as a result of the local implementation process, the lack of interaction of actors from the sector and the society, as well as the missing opportunity of a democratic and horizontal interaction level, brings the social and spatial restructuring process eventually and indirectly.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND THE GENTRIFICATION AS THE "SOCIAL AND SPATIAL RE-STRUCTURING"

The urban transformation process, through its methodologies, overall missions, expected and reflected outcomes as well as its actors has widely been discussed and criticised among local and international communities and platforms. Among various methodologies of urban transformation, some implementations are perceived as great successes for their cohesiveness to the local context, while some implementations do gain a substantial economic success in achieving a boost for the real estate value. A holistic vision for an outcome of a sustainable urban transformation however needs a balanced and interrelated structure between the community, economy and the natural and physical environment. Therefore, the overall mission and the tools of an urban transformation, bears an important role not only in terms of urban politics, but also for the urban economy and for the empowerment of an integrated and participating society of the urban land.

Cities have been transforming due to the rapid changes and developments in social, economic, cultural and technological fields. This imminent transformation phase mostly exposes itself within megacities through a continuous shift in development practices of social, political and economic agendas, spatial formations, changes in daily practices and through the inevitable social and spatial restructuring processes. Forms of transformation in this manner face various implementation methodologies and impacts over time. Under a general framework of urban transformation, the mission of the implementation lead to the exposition of various concepts as the "urban revitalisation", "urban renewal", "urban redevelopment", "gentrification" and "urban regeneration" through the context and time.

Roberts (2000) in this manner described the urban transformation process of the developed countries within a historical timeline starting from 1950s to the 1990s, as a continually improving process. According to this gradually developing process, 1950s through the end of the 1960s comprised the years of reconstruction and revitalisation of devastated urban settlements. From 1970s on the methodology of the urban transformation shifted mostly towards the clearance of insufficient urban settlements within inner cities. This form of implementation however seen mostly as large-scale urban renewal over the historic cityscape. Couch in this manner focused on the deficiencies of the methodology and highlighted that the improvement of the physical environment through renewal strategy, would not be efficient without addressing the need of an improved educational attainment, skills and employment factors for the community (Couch et al., 2003).

With the impacts of the neo-liberal economy, the 1980s responded to the previous transformation methodologies with what Harvey (1989) highlighted as the "urban entrepreneurialism", characterised by the business interests over the urban scape and place marketing through large scaled and economically structured, re-development projects of formerly devastated or underused regions of cities, or through large-scaled flagship projects.

With the new perspective, cities or places within urban environments have become the driving forces of the urban economy. In that respect, the urban regeneration methodology implementations in 1990s exposed the importance of a widespread and structured plan and urban policies developed with the collaborative efforts of a broad participation. In this context, Bovoird (1995) underlines that the urban regeneration methodology contributes into economic, social, political and cultural strands. Where similarly Roberts (2000) defined the methodology as a "comprehensive and integrated vision and action that leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area" (Roberts, 2000).

By restructuring the urban environment and the process of urban transformation, it is equally essential to underline the change of transformation policies related to the physical, social and mostly economic factors mostly in developed countries. Basing on Roberts's urban transformation flow, McDonald (2009) defined the evolution of the urban transformation policies in time (Figure 1). Starting from 1950s on, according to McDonald's policy flow chart, the transformation policies were subjected to a comprehensive redemption, which was followed up with the focus on the public welfare and the economic developments.

Comprehensive Redemption 1950s-60s
Public Welfare mid 1960s-late1970s
Economic Developments mid 1970s onwards
Private Sector Property led Regeneration 1980s
Local Area Based Partnerships 1990s
Local Strategic Partnerships late 1990s
Sustainable Places 21st century

Figure 1: Evolution of urban transformation policy
(Source: based on Roberts (2000), by McDonald et al., 2009).

Throughout this flow, it is also evident that the importance of public welfare and the voice of the society in decision-making and on the process itself, defined their positions in the urban and economic policy contexts within the last 65 years. In other words, positioning of the economic and political interests on top of the urban qualities, public welfare, democratic rights, right to the city, right in decision making and planning approaches overlay severe tensions between the actors of the processes as conflicting objectives, future aims and expectations from a lifespan.

In this context Bovoird (1995), while explaining different courses of urban regeneration processes, emphasised that to achieve qualified social interactions within the city would depend on a set of cultural facilities which are «inclusive» in their appeal rather than «exclusive», i.e. welcoming to different ethnic groups, to different social classes, to people of different educational backgrounds. This very remark for the discourse of urban planning and

design or urban transformation process, highlights the importance of "inclusion" in planning as a holistic approach, rather than creation of socially and spatially fragmented cities.

