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Culture, tourism and regeneration process in Istanbul

Ferhan Gezici and Ebru Kerimoglu

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Abstract

Purpose – *The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the relationship between culture and tourism, and the urban re-development process in Istanbul.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The paper focuses on the case of Istanbul and reviews the city's goal of being a financial, tourism, culture and innovation center.*

Findings – *The paper first points to the facts and main attractions of tourism as being tangible and intangible, and to the effects of national and local policies on cultural tourism development. In the second part, the review focuses on existing and ongoing projects in order to discuss their strengths and weaknesses, and the role of culture and tourism. Moreover, the paper presents a discussion of the conflicts based on main concepts such as consumption-led, production-led, economic development or quality of life goals, inclusive or exclusive processes, uniqueness or serial reproduction.*

Originality/value – *The findings of the paper contribute to the literature by considering regeneration along with culture and tourism.*

Keywords *Tourism, Culture, Urban areas, Regeneration, Turkey, Economic development*

Paper type *Case study*

Introduction

During the last two decades, culture has gained significant importance for restructuring the urban economy. Touristic activities are attracting more visitors and allowing cities to become more competitive. One of the main reasons is the changing economic structures of the cities in Europe and North America. Cities have been moving from manufacturing to service-based activities (de-industrialization), while finance capital has become more dominant in the global economy, reflecting neo-liberal trends. Furthermore, culture is becoming more of a balanced tool for the conservation of heritage and the development of new entertainment complexes (Smith, 2007). Many also consider culture to be a resource for identity as well as an economic asset (Galdini, 2007). Thus, as Evans (2001) emphasizes, ‘‘place, culture and economy have become symbiotic categories in the post-fordist economy’’.

On the other hand, cultural tourism is a significant part of urban tourism, and it is growing very quickly. Cities are competing not only to attract capital but also visitors. Cultural heritage now accounts for 30 percent of the European tourism market, with attendance at cultural sites doubling in the last twenty years (Bayliss, 2004; European Commission, 1998). Cultural heritage is the main attraction of cities, cultural heritage conserves the cultural values of the place and connects people to their collective memories. Moreover, cities have increasingly made a business of culture (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Zukin, 1995), and cultural institutions generally become more market-oriented because of reductions in the level of public funding (Richards, 1996). However, while culture remains a significant component for tourism and urban economy, the meaning of culture becomes more questionable. The anthropological concept of this word defines culture as a way of life, while

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cultural resources become the making of a place, including tangible and intangible qualities (Jensen, 2007). Hence, cultural tourism is no longer merely the visual consumption of high culture artifacts such as galleries, theaters and architecture, but is expanding to include simply allowing visitors the opportunity of soaking up the atmosphere of the place (Galdini, 2007; Richards, 1996).

While approaches exist to mobilize the urban cultural resources for economic revitalization, in line with urban renaissance (Evans, 2001), several criticisms also exist: Harvey (1989) accuses cultural economic policies of being a “carnival mask”, Richards and Wilson (2006) use the definition of “cathedrals of consumption”; Amin (2007) and Urry (2002) refer to “selling places for pleasure”, while Amin (2007) and Berg (2003) emphasize that prestige projects and consumption-led urban regeneration make the city a “citadel of spectacle”. While culture as a way of life and the forming of identities provides inspiration for creativity, culture also creates commercialized products and services (Jensen, 2007). Miles and Paddison (2005) point out that “the development of cultural forms of urban tourism is the commodification of culture and the spread of cultural capitalism”. Similarly, Richards (1996) acknowledges that commodification is, to some extent, unavoidable, since cultural products are specifically designed for tourist consumption. On the other hand, researchers have different views about the impacts of tourism; while this activity reconstructs place identities, tourism may also destroy these unique identities because global capitalism favors homogenization rather than the maintenance of differences (Galdini, 2007).

As culture plays a significant role in the restructuring of an urban economy and identity, an increasing literature emerges on culture-led regeneration in the cities of the developed world. Regeneration is the transformation of a place that is displaying symptoms of physical, social and economic decline (Evans, 2005). However, culture is a catalyst for the regeneration process, although the critics emphasize the main conflicts. While culture-led regeneration projects try to reconstruct the urban economy and image, they often give importance to economic development goals, property development, and urban entrepreneurialism, rather than to the quality of life goals, the protection of local identities, social justice or inclusion (Jensen, 2007). Current trends suggest a scenario of a rapidly regenerating and gentrifying urban core, surrounded by a ring of intensely disadvantaged residential areas (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). Therefore, many critics point to the increasing social polarization, poverty and reproduction of inequality, which are largely neglected during the regeneration process, as cities become the playgrounds for visitors and investors (Mooney, 2004; Miles and Paddison, 2005; Bezmez, 2008).

