"A Comparative Anthropological Research into the Policy Making Processes of Two Urban Regeneration Projects in Eskişehir, Turkey"

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ABSTRACT

In the recent years, the conservative ruling party, AKP, put Turkey in the alarming position against the alleged forthcoming earthquakes and issued a new law, known as the "regeneration law", through the discourses of securing the entire country against earthquakes. The law, which opened the way to seize private and public land by declaring them risky and transforming them into private property, caused wide opposition, including the CHP, the main opposition party from the center left. In summer 2013, two urban regeneration projects emerged in the city of Eskişehir, Turkey, where I come from. Even though they were opposing the regeneration law before, these two municipalities, governed by the CHP, instrumentalize the same law today.

Urban regenerations, being realized in Turkey and all over the world with their rent-seeking motivations and consequences of evictions, dispossessions, exclusions, and gentrifications, have brought oppositions and been disputed widely. The two regenerations in Eskişehir, which are applied by CHP, seem to utilize these broad debates to create room for their own projects. By referring to the "bad" and "rent-seeking" examples of urban regeneration projects in Turkey and beyond, both assert to apply a "good" and "role-model project" which contemplates the psychological, environmental, cultural, and social needs of the neighborhoods, as they claim. The two projects differ in terms of the types of the urban areas to be transformed and the inhabitants whose lives will be influenced. The Central Regeneration zone has a dense multi-story built environment with ownership from middle and lower income classes and several commercial areas. The second one, the Gündoğdu project zone, is situated at the periphery where lower income groups mainly live in single-story buildings. These differences, therefore, would bring along different mechanisms to convince the locals.

My presentation, which develops an interdisciplinary and comparative anthropological research, sheds a light on the planning processes of the two regeneration projects and interactions of the planning decisions with the inhabitants of the neighborhoods. Both projects were set with the discourses around the missions of "participation", "social-democracy", and "inclusiveness". The municipalities repetitively use the rhetoric of being the "first good project" in the regeneration category. Yet, there are already contradictions in both projects in terms of their self-declared missions and planning promises. Based on the early stage of an ethnographic research, my paper investigates the semantics and strategies of the urban regeneration projects under the leadership of the social-democrat mayors and the continuities and trajectories of planning and policy making tools within neoliberal urban strategies that have taken worldwide attention. Further, I will display the debates around inclusiveness, convincing mechanisms, locals' worries about the secretive planning processes, risk of evictions, and ongoing conflict around whether the zones carry real risk or they are declared to be risky to create rent.

1. INTRODUCTION

Eskişehir, a middle size city with a population of seven hundred thousand in Turkey, has experienced immense changes in the urban settings in the last fifteen years through the self-declared mission of becoming a "modern" and "European" city of Turkey – *"Türkiye'nin Avrupa Kenti"*. Thus, the process of rapid restructuring of the built environment has led to stimulation of investments in the city and commodification of central zones in particular. As the prerequisite of global neoliberal urbanism, the first urban regeneration project of the city has entered into the city's agenda in 2011 which formed the case study of my master's thesis. While the regeneration has caused various repercussions for the locals, it served for the economic interests of the project implementers well. Currently, the city has two new urban regeneration projects in its agenda that were initiated in the summer of 2013 by two municipalities, Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality and Odunpazarı District Municipality. The first municipality – the engineer of the branding strategies of the city– is controlled by the center left Republican People's Party (CHP) and the other – which carried out the former regeneration project – by ruling the conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP). Despite the party differences both projects were set with the missions of "participation", "democracy", and "inclusiveness" while asserting that they will serve the safety of settlements against earthquakes. The project from the conservative party has been criticized by the local inhabitants and the CHP for being a rent seeking project. However, the local elections of 2014 resulted in a loss of Odunpazarı Municipality for AKP. The new municipal administration has been formed by the CHP which aims to proceed with the regeneration project initiated by the former municipality.

My doctoral dissertation conducts a comparative anthropological research into these two regeneration projects in order to find out how the self-declared principles of the two projects would be positioned within the policy making and planning processes and how they would be conceived by the inhabitants. Through the ethnographic field work that combines participant observation into the policy making processes of the regeneration projects and among the local populations, and several structured and

unstructured interviews with the public authorities and urban experts, the research aims, first, to analyze the micro level dynamics and discourses of the two urban regeneration projects in terms of their self-declared "missions", and second, to compare the policy making processes of two municipalities from the same party in order to explore the variations of neoliberal urbanism even within the same city and to understand the continuities in and particularities of policy making strategies of urban regenerations in the neoliberal age.

