

## THE RE-PRODUCTION OF THE HISTORICAL CENTER OF İSTANBUL IN 2000s: A CRITICAL ACCOUNT ON TWO PROJECTS IN FENER - BALAT (1)

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1. In addition to the findings of the PhD. thesis titled as "The Role of the Architect in the Production of Urban Space: İstanbul Example"; prepared at İstanbul Technical University, conducted by Associate Prof. Dr. İpek Akpınar and Prof. Dr. Arda İnceoğlu; this research consists of new and expanded data. The scope of the research is largely broadened and elaborated within a new perspective.

Contemporary city is a multiplicity having social, political, cultural and economic projections. Production of urban space involves various mechanisms in which different interest groups play different roles in accordance with their identity, responsibility and agenda. In that sense, contemporary city is a ground of collision of conflicting interests that produce and transform urban space. Controlling urban space is a power struggle among different actors with varying agenda; constituting the basis of physical and socio-economic urban conversion (Keil, 2002). In the process of urban contradiction and change; social classes, capital accumulation and urban governments are three basic components with a fundamental role (Şengül, 2009).

İstanbul has currently become the 'stage' of extensive urban space production and re-production processes; almost becoming a construction site in itself. The urban boundaries extend on a daily basis, while numerous transformation projects within the city center raise crucial questions. The cityscape is subjected to critical interventions that aim to re-shape some of the major cultural, historical and natural landmarks of the city. In short, İstanbul is currently undergoing a series of mega scale operations that will change the fabric of the city irreversibly.

The mainstream space production processes in the İstanbul of 2000s are shaped by the neoliberal urban policies adopted by large scale capital, central and local governments that work hand in hand. In order to comprehend these processes, it is crucial to develop an understanding of the current urban political climate. This paper aims to take a critical look into the urban space production mechanisms of İstanbul's historical residential center through an in depth comparative analysis of two consecutive projects that have taken place at the Golden Horn during the 2000s; having acutely different social, spatial and economical approaches and agendas; namely the Fener Balat Rehabilitation Project (FBRP) initiated by the European Union (EU) and The Fener, Balat, Ayyansaray

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Urban Renewal Project (FBAURP) initiated by Fatih Municipality (FM). Within the scope of paper; firstly an overview of the urban political dynamics of İstanbul is presented. Secondly, a brief discussion on the geographical context of the projects is introduced. Then, a discussion on the urban space production mechanisms of 2000s İstanbul is delivered through the investigation of two projects stated above. Finally, concluding remarks are presented.

### **POLITICAL SETTING**

Neoliberal politics have been increasingly dominating the global economy within the last 30 years. The theory of neoliberalism as defined by Harvey (2005, 2006), suggests that individual liberty and freedom can best be protected by free markets, strong private property rights and free trade where state should keep its distance from the economy and act merely as a regulator that preserves the institutions of the market. The term “neoliberalism” is mainly used to express the market oriented approaches after 1980s and to interpret the basic aspects of urban structuring in the 2000s (Brenner and Theodore, 2004). However, the economic implications of neoliberal politics have increasingly gained a pejorative meaning aligned with the abolishment of social welfare and civil rights in favor of global capitalism and consumerism (Bourdieu, 1999, 2003; Chomsky, 1999; Touraine, 2001). In the critical literature, neoliberalism mainly indicates the ultimate domination of market economy despite its social, democratic, environmental and urban shortcomings; diminishing of the social and civil rights in favor of capitalism and intense privatization that exhausts natural, cultural and urban assets belonging to public.

Starting from the 1980s, the discussion above becomes increasingly relevant for Turkey, especially for İstanbul (Keyder, 2000). The struggle over the reproduction of space and the rent distribution in İstanbul is frequently addressed in current urban literature (Yalçın, 2005; Gülöksüz, 2002; Yırtıcı, 2005). Between the years 1980 and 2000, neoliberal urban politics that aim Turkey’s gradual integration to global markets are implemented parallel to populist urban policies that make concessions for the legalization of informal urban settlements (Öktem, 2011). With the 2000s however, a fundamental shift occurs in the urban governance policies of Turkey (Kuyucu, 2009). In 2002, JDP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) became the ruling party of the central government in Turkey, in addition to ruling a majority of the local governments, including İstanbul. Thus, the urban governing structure of İstanbul, dominated by JDP, was in the same camp for the first time since 1980’s; providing vast and unopposed grounds for implementation of their urban policies. From this date on, tolerance for informal mechanisms; being the primary urban space production practices until then; disappear as the neoliberal urban politics aiming the capitalization and commodification of urban space becomes institutionalized. This could be interpreted as the end of urbanization of the labor force and the beginning of urbanization under the hegemony of capital (Şengül, 2009; Şen, 2014). In this context, large scale property led urban renewal and transformation projects issued by local governments, mix used ‘mega projects’, shopping malls and high-rise office blocks initiated by global capital and extensive mass housing production executed by Mass Housing Department (TOKİ) become the new urban forms of neoliberal urbanism in İstanbul (Öktem, 2005; Kurtuluş, 2005; Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010). In fact, economy of Turkey in the 2000s is fundamentally

2. For additional information see: Ataöv and Osmay, 2007.

3. Sulukule and Tarlabası Urban Transformation projects are two of the controversial processes that have currently been executed in İstanbul.

leaning on the construction sector. Basic strategies for satisfying the insatiable land requirements of this sector are; opening natural assets such as forests, coasts and water supplies to construction, privatization of public land, confiscating private land via urgent expropriation and changing planning regulations of existing lots in order to raise rent value (Çavuşoğlu, 2011). The result of this extensive construction activity is the expansion of the limits of the city on a daily basis, while the building stock at the center is demolished to be re-produced so as to increase rent value.

One of the major agents enabling the transformation of urban space into capital accumulation areas are the local governments that gained autonomy and power with a series of legal regulations after 1984 (2). Legal regulations made especially within the 2000s transfer the right to redefine, regulate and redistribute urban property to local governments; enabling them to have the power to reshape urban structure via large scale urban renewal projects (Günay, 2013). In this respect, Marmara earthquake, underlining the lack of quality of İstanbul's building stock, have become a tool for political legitimization for the urban renewal schemes, creating a "discourse of urgency" as pointed out by Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008). This discourse, articulated around natural and "naturalized" disasters such as crime, migration, overpopulation, traffic congestion is deliberately utilized to justify massive urban transformation projects around the city (Altıntaş, 2012).