Economic regeneration is more concerned with growth and property development and finds expression in prestige projects and place marketing. Therefore, cultural quarters, heritage sites, museums, events and creative businesses become the main components of culture and tourism in the various experiences of the regeneration process, and the focus now is on flagship projects (Evans, 2005; Smith, 2007). The critiques about many flagship developments are due to the fact that these projects bypass local communities or that these inhabitants resist the changes (MacClancy, 1997; Plaza, 2000; Evans, 2005). Such flagship developments highlight prestige and gentrification by creating places for a specific class in the community. International events are increasingly becoming a new tool for attracting visitors, bringing revenue for the cities and enhancing their competitiveness. Mooney (2004) criticizes the policies and process of the European Capital of Culture Event in Glasgow. He points out that there was no longer one Glasgow but two: an official sanitized version which overlooked or deliberately blotted out the existence of another ever poorer section of society. Furthermore, as Jensen (2007) emphasizes: “many cities copied attractions and buildings that have proven successful elsewhere rather than adopting a unique strategy”. The impact of globalization creates serial reproduction, placelessness and homogenization (e.g. museum chains such as the Guggenheim) instead of differentiating their products and experiences (Smith, 2007; MacClancy, 1997).

Cities are where the local people and visitors can meet through culture. While cities enhance their position in the tourism market, the restructuring process of the cities is reinforced by culture-led regenerations. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the relationship between

culture and tourism, and the urban re-development process in the case of Istanbul, and to discuss the main concepts and strategies. Considering Istanbul's economy and cultural heritage, the city does not yet attract as many visitors as desired. Therefore, the following section will evaluate the tourism potential of Istanbul while pointing out the main dynamics and evolutions within the metropolitan development. The third section focuses on the regeneration agenda of Istanbul. The last section is an analysis of the existing and ongoing projects, based on common cultural regeneration strategies such as cultural quarters, heritage sites, museums, events, creative-cultural industries and flagship projects, and a definition of the role of culture and tourism on these projects in Istanbul.

An overview of Istanbul from the culture and tourism perspective

Istanbul with respect to tourism development and strategies in Turkey

After 1980, the economic and structural changes in Turkey affected the tourism sector as well. While the economy became export oriented, the significance of tourism as one of the main income generators for the national economy increased. After the tourism encouragement laws of 1982, coastal and developed regions received most of the investment capital in order to increase tourism revenue. However, property development interests and the idea of expanding bed capacity decided the level of subsidies, rather than an integrated approach which took into account cultural attractions.

The dominance of sea-sun-sand triangle on Turkish tourism brought the need for new approaches to extend tourism supply and demand throughout the country in the 1990s. The aim was for alternative types of tourism to reduce seasonal concentrations and to help attract visitors throughout the whole year. The Five-Year Development Plan (1996-2000), highlighted the improvement of new alternative types of tourism by considering changing demands to achieve a more balanced seasonal and spatial distribution of tourism (SPO, 1995). Moreover, the first priority of Turkey's 2010 tourism vision is to emphasize the cultural variety and richness of Turkey (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2004). Consistent with the policies to ensure tourism and cultural variety, cities are now more important as destinations. These developments have substantially raised the expectations of Turkish tourism from Istanbul, which is rich in cultural heritage and a place which has a unique atmosphere.

Turkey does not realize its tourist potential, and Istanbul, even with a historical background that goes back thousands of years and which contains many cultures, does not achieve its share of the global tourism market. While Turkey's share is 2.6 percent of the world tourism market, the share of Istanbul was 0.6 percent in 2005 (SPO, 2007).

Therefore, the development of the tourism function could be the most suitable tool for the promotion of both Turkey and Istanbul on the world stage. However, Istanbul lacks strategies for cultural tourism development within the national perspective, while the development and appraisal of the current potential and the role of culture in urban regeneration have to relate to local plans and policies.

Istanbul, the biggest city of Turkey on the basis of population (12 million), and the functions performed, and subject to the most rapid and great change under contemporary conditions, has a great potential to be an international city. Istanbul is the intersection point of the country and the region's transportation network, and has direct transportation capabilities to all regions, while its employment opportunities, infrastructure and social facilities are higher compared to other regions. The European Union considers that the Marmara Region, at the center of which is Istanbul, will continue to be the pivot for Turkey's development, and the industrial decentralization in the region will be sustained, while Istanbul will advance to become a global city (SPO, 2000). The primary goal of Istanbul's local authorities is to look after the city's historical, cultural and natural resources, providing the city with a global status by making use of regional opportunities within the economic structures of the world and region, and to assume a leading role in this structuring by establishing a balanced development (Istanbul Greater Municipality, 2007).

Furthermore, it is inevitable to plan tourism elements of Istanbul in order to make the city competitive in the international arena, and to follow new trends in the world. The common view is that Istanbul has the highest potential for cultural tourism development in Turkey with a focus on cultural heritage, museums, exhibitions, festivals, and trade-fair and congress tourism. These functions and types of tourism are important contributors to the tourism sector by satisfying the visitors, but they can also make a significant contribution to the urban quality. Therefore, most interested parties agree that Istanbul should make progress in cultural tourism and use its rich cultural heritage and diversity for this purpose. Recently, Istanbul was declared Culture Capital of Europe in 2010, and the related projects and funds represent an opportunity by providing the right combination of culture, tourism and urban regeneration, and the development of cultural tourism in Istanbul.