Gentrification as "social and spatial re-structuring": Glass (1964) was the first to highlight the concept of "gentrification" as a new terminology by developing a relation on the social restructuring processes of the city of London, and defined the term as "taking hold of the labourer's settlements ... by the middle and upper classes" (University College London & Glass, 1964). Gentrification according to Radovic (2009) commonly stands for the process that challenges and almost inevitably destroys the authenticity of established and sought-after urban qualities and precincts. Hoffmann (2007) defined the process essentially as the separation of the poor from rich by displacement.

The gentrification process in this context is a forced or directed movement of a social group from one location to another, which is mostly reflected in the evacuation of existing -mostly low income or a socially ignored disadvantageous groups- residents from an urban settlement. This form of action mostly takes place through top to down decisions with the interests of real estate market, corporate business and private institutions as part of higher economic priorities. Due to its close relation with the social and economic restructuring of renewal process according to Glass (1964), the terminology is mostly characterised by a replacement of population and therefore, was not embraced widely within the international – as well as local- academic literature. The process in fact, composes a social and spatial restructuring that embraces socio-cultural elements such as: the patterns of consumption - middle-class residential patterns changing according to a demographic structure and lifestyle, and issues of gender, race and education; economy, such as changes to economic value, impacts on land and housing markets, economic restructuring, the fabrication of new housing, and transportation costs; and the politics, such as the issues of state policy and funding (Turgut & Sismanyazici, 2012). Herein in order to embrace the multidimensional levels within the process rather than a negative purpose, this paper will define the gentrification process through the definition of "social and spatial restructuring" by Uzun (2005) and Turgut (2010).

THE URBAN TRANSFORMATION PROCESS AND THE SOCIAL AND SPATIAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE HISTORIC NEIGHBOURHOODS AT THE CITY OF ISTANBUL

The city of Istanbul along with the effects of global political and economic influences has been facing an ongoing social and spatial transformation process since 1980s onwards. Through the influences of urban economy and the inevitable urban transformation process, the formerly prestigious historic neighbourhoods gained popularity among creative class or high-income society. This high attraction to these inner city neighbourhoods in fact mostly were due to their touristic potentials for the urban economy and their close distance to the main business and financial districts of the city. Most of the spatial transformations associated with the economic impulsion have generated the development of gated communities, five star hotels where the city is labelled 'as a consumption artefact' of tourism, new office towers and the expulsion of small businesses and crafts mostly from the central historic neighbourhoods. Oncu (1997) stated that the driving force of a worldwide economy on cities and for the city of Istanbul, have been occurred with the gentrification processes of the historical and inner city neighbourhoods, marketed through the international images on billboards and through shop windows.

As for being a part of the global scene, various spatial and cultural grand projects started to develop at the city of Istanbul (Yavuz, 2002). On one hand the historical neighbourhoods and inner city areas of Istanbul started to host upper middle class population, facing a dynamic in and out flow of the urban population. On the other hand, the expansion to the periphery inspired the policy makers in reclaiming the inner city neighbourhoods for counter balancing the urban sprawl. Thereafter the historic neighbourhoods of the city of Istanbul were promoted for their physical and authentic characteristics as part of an urban commodification.

The breaking point of the urban transformation process of the historic city had been through the execution of two consequent urban policies. Stated by Canbay Turkyılmaz et al (2013), even though the effects of globalisation made its presence since 1980s, the necessity of providing a new urban identity for the city gained importance with 2000s (Canbay Turkyilmaz et al., 2013). In 2005, the state announced the Article 5393 the Municipality Law, authorising district municipalities to implement 'transformation projects' in derelict, obsolescent and unsafe (due to natural disasters) parts of cities (Kuyucu & Unsal, 2010). Consequently, announcement of the Article 5366 law on the "Renewal and Protection of Ageing Historical and Cultural Immobile Entities and Their Use by Sustenance", exposed a breaking point for the entire urban transformation projects of all the cities in Turkey. While the Article 5393 was targeting the renewal of the existing building stock, the article 5366 meant a major threshold for the historical neighbourhoods of many cities as well as the historical peninsula of the city of Istanbul.

As the policy encouraged the renewal and protection of historically valuable neighbourhoods, the profitable historic city has faced a tourism boost. This process by enforce created the peninsula a primary target in "cultural based urban economy" (Zukin, 1998) with its museums, authenticity, physical and cultural texture, and its preserved connotations and monuments. This phase was immediately followed up by the execution of urban transformation projects of the historical peninsula areas including Sulukule, Fener-Balat, and Suleymaniye in Fatih and Tarlabasi in Beyoglu districts.

