

Remapping the Modern Fragments of Istanbul

1950–1980

İPEK AKPINAR

During his visit to Istanbul following the 1999 Marmara earthquake, Umberto Eco declared that it is “one of the cities which are possible to be grasped gradually only if approached without fears and prejudices”.¹ The complex identity of the city demands a hybrid approach to reveal her transformation process. In this regard, the methodological approaches of this chapter are based on evaluating the modernising periods from a post-modern one; digging in history for a broader understanding of today while rethinking Istanbul’s palimpsest, *mélange*, fragmented and articulated identity,² while grasping the everyday life in a lefebvrian sense. In this approach, the chapter asks whether it is possible to deal with contradictory urban features and cover both dichotomies, clashes, potentials and dynamics of Istanbul between 1950 and 1980s. In this framework, İlhan Tekeli’s canonic classification of the urban modernisation process has been used as a chronological outline: timid modernisation of the late 19th and early 20th Century, radical modernisation of the early republican period, a technological modernisation process and the contemporary period.³

In the late 19th Century, richness and poverty, the chaos of a metropolis and calm of a village had been literally side-by-side in the imperial city. The imperial city, in line with its increasing significance in foreign trade and as a port, was a rich, cosmopolitan and dynamic platform with growing capital and population

¹ Eco, U., Interview in Atlas magazine, Fall 1999.

² Korkmaz, Tansel. “21. Yüzyıl İstanbul’u”, In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*, ed. İhsan Bilgin, (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010); Tanyeli, Uğur. “Dün-Bugün”, Taksim Sempozyumu, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 8 December 2012.

³ Tekeli, İlhan. “Development of Urban Administration and Planning in the Formation of Istanbul Metropolitan Area”, in *Development of Istanbul Metropolitan Area and Low Cost Housing*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Municipality, 1992); Tekeli, İlhan. *Modernite Aşılırken Kent Planlaması*, (Ankara: İmge yayınları, 2000).

prompted by transit commerce – as depicted by Akın,⁴ Bozdoğan⁵ and Çelik.⁶ European companies were established one after another and merchants, migrants and refugees who came to the city to work at these companies formed the pattern of cosmopolitan life – a new social pattern mixed with Muslims and non-Muslims residents of the city. The institutionalisation of the first municipality and its services, also with the role of the abovementioned European merchants and ethnic groups; the launch of infrastructure works; development of land and maritime transportation and of course the development of the port were important elements of the spatial transformation of the capital city, which, like all imperial capitals, was a center of consumption. Istanbul went through a radical spatial and social transformation with the construction of train lines, electric trams and bridges, underground railways, industrial exhibitions, coal gas plants, street lighting, horse-cars, apartment buildings, arcades, parks, universities, museums and theatres; which all symbolised the technical and cultural development of the 19th century. In this framework, the cosmopolitan quality of the capital became more pronounced in line with its integration with Euro-centred world capitalism. The macro-form of the city expanded with new neighbourhoods; new living styles emerged in wealthy neighbourhoods. At the imperial centre of multiple identities, provocative images held the potential to entrain placid lives. In this urban structure, the “spatial disorder” was based neither on income nor social status, the determinants of spatial differentiation were religious and ethnic. And during his journey to the Orient in 1911, Le Corbusier once wrote that Istanbul was “a harmonious structure without contradictions”. Besides cosmopolitan plurality, misery, earthquakes, fires, and *migrations* had been part of the urban identity of the city.

The ideal of modern life in the Early Republic, which made major legal, cultural and education reforms between 1923 and 1928 was reflected in the modern city master plans designed by foreign experts.⁷ In the Early Republican era, urban space throughout the country was shaped by state initiatives rather than private enterprises. With the 1924–1925 Lörcher Plan for Ankara which could not be applied, followed by the 1928 Hermann Jansen Plan and then the 1937 Henri Prost Istanbul Plan, the central administration’s demand for secular life was spatialised.

The Prost plan

With a passion for the civilised life of the modernisers, the architectural and urban fields became major arenas for the modernity Project. In 1936, Henri Prost, a French urbanist and leading architect in Paris was invited by the Turkish state for the preparation of a modern master for the former imperial capital. Henri Prost

⁴ Akın, Günkut. “19. yüzyıl sonu ve 20. Yüzyıl başında İstanbul”, In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*, edited by İhsan Bilgin, (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010).