The research on the urban regenerations have mainly and broadly observed, analyzed, and criticized the outcomes of such projects which manifested themselves in economic profits for the public-private partnerships, evictions, and dispossessions of local populations. There is a scarcity of studies that conduct research on regenerations from the very beginning, at phases even before the planning processes began. Thus, my research aims to study the very early stages of two projects and how the mechanisms of decision making processes proceed.

Moreover, the research on the urban processes in Turkey excessively focus on the main, big cities, such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Also, such research has largely concentrated on the AKP and TOKI projects and their outcomes. Different from, and in addition to, these valuable studies my dissertation project will conduct a comparative research on two projects of CHP applied by two local administrations in Eskisehir; a city which has not taken the scholarly attention yet.

2. STATE OF THE ART

2.1. Global Neoliberal Urbanization

Since the late 1970s, the world has witnessed neoliberal strategies of economy and governmental policies that started in North America and Western Europe, then expanded elsewhere (Shore and Wright, 1997:4) "in the hope of harmonizing – if not standardizing – economic and social policy" (Jessop, 2002:454). Neoliberal practices have had influences on urban processes which have been gripping research topics for several disciplines including urban anthropology. It would be difficult to claim that there is a hard-edge passage from the Fordist to post-Fordist era regarding urbanism.

Yet, scholars point out that there is a move away from the redistributive policies of the postwar era towards a more competitive forms of governance and the extension of market rules where decisions are increasingly driven by cost-benefit calculations rather than missions of service, equality, and social welfare (Leitner et.al., 2007:4; Çağlar and Glick-Schiller, 2011:4; Mayer and Künkel, 2012:4). We have thereby withnessed a transition from the Left hand – protective and collectivizing – to the Right hand – disciplinary and individualizing – of the states' priorities and actions (Wacquant, 2012:73).

Under the neoliberal reasoning, the myriad of cities have been imposed analogous, even if not identical, urban reshaping processes which claim to create safe, clean, modern, creative, smart, and first-class world cities. Through those labels or brandings – whether they are successful or not – cities struggle globally with each other in order to attract investors, tourists, artists, and skilled employees. Similarly, the city of Eskişehir, where I conduct my case studies, has aimed to "modernize" itself to attract academicians for its two universities, investors, artists, and domestic tourists[1].

Enhancing the competitive advantage of cities is seen as largely dependent on improving and adapting the built environment to the accumulation strategies (Swyngedouw et al., 2002:572) which manifests itself in restructuring the urban space. Even though rescaling and regeneration of the city spaces is not a new phenomenon that manifested itself in neoliberal reasoning, and as Çağlar and Glick-Schiller (2011:7) clearly assert that "neoliberalism has been just the latest historical conjuncture of rescaling processes", such projects have become the *key means* of entrepreneurial strategies to economic development since the 1980s. Urban 'projects' aiming at rapid capital accumulation have indeed emerged as the main strategy to stimulate economic growth (MacLeod, 2002:604; Swyngedouw et al., 2002:562). In light of these strategies, what makes neoliberal urbanism crucial is that cities themselves have

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[1] Büyükerşen, the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality and the engineer of the "modern city Eskişehir" project, mentions difficulty of attracting academicians and artists to Eskişehir before the urban development strategies (Taşçı, 2009). Lately, Büyükerşen and business circles often declare that Eskişehir has large a potential to become a tourism center and attract more domestic and international tourists.

become the sources of entrepreneurial strategies as the route to economic success (Hubbard and Hall, 1998:12-14; Rose, 2000:104).

Urban regeneration projects being realized all over the world have been widely discussed as a "global neoliberal urban strategy" (Fainstein, 1999; Jessop, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Harvey 2006; Harvey, 2008; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; MacLeod, 2002, Rose, 2000; Sassen, 1998; Şengül, 2009; Young et al. 2006). Particularly the old central neighborhoods and illegal settlements of the urban poor, as well as the old industrial areas, which are declared to be dysfunctional, have been targeted by regeneration projects which "have occurred as a new economy" (Kurtuluş, 2006:7). Regenerations foster land speculations and profit through the construction and selling activities while "cleaning" or displacing the "unruly" people of the urban areas that lead to "major colonization of the middle and upper classes" into such zones (Smith, 2002:445). As Smith (2002:445) puts it bluntly, the language of regeneration is to sugarcoat gentrification. Regenerations in the *last decades* are "at one extreme, ambitiously and scrupulously planned […] and evolved rapidly" (Smith, 2002:439).

