

Turkey 783'562 Km2 * Inhabitants 72'561'312
 Urban Region 6'000 Km2

Struggling to pave the road to implement metropolitan mainstream policies at the new greater center - While continuing with industrial growth and informality at the metropolitan periphery

Istanbul caught up with the NMM agenda since late80s, which requires a de-industrialized historical / geographical centre as a precondition. In local context, this includes cleansing informality, poverty, pollution and degradation from the centre. These had originally come 'as default' with that second wave industrialization at the periphery (of centre economies) after WW II. However, the contradictorily will to continue industrialization coexisted with NMM. The migration of low skilled labour force and rapid urbanization were continued and Istanbul metropolitan area grew simultaneously to a considerable size exceeding 10 millions. Such circumstances make the efforts to establish policies of MMM appear both Sisyphus-like and at the same time explain the rather harsh methods implementing them.

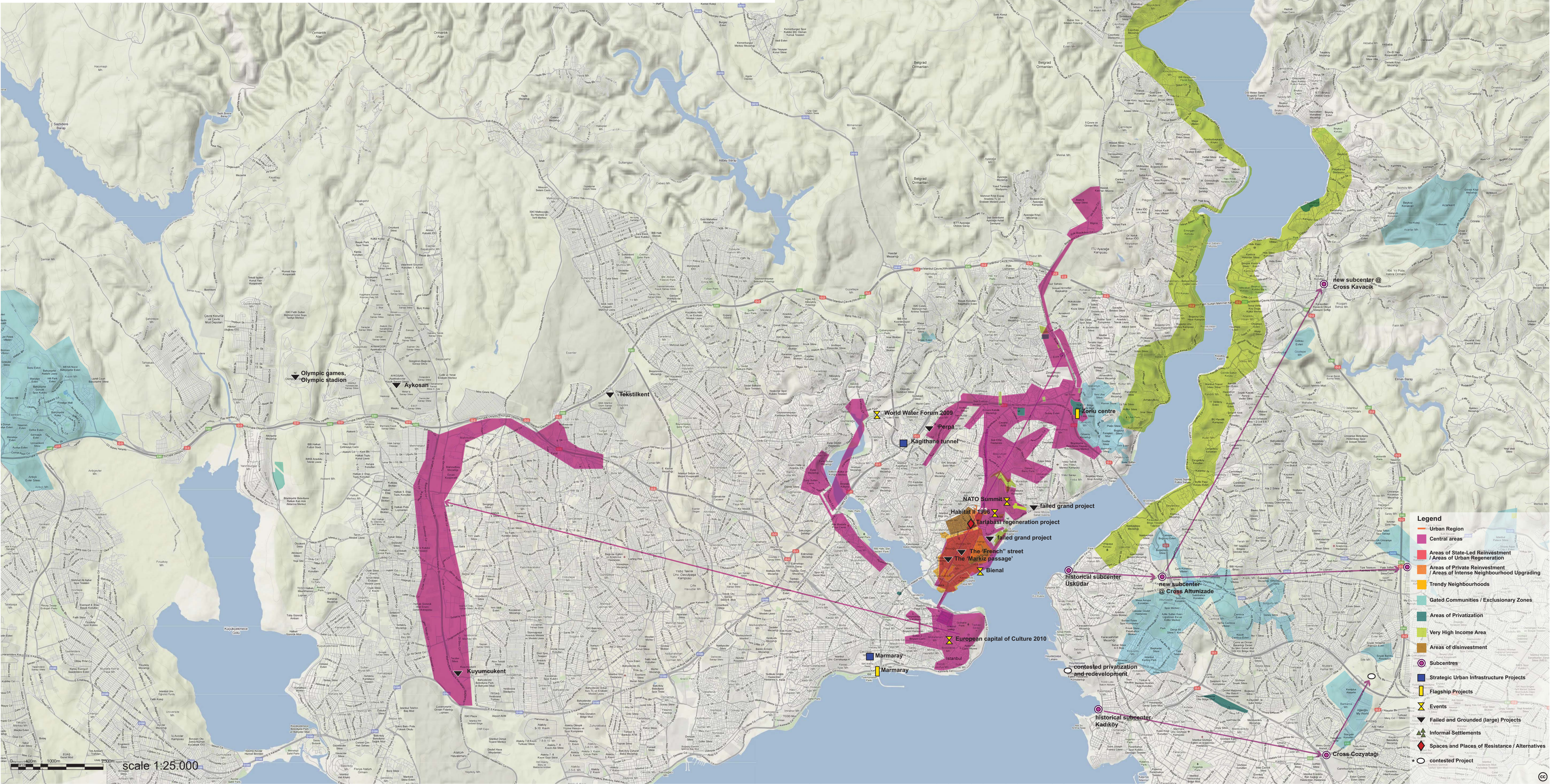
Popular resistance movements, as well as the fragmented state power and the ruthless competition among capital fractions hindered 'smooth and quick' privatizations. Most tenders had to be repeated due to rumours of corruption and conspiracy as processes are not transparent, and re-use concepts, unclear to public.

