

ARCHITECTURE CAN SERVE, PLANNING IS ALMOST UNFUNCTIONAL

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ABSTRACT: Cities gain new functions today, as being the crucial points within the global capital circulation network, in relation with the multi-layered processes of globalization. While the top tier of cities is defined, the second or third tiers are less clearly articulated. Because of this, cities compete to establish and stabilize their position in these networks of global capital fluidity within their regions. So, as cities became more competitive in global networks, their priorities shift. Special object of study of the paper is Istanbul, which is the biggest metropolis of Turkey and nowadays which has been in this contest of becoming the leader city within its region and engaging with global networks. And today, within this globally driven conjuncture, the city encounters with a new ruling factor: *The Package*.

The Package is the programmatic and formal content of new emerging areas of working, housing, commerce, entertainment, and circulation and, it also defines the relational networks between them. Principally it consist of the juxtapositions of “shopping center + business center + protected residential zone + highway/subway” in various compositions. The development area of *The Package* is mostly the new emerging axles on the edges of metropolis. Its impact on the center is mainly in the form of splashes.

The Package works for the tendency of the new global economic, political and cultural supremacy towards enclosing all aspects of our lives, with giving it its living form. It insists on a certain kind of planning and marketing strategy. Within this process, *architecture can serve for it and the thought or conception of planning (as we know it; a concept of planning considering public wealth), is almost unfunctional.*

KEYWORDS: globalisation, global city, production of urban space, neoliberal urbanism, urban life.

1 INTRODUCTION

The text about *city* in The Metapolis Dictionary of Advanced Architecture starts with this phrase: “City, is an old word...” [1] The city, as we know it, has once dead by transforming to modern metropolis through industry revolution in 19th century. And nowadays, are we talking about the dead of modern metropolis? If we think about the facts like social and economic inequalities, environmental problems, etc., of course “the dead of the city” is a metaphor. On the contrary many people now, than ever before, live in cities today. But it is still true that many cases related to contemporary metropolis, once again, force us to move away from the things that we know about the city. Short, identifies this situation by the concept of “liquid metropolis”. For him, contemporary megalopolis is a large liquid metropolis whose boundary demarcation is always provisional. It is a giant metropolitan region always in a state of becoming as well as being. The end result of myriad individual actions, investment decisions, and political choices is the collective, unforeseen creation of a giant urban region larger than our capacity to humanize it and greater than our imagination to conceptualize it. The liquid metropolis has oozed beyond our ken. [2]

Therefore, for a while today, we are faced with many new concepts produced by different disciplines in order to understand what is going on in cities. Some examples of them are below:

_ Edge Cities; as a new type of settlement developed far from the old downtowns, mostly nearby the highway networks and on areas where little villages, semi-rural areas or suburbs lay before. They contain nearly all the functions a city ever has, like houses, business centers, malls, entertainment areas, etc., albeit in a spread-out form. [3]

_ Urban Corridors; by lying along the intercity highways for hundreds of kilometers, make it impossible to determine any borders.

_ Urban Sprawl; as a process of large-scale real estate development resulting in low-density, scattered, discontinuous car-dependent construction, usually on the periphery of declining older suburbs and shrinking

city centers. [4]

– The emergence of the Space of Flows; that supersedes the meaning of the real spaces of places. They emerge as a result of a series of processes like the restructuring of capitalism; reorganization of business and investment environment; spreading of new tools like computer, mobile phone or internet; formation of a global competitive environment directed by creativity, connectivity and development of intelligent systems and, the transformation of the state. [5]

– The rise of the Generic City of Koolhaas; which has no center, identity and history. Which is homogeneous and every district of it develops nearly the same by a configuration of roads, blocs and green areas. The most attractive thing about it, is its irregularity and it is the one that has been built actually or mentally always on the *tabula rasa*. [6]

– The development of a new understanding as a result of the changes in the functioning and structuring mechanisms of culture industry by globalization, of which city's marketability and its image are the main priorities. And the development of a new field identified as City Branding, which is established by the practices of marketing and brand managers, market research companies, communication consultants, tourism companies' board of directors, financial analysts, etc.

In addition to all these different cases, one of the important distinctive characters of today's world is the introduction of the concept of "globalization" as an active component in all areas of our lives. And a new discourse on "Global City" accompanies this process.

2 THE DISCOURSE ON GLOBAL CITY AND THE RISE OF NEOLIBERAL URBANISM

While there is scant agreement on what the chaotic concept of globalization actually means, it is generally assumed that globalization is a process whereby everything from capital, labour and goods to communications, culture and pathogens can be rapidly exchanged or transmitted from any part of the world without the obstruction of national borders. Although globalization has many important political, social and cultural expansions, it is interpreted primarily as an economic concept, which is characterized with the internationalization of investments and markets. In fact, it can be said by looking to capitalism's history it is not at all a new phenomenon. What makes these phenomena special today is the new phase of capitalism defined as "flexible accumulation" which rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production; new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation. [7] And the most important supporter of this process is the continuing development in the areas of communications and information.