⁵ Akın, Günkut. “19. yüzyıl sonu ve 20. Yüzyıl başında İstanbul”, In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*, edited by İhsan Bilgin, (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010).; Bozdoğan, Sibel. “Cumhuriyet Hamlesi”. In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*, ed. İhsan Bilgin, (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010).; Bozdoğan, Sibel and Kasaba, Reşat. *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Bozdoğan, Sibel. *Modernism and Nation-Building, Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

⁶ Çelik, Zeynep. *The Remaking of Istanbul*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1986).

⁷ Bozdoğan, Sibel. *Modernism and Nation-Building*, Bozdoğan, Sibel. and Kasaba, Reşat. *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

was a graduate of L'École Nationale de Beaux Arts de Paris. He received Le Prix de Rome in 1902, where he stayed between 1903 and 1907 at the institute of the Villa Medici (L'Académie de France in Rome).⁸ He came fourth in his class with a survey on the Hagia Sophia of Istanbul – made with the permission of sultan Abdülhamid II – where he stayed between 1904–1905 and 1906–1907. He was aware of the rebuilding of the city by Constantine as Roma nuovo, and the Greco-Roman urban structure of Constantinian roads and squares were going to pave the way for Prost's planning.

In Istanbul, between the 1930s and 1940s, the making of a modern, hygienic and beautiful city had been the main axis in the urban modernisation process. The dominant motto of “modernising and beautifying Istanbul” had been spatialised by a new script for social re-existence, urban regeneration for cultural and social transformation defined by transportation, hygiene, aesthetics and culture.⁹ Public open spaces (*espaces libres*) played a central role in the Prost Plan of 1937 and did much to create the popular perception of the plan only as a ‘beautification’ project. However, Prost's *espaces libres* mean more than physical visualisation of squares, esplanades, children's playground and recreational areas. They signify both ‘public sphere’ (public having a place in the politics) and ‘public space’ (the visualisation of the administrative and legislative term of ‘public’ in the urban arena). Prost designed eighteen parks for the city, located mostly at cemeteries or sites of former fires in the historical peninsula.¹⁰ ‘Park no. 1’ was conceived as an Archaeological Park in the central historical peninsula, surrounding the site of Hagia Sophia and the Ottoman palace, Topkapı. ‘Park no. 2’, a ‘culture valley’ at Taksim-Maçka, was to be associated with sports, educational and cultural spaces as well as new houses and *espaces libres*. ‘Park no.3’, a botanic park, was a major proposal on one of the urban axes from east towards west of the city. Most of these projects were only partially realised due to the shift of power to Adnan Menderes in the following decade – ‘Park no. 3’, for instance, was realised as a vast boulevard.

Having seen both the natural possibilities of Florya, a new district outside the city walls on the Marmara Sea front and already selected as the presidential summer location, Prost proposed the development of recreational and camping areas as well as beaches. He recommended combining these with a new residential district close to the airport and also proposed hotels for economic development of the area. Prost designed a recreational youth park sports area and a racehorse course at Yenibağçe. He specified a recreational park with a yacht harbour at the Fenerbahçe peninsula on the Asian side, which became a major centre for the inhabitants. Although Prost thought of removing the military complexes from the area, this did not happen. However, instead these complexes became recreational areas for military officers. Apart from these relatively large-scale proposals, all the cemeteries located in the neighbourhoods were converted into sports fields and/or children's playgrounds (fig. 1, 2, 3).

Espaces libres directly marked the passage from an Ottoman era based on the separation of men and women towards the mixed society of a ‘secular’ state. In other words, for the context of Turkish politics, a new reading of Prost's design is

⁸ He was at the Villa Medici at the same time as Tony Garnier. Garnier at the same time was surveying an imaginary Roman city, *Tusculum*; Emmanuel Portremdi, *Bergama*; Victor Laloux, *Olympia*.

⁹ “İstanbul'u asrileştirmek ve abad etmek” were the main targets of the first Master Plan of the city. Prost, Henri. *TC İstanbul Belediyesi, İstanbul İzah Eden Rapor, 15.10.1937*, (İstanbul Belediyesi, 1937).

¹⁰ Prost, Henri. *TC İstanbul Belediyesi, İstanbul İzah Eden Rapor, 15.10.1937*, (İstanbul Belediyesi, 1937).



Fig. 1. *The First Master Plan of Istanbul, Henri Prost, 1937.* Bilsel, C., Akpınar, I., Yerasimos, S., Pinon, P., “Documentation and Inventory on Henri Prost’s Planning Work in Istanbul”, international joint research project founded by PIA programme of Tubitak-Egide, project report 2010. © IFA.