The urban space policies discussed above mainly operate as the commodification of urban space through urban transformation and redistribution of rent value. Urban transformation has become a tool for a profit based new urban economy, reflecting the speculative pressure exerted by private capital. Despite broad based public opposition, urban governments tend to exclude the citizens from decision making processes in favor of the demands of large scale capital; producing a fundamental problem in terms of urban democracy (Şen, 2014). Although the notion of urban transformation is supposed to be advantageous for all social classes; the current implementations in İstanbul fail to prove their legitimacy, becoming profit oriented executions based on the re-structuring of space rather than solving physical and socio-economic problems of the transformation area (3). This approach conceptualizes urban space as an economical asset rather than a milieu that generates urbanity; therefore disregards the social dimension of the urban condition that demands transformation. Hence it only transfers the actual problem to another – less favorable – section of the city, instead of addressing the problem (Şen, 2006; Kuyucu, 2011; Kurtuluş, 2006). The urban agenda aiming the total inclusion of urban land to capitalist economy is bound to have acute impacts on physical, social and demographical levels, paving way for social and spatial segregation, emergence of spaces of decay, distressed and privileged spaces (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008, Öktem, 2011). In this respect, the neoliberal city is becoming a new target for civil opposition and public contest (Ekmekçi, 2012; Özdemir, 2013).

In the process of physical, social and cultural privatization and commodification of urban space; the areas with the highest profit margin seem to be the historical centers, deterioration zones at the city centers and slum areas. The profitability due to their central location, the historical, cultural, spatial qualities they possess, as well as the economical fragility and legal defenselessness of the existing residents make these areas primary targets for urban transformation projects. The motive lying

beneath numerous transformation and renewal projects is the creation of a tourism economy based on the advantages mentioned above; leading to a “cultural based urban economy” as referred by Zukin (1998, 825-39). Associated with physical interventions and destruction; these projects aim the radical transformation of the urban space via demolishing the old for reconstruction (Tekeli, 2011). In that sense, large scale, property based renewal projects are becoming instruments of “urbicide” in İstanbul, leading to a model of urban destruction, as pointed out by Günay (2013).

To sum up, the urban space production of İstanbul is going through a critical stage in the 2000s. Urban governments, as powerful actors dominating the construction and real estate markets of the city attempt to change the property regime by privatizing valuable public land, issuing new development rights, interfering with slum areas and residential neighborhoods within the historical center under the name of urban transformation. The result of these endeavors is the gradual transfer of the property and usage rights of urban land from citizens to the dominating actors of the real estate market. This situation has crucial impacts on the spatial production dynamics of the city. The consortium of central, local governments and large scale capital make it challenging to create grounds of resistance and negotiation with regards to large scale projects that affect lives of citizens. In this context, the city is no longer a free space where the “right to the city”; as underlined by Lefebvre and Harvey; could be exercised, as the public welfare is suppressed by the profit oriented agenda imposed upon the city (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2008). The deprivation of urban rights and public participation demand a radical reconstruction of social, political and economic relations within and beyond the city, as pointed out by Purcell (2002).

### GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING / THE GOLDEN HORN

With regards to the discussion above, The Golden Horn has been a battleground of different urban intervention tactics since 1980s. As the northern natural bay of İstanbul, the Golden Horn has been a significant site as a harbor, a naval base, an important residential area as well as an appropriate location for various types of industry throughout the history. Having a multi-cultural ethnic identity, the Golden Horn became one of the first public recreation areas of the Ottoman Empire around the eighteenth century. The area not only hosted some of the prominent minority neighborhoods, but also became an important religious center of the city with institutions and sacred centers such as Fener Greek Patriarchate and Eyüp. Located at the south of the Golden Horn, Fener and Balat neighborhoods are important historical residential areas of İstanbul, populated mostly by the Greek, Jewish and Armenian minorities until the mid-20th century.



**Figure 1.** Map of the Historical Peninsula and the Golden Horn; İstanbul.

The cosmopolitan demography of the area begun to dissolve within the first half of the twentieth century. Many residents belonging to ethnic minorities have left the area as Muslim immigrants from Anatolia took their place. Around late 1940s, an accumulation of developing industries began to populate the area; attracting large numbers of immigrant workers. This intense industrial settlement however, gave way to heavy environmental pollution and urban deterioration.

During the 1980's, the revitalization of the Golden Horn became a top priority of Bedrettin Dalan, the mayor of the time (1984-1989). With a top down initiative, the local government intended to regenerate the area as

a cultural and touristic center. Through these operations, a number of historical neighborhoods were demolished, the industrial plants were removed to a great extent, roads and green areas were built and the water of the Golden Horn was cleaned. In short, The Golden Horn has gone through drastic changes during this period; including massive destructions of the coastal urban texture. Since Dalan, the local governments; mainly from the right wing; have followed his footsteps in terms of top down initiation, rehabilitation by demolition and the agenda of marketing Istanbul in a global scale (Bezmez, 2009).

In the last decades, the Golden Horn has been subjected to a number of urban transformation projects with different approaches and initiating actors. Some of the projects are executed solely by the local administration while in other projects, a private investor or a non-profit organization carries the initiative. The process and the end product acutely vary in terms of the identity, position and agenda of the initiating actor (Aysev and Akpınar, 2009). Activities of the local administrations aiming to revitalize the area as a recreational center create crucial discussions in the architectural and urban domain.

## PROJECTS

Among the most debated urban transformation areas in İstanbul, Fener – Balat - Ayvansaray coastline located at the Golden Horn is currently undergoing a controversial process. Within 2000s, the area was subjected to two consecutive urban renewal attempts, namely Fener Balat Rehabilitation Program (FBRP) sponsored by EU and Fener, Balat, Ayvansaray Urban Renewal Project (FBAURP) commissioned by FM. The controversies between the projects begin with the initiating agenda. While the first project prioritized the improvement of socio-economic conditions as well as physical restoration, the latter aimed to transform the area into a cultural and touristic center, giving way to gentrification and urban displacement (Şişmanyazıcı and Turgut Yıldız, 2010). Within the political setting discussed above, FBRP could be considered as a deviation from the dominating neoliberal urban implementations with its non-profit agenda while FBAURP demonstrates an example of mainstream market oriented urban interventions discussed above. These cases are selected within the scope of the study as they present two opposing urban intervention approaches within the same geographical and social context around a similar time interval, therefore offering an opportunity for a comparative analysis.

Below, two projects are discussed through a threefold analysis focusing on the project formulation stage, implementation stage and impact assessment. The comparative analysis structure is set in order to reveal the similarities, differences, successes and shortcomings of the projects in every stage; enabling a ground for the discussion of an alternative urban implementation strategy. In the project formulation stage, the projects will be analyzed in terms of initiation processes, financial models, involved actors, legislative basis, scope and agenda. In the implementation stage, the projects will be analyzed in terms of spatial / physical implementations and social / economic implementations. Finally, in the impact assessment stage, the projects will be analyzed in terms of physical impacts, social impacts and public reactions. The research sources consist of project documents such as architectural drawings, photographs, project reports and interviews with the executive officials of the projects (local co-director of FBRP and

PROJECT FORMULATION	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	IMPACTS OF THE PROJECTS
Initiation, Financial Model and Involved Actors	Spatial / Physical Implementations	Physical Impacts
Legislative Basis	Social / Economic Implementations	Social Impacts
Scope and Agenda		Public Reaction

Table 1. Threefold Comparative Analysis.

Projects Director of FBAURP, general secretary of FEBAYDER) as well as referencing prior academic studies.

