HISTORIC LANDSCAPES OF EXCLUSION IN ISTANBUL: RIGHT TO THE CITY?

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ABSTRACT

While the term "urban regeneration" has become a catchphrase in Turkey over the past two decades, the historic neighbourhoods have turned into valuable resources in line with the rise of neo-liberal urban policy and planning agenda. Especially the enactment of the Law on the Protection and the Revitalisation of Deteriorated Historical and Cultural Immovable Assets through Renovation and Regeneration (Law no. 5366) in 2005 has introduced a major challenge for the future planning histories of major cities. Hence, it has turned into a social exclusion instrument in the hands of ambitious central and local governments in the need for re-creating "global" and "competitive" cities. Among the threats of this process are socio-spatial polarisation and segregation, social exclusion, and displacement. There are many historic neighbourhoods in Istanbul under the threat of exclusion and even eviction through the current urban regeneration agenda. The paper, within this context, attempts to explore how urban regeneration initiatives socially affect historic landscapes of Istanbul through the demonstration of Sulukule Project as empirical evidence. The conclusion emphasizes the need for resolving the community realm in urban regeneration: "right to the city" by developing a debate on the emergence of community governance models to create a shift from social exclusion to social capital in urban regeneration.

Keywords: Urban regeneration, social exclusion, right to the city, historic landscape, Istanbul.

INTRODUCTION: A RETURN TO SOCIAL AGENDA IN THE REGENERATION OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Urban regeneration is a multi-faceted phenomenon without a unified form of policy or practice, and which is only successful if it can flourish with different spatial, social and economic notions together in "the use of public funding to support an initiative which aims to achieve an improvement to the conditions of disadvantaged people or places" (Roberts, 2000). However, the paper claims that the social agenda has increasingly been neglected in order to create opportunity spaces for market-driven investments, while urban regeneration has become an instrument of gentrification, socio-spatial segregation and social exclusion driven by neo-liberal urbanism politics.

On one hand, the 21st century city has been successful in increasing its competitiveness in the global market, in creating post-modern spaces of consumption such as hotels, shopping malls or luxury residences, and also in

increasing the range of consumption patterns. On the other hand, it has allowed increasing urban poverty, social inequalities and socio-spatial segregation in both developed and developing countries. While there are significant political and socio-economic changes, the gap between the richest and the poorest is doubling, the percentage of the population living under the minimum quality standards, and the number of slums and squatters are increasing rapidly. These problems carry urban agendas back into the question of "social exclusion", and particularly "right to the city".

Social exclusion is not a new phenomenon. Kleinmein (1998: 7) defines it as "a cliché to cover almost any kind of social ill". Urban and planning history is overloaded with debates that include gentrification, social exclusion or social justice (see Glass, 1964; Harvey, 1988; Davis, 1990; Castells, 1998; Atkinson, 2000; Madanipour, 1998; Atkinson, 2000; Smith, 2002; Keyder, 2005). Gentrification, first identified by Ruth Glass (1964) as the prominent instrument of social exclusion, has been used as an effective instrument since the 1960s. The use of the term "social exclusion" has a history dated back to the same years in France to refer to the excluded (Newman and McLean, 1998). While the understanding had been broadened in the 1980s, there has been a fashionable "return" to the subject via a major focus on spatial dimension and increasing debates on new forms of exclusion and socio-spatial segregation in the creation of "opportunity spaces" in line with the changing socio-economic and political orders of neo-liberalism especially after the mid-1990s.

Social exclusion refers to a failure of social integration at economic, political and cultural levels (Keyder, 2005). Castells (1998: 73) states that it is "the process by which certain individuals and groups are systematically barred from access to positions which would enable them to have an autonomous livelihood within the social standards framed by institutions and values in a given context". Social exclusion can operate at different scales including the disconnection with the accessibility to work, to public spaces, to urban facilities and employment, and socio-economic exclusion from a neighbourhood or a city or a country. The paper focuses particularly on the latter: socio-spatial exclusion and segregation. Within the urban context, social exclusion connotes spatial segregation and consistent inequality in the experience of space (Madanipour, 1998). Moreover, segregation is defined as the "spatial manifestation" of social exclusion (Van Gent, 2009). There are also some scholars, who attach positive influences to socio-spatial segregation such as the provision of social networks and social capital (DeFillippis, 2001; Forrest and Kearns, 1999; Putnam, 1998). These networks may help the societies preserve their culture, find housing and jobs in their society, and solve problems due to their solidarity, which may lead to social development. The social networks may be a way of existence strategy to overcome urban poverty and to build trust.