With the announcement of the Article 5366, the central state was authorised to develop a decision and foresight for an urban and profitable vision for the historical neighbourhoods and their building stocks. Through this execution, local municipalities would have taken the lead in assigning the process to a private firm according to the projected development plans. This form of methodology, while defining a top to down decision-making process for a local context, additionally invited the multi sectoral economic interests over the local and existing social, spatial and economic patterns on site. The lack of communication between all the actors and sectors at this point provokes highly critical implementation practices in return.

THE METHODOLOGY

With this overall perspective, this article focuses on three different urban transformation methodologies implemented at the two different historical and physically dilapidated neighbourhoods located at the Golden Horn of the city, Suleymaniye and Fener-Balat (Figure 2). Both neighbourhoods where the introductory flux of urban dynamics and interconnections meet, are the representatives of the targeting group of the Article 5366, and were chosen as the case studies of the paper in order to re-evaluate and expose colliding characteristics of the implemented three transformation methodologies for a historically valued settling of the city.

Figure 2: The Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye neighbourhoods located at the Historical Peninsula
(Source: Demet Mutman, 2018).

By exemplifying three consecutive urban transformation implementations taking place in two different neighbourhoods, the aim of the paper is both differentiating the overall missions of the processes and exposing potentials, capabilities and limits of the projects, their positions in an integrated and collaborative urban design process. Through such form of critical reading of the transformation processes of the historical neighbourhoods, this research aims to catalyse a discussion platform and self-evaluation for future implementations to achieve a sustainable and democratic urban planning.

The paper based its research on site analysis in both sites, on-site and in-depth interviews as well as literature and written media reviews for three different project implementations. After introducing the development of the neighbourhoods, the project processes will be continually deconstructed. By defining all implementations according to the actors and roles, implementation methodologies of the projects, the public and private distributions, and deconstruction of the three projects will be evaluated according to their potentials and colliding critical positions. In this manner focusing into both neighbourhoods as cases of different implementation strategies, this paper's mission is to expose the incompatible structure of actors of social and spatial restructuring processes, as well as the visionary aspects of these implementations. As prominent historical residential districts of the historical peninsula from the 16th century on the Suleymaniye, Fener and Balat neighbourhoods faced various population flows due to change in policies, change of state and in-migration led the physical and socio-economic downfall starting mostly from 1950s onward.

Suleymaniye neighbourhood (Figure 3), developed in the mid-16th century as a residential district of the officials of the Ottoman palace, developed as a higher-class residential area of the city. Together with the Suleymaniye's Religious School, the district was composed of big villas and small residential units of the Eminonu neighbourhood's inhabitants and schools by the Golden Horn. However, with the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the modernisation period of the young country, the neighbourhood started facing drastic change due to economic, social, cultural and physical downfall. This sharp transformation of the political context consequently caused an out-migration from the neighbourhood.

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Starting from 1950s to 1980s, the in-migration period of East to the West Anatolia increased the urban population drastically and the new comers of the city started to settle to the formerly high-income neighbourhood. This was followed by the devastation of the historical neighbourhood, due to the low incomes of the new locals as well as the lack of economic growth in the neighbourhood. Thereafter, the former residential and educational zones of the Suleymaniye district were transformed into the storages, crafts workshops, low class residential units and dorms for the cheap labour (Dincer, 2010).

Figure 3: (Left) Suleymaniye neighbourhood's traditional residential units (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018); (2nd and 3rd) Ayranci Street -the prominent street of renovations on site- (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018); (Right) Suleymaniye neighbourhood's traditional residential units and converted boutique hotels (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018).

Figure 4: From left to right (1st) A vacant traditional residential unit of the Fener-Balat neighbourhood for sale, scene from uphill towards downhill (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018); (2nd) A vacant traditional residential unit of the Fener-Balat neighbourhood scene towards uphill (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018); (3rd, 4th and 5th) The traditional neighbourhood structure of the Fener-Balat neighbourhood, with recently injected "trendy" shops and cafes around (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018).

From 17th century until mid-19th century, the Fener neighbourhood (Figure 4) which was developed around the Greek Orthodox Church hosted the high-class Greek society. The local Greek population had a first out-flow within the city for settling down at the Bosphorus neighbourhoods in mid-19th century. This flow let the district mostly to the mid-class officers, craftsmen and small business tradesmen. Although the neighbourhood lost most of its residents towards the Bosphorus back then, Fener was known as a Greek neighbourhood

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until the second and major out migration flow of the Greek population to Greece in 1960s due to political tensions. With mid-20th century's out and in migration flows, mostly Black Sea or South-East Anatolia origin, low-income population has settled down to the area (Dincer, 2010; Behar, 2006; Narli, 2006; Sismanyazıcı, 2009; Turgut & Sismanyazıcı, 2012).