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the main actor in the city. It adjusted to globalization quickly and was eager to cope with the new metropolitan mainstream. However the state with its antiquated culture could not catch up; flops, failures, misinvestments, financial, architectural and artistic scandals abounded, even in the field of its intended flagship projects. (Formula 1, Olympic Games, ECOC 2010) Hence the cityscape is visibly dominated by symbolic products of independent capital investments.

Vast geographies were gentrified, still they remained rather limited in greater metropolitan scale. A greater building stock was stigmatized as ungentrifiable behind a severe mental threshold, which evoked state led bulk gentrification with forced resettlements. This is obviously the part of the state side, according to a division of labour with capital. Big PR tools like European Capital of Culture 2010 were instrumentalized to justify expulsion policies. During 2010, Istanbul will most likely be listed by UNESCO at its Sao Paolo Conference as 'World heritage under threat'. Most successful in terms of new metropolitan mainstream were originally low profile projects, that begun slow, and linked well rooted cultural capital with resources of rather marginal investors, like Santralistanbul or the Hidirellez feast.

The violent urban transformation is best visible at vast bulldozed industrial areas on urban waterfronts, and at the new central finance and business district alongside the Büyükdere axis with its symbolic skyline of skyscrapers. Between this and the historical political center on the peninsula, which became the central tourism business district, a 'corridor of centralities' emerged, that contains central areas for congress business, cultural industries, pilgrimage industries, and for symbolic and political presence. A very high value real estate geography emerged between the corridor and the bosphorus coast.



Legend

- Urban Region
- Central areas
- Areas of State-Led Reinvestment / Areas of Urban Regeneration
- Areas of Private Reinvestment / Areas of Intense Neighbourhood Upgrading
- Trendy Neighbourhoods
- Gated Communities / Exclusionary Zones
- Areas of Privatization
- Very High Income Area
- Areas of disinvestment
- Subcentres
- Strategic Urban Infrastructure Projects
- Flagship Projects
- Events
- Failed and Grounded (large) Projects
- Informal Settlements
- Spaces and Places of Resistance / Alternatives
- Contested Project



failed and grounded (large)projects: Olympic Stadion



Description / Background context:

Istanbul candidate and failed already thrice (2000, 2004, 2008) for the Olympic games, although (because ?) there exists 'a law' of the central government 'to support the Olympic candidacy of Istanbul'. Possibly, among other good reasons, the candidacy of a governmental institution 'in the name' of a city was not found appropriate in the age of competing cities. The colossal Olympic stadium, the 'flagship' of the built armada, which has cost 150 mio USD according only to official figures, at the far northwest end was inaugurated 2001 and slept since then. 10 years after its completion it is still inaccessible by public transport, which is indeed reasonable as next Olympic candidacy is planned for 2020. (This time mayor should be on the forefront, Ankara has decided).

So it was left over to fans of FC Galatasaray, however it never became popular with them due to the big distance of play grounds to tribunes. GS gave it up after one season. The professional FC of Municipality of Istanbul, with not more than a few hundred fans per game 'uses' it today. FC Istanbul Municipality; this is simply another great misinvestment, spending money for communal sports on an expensive professional football team playing in the first league. As hopes on Olympics were fading out, event management lobbies planned to use it for the European football championship in 2016, another failed attempt.