Contrary to gentrification, which creates indirect displacements due to increasing rents and property values and increasing social isolation, the extreme fundamental of this new urban agenda is "forced evictions" and "direct displacements". According to Atkinson (2000), direct displacement is the forced outflow of the existing residents as the result of evictions and harassment. Smith (2002) calls this process a government-led gentrification process. It is also an agent in the destruction of the meanings of place that are

attributed to a space by the community and the social development attachments made by the social networks and capital.

In particular, the formerly-abandoned historic inner-city neighbourhoods became once again the focus of public interest in the developed countries in the 1970s, and have become so more recently in developing countries. While large and even mega-scale regeneration and renewal projects and even international events such as the Olympic Games and European Capital of Culture events are being used to transform historic inner-city neighbourhoods into the commercial, touristic and leisure hubs of rejuvenated city centres, these projects have also introduced major challenges for the future planning histories of major cities and their historic landscapes. Hence, they have turned into social exclusion instruments in the hands of ambitious central and local governments in their need to recreate "global" and "competitive" cities [1].

Considering social exclusion in historic landscapes via a conservationist perspective, the problem goes beyond being a social problem, but becomes rather a problem of cultural identity, expression and representation, and collective memory[2]. This is related to a wider understanding of conservation as an instrument of social inclusion, the consideration of its social impacts, and the enforcing of the idea of heritage within society as a public good and a social asset (see Newman and McLean, 1998; Avrami et al. 2000; Pendlebury et al. 2004; English Heritage, 2005). Infact, cultural heritage has been recognized as the principal instrument in combating social exclusion (Newman and McLean, 1998). There are also numerous international initiatives on the socio-spatial challenges in historic landscapes. These include the Round Table on the Renewal of Inner City Areas by the UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector (1996), the Conference on City Centres: Ethical and Sustainable Socio-economic Rehabilitation of Historical Districts (2002), and the UNESCO publications: Socially Sustainable Revitalization of Historical Districts (2002) and Historic Districts for All: a Social and Human Approach for Sustainable Revitalization? (2008). These focus on the idea that the rapid, uncontrolled and ambitious development, while resulting in socio-spatial segregation, is transforming urban areas with the potential to deteriorate urban heritage with deep impacts on community and their collective values; and they build up strategies in facilitating socially sustainable and inclusive conservation-led regeneration strategies in historic landscapes. While there is currently such strong impetus to demonstrate the socially inclusive role of conservation; the relationship between conservation and regeneration is still problematic. This problematic relationship poses more challenges through the symbolic meanings of heritage endorsed by elite groups, and the perception of conservation as an elitist activity (see Hubbord, 1993).

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[1] Beijing has been appeared in the urban agenda through the demolishments of 600-year old historic hutong settlements for the preparation works to 2008 Summer Olympics. While they are defined as sources of shame by the central and local governments, the demolishments resulted in the replacement of 580.000 inhabitants (Gallagher, S., "Beijing's urban makeover: the 'hutong' destruction". Open Democracy, 11.06.2006.)

[2] This role of historic landscape was extremely evident in the demolishment of Buddha sculptures of Bamiyan Valley by Taliban in 2001 or that of Mostar Bridge of Bosna-Herzigova in 2003 Bosnian War.

The paper, within this context, attempts to explore how urban regeneration initiatives affect the historic landscapes of Istanbul and, to examine their reflection on the communities through a conservationist perspective. The paper structure is as follows. After building a theoretical framework for the social agenda of urban regeneration, the second section demonstrates the regeneration framework in Turkey and its associated debates on the social implications of the historic landscapes of Istanbul. The third and fourth sections focus on a case study of eviction – namely Sulukule – to illustrate the investigation of physical and socio-economic implications of this approach by addressing Law no. 5366. The conclusion emphasizes the need for resolving the community realm in urban regeneration: "right to the city" by developing a debate on the emergence of community governance models to create a shift from social exclusion to social capital in urban regeneration. The paper hopes to raise questions regarding the concept of urban regeneration and its relationship to social exclusion as well as to present an up-to-date picture of Istanbul's recent development.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES OF EXCLUSION IN ISTANBUL