Yet the neighbourhood of Fener-Balat faced a second drastic urban renewal program in 1980s. The new mission was to cleaning up the shores of the Golden Horn and moving the Dockyards to Tuzla -south-eastern district located at the Anatolian side of the city- in mid to late 1980s. This attempt however effected the physical and economic conditions in the district by destructing small and medium sized industries, workshops as well as some historically valued masonry buildings dating back to eighteenth century in order to create a new green waterfront path. These socio-economic and cultural changes, created a major decline for the commercial activities within the area, where many enterprises closed down due to the lack of investment as well as many employees leaving the neighbourhood due to unemployment.

Starting with the UNESCO world heritage listing in 1985, the historical peninsula starting with the Suleymaniye neighbourhood became an attraction point of local authorities as well as local and international tourists. Intricately, the world heritage label catalysed the destruction of the historic patterns and the local architectural culture with a construction permit expectation for the visitors of the 'attractive' zones of the city. By the 2000's, Suleymaniye has faced multiple fires on civil architectural structures, illegal destruction of architectural values, transformation of already burned out plots into car parking areas or storages. Herein Suleymaniye and Fener-Balat neighbourhoods with similar intentions have faced high expectations in real estate due to tourism, and due to the catalysing effect of the UNESCO's label (Dincer, 2010). Dincer (2010) at this point connects these expectations on the sharply failing urban economy especially since 1985.

Social and spatial restructuring process in Fener-Balat

The Fener-Balat districts as a result of major political shifts and population flows, faced a sharp change in the socio-cultural context and a decline in urban living conditions. With these conditions serving as a driving force for a rehabilitation process, the district has faced two different urban transformation processes in between 1996 and 2009.

The first urban transformation project had been planned after the 2nd International Habitat meeting in 1996 and started as a feasibility research held collaboratively by the European Commission, Fatih Municipality, UNESCO and the French Institute for Anatolian Research with a local NGO, between 1997 and 1998 (Gur, 2015). The project's mission was to improve the local architecture of the neighbourhood, while developing an empowerment and rehabilitation project for the socio-economic context of the region. The project was completed in 2008.

On the other hand, from 2000s on, a new urban transformation era has been emerged in the city. This period was experienced as a change of shares, roles and powers of the actors and sectors of the urban transformation. The role and the mission of the state, together with the support of the private sector have merged their forces for a new projection of the city. With this point of view, the second Fener-Balat renewal project got started by replacing and sometimes even erasing the results of the earlier rehabilitation project. The second project's mission was to create a new comprehensive, physical, social and economic pattern by

framing the implementation to the Article 5366. This process has been called out as a "broad-brush effort" over the first rehabilitation project on site (Sismanyazici & Turgut Yıldız, 2009; Turgut & Sismanyazici, 2012).

The first Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Project aimed a social and physical rehabilitation throughout the area by restoration of houses, social rehabilitation, renovation and regeneration of the historical Balat Market and establishment of a waste management. The project via its four main strands encouraged the education of local artisans and creation of new job opportunities.

As a joint project of UNESCO with the Municipality of Fatih -which the municipality playing a supportive role compared to the second urban transformation project- the project took an inclusive effort in integrating the local communities to the decision and implementation processes (Sismanyazici & Turgut Yıldız, 2009; Turgut & Sismanyazici, 2012). The integration of the local community had been reflected to the share divisions of the project and according to this division, the property owners had 42% shares, and the rest of the shares did belong to the private sector as Dincer (2010) narrates. As a multidimensional implementation that targeted a socio-economic and physical restructuring, this project can be classified easily as of a community-oriented implementation.

The latter Fener-Balat renewal project: The transformation process of the Fener-Balat has shifted to a new phase with the Article 5366. By focusing on the "unsafe" parts of the city in terms of natural disasters, the municipality of Fatih Municipality announced the "Fener-Balat Renewal Project" in 2009. The mission of the renewal project was defined as developing a comprehensive new physical, social and economic pattern by transforming the urban degradation areas into re-habitable and liveable conditions (Turgut & Sismanyazici, 2012).