### Project Formulation

The differences between two projects begin with the formulation stage. The identity and objectives of the initiating actors are key factors that define the nature of the urban intervention. The organizational structure, division of labor and financial model are all shaped by the initiating motivation. The scope and agenda of the projects are produced in line with that initial definition. The legislative basis of the projects is also critical as the scope and agenda are either based on or legitimized accordingly. In short, the project formulation stage defines the way in which the implementation processes take place; paving way for the accomplishments or the shortcomings of the projects.

#### Initiation, Financial Model and Involved Actors

FBRP is one of the few examples of a non-profit initiation aiming to improve the life standards of a deteriorating historical residential area in İstanbul. In fact, the multi-actored and participative project structure that concentrates on rehabilitating the area not only physically but also economically and socially makes it an unprecedented experience for Turkey. The ideation of FBRP goes back to the 1996 Habitat II Conference on Human Settlements, held in İstanbul. As a pilot project, FBRP was initiated by a protocol between Fatih Municipality (FM) and European Commission in 1997 (ICOMOS/UNESCO, 2006). Sadettin Tantan, the mayor of Fatih at the time, was a key initiating figure of the project (Altunsay, 2010; Bezmez 2009). With the participation of European Union (EU), French - Anatolian Research Institute, UNESCO and Fener Balat Association, this protocol was followed up by a feasibility study where the project was modelled in detail, producing a report on the rehabilitation of Fener and Balat districts (Fatih Municipality et al., 1998).

According to the 1998 report, financing of the project was to be provided collectively by Mass Housing Department of Turkey (TOKİ) and EU (Fatih Municipality et al., 1998). However, this model had changed in the implementation phase and TOKİ did not provide any financial support. As a result, EU became the sole financer of the project while FM was defined as the beneficiary partner. In 2000, a financial protocol of 7 million Euros was signed between EU, FM and The Turkish Ministry of Treasury.

The initiating actors of the project, being FM and the EU formed a partnership of local government and non-profit organization. Under this partnership, a multi-actored organization structure was formulated, emphasizing public participation and transparency. A multi-national Consortium won the service tender organized by the EU and chosen as the project executer. A Technical Support Team (TST), in charge of the preparation of project documents and on sight implementation control was appointed by the Consortium. Professional contractor firms carried out

the restoration work under the supervision of TST. Alongside TST, four specialists; being the National Director, the Local Co-Director, Coordinator for Works and Supply and the Financial Director were assigned to conduct the FBRP. A participation forum was formulated with the intention of obtaining public feedback. Finally, an advisory committee was constituted as a mechanism of supervision (Altınsay, 2010).

Both positive and negative aspects of having such a multi-actored project structure were experienced during the execution process. First of all, the attitude of FM, as the initiator and beneficiary partner of the project, drastically changed due to the shift in its administrative and political agenda. In the beginning, the Municipality played an effective role of coordination including the preparation of the feasibility study, signing of the financial agreement with EU, providing public participation, managing tenant relations, supporting the TST, controlling the project documents and implementation (Eken, 2010). However, the governance of the Municipality changed prior to the execution phase. The new local government from Justice and Development Party (JDP) had an entirely different political agenda that perceived urban space as a financial source, thus aimed to capitalize it entirely. At this point, the non-profit agenda of the FBR Program and neoliberal policies of the new local government inevitably contradicted, resulting in the loss of political support behind the project (Aysev, 2012). The ICOMOS/UNESCO Screening Report outlines the problems caused by the inadequate contribution of the FM as; lack of municipality participation in terms of maintaining sustainability; inadequacy of the "Department of Preservation of the Historical Environment" connected to FM; lack of a coherent "World Heritage Site Governmental Plan" and lack of producing mechanisms to collect data and know how produced during the project in order to generate a model for the coming projects" (ICOMOS/UNESCO, 2006). The report defined these insufficiencies as a substantial threat towards the success and sustainability of the project; concluding that "FM did not adopt the project as its own, did not coordinate its activities in line with the project and did not assign adequate staff" (ICOMOS/UNESCO, 2006).

Secondly, the inhabitants played a crucial role in the project, taking an active part in the design and implementation phases (Eken, 2010). Although one-to-one relationship TST established with the residents was positive in terms of community participation, it created practical difficulties in implementation. The local co-director of the project underlines the challenges of having to deal with 121 clients with different demands and needs; describing it as a "fulfilling yet extremely difficult experience" (Altınsay, 2010). The unusual and on-site executive involvement of the architect; with the job description as TST; playing not only a technical but also a social and moderating role is a unique experience that redefines and enlarges the disciplinary boundaries of architecture (Aysev, 2012). Nevertheless, the fact that public relations were not managed by dedicated professionals was disadvantageous for the procession and public communication of the project.

Thirdly, even though the complicated organizational structure was positive for supervision and transparency of the process; the hefty bureaucracy, especially with regards to the EU, became another factor that slowed down the execution (Altınsay, 2010).

ACTORS OF THE FENER BALAT REHABILITATION PROJECT:	
INITIATOR	European Union (Financer) and Fatih Municipality (Beneficiary)
FEASIBILITY STUDY	European Union, Fatih Municipality, French - Anatolian Research Institute, UNESCO and Fener Balat Association
CONSORTIUM	Foment Ciutat Vella SA (Spain), IMC (England), GRET (France), Foundation for the Support of Women's Work
IMPLEMENTATION	Fener Balat Rehabilitation Program / Technical Support Team (TST) / Contractor Firms
INTERFACE	Participation Forum
ADVISORY COMMITTEE	Relevant Ministries, European Commission, Fatih Municipality, Cultural Heritage Conservation Board, Neighborhood Representatives, Technical Support Team
USER	Existing residents

**Table 2.** Actors of FBRP.

4. The contract covering the urban renewal of Fener, Balat Ayvansaray coast line and fifty nine building blocks up to the historical city walls was commissioned in 30.04.2007. This date has raised a lot of question marks in terms of legitimacy; as the initiation of project tender was held in 18.07.2007; four months after the contract, as stated by the general secretary of FEBAYDER, İbrahim Güntekin (FEBAYDER, 2009).

Unlike FBRP, FBAURP can be conceptualized as an outcome of the neoliberal policies of İstanbul's urban governments. Consecutive to FBRP, FM with a changed governing structure teamed up with a private enterprise namely GAP Construction in order to produce FBAURP (4). The private capital with a profit based agenda played a key role in the formulation and implementation of FBAURP. GAP Construction single handedly conducted the tasks of coordination, project management, construction, financing and real estate development. The company assigned and employed the architectural and consultant groups, determined the scope and agenda of the project and provided 200 Million USD for the execution phase.

FM as the local government and project partner acted as a legitimizing agent that negotiated public rights to a private enterprise (Aysev, 2012). It is hard to say that FM fulfilled the civic duty of defending public welfare, representing the rights of the inhabitants, communicating the process with public and establishing transparency as a mediating agent. The central government that prepared the legal structure for the project could also be conceptualized as a key actor in the process.