Even though the term "urban regeneration" has become a catchphrase in Turkey over the past two decades, the historic landscapes have become valuable resources in line with the rise of neo-liberal urban policy and planning agenda. However, social exclusion as a result of urban regeneration is not a new phenomenon in Turkey or in Istanbul. Istanbul and its historic landscape has been undergoing massive urban restructuring since the 1950s. In the 1950s, the urban restructuring in historic landscapes took place as a result of a modernizing project undertaken by the government of Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister between 1950-1960. This included the demolition of historic neighbourhoods to clear the areas surrounding major monuments or the opening of large boulevards as a reflection of the Haussman interventions in Paris. However, most of the physical transformation and urban restructuring associated with globalization in historic Istanbul has taken place since the 1980s through the liberalisation movement of Turkey by Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister and President respectively between 1983-1988 and 1989-1993, and the enacted "global urban vision" by the administration of Bedrettin Dalan, the Mayor of the Greater Municipality of Istanbul between 1984-1989. This liberalisation has resulted in major financial and structural changes in the urban governance, and has consequently led to the emergence of an entrepreneurial local government and market-driven interventions in urban restructuring (Bartu-Candan and Kolluoglu, 2008). The changes include, on one hand, the construction of five-star hotels, office complexes/towers, business districts, privatized public services; on the other hand, mega urban renewal projects for the opening of large boulevards, the demolition of industrial complexes, the construction of gated communities, and the facilitation of elitist consumption patterns. According to Bartu (2000), the interventions of the 1980s shows how the history, the past and their remains can be used as symbolic capital in political combat. These were also the years when gentrification was increasingly put on the academic agenda, especially with respect to historic inner-city landscapes including Cihangir, Galata and Kuzguncuk (see Uzun, 2003; Behar and Islam, 2006).

During the most recent decade, though, we have been re-witnessing the mounting of such restructuring projects in Istanbul including the waterfronts, squatter areas, and finally the historic landscapes. The 2000s is a period that foresees a growing tendency towards neo-liberal urbanism in the urban agenda through the employment of public-private partnerships and deployment of "regeneration-led conservation" as the base of urbanization politics. A significant number of studies (Bartu-Candan and Kolluoglu, 2008; Kuyucu and Unsal, 2010; Behar and Islam, 2006; Keyder, 2005; Isik and Pinarcioglu, 2001) have pointed out the implications of urban regeneration policies and particularly their relation to social exclusion since the mid-1990s, a decade when the impact of globalization is most visible.

In particular, the enactment of the so-called "regeneration-led conservation law" (Law on the Protection and the Revitalisation of Deteriorated Historical and Cultural Immovable Assets through Renovation and Regeneration, Law no. 5366) in 2005 has introduced a major challenge for the future planning histories of major cities. This law forms the basis of current regeneration process in historic landscapes, it has turned into a social exclusion instrument in the hands of ambitious central and local governments into the need to recreate global and competitive cities. In the 5 years following its enactment, the Law had become the prominent implementation tool in area-based renewal and regeneration policy and programmes. It propounds "renewal sites" and "exclusion zones" in order to consolidate the urban structure for earthquake risk mitigation, low quality of life standards, and especially to regenerate the deprived neighbourhoods of historic city centres.

While urban renewal has emerged as the only possible solution for these so-called "naturalised" urban problems (Bartu-Candan and Kulluoglu, 2008), social exclusion has started to be seen as an inevitable effect of global economic restructuring from a neo-liberal perspective (Beall, 2002). Isik and Pinarcioglu (2001) call this process a transition from a "softly segregated city" to a "tense and exclusionary urbanism". The private sector had validated this process, and especially with the new role that TOKI (Mass Housing Authority) attained in 2005, the renewal process has increased its pace with the creation of new housing areas through the employment of low credits (such as Bati Atasehir) or through international competitions (such as Zaha Hadid's Kartal Project and Ken Yeung's Kucukcekmece Project). These followed the transformation of old squatter areas, and especially historic inner-city neighbourhoods, into urban spaces of high economic rental value. There are numerous controversial examples which include Sulukule, Tarlabasi, Ayvansaray or Fener-Balat (for an overview of declared urban renewal areas in historic environments, see Dincer et al., 2010). These interventions were initiated with the partnership of private sector under the banner of "resource development and income-sharing projects" in TOKI programmes, which were encouraged to raise financial resources to be used in housing projects for lower and middle income groups. However, they increasingly demonstrate deleterious effects on historic landscapes and society by allowing the emergence of uncontrolled power in the governance of the built environment, the changes in the urban landscape of the city through the loss of collective memories, and the socio-spatial segregation and exclusion regardless of project areas. In addition, they result in displacement and the replacement of urban problem areas, rather than finding solutions.