The Fener-Balat renewal project in this manner comprises of the demolition of all low quality renovations, constructions and irrespective examples to the historical settings as Dincer (2010) states. The destruction at this point is a controversial point as the demolition of irrespective or low quality buildings would be agreed by the authority and those decisions could contain the implementations of the first Fener-Balat rehabilitation project. Another controversial strand was the construction of replica facades and structures imitating the local physical context of the region in general. Inevitably, this attitude kept the debates among scholars related to the design and planning practice, as well as the demolition of the UNESCO supported community-oriented urban transformation. In this manner as a multidimensional social and spatial restructuring process the Fener-Balat Renewal Project would be defined as an urban image oriented, profit led, renewal strategy where the local social and cultural context had been neglected through the top to down planning approach.

Social and Spatial restructuring process in Suleymaniye

Suleymaniye neighbourhood has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985, and is the leading neighbourhood of the list among the whole historical peninsula. However, the acceptance of the neighbourhood to the UNESCO World Heritage brought a new form of disruption to its spatial environment. Many historically valued residential structures were burned out systematically either to build up new urban structures for tourism facilities or to open up plots for parking. With the announcement of the Municipal Law of 5393 and the Article of 5366, the neighbourhood's urban destiny was drawn from spontaneous

development towards a new development with an overall vision of urban policy makers and the economic actors of the city.

Suleymaniye was announced as an urban regeneration site in 2006 just before the Fener-Balat. The mission was to regenerate the historical residential units and promoting the area with a historical reincarnation. After the urban regeneration announcement has been made, a counter declaration by the officials of the UNESCO stated that, a city is not only composed of buildings but also its own communities and thus preserving socio cultural identities and the structure is also essential in preservation policy of the UNESCO.

In the year 2008 the Suleymaniye rehabilitation project started as part of the Istanbul metropolitan municipality and claimed that the neighbourhood would get 24 hours liveliness; a new setup with residential and cultural facilities within. The project covered 938,738m^2 including 728 preservation buildings. It was a joint project of metropolitan municipality, directorate of preservation of historic environments, KUDEB (Directorate of Protection Application and Supervision), planning directorate, construction directorate, and the KIPTAS (Istanbul Public Housing Corporation). Dincer (2010) explained the system as 60% of the project cost would be covered by the Contributions for the Conservation of Cultural Assets, and the remaining 40% would come out of the budget of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. As for the construction costs, the portion of the 40% would be collected through the long-term, low interest credits that the Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKİ) would grant to the property owners.

This clearly publicly weighted and credit granting scheme implemented in Suleymaniye, was considered a positive model in terms of protecting the historical structure and the property rights according to Dincer (2010). The main critical debate related to this project was actually the role of KIPTAS, where the corporation was acting as a real estate developer by buying the plots and houses in the area before the announcement of the Article 5366 decisions, to very low costs. This ethically contentious marketing behaviour of KIPTAS definitely created an imbalanced situation within the whole system for the long run.

The project of Suleymaniye on the other hand was aiming to revitalise the degraded civil housing structures in the neighbourhood. However due to the devastation of historical values through fires until recent history, gaining data on the local texture and revitalising the physical characteristics of the settlement, created a problematic implementation of the profession issue and the use of materials. In this manner, three different methodologies were implemented in the area. The first option was composed of basic revitalisation processes for an existing and preserved historical structure. The second option was based on the accessibility of documents related to the destructed physical structure (Dincer, 2010). Finally, the third option was aiming to construct a complete new structure that has no information available about the former situation and would be constructed onto an empty plot in order to replace or reincarnate the former urban image.

Similar to the discussions of the Fener-Balat Renewal Project, the implementation methodology of this project as well did create long lasting debates concerning the design principles and planning approaches for historical neighbourhoods among scholars and urban critics. These debates did surely lead to the new design practices within old urban structures however, the top to down approach in general planning decision was made again by authorities for regenerating an urban image.