The inhabitants played a unique role of civil resistance; in terms of protesting and struggling against the violation of their property rights (FEBAYDER, 2009). The role of the urban governments and the inhabitants will be discussed further in course of the study.

ACTORS OF THE FENER BALAT AYVANSARAY URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT	
INITIATING ACTOR	Fatih Municipality, Central Government
CONTRACTOR	GAP Construction
ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS	Trafo Architects, Net Architects, Çinici Architects, Hazan Architects, Sepin Architects, Teğet Architects, HF Architects, Ütopya Architects
CONSULTANTS	Yrd.Doç.Dr. Zeynep Kuban, Dr. Sinan Genim, Prof.Dr. Güzin Konuk, Prof.Dr. Sercan Özgencil Yıldırım, Prof.Dr. Murat Güvenç, Prof.Dr. Hülya Turgut, Arife Deniz Oktaç.
RESISTANCE	Inhabitants, FEBAYDER
USER	Mid-high level income group

**Table 3.** Actors of FBAURP.

### Legislative Basis

With the 1980s, the legal framework of conservation in Turkey evolved to a structure where the agencies responsible of preserving cultural heritage were clearly defined. The Ministry of Culture became the principal agency of conservation (Şahin Güçhan and Kurul, 2009). According to this structure, all interventions towards cultural heritage should comply with the ministry regulations and be approved by the Regional Conservation Councils; while municipalities became responsible for procuring and implementation of conservation master plans. FBRP is legally based on the Law 2863 (Law of Conservation of Cultural and Natural Entities), issued in 1983 within this context. This law enabled a transparent and collaborative project structure open to supervision (Eken, 2010). FM was in charge of supervising the project documents prepared by the TST. The documents were then approved by the Protection Board of Natural and Cultural Assets, before implementation. Furthermore, EU as an international partner inspected the advancement of the project on a regular basis (Altınsay, 2010). In short, FBRP is legally based on the Law 2863 that enables a meticulous regulation and control of the urban interventions towards historical cultural heritage.

Coming to the mid 2000s, the legal structure of historical conservation was subjected to a shift (5). A series of legal regulations took place within the last decade that turned İstanbul into an implementation area of large scale urban transformation projects. With the issuing of The Protection by Renewal and Utilization by Maintenance of Deteriorated Historical and Cultural Assets Law (No. 5366); FM became one of the active local governments in terms of producing urban transformation projects including FBAURP.

The Law 5366 gave way to controversial urban transformation implementations, receiving intense criticism. One of the main points of criticism was that the law disregarded the social, economic and cultural context of urban transformation areas; reducing the process to a mere physical intervention. Moreover, the law included articles that immunized urban transformation implementations from all legal sanctions; instead of improving existing legal structure (TMMOB, 2006). Demands of the right holders or providing public participation were not taken into account. On the contrary, the law invalidated the large scale planning decisions and granted the right of making new development decisions solely to municipalities, by preparation of development plans for urban transformation. Any opposition that might come from right owners to these decisions could be confronted with rulings of “urgent expropriation” (TMMOB, 2006). To sum up, the law:

- Takes the areas of transformation merely physically; ignores the cultural, social and economic dimensions.
- Ignores the rights of the inhabitants to be a part of the decision making mechanisms.
- Takes the city in fragments with regional planning decisions, instead of preparing an integrated intervention strategy.
- Transfers the negotiation of dwelling and property rights of the citizens to private sector, therefore leaving the transformation areas in the hands of the dynamics of the real estate market.

5. For additional information see: Madran, 2005; Günay, 2013.

In short, FBAURP is based on the Law 5366 having controversial aspects that could lead to profit based fragmental transformation processes that ignore public welfare, deepen urban segregation and social inequality.

#### Scope and Agenda

The objectives of FBRP are based on providing housing for every individual, creating livable human settlements, enhancing participatory planning and gender equality; as stated in the Habitat II Report (1996). The main reasons for the selection of Fener and Balat neighborhoods as a pilot location were the unique urban fabric and historical heritage of the neighborhoods that could be restored with a relatively small budget; the central location of the neighborhoods; the unfavorable environmental and living conditions of the inhabitants (FM, 1998).

In this context, the program aimed for social rehabilitation as much as building restoration; encouraging active public participation in decision making and implementation processes. Major goals of the program were stated as;

- socio-economic rejuvenation of the neighborhoods via sustainable urban rehabilitation,
- development of income generating activities for the inhabitants,
- improving the technical capacity of FM in terms of protecting cultural heritage,
- stimulation of further restoration of other buildings in the neighborhoods,
- creation of an urban rehabilitation model that could be applied in other neighborhoods (FBR Program, 2005).

In this respect, the agenda of the project is to trigger a sustainable rehabilitation process that could socially, economically and physically improve the area. Nevertheless, due to the budget and time limitations, the scope of the project had to be narrowed down during the implementation stage. The reduced version of the project scope involved four main issues namely;

- a limited (symbolic) amount of restoration work,
- social rehabilitation of the area by producing programs mainly towards women and children,
- the rejuvenation of historical Balat market as an economical rehabilitation move,
- producing a solid waste management program (FBR Program, 2005).

Despite the modest budget and limited scope of FBRP; FBAURP is one of the large scale urban transformation projects of Turkey, with a project area of 280.000 M2 (GAP Construction, 2007). The project scope is the urban renewal of 909 lots with 370 registered buildings in 59 blocks, as well as the redesign of Ayvansaray coastline. The project coordinator summarizes the project criteria as; taking the preservation master plan as a fundamental basis; the reconstruction / removal of poorly constructed building stock upon the historical city walls; amalgamation of the small lots in order to provide "comfortable living standards" (Kivircik, 2010).

Nevertheless, the project agenda has fundamental deficiencies in physical, social and legal terms. First of all, the project intends the total and

	<b>FBRP</b>	<b>FBAURP</b>
<b>Initiation</b>	Local Government (FM), Non-Profit Organization (EU)	Local Government (FM), Central Government, Private Sector
<b>Financial Model</b>	Non-Profit Organization (EU)	Private Sector (GAP Construction)
<b>Involved Actors</b>	See Table 2	See Table 3
<b>Legislative Basis</b>	Law No: 2863	Law No: 5366
<b>Scope</b>	A limited scope involving restoration, social rehabilitation, economic rehabilitation and solid waste management	Urban renewal of 909 lots with 370 registered buildings in 59 blocks, redesigning of the Ayvansaray coastline
<b>Agenda</b>	Triggering a sustainable rehabilitation process that socially, economically and physically improves the area	Profit generation by physical transformation, gentrification and displacement

**Table 4.** Project Formulation stages of FBRP and FBAURP.

irreversible physical transformation of the area; disregarding the continuity of social, demographic and historical urban texture. As the existing urban pattern of small lots does not meet the spatial needs for large scale investments, the project tends to destroy this pattern and introduce a new one through amalgamation and removal (Dinler, 2013). The architectural decisions regarding this physical transformation will be discussed in the following chapter.