The presence of a very poor informal settlement of displaced Kurds at the direct neighbourhood is officially seen and shown as the reason of unsuccess. The International Committee obviously disliked the social circumstances surrounding the Olympic Temple. So far the stadium only triggers as a major reason to displace its neighbours. Istanbul will 'get the big event' whenever she succeeds in cleansing its environs fully, so the mainstream hopes.



Infrastructure Project /Flagship Project: Marmaray



Marmaray is the most ambitious infrastructure project in Istanbul since its growth into megapolitan size. The mobility strategy in the decades of the growth-into-megapolis was based on the question 'How can we enclose more land in order to settle more population?' and the answer, 'per highways'. This irrational strategy created an unsustainable model of urbanisation: As distances grew, the times spent on commuting became unbearable. The urban experience of most citizens got limited to commuting or even immobility, the urban experience and hence the public life fell apart, got highly fragmented. This is most likely the major life quality deficiency Istanbul's, hindering Istanbul in attracting, among others, more International headquarters.

The construction of a 76 kms long metropolitan railroad linking the 2 wings via an integrated sub-bosphorus tunnel and the largest interchange in Europe (1.5 mio passengers/day in Yenikapı) began 2004, and is likely to swallow 2.5 bio euros, till its opening in 2012/13, mainly invested by Japanese International Cooperation Bank and German investment banks.

As proximity has a direct effect on socialization, Marmaray is likely to redefine the urban structure and its experience radically by connecting the two wings at such a fast speed. The dissuasive effect of the distances within the city will end. The distances will no longer be considered as obstacles. Its impact will be beyond the one of a mere transportation project.

The further development of new subcenters at highway junctions may no longer be the trend. The close integration of the Asian side, dominated by capital intensive sectors, with the European side with labor intensive production may result in unexpected fermentations of worlds.



gated communities: Göktürk



Description/Background context:

Göktürk, embedded in the northern forests of Istanbul, was in late 80s chosen by a construction company as project arena for a trendsetting residential development 'Kemer Country', a villa type gated community. In 20 years it has developed into a location with one of the largest clusters of gated communities in the city. This kick off project made possible to receive utility services and infrastructure on registered farmland for high-income groups, and created a center of attraction for a new urban lifestyle outside the city.

Besides the change in land use, land prices which had been \$2-5 /m² in 1990 prior to the completion of Kemer Country rose to \$30-60/m² in the second period of the 1990s and to \$ 350 - 450 today.

Parallel to the increase in land prices, the municipality adjusted its policies of land use to adapt to the demands of the constructor as a big-scale corporate investor. These policies created the legal framework of the 1993 master plan, which was necessary in order to supply large-scale plots. This adjustment of planning tools to market demands has set new standards to Istanbul's urban development mechanisms, institutionally linking corporate capital interests with planning procedures. Göktürk is now representational for new trends on the residential housing market. It is a much studied urban area in which the effects of privatization and gated living can be analysed. It is a key spot and a laboratory for architectural development on the field of gated living, a playground for local (and beyond) star architecture, and imitators. Göktürk features a large range of property prices, setting standards for architectural input on the housing production.



Events: Hidirellez feast in Ahırkapı



The ancient tradition of local Romani communities to celebrate the spring in the names of the Prophets Hidir and İlyas (St Elias the Saviour of the Orthodox) On May 5th the meeting of Hidir and İlyas, (in Thracian dialect, together: Hidirellez) is celebrated with wishes for the new year by jumping over a midnight fire. The traditional celebration in a poor Romani neighbourhood of Istanbul has acquired event character in recent years.

The story is linked with Mr. K.Z., a small scale entrepreneur with 68er background, who invested into accommodation infrastructure in the low income neighbourhood of Ahırkapı which is adjacent to the tourism centre of Istanbul (Roman Palace and Hippodrome, Blue mosque, Hg Sophia, Topkapi) and is inhabited mainly by the Romani. Soon Hotel A. did not only become a campsite for meetings and events of leftwing NGOs (active in human rights, environmental, gender, ... issues) but also showed interest in cultural resources of its own neighbourhood. - The common (mainstream) position of the touristic investors would be diametrically different, isolating or even displacing the local, targeting at a segregated touristic bubble.