Tourism facts: tangible and intangible qualities of Istanbul

In Istanbul, between 1990 and 2000 the number of tourists increased 110 percent, which is above the general increase rate of Turkey of 93 percent for the same period (TURSAB, 2002). In 2004, the number of foreign tourists visiting Istanbul was only 76 percent that of Barcelona, 30 percent that of London and 14 percent that of Paris (IMP, 2006). However, this number rose in more recent years; between 2000 and 2008 the number of foreign visitors tripled (Table I). Today, although Istanbul is still behind London and Paris, the number of foreign visitors is nearly the same as that of Barcelona (Table II). The increasing penetration of low-cost airlines, as well as cruise ships, contribute to the growing arrival numbers. However, increasing arrivals do not necessarily indicate greater benefits from tourism. Given the short average length of stay for Istanbul and limited tourism product offerings targeting

Years	Istanbul	Share in Turkey (%)
1995	2,006,413	26
2000	2,420,541	23.21
2001	2,517,139	21.66
2002	2,705,848	20.41
2003	3,148,266	22.44
2004	3,473,185	19.83
2005	4,849,220	22.96
2006	5,346,681	26.98
2007	6,453,598	27.69
2008*	7,050,748	26.77

Note: *Provisional, Ministry of Culture and Tourism annual statistics

	Istanbul	Barcelona	Paris	London	Vienna
Number of visitors/million	6.5 ^a	7.1 ^a	27 ^a	25.4 ^a	4.2 ^a
Number of hotels	419 ^a	236 ^a	1,466 ^a	1,639 ^a	373 ^a
Number of museums	69 ^b	51 ^b	137 ^b	76 ^b	100 ^a
Number of museum visitors-(first ten)/million	4.5 ^a	16 ^a	55 ^a	27.7 ^d	7 ^a
Number of congresses (national – international)			858 ^a		713 ^a
Number of theaters	66 ^e	106 ^e	115 ^e	69 ^e	154 ^e
Occupancy rate (%)	73 ^b	45 ^a	138 ^b	178 ^b	
Average length of stay	47.79 ^a	75.50 ^b	78.4 ^a	82 ^a	57.85 ^a
Average length of stay	2.1 ^a	3.6 ^b	2.7 ^a	6.2 ^a	2.2 ^a
Advertising budget-euro/million	0.65 ^c	10 ^c	120 ^c	20 ^c	27.1 ^a

Notes: ^a2007; ^b2004; ^c2003 TUYED; ^d2006; ^e2007 ICCA database (only international), Municipality of Barcelona, Statistics Department, Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau Statistics, London Tourism Office, Vienna Convention Bureau, Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism

the different market segments, it is highly unlikely that the average spending of visitors is increasing at the same rate as the number of arrivals (GWU and BU, 2007).

In general, the number of beds in Istanbul is 79,065 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007). Although this number is far behind that of cities like Paris and London, the low occupancy rates indicate that in fact the bed capacity is not the issue for tourism in Istanbul (Table II).

In order to realize the significance of these numbers, it would be helpful to have an overview of the main tourism attractions based on the heritage sites, museums, events, arts and festivals.

In terms of tourism product and target markets, Turkey mainly competes with other similar Mediterranean destinations. In this context, many regard Istanbul as a gateway to sun and sea destinations, attracting visitors for an average length of 2.1 days, compared to the average of six-seven days for coastal destinations. However, leading travel publications include Istanbul in their lists for Top Ten European City destinations, safest cities in Europe and top global destinations. On the other hand, the richness and vibrancy of the local culture, the combination of modernity and elements of ancient histories, the unique location spanning over two continents, and the praised local cuisine constitute intangible elements that are part of Istanbul's competitive advantage (GWU and BU, 2007).