Secondly, the project violates the basic property rights of the inhabitants. This violation; widely protested by the residents, indicates an agenda of gentrification and displacement of the current demography, in favor of a new, wealthier resident profile of middle – high income (FEBAYDER, 2009).

Thirdly, the project has no social scope or agenda, being merely a physical intervention that aims to raise the rent value of the area. The project coordinator admits to the fact that Law 5366, forming the legal basis of the project, lacks a viable social agenda and the urban governments have to take an active role of developing social policies in transformation projects (Kivırcık, 2010).

### **Project Implementation**

The implementation stages of the two projects have a number of differences. The major difference is that FBRP is completed; therefore it is possible to analyze and evaluate the project through the work that has been done. On the other hand, the physical implementation of FBAURP has not been commenced due to a number of law suits. Therefore, it could only be assessed through the analysis of the project.

#### **Physical Implementations**

The physical implementation of FBRP commenced in 2003. The job description of TST involved the

- selection of buildings to be restored according to physical and social assessment criteria,
- preparation of the restoration projects, obtaining the approval of the Board of Preservation and collecting the construction permits for the buildings to be restored,

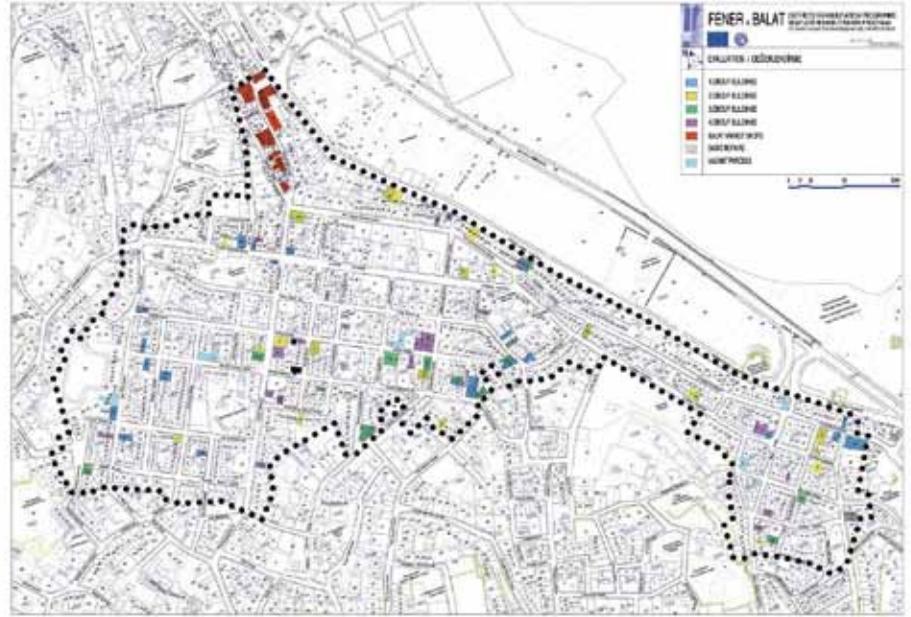


Figure 2. Project Site of FBRP (FBR Program, 2005).

FENER BALAT REHABILITATION PROJECT:	
PROJECT AREA	1074 lots (750 of them having historical quality)
PROJECT SCOPE	Restoration of 121 buildings, Restoration of Historical Balat Market, Restoration of the Social Center and Dimitri Kantemir House, Solid Waste Disposal Center
FEASIBILITY	1997-1998
EXECUTION	2003 - 2008
COST	Seven Million €

Table 5. Fener Balat Rehabilitation Project.

- producing a tender document, issuing the tender and selecting the contractor companies,
- control, coordination and approval of the construction work and progress payments (FBR Program, 2005).

Within the boundaries of the project area, 1074 buildings (744 being of historic character) were evaluated and graded according to a “scoring system” based on the architectural, historical and location value, authenticity, extent of restoration work required, planning issues and seismic risk as well as the willingness and participation of the inhabitants (Altınsay, 2009). The restoration work was divided in two parts being basic repairs for 57 houses and 28 shops in Balat Market and extensive restoration for 27 houses and 5 shops in Balat Market (Dinler, 2013). Within five and a half years, restoration of 121 buildings was completed without displacing the residents; Balat Market, a social center and Dimitri Kantemir House were restored.

The project adopted a meticulous and sensitive restoration approach that aimed to protect the authentic neighborhood fabric. The restoration principles of the project could be summarized as;

- conserving authentic material, architectural and constructional features of the buildings,

- producing a restoration model and setting a reference for future projects,
- maintaining the residents within the buildings throughout the restoration work,
- achieving sustainability by public participation and attraction of international funds,
- creating work possibilities for residents by improving constructional skills,
- preparing simple repair manuals for residents so as to achieve constant building maintenance,
- simplifying restoration procedures,
- producing a data base and archive for the construction documents (for more information on the physical implementations of FBRP, see Dinler, 2013; FBR, 2005; Altınsay, 2009; 2010-2).

Coming to FBAURP, the project included the urban renewal of Fener, Balat Ayvansaray coast line and fifty nine building blocks up to the historical



**Figure 3.** Examples of the production of FBRP. Before and after restoration (FBR Program, 2005).

FENER BALAT AYVANSARAY URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT	
PROJECT AREA	279.345 m2
PROJECT SCOPE	59 building blocks, 909 parcels, 370 registered buildings at Fener, Balat, Ayvansaray neighborhoods, Golden Horn, İstanbul.
PROJECT START	20 April 2007
PROJECT END	Unknown
COST	200.000.000 USD
CONTRACT SCOPE	Building Surveys, restoration, restitution, architectural projects and construction.