The Hidirellez was originally celebrated in public space at a very modest scale among locals only. The first Hidirellez feast bringing the local with guests from outside was celebrated 1997 in the vicinity of the Hotel. Very soon a committee under KZ's initiative took up the local feast and made an ever growing event for all Istanbulites out of it. A major step in branding the festival came with the branding of local musicians as the official festival band, under the logo Ahırkapı Roman Orkestrası (www.ahirkapiroman.org). Since 2002 the neighbourhood based band is supported by the municipality, rehearses and records in municipal premises and regularly goes on stage during the annual street festival and other events. The festival which has created great visibility for the local community and its artistic resources grew 2009 out of the streets of the neighbourhood into the larger space of the adjacent coastal park attracting over 300 000 visitors in 2010, where it became part of the ECOC 2010 programs.



Flagship Project: The conversion of the culture and sports park nr2 into the so called Conference Valley. The conversion of the formerly industrial Golden Horn into a Not-Yet-Defined-Valley nr2.

Description/Background context:

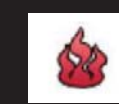
The Maçka valley was in the 19th century surrounded by a set of military buildings which triggered as a buffer zone for Dolmabahçe, the late Ottoman Sultan Palace. Within the master plan of H. Prost (1930s), it was redesigned as a culture and sports park for the 'republican citizen'. Hilton and Sheraton hotels came with a partial privatization of the greens in 1950/60s. The park had thus acquired a supplementary function, tourism, and several more hotels including the Hyatt Regency, Ritz Carlton, Swissotel, ... would follow. In 1996 on occasion of the UN conference Habitat II, the 'Sports and Exhibition Palace' in the valley was refunctioned as the 'Congress and Convention Center', the former humble 'city park nr2' was branded from now on as 'The Conference Valley'.

Simultaneously the congress and convention organization business grew into new dimensions, as a globally operating sector, emancipating from common cultural tourism. Expanding classical cultural tourism operations in Istanbul had proven difficult, if not impossible, as the Historical Heritage was embedded within a vast geography of poverty. Hence the valley was established as the main base of this expanding alternative business.

Recently, the Municipal Theater has been redeveloped in a highly scandalous process of 'constructor's architecture', and became a posh and dull annex of the Conference Center. Its inauguration on the occasion of nothing lesser than the joint annual meeting of the IMF and the World-bank just in the middle of the crisis, October 2009 marks a new stage of the Valley. The cultural function serving local public is dominated by activities of global convention business, which again and again converts the area into an exclusionary high security area due to the assumed 'high profile' of convenors here.

The convention and conference geography has recently expanded into the formerly industrial upper Golden Horn Valley, on occasion of another global convention event, the World Water Forum in March 2009. The leftovers of the industrial heritage in municipal hands comprise of The Sütlüce Cultural Center on the northbanks, and the Fezhan Cultural Center on the southbanks, the restored former factory for imperial woolen fabrics. The redevelopment of former Sütlüce slaughterhouses (under protection) as an inflated model of its own was scandalous enough. The historical Galata bridge was re-established to link the two. The convention capacity in the Golden horn valley is increased through the Santral Istanbul Complex, comprising of a museum and a university campus 2 kms away on the site of the former Silahtaraga Power Plant, which had housed the alternative Water Forum. The minimalist cube of the museum of modern arts within it is on the best way to become the new architectural icon of Istanbul, the project as a whole, the 'unintended flagship project' of Istanbul. The planning and realisation of the project based on cultural capital independent from public and big corporate financial resources explains both the success and possible future failure of it.

A newly built system of car tunnels containing underground highways is meant to link the 2 valleys directly, independently from the difficult topography and the traffic chaos of the metropolis.