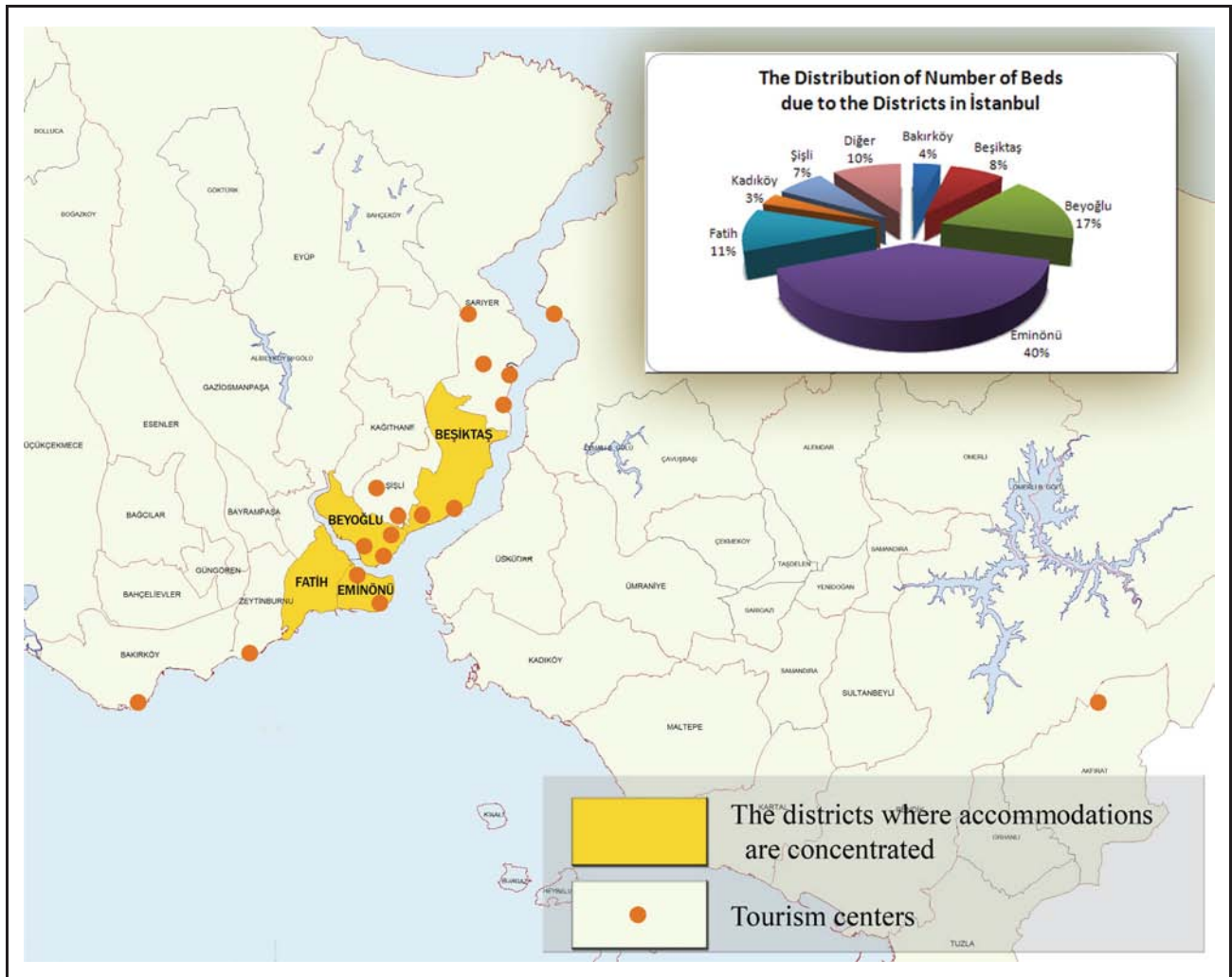
The historical peninsula is the main cultural quarter of Istanbul having a cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure. The historical peninsula has the highest number of tourist attractions, such as museums, monuments (Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, and the Grand Bazaar), while both historical patterns and civil architecture are in this area. The Eminönü district, which is in this area, includes 40 percent of the total bed capacity of Istanbul (Figure 1). Out of the 69 museums of Istanbul, 18 are also in this district (IMP, 2006).

Currently, less than 40 percent of international visitors to Istanbul visit museums and numerous valuable sites suffer from lack of revenue due to minimal visitation. In contrast with other places in Turkey, Istanbul has a large number of museums. Coupled with the fact that cultural heritage tourists are a major target market for Istanbul, the museum visitation of the tourists ought to be relatively high. However, the current level of museum visitation in the historic peninsula is low. Istanbul is far behind other European cities in terms of number of museum visitors. The two most important museums of Istanbul have a total of 3,932,852 visitors every year (2007) (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2008), whereas the Tate Museum in London attracts 6,412,000 visitors annually (London Tourism Office, 2007).

Another historical site of tourism potential with a high density of culture and art facilities (39 percent) is the Beyoğlu district (IMP, 2006). In addition, various archaeological, historical, natural and urban conservation areas exist creating different identities of Istanbul located in various regions. After the declaration of Istanbul as the 2010 European Capital of Culture, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced its support for many regeneration projects that will take place with collaboration between public-local government and institutions -NGO's-educational- art and culture institutions in the mentioned historical quarters (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2009). Therefore, Istanbul's historical heritage makes the city an attractive tourism destination and Istanbul's recent nomination as the 2010 European Capital of Culture led to a series of renovation, restoration and demolition projects, complemented with financial incentives to increase the tangible capacities such as hotel, museums and other cultural amenities (OECD, 2008).

Among cultural activities, festivals occupy an important place and the ratio of established festivals with a history of more than ten years is 27 percent (21 in number). Public support for the festivals is only 3 percent, whereas in Europe public support is on average 30 percent (IMP, 2006). The number of facilities is increasing for important festivals and various art activities, especially after the year 2000, and these facilities are more modern and competitive in capacity and quality. Projects that recently finished are important steps in ensuring quality and diversity of the culture potential of Istanbul. However, these new projects depend on the restoration of historical structure inventory and hence mostly in the scale of the buildings. Furthermore, new developments also require new locations, which also contribute to urban regeneration. The following section examines the existing and

Figure 1 The distribution of number of beds and tourism centers



ongoing regeneration cultural projects, which assist the culture and tourism potentials of Istanbul mentioned above.