**Table 6.** Fener Balat Ayvansaray Urban Renewal Project.

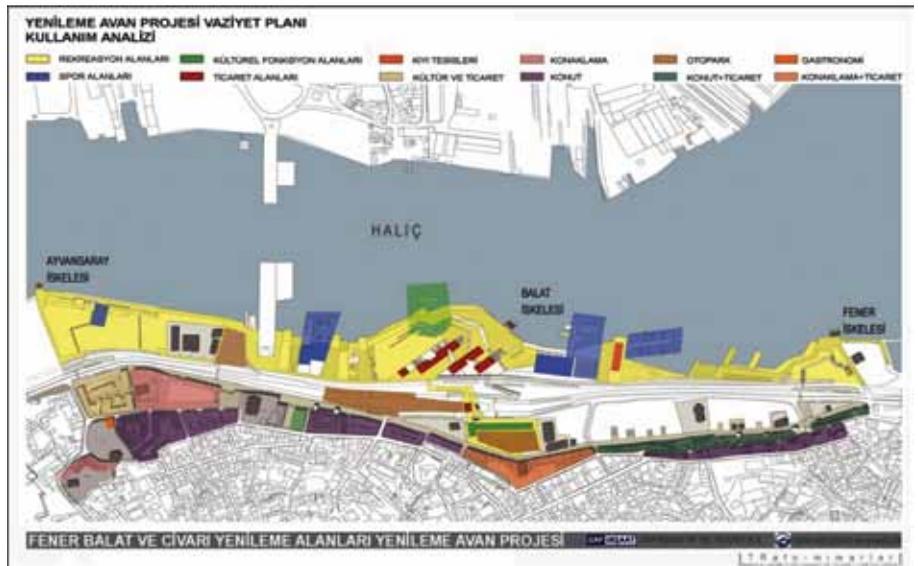
city walls. GAP Company selected eight accomplished architectural offices and formed a board of consultants. The project site was divided according to topography and building typology. Each architectural group picked their site and begun working on the projects. The site plan of the coast line was prepared by Trafo Mimarlık. Çinici Mimarlık was commissioned for four building blocks (2276, 2306, 2307, 2308); Net Mimarlık for three building blocks (2299, 2300, 2305); Teğet Mimarlık for four building blocks, (2644,2645,2830, 2875); HF Mimarlık for one building block (2821); Sepin Mimarlık for two building blocks (2833, 2838); Utopya Mimarlık for three building blocks (2872, 2873, 2874) (Dinler, 2013).

Contrary to FBRP that aims rehabilitation through preservation of the existing urban fabric, FBAURP is bound to make dramatic physical changes in the neighborhoods. First of all, the project rearranges the coast line with additional leisure areas, services and infrastructure such as terraces, playgrounds, sports facilities, urban furniture, decks, pedestrian routes, car parking and new marinas for small sized boats. Moreover, the neighborhoods are attempted to be re-connected to the coast line with an overcrossing.

Apart from the coast line, the most radical change the project brings to the area is the transformation of the urban pattern through the amalgamation of 317 lots (of which 108 lots are registered) on 17 building blocks;

**Figure 4.** The FBAURP Project Area (www.febayder.com)

**Figure 5.** The FBAURP Site Plan (Project design by Trafo Mimarlık, www.febayder.com).



**Figure 6.** The FBAURP Site Perspectives  
(Project design by Trafo Mimarlık, [www.febayder.com](http://www.febayder.com)).



**Figure 7.** Transformation of the Urban Pattern Through Amalgamation of Building Lots ([www.sepinmimarlık.com](http://www.sepinmimarlık.com))

**Figure 8.** Transformation of the Street Character Through Construction of New Facades ([www.cinicimimarlık.com](http://www.cinicimimarlık.com))



producing 103 new lots (Dinler, 2013). The planar arrangements of the lots are altered so as to produce larger footprints.

Furthermore, some of the lots are transformed functionally. Altering the existing residential fabric, new functions requiring large footprints such as conference halls, movie theatres, exhibition halls and commercial buildings are inserted. In the project booklet, it is stated that %2 of the project area is designated to cultural use; involving the construction of new complexes and recreational areas; % 12 for commercial use, %16 for hotels and %8 for office use (Eken, 2010).

The authentic street character is also transformed by the project through storey additions to the buildings, use of new materials and construction of new facades. In fact, FBAURP has a contradicting understanding of restoration, renovation and reconstruction as architectural intervention techniques. The redesign of planar schemas and elevations are defined as “restoration”, the redesigning of planar schemas while conserving the

	FBRP	FBAURP
<b>Open Spaces</b>	No particular implementations with regards to open spaces	Reorganization of the coastline
<b>Selection Criteria Of Buildings</b>	Physical and social criteria + participation of the residents	Physical criteria
<b>Architectural Intervention Understanding</b>	Repairing the existing buildings with minimum invasion, protecting the authentic fabric and architecture	Transformation of the physical and social fabric
<b>Function</b>	Original functions of the buildings are preserved	There are functional changes in the land use

**Table 7.** Physical Implementation of FBRP and FBAURP.

elevations are defined as “renovation” and the construction of the replicas of historic buildings are defined as “reconstruction” (Eken, 2010).

Lastly, the implementation areas of the two projects intersect, meaning the latter project intervenes with some of the buildings already evaluated and restored by the prior project (Altınsay, 2010). This is a clear indicator of the fact that two consecutive projects, initiated by the same institution being FM, problematizing the same area have no correspondence, no data sharing or cooperation whatsoever. In the ICOMOS UNESCO Report in 2009, this issue was addressed and the focus of FBAURP on land development rather than conservation of historic buildings was stated to be “inappropriate in World Heritage core areas” (ICOMOS/UNESCO, 2009).

#### Social Implementations

Social rehabilitation of the neighborhoods was a crucial part of FBRP. In this respect, the project incorporated a Social Center with a health clinic, nursery, educative classes and a mother and child center. Two buildings including the Dimitri Kantemir House were restored in order to function as Social Centers for the neighborhoods (Altınsay, 2009). Human Resource Development Foundation (İnsan Kaynaklarını Geliştirme Vakfı - HRDF) and Cultural Consciousness Development Foundation (Kültür Bilincini Geliştirme Vakfı) were assigned for the operation of the center and the activities have started in 2006. Within the scope of the program, a childcare center was established; seminars and focus group discussions, targeting mainly women were organized; 39 seminars were conducted with the participation of 331 women and 215 adolescents. Individual counselling concerning family and health issues were provided for the inhabitants. Educational activities such as computer, English and Math courses for primary school students were organized. A program named parent school partnership was established. Lastly, occupational training was provided for women (Final Report of HRDF, 2007).

In terms of participation, the program established a Community Forum for direct inhabitant involvement. Community volunteers have been selected as representatives that could act as the local voice (Altınsay, 2010). A series of meetings involving the Advisory Board members and community volunteers were held in order to develop communication and cooperation. Moreover, the program set forth the goal of active participation of the residents to restoration works in order to achieve sustainability of the building maintenance as well as the acquirement of skills that would provide an economic input to the area. That way, it aimed to rehabilitate the physical structure of the area while providing a model that contributed to local economy.

Finally, in terms of ownership patterns, FBRP deliberately aimed to avoid gentrification and displacement. The main objective of the project was “to

	<b>FBRP</b>	<b>FBAURP</b>
<b>Social Rehabilitation</b>	Extensive social rehabilitation agenda	No social rehabilitation agenda
<b>Participation</b>	Community forum, active participation to restoration works as an economic input	No participation incentive
<b>Ownership patterns</b>	Aim to keep the inhabitants in place	Aim to transform the ownership structure

Table 8. Social Implementations of FBRP and FBAURP.

make the people who have been living in the area for a long time, having no means to improve the buildings by themselves, primary beneficiaries of the restorations" (FBR Program, 2005). To minimize gentrification, the owners of the buildings to be restored signed an agreement stating that they would not sell their property for five years. Moreover, the restoration works were completed without removing the residents from the buildings.