Fig. 2. *The making of a public space: Taksim. Henri Prost, 1937.* Bilsel, C., Akpınar, I., Yerasimos, S., Pinon, P., “Documentation and Inventory on Henri Prost’s Planning Work in Istanbul”, international joint research project founded by PIA programme of Tubitak-Egide, project report 2010. © IFA.

needed in order to understand the real meaning of *espaces libres* in the city. As Prost declared: “The plans that I drew up and that I am satisfied to see being executed partially *bouleversent* [shake up] considerably the old Istanbul”.¹¹ These spaces had to be freely accessible to all, and uncontaminated by religious associations if the aims of the new state were to be met. It is in the context of secularisation that Prost’s Plan made a striking contribution to debates within Turkish society. Secularism had a significant spatial aspect, in which new town planning was closely implicated. In their designs, both Jansen and Prost revealed a surprisingly close relationship between secular ideology and the new urban pattern. Prost’s proposals reflected some striking similarities with the modernist ideology of the new Re-

¹¹ Prost, Henri. *A letter to Hauteceur*.07.10.1943. IFA/AA archive, Paris, 1943.

public. The *espaces libres* of the Istanbul master plan were not only part of the visual ‘beautification’ of the city and the connection of various zones, but also a powerful political and social tool in the conversion of Muslim Ottoman subjects into secular citizens of a nation-state. This was intimately connected with the programme of social-political revolution in Turkey; and, its continuing influence, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, suggests that this indeed was exactly what the plan was about. *Espaces libres* were not only spatial elements of planning but also a platform legitimising the reforms for women, enabling women and men to freely enjoy a mixed public life and grow accustomed to each other. These theoretical reforms were made visible both at a national level (for fundamentalist-religious parts of the society) and an international level (especially among Western European countries). Moreover, Prost’s urban design indicated the critical role of bringing disciplines of planning and urban design together in order to aestheticise the city.



Fig. 3. Espaces Libres for the children and women: secularisation of a society. Photograph by Henri Prost, c. 1947. Bilsel, C., Akpınar, I., Yerasimos, S., Pinon, P., “Documentation and Inventory on Henri Prost’s Planning Work in Istanbul”, international joint research project founded by PIA programme of Tubitak-Egide, project report 2010. © IFA.

It is not surprising that in a country founded on the basis of a rationalist identity and modern life, architecture was embraced as a part of the Republican ideology. The emergence of a Turkish bourgeoisie was in particular physicalised by housing. The social, economic and cultural continuity or disruptions as well as their diverse stylistic applications can be traced in the architecture of housing in the period.¹²

¹² At the early stages of the construction of apartment buildings, it is possible to observe the predominance of non-Muslim architects who maintain traditional styles that could be called neo-classic and sometimes neo-baroque. At the outset of modernisation, original examples of Art Nouveau and Art Deco that are not common in public buildings can be found mainly in Gümüşsuyu and Talimhane. In the 1930s, there are also examples of modern housing which is presented as the dominant approach of the period. It is possible to see traditional architecture gain weight in the 1940s and an approach that could almost be called conservative prevails. The localist approach based on traditional housing architecture, which will later be named as ‘national’, comes to the forefront with buildings symbolising

In this urban platform, foreign architects from continental Europe both played a role in schools of architecture and created distinguished examples of modern architectural practice. The rising Turkish bourgeoisie commissioned buildings to both foreign and Turkish architects. Architecture assumes a revolutionary quality on this stage, constructing, equipping and changing everyday life with modernity. The qualities and states of modern architecture of being more ‘democratic’ with more sunshine; ‘freer’ with open plans; ‘innovative’ as its permeability and lightness meet at a common denominator with the revolutionary structure of the Republic. Moreover, the technology of modern reinforced concrete became widely used in the building of houses in the Early Republican era. This rising form of new construction is one of the developments that best exemplifies the changing economic conditions and the changing concept of housing in the Republican era. First of all, modern architecture was reflected in popular culture as ‘cubic architecture.’ Apart from this, family houses from the 1930s to the 1950s apartments had been a symbol of luxury life as the housing spaces of upper income groups. The emerging apartment buildings became seen as a symbol of a modern lifestyle and cultural change, as visualised in municipal publications.