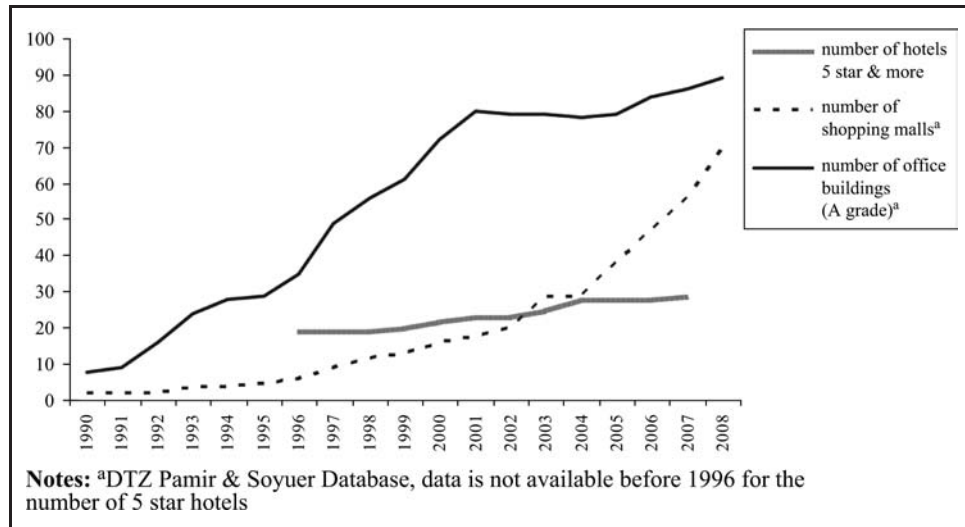
Evaluation of regeneration projects with respect to culture and tourism

Neo-liberal movements have strongly affected Istanbul in defining its vision to be a world-global city. While the interest on cultural heritage increases, especially related to the UNESCO convention, the aim of attracting more investors created an environment for real estate developers and consumption-led projects with new and modern complexes in Istanbul. Figure 2 displays the increasing number of shopping malls, office buildings and high-standard hotels as the new faces of Istanbul since the 1990s.

The literature on city competitiveness with respect to tourism and culture highlights restructuring of the cities based on some common cultural regeneration strategies such as cultural quarters, heritage sites, museums, international events, cultural industries and flagship projects. This section will evaluate 19 regeneration projects in the Istanbul Master Plan, with respect to these strategies.

The main reasons for the establishment of The Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Centre were to draw the vision of Istanbul and to prepare the master plan for future decades in 2005. Even though the local authority in the Istanbul Metropolitan Area has power

Figure 2 Number of hotels, shopping malls, and office buildings in Istanbul by years



in this process, the importance of the central government regarding planning is still strong, and the central government takes several top-down decisions, which are made without any integration to the master plan. If the Ministry of Culture and Tourism declares any area as a tourism center (see these centers in Figure 1), the Greater or District Municipality plays no part in the process. These power struggles between the authorities created conflicts and a fragmented approach towards the spatial development of the metropolitan area. The two main strategies of the Istanbul Master Plan are to raise the competitiveness and provide sustainability. Several challenging objectives exist: the conservation of Istanbul's historical and cultural heritage, the preservation of Istanbul's natural resources, the development of new activities and the enhancement of the diversification of the economy. According to both the OECD Report (2008) and the Istanbul Master Plan (Istanbul Greater Municipality, 2007), Istanbul should have a broader perspective regarding its position as a regional and international center, and should make use of its key qualities in finance, logistics, culture, tourism and innovation. As Güvenç points out, Istanbul has had a global perspective since the 1990s, and the changing functions and new visions of the city highlight the concept of urban regeneration and the implementation of big projects with the support of a new legal framework. However, their fragmented approach draws criticism (Istanbul Chamber of City Planners, 2007).

Istanbul's master plan has 19 projects. These are in regeneration areas with different locations, focus, and functions in the regeneration process (Table III, Figure 3). The projects come under two main classifications, Cultural Heritage Projects and Flagship Projects, in order to emphasize the overall policy and various implementations of the policy in cultural heritage sites and re-development areas for new and modern functions and complexes. Therefore, there is an evaluation of two projects as cases of heritagization, and two projects as flagships with the following criteria: visions, goals, focus, existing and proposed functions, decision and implementation process, actors, critics and the possible impact of the projects. Location, functions and focus gave the classification parameters for the projects in order to see the typologies of culture-led regeneration in Istanbul (Table III).