The residents of many historic neighbourhoods in Istanbul are under the threat of exclusion, and even eviction, through the current urban regeneration agenda. While the planning history of Istanbul is being restructured through the debates on social injustice, inequalities and exclusion, the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE, 2009) estimates that the number of people that are under the threat of involuntary eviction is approximately one million, most of whom are currently the residents of historic neighbourhoods. According to them, the evictions are driven by private and public sponsored real-estate and property market-driven developments and commercial interests, the planning and development control decisions penalise informal buildings and land occupation, urban planning and land use ordinances leads to clearance and land-use transformation that are incompatible with present residential use, and lastly the conflicts and internal ethnic tensions generate outbursts of property destruction and human suffering. While the developers, speculators and the elite are the main beneficiaries, the projects are a potentially destructive threat to the meanings associated with these neighbourhoods and their strong social networks (AGFE, 2009) which may help them preserve their culture, and could lead to social development as a way of existence strategy. According to Bartu-Candan and Kulloglu (2008), the projects for the prestigious redevelopment of historic landscapes have been blended with strengthening urban entrepreneurialism and city marketing efforts. The threats are also well-documented in various international conservation expert reports (UNESCO/WHC, 2008). However, there is still a lack of research that would allow a discussion led by a conservationist perspective, which brings the necessity to link urban conservation and regeneration focusing on their socially inclusive roles.

THE DNA OF EXCLUSION: SULUKULE

Beall (2002) studied social exclusion by utilizing two fundamental approaches: exclusion on the basis of who you are and exclusion on the basis of where you are. Sulukule is a typical example for the analysis of the relationship between urban regeneration and social exclusion in historic landscape at the intersection of these two questions. Sulukule, comprising of the Neslisah and Hatice Sultan neighbourhoods, was one of the historic areas of Istanbul that lie along the Land Walls that was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985. It was also an extension of the former Romani lonca neighbourhoods of Istanbul having a history dated back to 11th century. The society was largely in entertainment business serving mainly in Historic Peninsula. Besides society, the neighbourhood also had a significant collection of built heritage (such as Edirnekapı Mihrimah Sultan Mosque, Hagios Demetrios Rum Orthodox Church), as well as archaeological remains.

Sulukule had suffered the first exclusion in the 1960s by the demolishment of the original Romani neighbourhood, and second in the 1990s by the closing down of entertainment houses, which were the basic income resources for most of the society. Finally in 2006, it was declared as an urban renewal area (26147/13.10.2006). Following the declaration, the Sulukule Renewal Project was approved in 2007 by the Istanbul Renewal Areas Board of Protection (20/02.11.2007) and the Greater Istanbul Municipality (4269/17.12.2007). It covered 382 parcels, 759 right owners, 645 dwellings and 45 shops (Mimarizm, 2008). As stated by the Fatih Municipality (2011), the purpose was "to renew

the area through healthy buildings and infrastructure that are in harmony with the urban and architectural heritage of Historic Peninsula". The project has been based on the theory that the conservation of cultural heritage through the elimination of "invasion" would increase the sense of belonging through the creation of an environment where different social groups live together; the prevention of decay through the eviction of social elements who do not invest in the maintenance of these environments and who create an environment of high crime and illegal economic activity; the provision of economic development through the creation of an urban attraction zone; the protection of cultural dynamics and increase social integration with the rest of the city; and the establishment of a participatory process through public meetings. According to Kiyak-Ingin (2008), the neighbourhood was highly stigmatised in the minds of the mainstream population mainly in the belief that it was host to drug users and their suppliers; thus it was a prime target for an urban renewal project.

The implementation model was based on urgent expropriation decision (26375/13.12.2006). While the prominent implementing agent of the project was TOKI, an agreement with a private firm – Aarti Planlama – was signed in 2006. The project was designed through the proposal of the demolition of the entire area and the construction of new, high-quality housing stock, while sustaining and conserving the identity of the neighbourhood including the listed buildings and plot pattern. The estimated cost of the project was stated to be approximately €43 million (Radikal, 2007).