The most important effect of this situation on cities is the new formation of the city directly as an investment space isolated from the control and govern of the nation state. And this process produces two new phenomena: First, is the development of a new discourse on metropolis under the name of "Global City"¹ and the second, is the dramatic increment of the domination of the capital over the mechanisms of decision-makers in the cities.

Thus cities gain new functions as being the crucial points within the global capital circulation network, in relation with the processes of globalization. [8] While the top tier of cities is defined: London, Tokyo and New York, the second or third tiers are less clearly articulated, and because of this, cities compete to establish and stabilize their position in these networks of global capital fluidity within their regions. And, as cities became more competitive in global networks, their priorities shift. Because the predominance in this

¹ Sassen, identify the process of globalization with a different type of metropolis that she calls the "global city". The combination of spatial dispersal and global integration has created a new strategic role for major cities. Beyond their long history as centers for international trade and banking, these cities now function in 4 new ways: first, as a highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy; second, as key locations for finance and for specialized service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors; third, as sites of production, including the production of innovations, in these leading industries; and fourth, as markets for the products and innovations produced. These changes in the functioning of cities have had a massive impact upon both international economic activity and urban form: cities concentrate control over vast sources, while finance and specialized service industries have restructured the urban social and economic order. Thus a new type of city appeared. It is the global city. [9]

competition can only be achieved by serving the components of attraction like the best business environment, communication and transportation probabilities, etc., for global capital fluidity. To provide support for large-scale infrastructure projects (like metro, international airport, trade fair, international business centers, etc.), to give guarantee to foreign investors and, to market the new image of the city to potential investors and to the whole world, can be considered as the main strategies of this process.

So, how can we interpret all these? Worst scenario might be: It is the fact that the world economy experienced a transformation in the last thirty years. But this transformation has not emerged within a natural process, such as the dominant discourse of globalization claims. It is the result of the implementation of a political project and, the global fluidities, which are claimed to be increased by globalization, are not independent from these political decisions and power relations. [10] In other words, globalization, in fact, is the name of the political project of the final phase of capitalism. And neoliberalism is the primary ideology of this political project. While the discourses on globalization provides an ideological manipulation to orient and legitimize this process, the discourse on Global City constitutes its urban ideology by implying complete articulation to neoliberal policies as the only choice for cities to live.

On the other hand, of course there can be a best scenario, which might be based upon an other interpretation of the same process. Because we can claim that the same process also has the potential to open new ways for the development of the new, productive and creative fields as a result of its dependence on difference and creativity: "Parallel to this process of delocalization of productive structures, cities evolve dynamically and obliquely (slanted or skewed, biased or tilted), converted into more or less effective poles of attraction whose success depends upon the capacity and quality of the supply of certain facilities, whereby the development of cultural and productive activity is possible." [11]

As a result, within this condition and among these contrasted interpretations, and with a presumption that there is no absolute worst or best position, where do we stand? To answer this question, first of all, we need to explore, understand and interpret the inner dynamics of the system.

So, in order to explore the dynamics of this situation within a local/situated context, special object of study of the paper is Istanbul, which is the biggest metropolis of Turkey and nowadays which has been in this contest of becoming the leader city within its region and engaging with global networks.

Below, it will be a very brief history of how the city of Istanbul has been changing by acknowledging neoliberal policies with the support of the manipulative mechanisms of the discourse on Global City. And *The Package* constitutes the spatially and vitally visible side of this process.

3 THE PACKAGE

A brief history of globalizing and neoliberalizing Istanbul by the implementation of *The Package* and in how ways the city is changing within this process can be introduced as follows:

1. *The Package* defines the programmatic and formal content of the new emerging urban areas of working, housing, commerce, entertainment and circulation, and it also defines the relational networks between them. It insists on a certain kind of planning, management and marketing strategy. Principally it consist of the juxtapositions of "shopping center + business center + protected residential zone + highway/subway" in various compositions. Sometimes this programmatic content expands with the involvement of larger projects like congress centers, theme parks, urban transformation projects, etc. It mostly develops on new emerging axles on the edges of metropolis. Its impact on the center is mainly in the form of splashes.

2. These are the spaces, which create attraction among the contesting cities. Within this context of global competition, the various programmatic contents like working, shopping, entertainment, etc., are constructed by spectacular architectural designs and they become the main components of this attractive environment. The criteria demanded for global cities tend to be generic, a standardized checklist of selling points: a skilled and educated labor force, education facilities, physical infrastructure, an international airport and communication technologies suited to international corporations. Yet to be competitive a city requires more than just the basics. It is around the qualitative that cities formulate their image and in relation to that image, globally market themselves as unique. In particular this stimulates the market for iconic imagery embedded in "signature" projects that signify a "sense of place" for global consumption. [12]

3. The liberalization of Istanbul's economy and urban management, which is the necessary condition for *The Package*, began with radical financial and administrative changes in Istanbul's metropolitan governance.