The 1950s

In the mid-20th century, industry and commerce replaced bureaucracy and the centre of gravity of the country had rolled from Ankara to Istanbul, which in the official discourse was proclaimed to be, once more, the jewel of Turkey.¹³ Istanbul was considered a ‘neglected city’ throughout the twenty-seven-year governance of the CHP (1923–1950). The new prime minister Menderes (1950–1960) declared that “we are going to rescue her from the 1900s’ look”.¹⁴ Maintaining the axis of modernisation and activating industrialisation and urbanisation policies with a liberal economic approach, his Democrat Party’s motto was “creating a millionaire in every neighbourhood”, and “becoming the little America”.¹⁵ The second feature

the period. Altan Ergut, Elvan, Akpınar, İpek, and Akay, Zafer. “Cumhuriyet Döneminde İstanbul’da Mimarlık”, In *Antik Çağdan XXI. Yüzyıla, Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*, vol.8, In *Mimari*. ed. Çoşkun Yılmaz, (Istanbul: İBB Kültür Aş., 2015, 558–597); Akpınar, İpek and Uz, Funda. “Housing”, in *Curiosity Assembly Exhibition Catalogue*, coordinated by P. Derviş for the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennale, curated by B. Colomina and M. Wigley, 22 October–20 November 2016, Studio X, Istanbul. (Istanbul: IKSV Foundation, 2016); Akın, Günek. “19.yüzyıl sonu ve 20. Yüzyıl başında İstanbul”, In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*. ed. İhsan Bilgin. (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010).

¹³ Akpınar, İpek. *The Rebuilding of Istanbul after the Plan of Henri Prost, 1937–1960: from secularisation to Turkish modernisation*, unpublished doctoral thesis, (University of London, University College, Bartlett School of Graduate Studies. 2003); Akpınar, İpek. “The Making of a Modern *Pay-i Taht* in Istanbul: Menderes’ Executions after Prost’s Plan”, In *From The Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henri Prost’s Planning of Istanbul (1936–1951)*, ed. C. Bilisel and P. Pinon, (Istanbul: Istanbul Research Institute, 2010), 167–199; Akpınar, İpek. and Uz, Funda. “Housing”, in *Curiosity Assembly Exhibition Catalogue*, coordinated by P. Derviş for the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennale, curated by B. Colomina and M. Wigley, 22 October–20 November 2016, Studio X, Istanbul, (Istanbul: IKSV Foundation, 2016).

¹⁴ Adnan Menderes’ emphasis in his speeches during the electoral campaign in the beginning of 1950s. Interview with Kemal Ahmet Arû, founder of the Planning Department at ITU and the head of the revision Committee for Prost’s Plan, Istanbul, December 1999. He also indicated the discourse of Samet Ağaoğlu, spokesman of the DP, as the election propaganda before the municipal elections. Also see Samet Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes*. Istanbul, 1967, 35–36.

¹⁵ Often quoted by the Celal Bayar (President of the Republic in the 1950s) and Adnan Menderes during the electoral campaign in the beginning of 1950s. Interview with Kemal Ahmet Arû, Istanbul,

of the decade, an industrialisation policy implemented with a focus on Istanbul, led to rapid urban growth, causing mass migration from rural areas to cities, and as a result, a housing crisis and the illegal construction of *gecekondus* (squatters) on public land. Thirdly, the Democrat Party, taking advantage of the overall polarisation and fragmentation in national politics, applied anti-democratic measures and suppressed the opposition. Finally, linking populist Islam with Turkishness, and blending images of a glorious Ottoman past with a rejection of anything non-Muslim or non-Turkish, the Menderes regime began to use nationalist and religious discourses as political tools. This era saw non-Muslims leaving Istanbul in large numbers.

As opposed to the characterisation of Istanbul as decadent and ‘Byzantine’ in the early republican years, the DP called Istanbul “the jewel of Turkey” and talked about “the re-conquest of the city”.¹⁶ Adnan Menderes embarked on the urban rebuilding of Istanbul under the motto of “making the traffic flow like water”.¹⁷ If Ankara was the location of the high-rank bureaucratic and military officers, then Istanbul would play host to the bankers, businessmen and entrepreneurs. The Hilton Hotel became the symbolic stage of an international style in the city. Marshall Papagos and Konstantinos Karamanlis in Greece, Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, David Ben-Gurion in Israel, Reza Shah and his son Mohammed Reza Shah in Iran all led similar urban infrastructural developments of their countries in the bi-polarised post-war era.

In the 1950s, the masterplan designed by Henri Prost in the 1930s and partially applied in the 1940s became the basis of urban interventions following two revision processes.¹⁸ Nicknamed “the head architect of Istanbul”¹⁹ Prime minister Menderes was featured on the cover of Time Magazine’s 1958 under the headline “What Constantine did, Menderes is going to re-make”.²⁰ Conquering Istanbul and beautifying it were terms used to propagate the urban transformation, making

December 1999. He also indicated the discourse of Samet Ağaoğlu, spokesman of the DP, as the election propaganda before the municipal elections. Samet Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes*. Istanbul, 1967, 37–39.