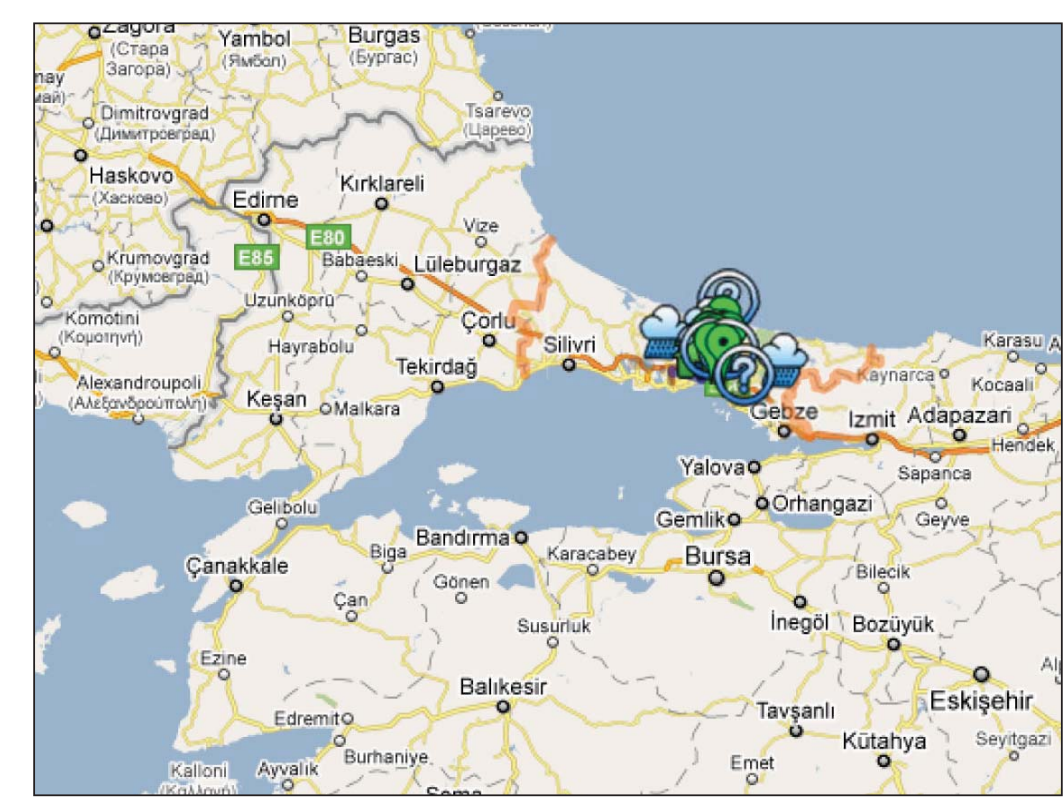
park hotel Successful birth of urban resistance movements



Mayor Dalan planned in 1980s to extend the Central Business District starting from its historical location at the Galata bridge. I.e. into the industrial Golden Horn and into the former-bourgeois Pera neighbourhood towards Taksim square, bulldozing existing structures and rebuilding with highrises: A plan, that rises densities at the center tremendously, blowing up both the historical building stock and the urban scale here. Large concessions for such developments were delivered easily, without taking it too strict with legal guidelines. The new Park Hotel project by Sürmeli group, far beyond the horizontal and vertical dimensions of its predecessor, even swallowing a local street as building site, was not found sympathetic at all, and evoked the formation of a local resistance group with broad metropolitan support. The Park Hotel struggle, -together with the Tarlaşşı bvd resistance, an 8 lane inner city arteria- marks the birth of social movements dealing with issues of built environment in Istanbul. Both were finished, but the struggle was successful, as Dalan was not re-elected and his general plan disappeared. Not much could be done about a built boulevard, but the court decision against the illegal highrise could be implemented 1993 and the 28 built stories of the park hotel were reduced to 11, to the height of the neighbouring German consulate. The investor went bankrupt and the colossal ruin still stands as an urban landmark, as a monument to victorious urban resistance and will remind all that 'its doable'.

ISTANBUL

STRUGGLING TO PAVE THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENT METROPOLITAN MAINSTREAM POLICIES WITHIN THE NEW GREATER CENTER - WHILE CONTINUING WITH INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND INFORMALITY AT THE METROPOLITAN PERIPHERY



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Geographies of Centrality:

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