Cultural heritage projects

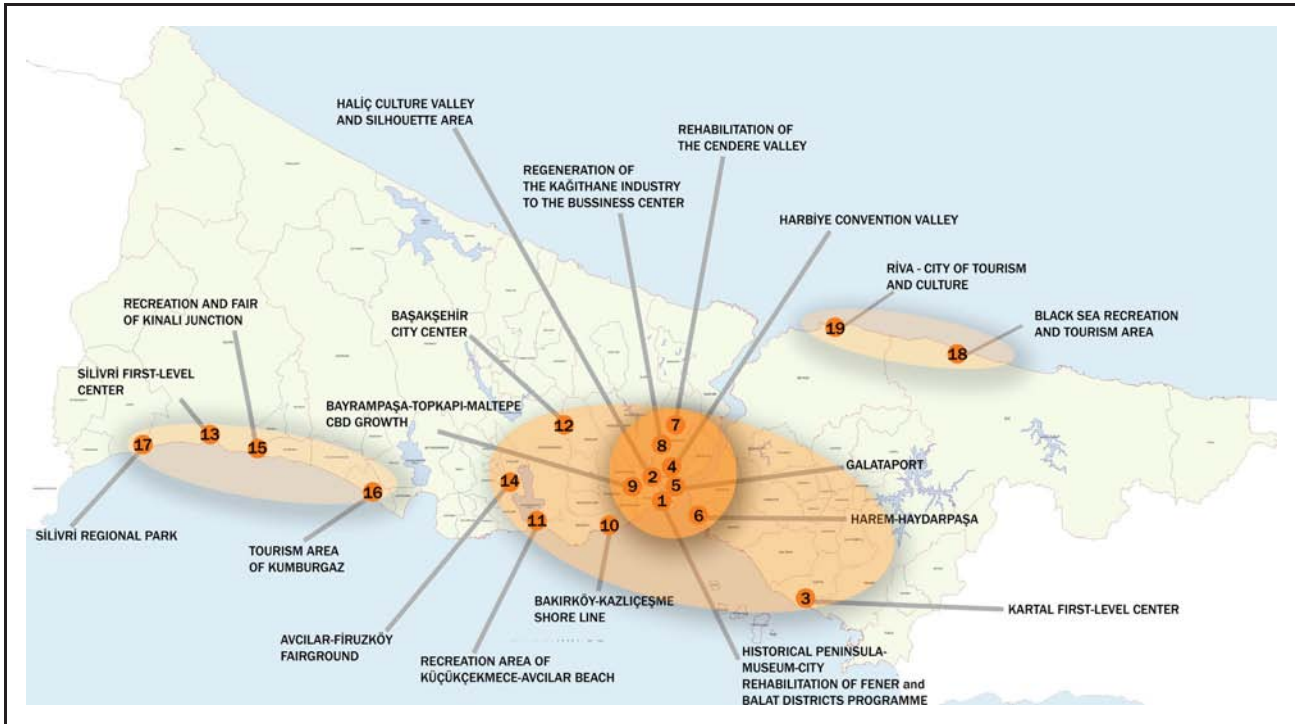
In the concept of Istanbul Master Plan, the Historical Peninsula, as the heart of cultural heritage and the magnet for visitors, has several projects such as The Historical Peninsula Heritage Management Plan, The City Wall Conservation Master Plan, The Theodosius Harbor Planning Project, The Fener-Balat Regeneration Project and The Museum City Project as cases of heritagization. UNESCO included Istanbul in its convention concerning

Table III Classification of the regeneration projects in Istanbul metropolitan area

Classification of the projects	Name of the project	Location (see Figure 3)/size of the project	Existing function	Focus	Proposed function
Cultural heritage	Historical Peninsula – Museum – City (IMUKEP) Fener-Balat	Europe ^a (first ring)	Tourism, housing, business	Heritagisation	Tourism, cultural centers, service, housing
Flagships	Haliç Culture Valley and Silhouette Area	Fatih and Eminonu districts Europe (first ring)/1,033 ha.	Shipyards, housing, open space and trade	Cultural center	Convention centers, cultural centers, exhibition halls, museums, theaters
	Kartal First-level Center	Eyüp and Beyoğlu districts Anatolia ^b (second ring)/554 ha.	Manufacture and open space (with 47 percent, private property)	First-level center	High quality offices and residences, cultural and recreation areas
	Harbiye Convention Valley	Kartal district Europe (first ring)	Culture and tourism	Congress and convention center	Underground convention hall, cultural center, office buildings, restaurants, car parks
Mega waterfront development	Galataport	Şişli district Europe (first ring)/10 ha.	TDJ ^c General Directorate, passenger terminal, customhouse	Cruise port and tourism complex	Hotels, shopping centers, museums, free-shops, exhibition and fair grounds, car park
CBD integrated/development	Harem-Haydarpaşa	Beyoğlu district Anatolia (first ring)/87 ha.	Harbor and railway station	First-level center	Cultural areas and public sphere
	Rehabilitation of the Cendere Valley	Üsküdar and Kadıköy districts Europe (first ring)/211 ha.	Manufacture	Urban greenery, service and facilities corridor	Open spaces, sports ground, cultural areas, film industry areas
	Regeneration of the Kağıthane Industry to the Bussiness Center	Kağıthane district Europe (first ring)/252 ha.	Manufacture and housing	Central business district (CBD)	Trade, cultural industries, information and communication technologies
	Bayrampaşa-Topkapı-Maltepe CBD Growth	Kağıthane district Europe (first ring)/663 ha.	Building and manufacturing industry, partially trade	Central business district (CBD)	Trade, cultural industries office areas and housing
Peripheral projects	Bakırköy- Kazlıçeşme Shore Line	Bayrampaşa and Zeytinburnu districts Europe (second ring)/400 ha.	Tourism, harbor and manufacture	Open-space and tourism area	Tourism areas, harbor, cultural, entertainment, office, open areas
Waterfront development	Recreation Area of Küçükçekmece-Avcılar Beach	Bakırköy and Zeytinburnu districts Europe (second ring)/248 ha.	Housing	Recreation and cultural area	Tourism and cultural industries
Center development	Başakşehir City Center	Avcılar and Küçükçekmece districts Europe (second ring)/114 ha.	Vacant area, housing and manufacture	Second-level center	Cultural and convention center, housing, trade, service, tourism
	Silivri First-level Center	Esenler and Küçükçekmece districts Europe (third ring)/1,076 ha.	Vacant area, housing, trade, manufacture and agriculture	First-level center, technological development park	Cultural industries, cultural and convention centers, hotels, residences, recreation areas
Hosting events	Avcılar-Firuzköy Fairground	Silivri district Europe (second ring)/732 ha.	Vacant area and housing	Fairground	Cultural and tourism areas
	Kınalı Junction Recreation and Fair Area	Avcılar and Esenyurt districts Europe (third ring)/521 ha.	Vacant area, housing and manufacture	Fair and recreation areas	Fairground and tourism areas
Recreation and tourism centers	The Tourism Area of Kumburgaz	Silivri district Europe (third ring)/178 ha.	Housing	Tourism areas	Tourism areas
	Silivri Regional Park	Kumburgaz district Europe (third ring)/645 ha.	Agriculture	Regional park	Hobby gardens, cultural and recreation areas, tourism, sports ground
	Black Sea Recreation and Tourism Area	Silivri district Anatolia (third ring)/3,009 ha.	Grounds of mine	Recreation and tourism area	Marina, yacht sports, accommodation units, cultural tourism, picnic and camping ground
	Riva – City of Tourism and Culture	Şile district Anatolia (third ring)/1,979 ha. Beykoz district	Rural area and forest	Tourism, cultural and recreation areas	Culture-tourism areas