¹⁶ Samet Ağaoğlu, the spokesman of the DP, “Ülkenin gözbebeği” [Jewel of Turkey], *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1953; Menderes’ speech at the National Assembly entitled “İstanbul’u bir kez daha fethedeceğiz” [We are going once more conquer Istanbul], *Havadis*, 27 February 1957.

¹⁷ Menderes’s press conference of 23 September 1956 in Istanbul; published as “Sayın Başbakan Basına Geniş İzahat Verdi ve İstanbul’un İmar ve Kalkınma Prensiplerini İzah etti” [PM intensively briefed the press, and explained the principles of urban reconstruction and development], *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet*, 24 September 1956; also published with the same title in *Belediyeler Dergisi*, 132, October 1956, 644–645.

¹⁸ The Temporary Revision committee for Prost’s Plan was formed with the participation of several institutions of the state and universities: Kemal Ahmet Arû (ITU), Cevat Erbel and Mithat Yenen (Bank of Provinces), Mukbil Gökdoğan (Turkish Union of Engineers), Muhittin Güven (Turkish Union of Architects), Mehmet Ali Handan (Academy of Fine Arts), Behçet Ünsal (Technical School). Faruk Akçer and Ertuğrul Menteşe (Directorate of Reconstruction) assigned as counselor, and architect Seyfi Arkan as observer by the General Council of the Istanbul Municipality. The Permanent Committee’s essential tasks were to advise the planning process of the master plan, to organize planning issues and to collaborate with the Directorate of Reconstruction at the municipal City Council. It comprised of Turkish experts, Cevat Erbel, Kemal Ahmet Arû, and Mukbil Gökdoğan from the former committee, and Emin Onat from ITU as a new member. *H. Prost Raporlarını Revizyon Komisyonu Raporu* (report on H. Prost’s reports by the revision committee), Istanbul: Belediye Matbaası, 1954.

¹⁹ Founding Dean of ITU Faculty of Architecture Professor Emin Onat, a member of the Permanent Revision Committee, used to call him with this terminology. Interviews with K. A. Arû and G. Özdeş, Istanbul, January–February 2000.

²⁰ “Turkey’s Premier Menderes”, *Time*, 3 February 1958. *Time*’s cover was broadly republished in Turkish dailies. See for instance “Kapakdaki Devlet Adamı Menderes” [stateman on the cover], *Havadis*, 24 February 1958.

Menderes reminiscent of the famous Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed II, who conquered Istanbul in 1453. The frequent emphasis on “the re-conquest of Istanbul” in 1953 marking the 500th anniversary of the conquest,²¹ and Menderes’ own references to “Istanbul against Beyoğlu”²² could also be read in the light of the events of 6–7 September 1955, as thousands of shops owned by non-Muslims were attacked all over the city.²³ A year later, the demolitions of entire neighbourhoods caused the emigration of many non-Muslim Istanbulites, depriving the city of its cosmopolitan aura. The emigration of non-Muslim Istanbulites to Europe and immigration to Istanbul of people from rural areas, and the massive urban demolitions for the construction of new roads, turned Istanbul from an imperial, cosmopolitan, Mediterranean and Ottoman city, into a Turkish metropolis of the 1950s.



Fig. 4. So-called ‘miserable neighbourhood’ of the historic peninsula, about to be razed in order to leave room for one of the new avenues. © by the author.

In the rapid transformation process of the decade, old timber houses were regarded as the biggest obstacle to progressive and formative modernisation; thus, with the motto of “let’s raze the miserable slums”, the living spaces of low-income groups became a target.²⁴ During the massive urban demolitions of the 1950s, approximately 7,300 buildings were demolished. In the municipal publications and daily news, the modernisation process was dominated by discourses of “getting rid of

²¹ S. Ağaoglu, the spokesman of the DP, “Ülkenin gözbebeği” [Jewel of Turkey], *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1953.

²² Menderes’s press conference of 23 September 1956 in Istanbul, *ibid.*

²³ Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918–1974*, Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, 268–269.

²⁴ Istanbul’s newspapers started to publish daily columns on urban reconstruction of the city and showed old traditional houses as a target to demolish. R. Ziyaoğlu, *Cumhuriyet Devri: İstanbul Kadıları, Şehremineleri, Belediye Reisleri ve Partileri Tarihi, 1453–1971* [the republican period: history of İstanbul’s judges, mayors and parties, 1453–1971], Istanbul: İstanbul Belediyesi, 1971, p. 462.

the dump”, “hygiene”, “security”, along with speed, productivity and visibility.²⁵ The prime symbols of the massive Menderes demolitions are the Millet and Vatan avenues (fig. 4–5). The Millet avenue was described as the largest road in Turkey, its 25 cm thick layer of cement a symbol of modernisation. In the construction process, the use of modern machines became part of the representational modernisation; finishing the plans as quickly as possible was described in similar terms in the political publications of the municipality.