Coming to FBAURP, there is no intention for social implementations. The project does not involve new public services or a social center. There are no social criteria in the selection of the buildings to be altered. In terms of participation, the inhabitants are excluded from the preparation stages of the project; not being informed about the decisions made for their neighborhood, about their homes (FEBAYDER, 2009). Moreover, the project has no strategy to keep the inhabitants in the neighborhood. Quite the contrary, the project agenda is based on profit generation by displacement of the existing demography with a higher income level group of new comers. The FBAURP booklet states that property owners should participate in the project and if they cannot afford the construction expenditures, they should move (Eken, 2010). Furthermore, the project has no strategy for the tenants; considering only property owners as a negotiating party and disregarding the dwelling rights of the tenants.

In short, FBAURP has no social implementations. Yet, the physical transformation of the area intended by the project will inevitably bring a new socio-economic structure and an ownership pattern to the neighborhood.

### **Impacts of the Projects**

FBRP is a small scaled and humble project that prioritized public welfare and participation, intending to ameliorate the life quality of the area without causing dramatic economic ruptures. The project accommodated point interventions and creative solutions that aimed the utilization of local potential and labor force. Quite the contrary, FBAURP is an ambitious and large scale physical intervention that could inevitably alter the neighborhoods physically and socially. Below, the impacts of the projects are discussed. As FBAURP is not executed yet, the impact assessment will be made through future projections and discussion of public reactions against the project.

#### **Physical Impacts**

The physical impacts of FBRP are limited in parallel with its humble scale. The project could be evaluated as successful in terms of individual restoration. Inhabitants were content with the simple or extended repairs of the 121 buildings (Altınsay, 2010). On the other hand, the discontinuity and lack of coherency of the project have been disappointing for the

community (Eken, 2010, Enlil and Bilen, 2009). Due to limited time and budget as well as lack of political support, the project could not achieve an adequate number of restorations that could create a sense of continuity and comprehensiveness. The buildings were restored individually and selected in a scattered fashion throughout the project area. The reason for this manner of selection was to avoid the beautification of a single street and trigger further restoration efforts. Yet, the modest number of restoration work was not enough to achieve an integrated visual impact. Furthermore, no intervention could be done in terms of open space. Initially, the existing empty lots within the urban fabric were planned to be reutilized as small public spaces for women and children; yet this idea could not be realized (Altunsay, 2009). Even though the inhabitants use the coast line more frequently due to a cleaner and safer environment, neighborhoods still lack playgrounds and sports areas for children (Eken, 2010). As a result, the work that has been done could not achieve an obvious physical improvement of the neighborhoods.

In terms of utilities and services, the installment of waste disposal system was successful as the neighborhood became cleaner (Eken, 2010; Enlil and Bilen, 2009). On the other hand, the night lighting of the neighborhoods is still inadequate, creating a feeling of unsafety at night.

Despite the limited impact of FBRP, FBAURP is bound to create an irreversible physical transformation of the authentic historical residential fabric of the neighborhood; due to amalgamation of lots, alteration of planar and elevation compositions of buildings, introduction of new building materials, production of new streetscapes and change of function; as discussed in the previous chapter. The project has an extensive agenda in terms of open space; proposing new recreational and service facilities to the coastline and connecting the neighborhoods to the waterfront. Although the intention is valid and necessary for the community, the target group of this intervention is unclear as the project aims to alter the demography of the area.

#### Social Impacts

The social impacts of FBRP are twofold. The first impact is the social rehabilitation of the area through the establishment of a Social Center. As discussed in the previous chapter, a social center was established and activated in the course of the project. Yet, the efficiency and sustainability of the center is debatable (Altunsay, 2010). Although there was a considerable increase in the satisfaction of health and education services, the capacity and public communication of the center was claimed to be insufficient. The municipality was inadequate in efficiently managing the center and developing viable strategies to sustain social improvement (Eken, 2010). Dimitri Kantemir House; restored for the purpose of being another social center; was never put into action by the FM. Moreover, the community was not adequately informed about the activities of the center as many of the inhabitants were unaware of the activities and services provided.

The second and greater social impact of the project is the enhancement of public awareness and participation. The project became a means of underlining the historical value of the area, raising consciousness about environment, community and civic rights of the inhabitants. This result could be derived from the community reflex generated towards the consecutive project in the area, being FBAURP.

FBAURP on the other hand, is a striking example displaying the shortcomings of the urban transformation processes based on Law 5366. First of all, transferring the negotiation of the property rights of citizens to a private enterprise is highly problematic. It is a fact that numerous urban renewal and transformation processes incorporate public – private collaborations. Yet, these processes become socio-economically and legally problematic when they are left solely in the hands of the private sector with a profit based agenda of physical transformation, lacking social and public perspective. The social policies of urban transformation should clearly be defined by laws and regulations. It is the duty of the urban government to produce social policies that protect the legal rights of the citizens as well as the authenticity of the physical and cultural texture of the neighborhoods. The statement of the Fener Balat Association below clearly indicates the basis of the problem: “Our homes with deeds belonging to us were taken into the scope of urban renewal without our knowledge or consent. They were commissioned to a private firm that prepared the projects. This is a violation of our dwelling and property rights” (FEBAYDER, 2009). In this respect, the major social impact of FBAURP, prior to implementation has been the emergence of a civil revolt against the project.

#### Public Reaction

The public reaction towards the FBRP was twofold. In the beginning of the project, most of the residents were skeptical, mainly because of mistrust towards initiating institutions. Since the public relations of the project could not be effectively conducted, there was a great deal of misinformation (Altınsay, 2010). As the project proceeded and restoration work became visible, the inhabitants began to have a more accurate idea about the goals and agenda of the project. After the termination, the reactions toward the project were generally positive yet the main public opinion was disappointment towards the limited scope and impact of the project, as discussed previously.

The public reactions toward FBAURP, on the other hand were quite harsh and protesting. First of all, the public communication of the project was problematic. Residents were not informed about the process until a project meeting was held by FM in July 2009; two years after the initiation. In this meeting, the preliminary projects were ill received by the residents as they were perceived as displacement projects that would force them out of the neighborhoods. The existing urban texture had gone through major transformation in the projects presented (FEBAYDER, 2009). The footprints of the blocks were changed and enlarged; individual blocks were merged together for the sake of having larger floor areas; making it impossible for the land owners to reclaim their property. Following this presentation, the residents formed the Fener Balat Association to claim and protect their neighborhood and legal rights. As a result of the legal action taken by the association, the project was cancelled by the İstanbul Fifth Court of Law in June 2012. The basis for this decision was that the project destroyed the neighborhood culture, disregarded the existing social structure and urban texture of the area, harmed the historical fabric as registered cultural heritage buildings were intended to be demolished against the rulings of the board of preservation. Following this cancellation, an “urgent expropriation” ruling was issued by the ministerial cabinet in 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2012, as a result of the demand of FM. This ruling was based on the twenty seventh article of the Expropriation Law that enables the confiscation and demolishing of private property, under extraordinary circumstances such

	<b>FBRP</b>	<b>FBAURP</b>
<b>Physical Impacts</b>	Limited amount of restoration work, could not achieve an obvious physical improvement of the neighborhoods	Irreversible physical transformation of the authentic historical residential fabric of the neighborhood
<b>Social Impacts</b>	Limited improvement in the social services, enhancement of public awareness and participation	Emergence of a civil revolt against the project
<b>Public Reaction</b>	Positive yet disappointing due to the limited scope and impact	Harsh and protesting public reaction leading to an ongoing legal battle

Table 9. Impacts of FBRP and FBAURP.

as war or natural disasters. The Plato Academy was one of the buildings subjected to “urgent expropriation”. The academy issued a lawsuit against urgent expropriation and the lawsuit resulted in the suspension of execution, granted by the Council of State. This decision; being the first ruling against a ministry issued expropriation in the history of Turkish Republic; became a valuable precedent for not only the cases regarding the neighborhood but also all the historical districts under the threat of destruction due to the Law 5366.