Concerning the participatory process, the project created a relatively "down to the local community" structure. However, it is important to highlight that the change of ownerships during and just before the announcement of the revitalisation project of the Suleymaniye, highly affected the social texture and the context of site. Therefore, this attitude is believed to accelerate the commodification of the neighbourhood as a touristic attraction while in long term letting a change or re-structuring of the local structure of the neighbourhood.
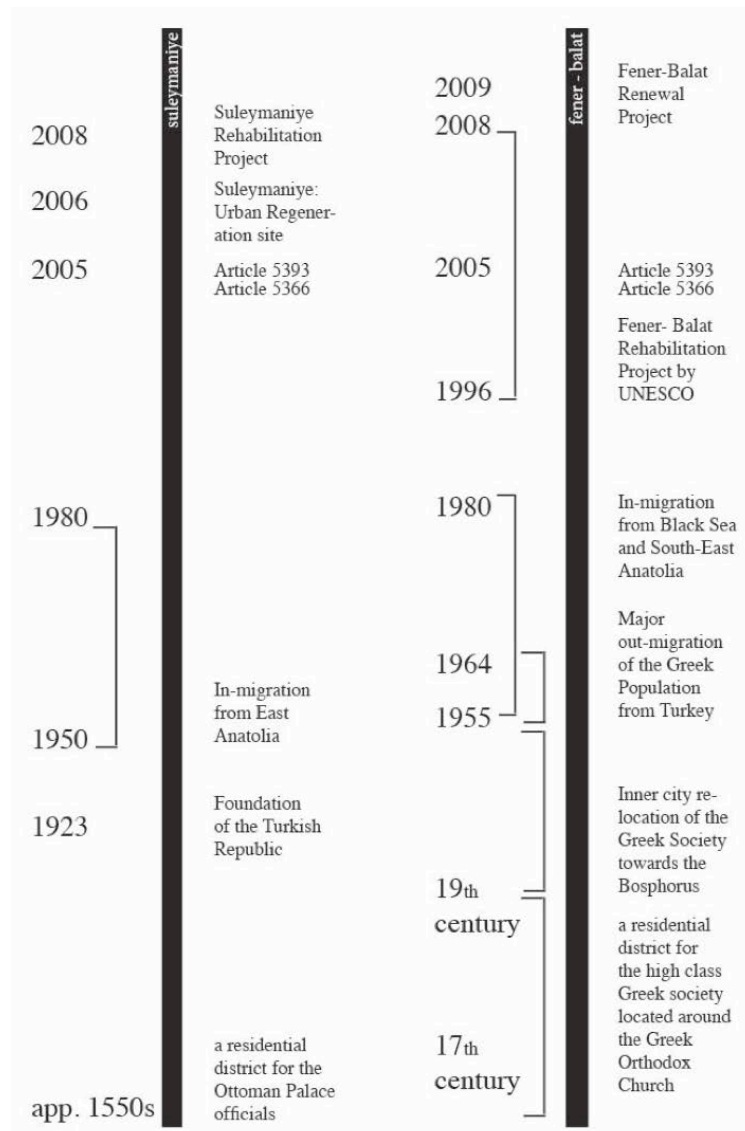

Figure 5: Development and change of the Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye neighbourhoods through the socio-political timeline of the city (Source: Demet Mutman, 2018).

As seen from Figure 5 both neighbourhoods since their first settlings, faced a tremendous shift from main political changes, to the social and cultural movements and physical transformations through time. These flows ended up with various cultural, psychological, economical and physical deformations among not only the Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye neighbourhoods, but among all the historically valued urban settlements.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The urban transformation process in general aims an improvement for socio-cultural, economic and physical environments. However, with the historical neighbourhoods of the city of Istanbul, the form of transformation exposes the lack of inclusion of the local community into the restructuring process. The differentiation among the cases defined above, is clearly showing that there also is a lack of a holistic and integrated strategy for a sustainable urban transformation of the city and of the historic settlements. This situation exposes a gap between the actors and their missions in an urban transformation project in local context. In this manner the creation of networks between a variety of actors, including local communities, brings out a holistic strategy for the city as a long term and sustainable (in terms of social, economic, physical and environmental manners) planning development, and produces an integrated and collaborative project resulting in an exposition of deficiency for the local urban transformation and planning context. This takes an important position in up to date's debates on the urban transformation strategies through promoting a participatory approach with the local community in order to achieve a socially, economically and spatially efficient response in urban planning.

As a counter approach, the current and most of the urban transformation decisions and project development phases cover a series of debates among scholars, decision makers and as a final follow up a sole share of information with the local community. This in fact defines the urban transformation implementation methodologies of the city of Istanbul's historical neighbourhoods especially starting with 2000s. As a general methodology of an urban transformation process the system either structures as a community-oriented approach as exemplified with the initial Fener-Balat Rehabilitation project, or as an implementation of a top-to-down process supporting a promotion of land through the acts of the private sectors speculative implementations. This process in return, within a short or long-term period (as showcased with the Fener-Balat's second urban transformation project and the Suleymaniye neighbourhood's project) leads to the physical and social re-structuring of the urban context.

Existing communities of the neighbourhoods as another actor of the process of transformation are usually neglected in Istanbul's urban transformation process. Therefore, the Project I of Fener-Balat plays an important role in exposing such a role model for a participatory urban revitalisation project of a historical neighbourhood. Behind the mediation of the UNESCO, the supportive role of the local administration for rehabilitation of social and cultural texture of the neighbourhood, the project aimed for a sustainable upgrading of the neighbourhood in the long run. In this manner, supporting the local culture and the existing communities of transformation areas, besides their "settler" status due to population shifts in recent years, brings an opportunity for a sustained urban transformation by adopting the process and preservation of the authentic structure.