Fig. 5. The symbol of modernism in the 1950s: Vatan Avenue (now Adnan Menderes Avenue). © by the author.

In 1960, the Union of Municipalities of the European Council awarded *Le Prix de L'Europe* of 1959 to Istanbul. For the Turkish political discourse, nothing could seem more significant than a European award to prove that Istanbul was a part of the civilised West. The city had embraced the ideal of American cities, with networks of roads and massive urban demolitions. Similar transformations, which can be defined as ‘destructive creativity’ with strong emphasis on transportation, took place in St. Petersburg and Paris in the 19th century and in New York in the 1950s. Turkey in the 1950s was depicted as a new Turkey, manifested in the destruction of the old, in speed and rapidity, and in the accumulation of capital – reminiscent of what we have been witnessing on the urban arena of the early 21st century. The industrialisation policy implemented with focus on Istanbul led to rapid urban growth; towards the 1960s the population of the city increased to almost two million with migration from rural Anatolia. Migration brought instability both to the immigrants’ lives and to the city’s culture. Turkish nationalism blended with a nostalgia for the Ottoman past, which together with mechanisation, high-capitalisation, consumption and conservatism created a backdrop for the rise of populist Islam, which was to have fundamental social and political consequences.

Urban development applications and operations, in which foreign consultants including the Italian Luigi Piccinato, the British Sir Patrick Abercrombie and the German Hans Högg worked, made their mark on the period. It was as if the city

²⁵ “İstanbul traş ediliyor” [Istanbul has been razed], *Havadis*, December 8, 1956; “Vatanı imar ediyoruz” [we are reconstructing the patria], *Havadis*, 9 August 1957; “Başbakan Süleymaniye’ye restorasyon faaliyetini tetkik etti” [Prime Minister observed the renovation activities at Suleymaniye], *Havadis*, 24 July 1957; “Asırların ihmalini bir hamlede telafi etmek mecburiyetindeyiz” [we have to compensate the neglect of centuries at once], *Havadis*, 29 July 1957; “Başbakan direktifler verdi” [prime minister giva orders], *Havadis*, July 17, 1957.

was becoming a new capital. The architecture supported this perception. There was an increase in the multi-partner firms established by young architects in the 1950s with the impact of the winds of cultural and political change and also the internalisation of the liberating aspect of modernism and universal modern values. Architects who used to work under the patronage of the state in the Early Republican era now chose to stand on their own feet and work independently. The products of their designs overlapped with the international rationalist formal language that became predominant in post-Second World War USA and continental Europe. In the architectural context, the Real Estate Bank developed its first important housing settlement project on the Istanbul Municipality Levent Farm military zone, designed by Kemal Ahmet Arû and Rebiî Gorbun (and sternly criticised by Prost for allowing urban growth towards the northern zone of the city practically up to the forested area). The second exemplary settlement was the Ataköy area, which the Prost Plan had envisioned to be directed by the Italian architect and town planner Luigi Piccinato. The settlement plan, designed as buildings of varying heights with the rationale of attaining optimum views, was a modern settlement area with large common green spaces and planned urban facilities. Beach facilities on the sea-coast increased attraction to the settlement. Both projects are among the most original examples of modern lifestyle of the period. The architectural language of the settlements and the model of life they offered spread across the country in the 1950s. ‘Bank Lottery Houses’ were seen as an important form of housing supply and presented as a solution to the growing problem of dwelling space in large cities due to migration. In the new economic order, the extension of the discourse of Turkey as the Little America was the introduction of American lifestyle and new patterns of consumption. Luxury apartments, apartments with central heating, open-American kitchens were all the reflection of society’s dream of a new life.

The decade ended with a military coup. Following a political court process, Menderes along with his two ministers were executed, which made the decade a taboo topic of research for a long time dividing the society in polarised camps.²⁶ As such, the roots of urban, social and political issues remain unsolved.

Post-Menderes: Transformations and new actors, 1960–1980

To tell the story of Istanbul’s urban reconstruction is unveiling its many layers and revealing its contradictory features. A new citizen type and a new physical environment were to emerge in the city. First of all, whenever an immigrant came, his relatives, friends and acquaintances from his village followed him, recreating their own village within a neighbourhood, a social event described as chain migration by sociologists. Factories were not obligated by law to build housing for workers; but the law did not prevent newcomers from settling on public lands either, turning a blind eye. Meanwhile, the preference of transportation based on motor vehicles and highways grew unabatedly in the next decades.²⁷ The architecture of the 1960s and 1970s, as the modern movement tried to find its own way between

²⁶ Gürbilek, Nurdan. *Benden Önce Bir Başkası*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2010).