The current state of the project is a domain of conflict between the urban government that undermined the court order and the residents that are determined to protect their rights. The process is halted and the related architectural firms have retrieved from the process. The FM is currently working on an alternative project with a new architectural team; yet there are no official statements about the issue. Time will show the outcome of this legal battle that produced a reflex of civil rights which could potentially become a future reference for other urban transformation processes.

## CONCLUSION

Two projects discussed above represent acutely different approaches to the reproduction of historical residential areas in İstanbul. On one hand, FBRP is a non-profit approach, aiming to create a physically, economically and socially self-sustaining urban environment while keeping the land values stable. The model tries to resist gentrification and urban displacement; aiming to distribute the generated value back to the inhabitants. Instead of a harsh socio-economic shift, a slower yet less dramatic improvement in the area is proposed. The shortcomings of this project are the limited physical and social impact due to insufficient coordination, insufficient budget and lack of support from the local government. Although the success of the final outcome is debatable, FBRP suggests a viable urban rehabilitation model open for improvement. However, the project model which achieved a certain level of success was not adopted, improved and institutionalized by the local authorities as an urban intervention method for successive implementations.

Quite the contrary, most of the projects in İstanbul within the last five years, including FBAURP are profit oriented implementations, lacking social dimension. With a lavish budget, a large project area, an unlimited support from FM and a distinguished technical team of well-known architectural firms and specialized consultants, FBAURP is properly funded and coordinated. Yet, the profit-based build and sell model of

6. For additional information on urban governance models, see: Şen, 2014; Şengül, 1999, 2003.

the project and the absence of a social agenda could result in acute and traumatic changes for the neighborhoods. Gentrification and displacement are expected outcomes of the implementation and the resident's share from the rent value produced will be minimal.

From the analysis of the two cases, a number of hints for a viable urban interference model could be derived as stated below:

- The identity of the involved actors is a key factor. A multi-actored structure involving the collaboration of a non-profit actor introducing an agenda of public welfare, a governmental organ controlling, regulating and subsidizing the process and the private sector injecting know how, practicality and problem solving skills is required (6).
- Financial model could involve subsidizing from a governmental agent or an NGO; yet a self-sufficient and sustainable financial model is necessary for avoiding a profit based project agenda.
- The legislative basis of urban transformation in Turkey should be readdressed; social and legal shortcomings of the current laws should be reformulated.
- The scope and agenda of urban transformation processes should incorporate sustainable social and economic policies for the inhabitants as well as comprehensive physical rehabilitation of the area that could create a coherent spatial impact.
- The project should have consistent political support in order to foresee the achievement of goals and sustain the implementations.
- Adequate control and supervision structures should be assigned in order to achieve a transparent and accountable process.
- Effective public communication and active participation should be achieved throughout the project.
- Physical implementations should adopt a sensitive restoration approach protecting the authentic urban fabric as well as architectural peculiarities of the buildings.
- Social implementations should be well communicated and sufficiently distributed throughout the project area. Persistence after the implementation stage is important for achieving results.
- Lastly, urban transformation should target the greater public welfare instead of the profit of a privileged few. Urban strategies that aim to minimize gentrification and displacement should be an integral part of the project scope.

The revitalization of coastal areas that carry historical and geographical significance, like the Golden Horn, is not only affirmative but also inevitable. Yet, the reductionist and profit oriented approaches carry the danger of producing greater problems than they intend to solve. In fact, urban renewal implementations in Turkey tend to become state driven destruction mechanisms in line with the dynamics of the real estate market. The key to applying viable transformation strategies are to develop participative and multi-layered action plans; learning from past experience and transfer the accumulated data into future implementations. In this context, the primary duty of urban governments is the production of efficient yet transparent action plans that primarily protect the rights of the citizens.

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## **2000'LERİN İSTANBUL'UNDA TARİHİ MERKEZİN YENİDEN ÜRETİMİ: FENER – BALAT'TA İKİ PROJE ÜZERİNDEN ELEŞTİREL BİR OKUMA**

2000'li yılların İstanbulu, yoğun kentsel mekan üretimi ve yeniden üretimi süreçlerine sahne olmaktadır; neredeyse tüm şehrin kesintisiz bir şantiyeye dönüştüğü söylenebilir. Bir yanda kentsel alanın sınırları yeni konut bölgeleri ve merkezi iş alanlarıyla genişlerken, öte yanda kent merkezinde yoğunlaşan kentsel dönüşüm projeleri soru işaretleri yaratmaktadır. Dahası, kentin müşterek belleğinde yer etmiş kültürel, tarihi ve doğal kentsel simgeler, mekanın kapitalistleşmesi adına yeniden şekillendirilmekte ve şehir peyzajı önemli sayıda can alıcı müdahaleye maruz kalmaktadır. Kısacası günümüz İstanbulu, kentin dokusunu geri dönülemez bir biçimde dönüştürmekte olan bir dizi büyük ölçekli uygulamanın nesnesidir.

2000'li yılların İstanbulunda ana akım kentsel mekan üretim pratikleri, küresel sermaye, merkezi ve yerel otoritelerin işbirliği içinde benimsedikleri neoliberal kentsel politikalar doğrultusunda şekillenmektedir. Bu pratikleri çözümleyebilmek için öncelikle 2000'li yılların kentsel politikalarının anlaşılması önemlidir. Bu çalışma, İstanbul'un tarihi merkezindeki mekansal üretim süreçlerine; 2000'li yıllarda Haliç bölgesinde ardışık olarak gündeme gelen; sosyal, mekansal ve ekonomik yaklaşımları keskin biçimde farklılaşan iki projenin karşılaştırmalı değerlendirmesi üzerinden eleştirel bir bakış getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. İlk proje, Avrupa Birliği ve Fatih Belediyesi öncülüğünde 2003 ve 2008 yılları arasında uygulaması gerçekleşen Fener Balat Rehabilitasyon Projesi, ikincisi ise hazırlık süreci 2007 yılında başlayan ve Fatih Belediyesi'nin özel bir firmaya ihale yoluyla başlattığı Fener Balat Ayvansaray Kentsel Yenileme Projesi'dir.

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