This process has started with the municipality law of 1984, and today it is still going on with introduction of many new laws and regulations. Obviously, main target of this process is to establish the secure ground for a neoliberal urbanism. Its leading strategies are: 1. Introducing new financial resources for the local governments, 2. Rendering the mayor's office more powerful with its enhanced administrative and financial resources and also increasing the greater municipality's power and authority in development, control and coordination of district municipalities, 3. The development of an entrepreneurial local government acting as a market facilitator and, the privatization of various municipal services such as transportation, housing, provision of natural gas, etc., 4. Making it easier for greater municipalities to establish, and/or create partnerships and collaborate with private companies and, also financially, in same ways, act like private companies, 5. Outlining a legal framework for "urban transformation," by giving municipalities the authority to designate, plan and implement "urban transformation" areas and projects. [13]

4. This changing legal framework is wrapped within a new language, a language that is characterized by the usage of discourses on global city, world city, new life style or urban transformation. These discourses are reproduced through various campaigns and projects of the current greater municipality and the district municipalities in their attempts to engage with their projects *with* and *for* the people of Istanbul. For example in an interview, the Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, K. Topbaş says: "We regard the renewal of Istanbul as an opportunity as we enter into competition with other world cities. (...) First of all, we are looking for an opening in the congress tourism with its more skilled workforce, and to become a center for culture and art where big organizations that may affect world governance are held." [14] And an other example from the Mayor of Kartal District Municipality, A. Dağlar: "Kartal will be the new Manhattan of its region." [15]

5. The structuring logic of *The Package* has no concern for any kind of integrality. We come up against autonomous elements on the terrain: integrated shopping centers, sports and leisure complexes, office buildings or housing zones with lack of any relation. But at the same time another change is induced by the appearance of "introverted islands" [16] within which similar objects and lifestyles are reproduced. Protected residential zones (*gated communities*) or production zones constitute the typical examples of this situation. The repetition of similar-sized construction elements, the high degree of internal organization and, the homogeneity of the inhabitants and their behavior are the main characteristics of these areas.

6. The main motivation behind *The Package* is the unchanging will of the capital: to increase the profits. So, the capitalists always want the biggest solid land in or outside the city and generally, old industrial buildings, large public lands or collapsed old neighborhoods are the most attractive building sites for investors because of their proper scale. In the city center, this kind of very large constructions cause many problems like over-loaded infrastructure services. But more importantly, they create deep and wide voids. The development of any kind of urban life is almost impossible on these areas. These voids serve for the modish discourse about the security problems in contemporary metropolis, and more importantly they serve for the propagation of the common feeling of despair through the premises of the urban which, in turn, would be one of the confirmatory causes for the production of *The Package*.

7. The spatial quality of the new city of *The Package* is characterized by the lack of *relations* and *in-between spaces*. In this way, *The Package* ignores and annihilates the fields, which feed the very precious thing about metropolis: the metropolitan life with its modern cosmopolitanism.

8. There are a lot of things about *globalization* generally which are under cover. The most important one is the fact that the thing called globalization does not cause the same effects for everyone and in everywhere. For some, it is connective, for some disjunctive; for some it means the freedom of movement and for the others it is the bad experience of jamming in an awful destiny in their fixed locality. [17] And all these extremely unequal people live very close to each other in contemporary metropolis. Increasing interest on urban transformation projects is one of the results of this situation and this is a good example of the strategies of disregarding or neglecting those ones who are not in the system. An other result of this situation is the creation of new kinds of spatial boundaries. Sometimes these have real reasons but generally they are the results of the security paranoia manipulated by marketing strategies. The walls, which were once surround the city, henceforth divide it from inside in many different directions.

9. The concept of "urban transformation" is presented as a kind of an inevitable and magical process, which would solve all problems of Istanbul. But actually, both the usage of the concept in daily life and its legal side are very ambiguous. Nevertheless, in practice, the working principles are very simple: 1. Choose an area in the center of the city, 2. Send the poor inhabitants of that area somewhere in the fringes of the city,

examples.

5. Imported projects of city marketing strategies: Some examples of them are, Kartal Urban Renewal Project by Zaha Hadid, Küçükçekmece Urban Renewal Project by Ken Yeang, Meydan Shopping Center by FOA, a proposed museum by Frank Gehry in Şişhane.

5 CONCLUSIONS

It can be said that, when we look to its recent history, the formation of the urban form of Istanbul has once been directed by the development of *gecekondu* areas, and then by the construction of highways. Today, within this globally driven conjuncture, the city encounters with a new ruling factor: *The Package*, which can be matched with the concept of neoliberalizing Istanbul.

Istanbul is a very large city, which has gone through rapid urbanization and growth of population since the first half of the 20th century in a developing country. So, planning was always a problematic issue for the city. Tekeli, identifies Istanbul's planning adventure as "cyclical planning". The structuring and shaping of the city through the interaction and periodic implementation of local plans and, the role of unplanned development and the periodic demands to legalize such are very important and influential facts on developments of the city. [18] But today these kinds of equilibriums have changed. The logic of *The Package* and neoliberal urban policies have achieved the govern of all the determining mechanisms on the structuring of the city and its life.

Under these circumstances, the question is whether this situation will persist or it will transform into new planning situations, which have the ability and capacity to embrace and produce the new, productive and creative fields on the side of the public welfare and with the collaboration of the public.

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