²⁷ The main urban axes of the 1950s survive until today: Vatan – Millet Caddeleri, Barbaros Bulvarı, Kemeraltı Caddesi, Karaköy Meydanı, Salıpazarı Limanı, Büyükdere Caddesi, Florya – Sirkeci Sahil Yolu, Levent – Ataköy.

the local and the universal, owed its existence firstly to people who chose to be modern in everyday life, despite social and cultural resistance, and who wanted to live in the sometimes timid, sometimes bold, and oftentimes ostentatious new apartment buildings; and secondly to the architects who designed these buildings despite the pressure from property ownership law, large-scale migration to the city and urban development plans. An important business opportunity for the increasing number of architects was individual house designs for the high-income group. As of the 1960s, along with the property ownership law, productions of apartment buildings by contractors were built all across Turkey. In later decades, *gecekondu*s and apartment buildings formed the most prevalent means of housing supply for the lower and middle class respectively. During the apartmentisation process, anonymous architecture (*Yap-Sat* / build & sell) became dominant in the urban pattern. Although there were examples distinguished from their contemporaries with their architectural design, the typology dominating the market was standard mediocre apartment buildings.

In the mid-1980s prime minister Turgut Özal launched a series of reforms marking the start of the transition to neoliberalism in Turkey. The state downsized and withdrew from the economy, pushing for privatisation. While the country opened to foreign trade in the process of globalisation and privatisation, industry rapidly flowed to peripheral cities. Economic, social and political changes along with globalisation caused growing inequalities on the social spectrum. Most of the physical transformations that have taken place in Istanbul since the mid-1980s spatially visualise a set of specific languages/codes of social distinction. Towards the end of the 1980s, the *Yap-Sat* business lost its position as the dominant builder for the middle class and started to operate in the old *gecekondu* areas. Urban and social mobility, reflecting the transfer and share of knowledge and people, had been primary dynamics of Istanbul.²⁸ In the fragmented sphere of the rapid and chaotic urbanisation the city now became a theatrical stage for populist policies.

Restoration projects have become a stage for reinterpretations of history as an invented past and source of nostalgia, such as for example the Soğukçeşme Street restoration behind the Hagia Sophia. The 1987 Beyoğlu Restoration Plan, on the other hand, prepared the legal framework for the Tarlabaşı demolitions and the opening of a boulevard that had been projected in the 1937 Prost Plan. The avenue divides the Beyoğlu area both physically and socially and has become a symbol of the urban demolitions of the 1980s and the mayorship of Bedrettin Dalan. Itself foreboded by the Menderes zoning operations in 1956–1959 – which conjoined the acts of demolishing and building – the 1980 Bedrettin Dalan demolitions in Tarlabaşı anticipated the forceful evictions in Sulukule, Ayazma and Maltepe of the early 2000s. Regarded as main obstacles to progressive and formative modernisation since the Menderes years, previously cosmopolitan and now ‘dilapidated’, ‘ramshackle’, ‘unkempt’ living spaces of low-income groups have become targeted, erasing layers of people’s lives as well as cultural and spatial memories. Technology, entrepreneurship capacity and organising skills gained in this procedure during the 1980s has prepared the construction sector for further large-scale projects. As a construction practice with high production speed, standardisation and quality, tunnel formwork technology in particular has expedited the production of mass housing, but the fact that it consists of a single model is a factor monotonising and limiting architectural design.

²⁸ Keyder, Çağlar, (ed.), *Istanbul: between the Global and the Local*, (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

Reorganisation processes following the 1999 Izmit earthquake and the economic crisis of 2001 have transformed Istanbul into Turkey's main stage on a global arena. The city as an attraction has become something to sell to tourists. In the search for an image of distinction and quality, architectural language has been emphasised with luxury consumption materials.²⁹ Meanwhile, land ownership has become a commodity. Building projects executed along aestheticised demolitions reinforce the power of global networks and social, economic and cultural dynamics as well as the attraction of rapidly gentrified living spaces. The integrity of public space that gives the modern city its ideological meaning has disappeared following the massive urban demolitions; public spaces of everyday life have been razed. Criticism against this has raised awareness of the concept of urban rights, the right to the city, the right to housing, and the trauma of dispossession.