The financial model for the property owners was based on a long-term credit of 15 years. The new apartment units will be sold to existing property owners if they accept to pay the difference between the current value of their property, which was calculated by the Municipality. Those were granted apartment units in Tasoluk, a TOKI social housing complex in Gaziosmanpasa (some 30 kilometres away), by paying monthly instalments of approximately €200 over 15 years. The owners of historic buildings, which have not been demolished, are obliged to carry out their own conservation projects under the assistance of KUDEB (Control Bureau for the Conservation of Cultural Assets). While the implementation and financial models ignores tenants, most of the property owners (67%), who had been granted apartments in Tasoluk, never went there due to its remote location from the central business district and due to their economic conditions (an average monthly income of €125-200), and the percentage of population (77%) who had no permanent jobs (Kiyak-Ingin, 2008). While there are only six families living in Tasoluk today, it was determined that only 50 of the 900 share-holders had given houses in Sulukule (Sol, 2012). In addition, it is clear that the lack of financial resources could even force the owners of the historic buildings to leave the neighbourhoods due to high restoration and maintenance costs. Defined as a "romantic and human" project by Aaarti Planlama (Mimarizm, 2008), the UNESCO World Heritage Committee especially criticised the Sulukule Renewal Project as a "gentrification project" in 2008, and recommended "that a balance must be found between conservation, social needs and identity of the community" (UNESCO/WHC, 2008: 24).

However by February 2012, the Sulukule Project has nearly been completed after the total demolition of the historic neighbourhood, despite all the delays

caused by claims, counterclaims and discussions. As illustrated by Korkmaz and Unlu-Yucesoy (2010), the people, who had been placed in Tasoluk, have already moved to other neighbourhoods of the Historic Peninsula in small groups, which has resulted in the disappearance of the collective social network of the Sulukule community, and that of the collective identities and memories associated to the historic landscape of the Sulukule area in a city of European Capital Culture of 2010.

Figure 1- Sulukule between 2005 and 2010: a. Sulukule from the Landwalls [Sulukule Gunlugu], b.c. Destruction [Najla Osseiran, S.G.], d. New constructions [Funda Oral, S.G.]

RIGHT TO THE CITY: SULUKULE PLATFORM AS A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE MODEL IN HERITAGE-LED REGENERATION

From a rights-based approach, there is a close relationship between social exclusion, human rights and local governance (Taylor, 2000). In particular, considering the historic landscape as a "public good" relates it to "public interest". Lefebvre (1968/1996) defines right to the city as the demand for a transformed and renewed access to urban life. He states that the traditional city is the hub of social, cultural and political life, but its use value is being overwhelmed by the exchange value resulting from the commodification of urban assets. Brown and Kristiansen (2009) emphasize the fact that Lefebvre's definition encompasses the ideas that the city is public as a place of social

interaction and exchange through the demands of heterogeneity, and it is a place that encounters difficulties in situations where difference creates struggle in terms of access to the public realm, or the right to citizenship. Moreover, as Purcell (2002) points out, the city is a place which enfranchises citizens to participate in the use and production of urban space. According to Harvey (2008), the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources; it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is a "common" rather than an individual right since the transformation and urbanization depends upon the "collective power". This is related to a greater democratic control over the management of cities, while neo-liberal ideology tends to privatize this control. Therefore, the right to the city has emerged through two themes: the need to develop urban politics of communities and the need to negotiate politics at the urban scale rather than at state level (Purcell, 2002).

There have been significant international initiatives to increase awareness on right to the city including the Habitat II City Summit (1996), the Global Campaign on Urban Governance (1999), the Millennium Development Goals (2000), the European Charter for Safeguarding Human Rights in the City (2001), the UNESCO-UN-HABITAT Memorandum of Understanding (2005), the Right to the City Meeting Barcelona (2006), the World Conference on Inclusive Cities for the 21st Century (2008), and the Brazil City Statute (2001). Such initiatives promote the concept of an inclusive city as a place where everyone can participate positively in the opportunities of urban life through inclusive urban policy and governance. According to Brown and Kristiansen (2009), developing the right to the city as a vehicle for social inclusion in cities implies liberty, freedom and the benefits of city life for all, transparency, equity and efficiency in city administrations, participation and respect in local democratic decision making, recognition of diversity in economic, social and cultural life, and reducing poverty, social exclusion and urban violence. Besides the already mentioned initiatives, the real challenge for right to the city is to create the demanded legal and administrative framework to seek ways to combat social exclusion and to allow social justice in urban governance to flourish. The challenge for the right to the "historic landscape", then, is to balance urban regeneration initiatives for socially inclusive urban conservation. In this sense, the UNESCO toolkit: Historic Districts for All: a Social and Human Approach for Sustainable Revitalization? (2008) is an important initiative which focuses particularly on historic environments. According to the toolkit, social cohesion and economic competitiveness are complementary objectives. Moreover, the conservation of old buildings cannot be dissociated from the local population who give meaning to those historic districts; and local and national strategies must respond to the needs of all inhabitants.