On the other hand, concerning the participatory planning approach of two different implementation methodologies within the site of Fener-Balat exposed a drastic difference. Whilst a participatory and inclusive bottom-up approach was accepted during the UNESCO's rehabilitation project, with the Article 5366's announcement, higher expectations of the private sector acting with the state, brought out a top to down urban transformation approach. This process also catalysed a shift of the ownership status in the area and led to a rapid social re-structuring process in a small period.

At this point, the situation in the Suleymaniye neighbourhood can be seen as a transition or an in-between phase according to the Project I and Project II of Fener-Balat. The importance

of actors in this project creates an opportunity for both the private sector and to the local community by the project management. Due to the structure, either a private investor or an inhabitant has an option of collaborating with KUDEB for rehabilitation of their housing units. However, in practice in order to take a responsibility for the rehabilitation of a housing unit, one needs to get a license in rehabilitation from local authorities besides a proof of an historical value, and a data to be restored about the building's former situation. Local community in this manner, due to the previously and inaccurately implemented renovation methods, are forced to ignore the derelict living conditions and neglect the historical values. This indirect impact in fact, forced the area to develop as a lost historical texture and socio-cultural value. Therefore, whilst proposing a comparably balanced opportunity for both the community and the private sector, realities of the physical structure and the insufficient economic conditions of the current residents of the area, brings out a shift of ownership in the neighbourhood. Through this type of a flow of ownership, inferential social and spatial restructuring processes are being created in this neighbourhood (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Actors and the focus of the social and spatial restructuring processes of the Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye neighbourhoods (Source: Mutman and Turgut, 2011).

Overall, the urban transformation projects of the historical peninsula of Istanbul expose contradictory implementation methodologies and processes of the same organs through different methods and tools of urban transformation. The municipality of Fatih as the local authority and a leading actor of the transformation is the representative of the state led decisions by carrying the scents of the global economy and current dynamics for a city development and with a marketing strategy. The local participation, or the community, as part of the processes however, represents an obscure role. The socio-economic, cultural capacity and potential of the community seems to be irrelevant to catalysing a fast forward urban boom and this form of act results in a new form of "economically forced evacuation" for the low-income society in time.

Eventually, the promotion of urban land for the urban economy as a marketing tool leads to the execution of "re-made" physical structures, inserted social, cultural and economic facilities whilst accelerating a flow of the local population, clearance of local small-scale

business and production, on the other hand stirs up non—living zones of staged urban environments.

In this context, the research claims that a state led urban transformation strategy creates a conflictual relation between the roles and capacities of the actors in the processes. Neglected participation of the local inhabitants of the area reflects in return either a struggle against the project process or an acceptance of the process, and the eventual leaving of the neighbourhood -creating an inner city population flow- for a much affordable and liveable urban area. If there would be a chance of choosing to stay in the neighbourhood, with the restructured social and economic patterns, this case would mean long-term economic dues - which most of the low-income local residents of these historic neighbourhoods would decline. Nevertheless, as a short or long-term outcome among the described three cases, neighbourhood transformations are exposing profit-oriented implementations through socio-economic and physical upgrading processes. Therefore, if the leading factor is a gain for the urban economy rather than the balanced and equal distribution of welfare, qualified urban spaces, and upgraded socio-economic standards, then in the long run the urban transformation process is expected to create a direct or indirect shift of population. Also, the lack of a holistic and democratic urban vision and interconnected actors -of whom the rights to the city would legally being protected- are defining the missing parts of the general urban transformation methodology of 2000s.
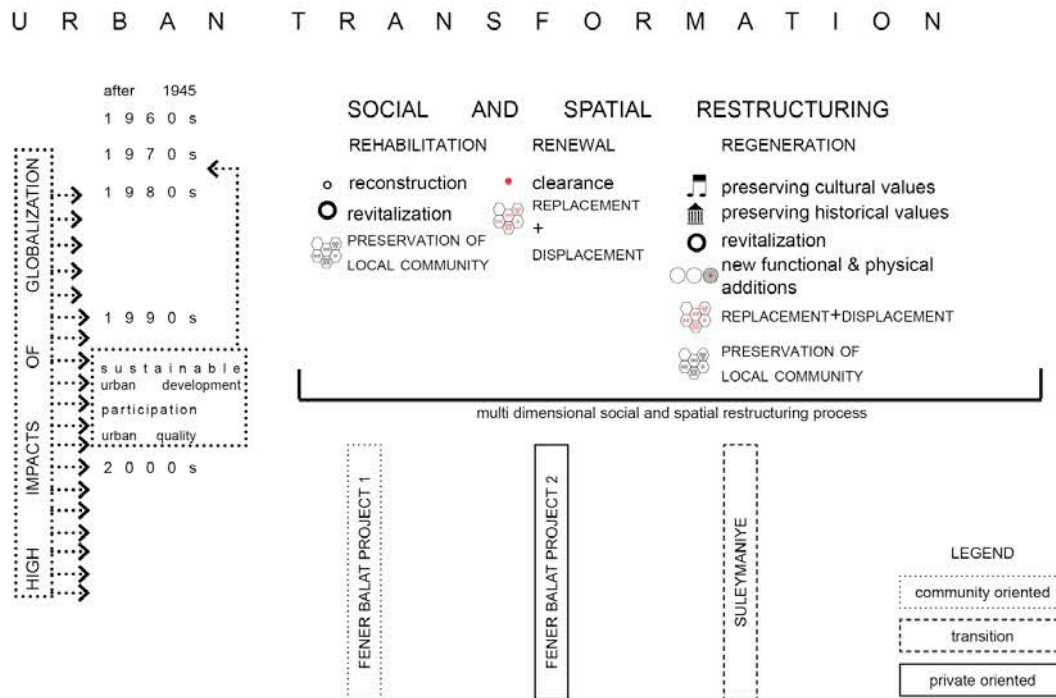