Bibliography

- Ağaoğlu, Samet. *Arkadaşım Menderes*, Istanbul, 1967.
- Akın, Günkut. "19.yüzyıl sonu ve 20. Yüzyıl başında İstanbul". In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*. ed. İhsan Bilgin, Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010, 43–57.
- Akın, Günkut. "20.Yüzyıl başında İstanbul: Toplumsal ve Mekansal Farklılaşma". In *Osmanlı Başkentinden Küreselleşen İstanbul'a: Mimarlık ve Kent*. ed. İpek Y. Akpınar, Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Müzesi Arşivi Yayınları, 2010, 12–19.
- Akpınar, İpek. *The Rebuilding of Istanbul after the Plan of Henri Prost, 1937–1960: from secularisation to Turkish modernisation*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, University College, Bartlett School of Graduate Studies. 2003.
- Akpınar, İpek. 2010. "The Making of a Modern *Pay-i Taht* in Istanbul: Menderes' Executions after Prost's Plan", In *From The Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henri Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936–1951)*, ed C. Bilsel and P. Pinon, Istanbul: Istanbul Research Institute, 2010, 167–199.
- Akpınar, İpek. "Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula: Turkification of Istanbul in the 1950s", In *Mid-Century Modernism in Turkey, Architecture Across Cultures in the 1950s and 1960s*, ed. Meltem Ö. Gürel, New York: Routledge, 2015, 56–84.
- Akpınar, İpek and Uz, Funda. "Housing", in *Curiosity Assembly Exhibition Catalogue*, coordinated by P. Derviş for the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennale, curated by B. Colomina and M. Wigley, 22 October–20 November 2016, Studio X, Istanbul. Istanbul: IKSU Foundation, 2016.
- Altan Ergut, Elvan, Akpınar, İpek, and Akay, Zafer. "Cumhuriyet Döneminde İstanbul'da Mimarlık", In *Antik Çağdan XXI. Yüzyıla Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*, vol.8, *Mimari*, ed. Çoşkun Yılmaz, Istanbul: İBB Kültür Aş., 2015, 558–597.

²⁹ Bozdoğan, Sibel. and Akcan, Esra. *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History*. (London: Reaktion Books, 2012).

- Alexandris, Alexis. *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918–1974*, Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983.
- Bozdoğan, Sibel. “Cumhuriyet Hamlesi”, In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*, ed. İhsan Bilgin, Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010, 47–58.
- Bozdoğan, Sibel and Kasaba, Reşat. *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.
- Bozdoğan, Sibel. *Modernism and Nation-Building, Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.
- Bozdoğan, Sibel, and Esra Akcan. *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History*, London: Reaktion Books, 2012.
- Çelik, Zeynep. *The Remaking of Istanbul*, Berkeley: University of California, 1986.
- Eco, U. Interview in *Atlas* magazine, Fall 1999.
- Gürbilek, Nurdan. *Benden Önce Bir Başkası*, Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2010.
- H. Prost Raporlarını Revizyon Komisyonu Raporu (report on H. Prost’s reports by the revision committee), Istanbul: Belediye Matbaası, 1954.
- Keyder, Çağlar, (ed.). *Istanbul: between the Global and the Local*, London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.
- Korkmaz, Tansel. “21. Yüzyıl İstanbul’u”. In *Istanbul 1910–2010, Kent Yapılı Çevre ve Mimarlık Kültürü Sergisi kataloğu*, ed. İhsan Bilgin, Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2010, 91–112.
- Le Corbusier. *Journey to the East*, 1911, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987.
- Prost, Henri. *A letter to Hauteceœur*, 07.10.1943. IFA/AA archive, Paris, 1943.
- Prost, Henri. *TC İstanbul Belediyesi, İstanbul İzah Eden Rapor, 15.10.1937*, İstanbul Belediyesi, 1937.
- Tanyeli, Uğur. “Dün-Bugün”, Taksim Sempozyumu, SALT Galata, Istanbul, 8 December 2012.
- Tekeli, İlhan. “Development of Urban Administration and Planning in the Formation of Istanbul Metropolitan Area”. In *Development of Istanbul Metropolitan Area and Low Cost Housing*, Istanbul: Istanbul Municipality of Greater Istanbul, 1992.
- Tekeli, İlhan. *Modernite Aşılırken Kent Planlaması*, Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2000.
- Ziyaoğlu, Rakım. *Cumhuriyet Devri: İstanbul Kadıları, Şehremineleri, Belediye Reisleri ve Partileri Tarihi, 1453–1971* [the republican period: history of İstanbul’s judges, mayors and parties, 1453–1971], Istanbul: İstanbul Belediyesi, 1971.