In Turkey, there is no established tradition of community and voluntary effort that could provide a strong foundation for urban regeneration. However, and especially after the launch of urban renewal programmes in the 2000s, there have been a rise in community action having an impact on mainstream programmes to cope with social facets of regeneration efforts including neighbourhood beautification foundations, Fener-Balat–Ayvansaray Association for the Protection of the Rights of Property Owners and Tenants and Social Aid, the Tarlabasi Platform, the Taksim Platform and particularly the Sulukule Platform.

The Sulukule Platform has been established as a multi-actor and dynamic organisation to work actively on the issues arising from the implementation of Law no. 5366 and their effect on Sulukule and the wider region of the Historic Peninsula (see Kiyak-Ingin, 2008; Uysal, 2011). Its aim is to create a dialogue foundation to allow participation and sustainability. It is based on an understanding of the fact that conservation is not limited to physical preservation, but rather it is an integrated process. Moreover, it advocates the view that all relevant local, central and international actors should be involved in the process.

Beginning from 2007, the Sulukule Platform has been successful in interrupting the demolition process through the activities by non-governmental organisations, artists, architects and local people such as the "40 Days 40 Nights Sulukule" event which used "We will sing 40 times; and Sulukule will survive" as a slogan[3]. The preparation of an alternative plan by Sınır Tanimayan Otonom Plancilar [Autonomous Planners with No Frontiers] (STOP) and Sulukule Atelier, who use the slogan "Another Sulukule is possible", was another important civic initiative in the building of a new planning culture in Istanbul and also in Turkey. The plan was developed on a vision that provides higher quality living environments, employment opportunities, and socio-economic and cultural programmes that help Sulukule inhabitants sustain their sense of community as a prerequisite of staying in the neighbourhood. However, after the general elections in September 2007, the demolitions started again even before the approval of the first draft project by the Board of Protection.

Although the Sulukule Platform or other associated initiatives could not manage to stop the demolition process, it has succeeded in raising international and national awareness of renewal interventions and the heritage of these communities. Moreover, it has created a potential and an alternative model for future sustainable area-based regeneration and urban conservation interventions. The platform has emphasized sustainable, and human-centred approaches through a participatory process by emphasising the necessity to shift towards integrated area-based policies. It has also advocated that there is an improvement option with social and economic improvement rather than total demolition and rebuilding, and has emphasised the potential of the location. Finally, it has become a bridge between the institutions and persons, and has consistently advocated the transparency in management and application plans.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Urban regeneration is the prominent instrument in restructuring cities, and especially historic landscapes, in Turkey; but the state-driven character of this spatial strategy is more a state-driven exclusion strategy, rather than being a strategy to respond to urban deprivation. Therefore, the Sulukule example emphasizes the need for resolving the community realm in urban regeneration – "right to the city" – by developing a debate on the emergence of community governance models to create a shift from social exclusion to social capital in urban regeneration.

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[3] See, http://sulukulegunlugu.blogspot.com, http://www.sulukuleatolyesi.blogspot.com.

While the government normalised this eviction process as the only solution to combat urban deprivation, crime and natural hazards through the "legalised" speculative process oriented towards laws and public-private partnerships, the results of project shows that the project has neither brought an integrated approach to socio-economic problems of the neighbourhood, nor it has achieved a sustainable area-based strategy to resolve the problems of the community with the community. It is one of the most important examples of massive physical destruction, "bulldozer renewal" of historic landscapes that are inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List, and also the destruction of all the meanings, collective memories and social capital attached to this historic landscape. It has merely triggered social exclusion, and replaced the urban problem into another area, while bringing a major focus on land development. In return, the Sulukule neighbourhood has nearly completed its transformation process through the construction of prestigious housing areas. However, it is certain that the old Sulukule community will be last ones to benefit from this newly created "high-quality, safe and healthy" environment.

Despite all these challenges, the Sulukule Project has provided the re-rise of community organisations as the basis of local democracy in the urban development and regeneration process. The Sulukule Platform has become a role-model in raising awareness and consciousness into the role of community and "right to the city" especially in heritage-led regeneration. It has raised the hope that community organisations may have an influence on conservation and regeneration understanding, policies and implementations (as a model in initiating community governance in the management of historic landscapes).

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