Notes: ^aEuropean part of Istanbul; ^bAnatolian part of Istanbul; ^cTurkey Maritime Organization

Figure 3 Distribution of regeneration projects in Istanbul Metropolitan Area



the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage in 1985. The occasional threats from UNESCO to exclude Istanbul from the convention rise significant concern.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has a Museum City Project that aims to prevent the risk of the historical peninsula losing its place on the World Heritage List. Initial studies of the project, which is exclusively focusing on the historical quarter, date back to 2004 and studies into legal instruments and implementation procedures continue. In the scope of the project the historical urban patterns of Istanbul, especially in areas like the Historical peninsula, the Golden Horn and the Beyoğlu quarter, undergo regeneration, including the people living in those areas, and the objective is for them to become places that reflect their richness and historical characteristics. Part of the project is the determination of pilot areas, and in these areas regeneration implementations take place concurrently with socio-economic projects. One of the gravest critiques is that "it sees the history of a world city like Istanbul as an object exhibited in a museum" (*Yapı Journal*, 2006). While the intensity of restoration activities with the fabric scale attracts attention, the process does not have a comprehensive approach. No detailed explanations exist in terms of means and resources of implementation, for the proposed functions in the project areas. Additionally, another controversial point is that the large scale of the project area and scope makes constructing a coherent structure harder for sub-designs and renovation projects.

One of the several projects being implemented in the historical peninsula is the Fener-Balat Regeneration Project. The undertaking, which refers to two neighborhoods that run along one side of the Golden Horn, started in 1997 with a joint intervention between the Fatih District Municipality, UNESCO and the European Union. Fener was mostly home to Greek people, while Balat was the main Jewish district during the Ottoman period. After the departure of the original residents, the neighborhoods became the major arrival points for the migrants from Anatolia during the first half of the twentieth century (Bezmez, 2008; Narlı, 1997). In the 1980s the interventions of Dalan, the mayor of Istanbul, to clean up the industrial areas broke the existing social and economic networks within the region, and therefore the area became poverty-stricken, with a lack of infrastructure and unhealthy conditions. The aim of the current project is the conservation of the cultural heritage and the

increase in the living standard of the current residents, while the promotion of tourism, based on the idea of emphasizing Fener and Balat's historic heritage, seems like a viable choice (Bezmez, 2008). But the implementation of the project is taking a long time. This is due to different reasons, although the most significant ones are the mistrust of the residents towards the project, the number of property owners interested in preserving their investment, and the changes already made by the residents to the original buildings.