Figure 7: The urban transformation processes and the Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye neighbourhoods within the framework (Source: Mutman & Turgut, 2011).

However, it is equally important to clarify that the multidimensional process of social and spatial restructuring processes of the Fener-Balat and Suleymaniye neighbourhoods (Figure 7) are exemplifying not only a clash of higher missions of the implementation methodologies. These cases on the other hand represent the importance of the preservation of the local context and contents on site for the understanding of an urban sustainability. Even having

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gone through a huge population shift and connectively an economic deprivation influencing the physical and social corrosion of the cityscape, the city of Istanbul needs to re-value the context, potentials, and historic, cultural and physical values together with the community. Instead of creating a powerful economic and political pressure on relatively low-income neighbourhoods and the society, an urban transformation methodology of improving the spatial conditions while creating opportunities for a socio-economic empowerment by integrating the local community into the planning and decision making processes within a holistic approach.

Coming across a participatory planning approach in the city of Istanbul or even around the country, even today, is very rare unfortunately. Although this paper investigates the potentials and the gaps between three different urban transformation projects the "participatory planning" approach in the local context, clearly forms a lack of democratic integration of the society towards urban life, decision-making process and most probably in claiming and preserving of rights to the city and to the society. In such cultural and societal practice, engagement for the neighbourhood's urban development and transformation, at the same time claiming for empowerment of the community in socio-cultural and economic manners is the missing links of the Turkish practices.

Therefore, through the evaluation of three different implementations on two historic neighbourhoods of the city, this paper envisioned prospect that exposes different levels/doses of participation and engagement of the local community to the overall transformation practice. The paper in this manner shows that within the local practices of urban transformation methodologies, structuring the backbone of an urban transformation project is the initial need to arise from the local practices, with potentials of the site and the engagement of the society for an "on-site" and participative urban transformation. Additionally in this manner instead of supporting a disruptive urban transformation processes, a holistic strategy and a planning process with the moderation of the local government is a requisite for the consistently transforming city. New forms of interaction possibilities in this context, would serve to the upgrading of the cityscape and its citizens through the potential of integrating the local actors and sectors for developing an integrated and collaborative local forms of urban transformation practices.

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NOTES

KIPTAS (Istanbul Public Housing Corporation): As the number 1 public housing company in Turkey, KİPTAŞ was established in 1987. The aim of the company is to prepare projects concerning city, environment, and construction planning as well as architectural projects. KİPTAŞ aims to prevent the build-up of slum and shanty areas and the consequent decrease in public health standards, to prevent overpopulation and over construction, and to keep urban development under control and in accordance with a planned development strategy (http://www.ibb.gov.tr/en-US/Organization/Companies/Pages/KIPTASAS.aspx).

KUDEB (Directorate of Protection Application and Supervision): It was found in 2006 within the umbrella of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. It covers restoration and conservation

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laboratories, projects unit, wood workshop, stone carving workshop, permissions and controlling department, automation services for archives, and a historical landscape group within the directorate (http://www.ibb.gov.tr/sites/kudeb/Documents/birimler.htm).

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