Flagship projects

The Haliç Cultural Valley is a flagship project which includes cultural centers and museums. Haliç is located on both sides of the Golden Horn as part of the Historical Peninsula, and transformation actually started in the mid 1980s as a top-down initiative (Bezmez, 2008). With its 16 km long coast, the Golden Horn was historically a main industrial and shipyard area, but the plan is to make Haliç into a cultural valley. The "Cultural Valley" project is dealing with the refinement of the coasts and surroundings of the Golden Horn, regaining its vitality with its historical and natural values. Along the coast of the Golden Horn (Haliç) a number of regeneration projects continue, most of them giving the old buildings new functions. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources handed Silahtaraga Power Plant, which was the first power plant built during Ottoman Empire times, to Istanbul Bilgi University in 2004. The power plant is now a university campus, and has museums, like the Museum of Modern Art and the Energy Museum, within the facility. The Rahmi Koc Museum of Industry stands upon the foundations of a twelfth century Byzantium building and now the facility is one of the most modern museums of Istanbul. The museum is not a profit-oriented initiative; rather it is a prestige investment for the one of the biggest companies in Turkey (Bezmez, 2008). The municipality manages the Feshane Cultural Center in a renovated old textile factory constructed in 1839, but it remains unnoticed by most of the residents (Bezmez, 2008). Furthermore, in the same area is now an open-air museum, Miniaturk. A renovated old slaughterhouse is now the Sutluce Cultural Center, which opened in 2009 for the World Water Forum. When all these projects are completed, many expect that Haliç will be one of the most important areas to serve cultural tourism in the city. However, there have been critics of the process ever since the Haliç emerged as a large empty land area after the de-industrialization process in the 1980s. The objective is to internationalize Istanbul, although public initiatives to manage the process remain weak. Moreover, Bezmez (2008) points out that most of the residents still perceive Haliç as a place of deterioration and isolation, and defines the area as including mostly local oriented projects, rather than what was promised.

The Kartal Regeneration Project is also a flagship project on the Eastern side of Istanbul. The area used to be an old industrial district and the transformation started spontaneously. Great imbalances exist between the Eastern and Western sides of Istanbul in terms of distribution of commerce, industry, culture and administration functions. Central Business Districts, especially, are mainly on the Western side of Istanbul. This inequality not only exerts pressure on the natural and historical fabric of the city, but unequal distribution of economic functions also creates problems in transportation. In this sense, within the metropolitan plan, the aim of the project in Kartal is to offset this imbalance and allow Kartal to gain more importance as the area creates an alternative in the Eastern side to the current Central Business Districts. There was an international competition for the Kartal regeneration project, and the design of famous architect Zaha Hadid won the prize. This area will have a privileged high density, while the Mayor pronounced Kartal the "Manhattan of Istanbul". The project area is one of the largest urban regeneration areas in the world in terms of size, number of offices, limited number of residences, cultural center, opera house, recreation areas along the lake, public buildings, shopping mall, hotels, restaurants and marina. However, critiques suggest that 60 percent of the planned construction in the scope of the project is commercial area. Considering the scarcity of A grade office space in Istanbul, Kartal will have twice as many offices as the current supply of Istanbul (Ersöz, 2008). The discussion questions whether these new offices are usable or necessary. Other criticisms also exist about the density that will increase with the project, and the project's adaptability to the surroundings.

Other projects differ according to their location and focuses (Table III, Figure 3). Since most of these projects are still in the decision process rather than in the implementation phase, it is preferable to indicate the diversification and typologies of these regeneration projects. While some of them are Central Business District (CBD) integrated projects including the transformation of industrial areas to extend to the CBD by highlighting cultural industries, two of them, which are at the main gates of the city as the harbor and/or customs area, are mega-waterfront development projects in the central part. Several regeneration projects also exist in the Istanbul Master Plan which aims to design and develop the periphery in an organized manner. The second and third rings include two Hosting Events Projects, while four of them are peripheral recreation and tourism centers on the two sides of Istanbul. These projects would address the long term challenge to create not only new economic activities but also new visitor attraction areas within the city, rather than concentrating only on the historical peninsula.

Conclusion

This paper evaluates how culture is used in the regeneration process with respect to cultural tourism in Istanbul. Recently, the changing structure of cities has enhanced the significance of cultural tourism, both for raising their cultural heritage and for developing new activities and areas for attracting visitors. This makes cities more competitive by creating landmarks in the city and giving importance to creative and cultural industries as new economic activities and attractions which are complementary to the heritage sites.

Istanbul, in defining its role of being a global city, and as being the heart of economic and cultural activities of Turkey, needs to emphasize its vitality. With these challenging objectives, restructuring the city has several dimensions, such as conserving cultural and natural sites, sustainability, increasing quality of life, economic development and diversification. Therefore, the regeneration activities have become more and more significant with their focuses and processes. The analysis of regeneration projects in Istanbul indicates that culture and tourism are included as major activities. However, their focus and dominance changes, as culture and tourism become important components to increase the quality of life in the city and attract more visitors. Except for the heritage sites, most of the projects are developing based on a consumption-led approach, with the goal of economic and property development. The contents of the projects follow world experiences and are classified with respect to different cultural regeneration strategies. Moreover, their focus is much more on creating "flagships" as prestige areas of the city, and a citadel of spectacle for city users. The criticisms of ongoing projects are that they are fragmented, the scale of privileged densities, the dominance of commercial areas, the ignoring of the impacts on surrounding areas and the people who live in those areas, and that these create issues of gentrification and social exclusion and neglect the concept of public interest.

However, it is quite early to evaluate the impacts of these projects on cultural tourism and urban development, and to see whether they have brought a diversification of the economy, an enhancement of the tourism infrastructure, a raise in the number of visitors and revenues, and an increase in the quality of life in Istanbul. These benefits may be achieved if the governing bodies manage projects by considering the criticisms mentioned above and by emphasizing the uniqueness of Istanbul rather than increased homogenization.

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