2.2. Neoliberal Urbanization in Turkey

Turkey's urban developments in the last decades have shown considerable similarities with worldwide trends. Turkey's transition from an inward oriented model to an export oriented one through the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) strategies and pressures since the 1980s has been considered as the neoliberal turn in the economy while the far-reaching administrative changes of the new era foreshadowed the upcoming urban developments. One of the most important changes for urbanization after the 1980s has been the delegation of more administrational and economic power to municipalities. Especially important is the Municipality Law, issued in 1984, which transferred the authority about important zoning and public work regulations from the central authority to the local authorities. The endowed power of municipalities meant to "become the investment tools of municipalities" (Şengül, 2009:140) and to create more room for urban reshaping activities. After the 1980s, while the big cities have been becoming pivotal enterprise centers of local governments, the time was

opportune for housing, transportation, and urban infrastructural investments which were neglected before (Şengül, 2009: 138-140). Besides, the municipalities have been applying new regulations regarding zoning rules and giving peculiar building rights to particular cases (Çavuşoğlu, 2011: 46). "These changes led to the emergence of entrepreneurial local governments acting as market facilitators" (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008:12). The iconic figure of the new era of municipal power was Bedreddin Dalan, who served as the mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul from 1984 to 1989. With the goal of making İstanbul a "world city", Dalan initiated a number of large scale urban transformation projects based on the logic of private entrepreneurship (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008; Keyder, 2000:26),

The victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the elections of 2002 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been another turning point for the urban developments in Turkey. Through more than 200 new pieces of legislation, the AKP government conducted several interventions which have encouraged the reproduction of the urban built environment, such as allocation and marketing of the public domain to the private sector for housing, shopping malls and urban regeneration projects and promoting public-private partnerships which implement large scale urban projects (Çavuşoğlu, 2011:44; Penpecioğlu, 2011:66). Furthermore, since 2002, the Mass Housing Administration (TOKI) has been given extraordinary privileges and powers which altered the initial mission of TOKI which had been to provide social housing for the low and middle income groups. Gradually, TOKI became "one of the most important actors of the construction sector" (Balaban, 2011:24) and "the sole agency to regulate the zoning and sale of almost all state-owned urban land (excluding military land)" (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010:1485). Since 2002, urban regeneration projects have increased drastically. Through partnerships with the municipalities and the private sector, TOKI has entered into a myriad of regeneration projects, if necessary, by overlooking the regional zoning regulations.

Harvey (2003:85, 135) significantly points out that building a new landscape equally accommodates the endless accumulation of capital and the endless accumulation of political power. Political tools are needed in order to stabilize urban projects against

potential external problems. Utilizing discourses and rhetoric while making policies are useful tools for keeping political legitimacy afloat (Shore and Wright, 1997). To attract mass support, 'mobilizing metaphors' "become the cluster of keywords whose meaning extend and shift" while "their effects lie in their capacity to connect with, and appropriate, the positive meanings and legitimacy derived from other key symbols of government such as democracy, public interest, and the rule of law" (Shore and Wright, 1997:15). In the case of Turkey, neighborhood inhabitants, urban experts, university students, and leftist groups reacted against the numerous regeneration activities of the municipalities and TOKI that lead to dispossessions and evictions. Yet, AKP has been able to obtain the consent of large segments of the society and to perpetuate its hegemony on the regeneration projects through the invention of new discourses in the name of "public interest", "social housing", "profiting for everyone", and a "win-win situation!".

Moreover, by indicating various global instances, Ong (2011) and Mayer and Künkel (2012) point out the flexibility and unevenness of neoliberalism that provides adaptation of policies into constantly changing circumstances which contributes to renewal, reproduction, and transformation of neoliberal power. Mayer and Künkel (2012) further discuss the impressive capacity of neoliberal urbanism to instrumentalize crises. Altering the direction of regeneration discourses by referring to the catastrophic results of natural disasters directly after the Van earthquake in 2011 in Turkey is a very relevant indicator of neoliberalism's ability to make use of changing circumstances. Globally, natural disasters of tsunamis, hurricanes, and earthquakes provide authorities and elites with the ability to push their expropriation plans by using "emergency" and "risk" pretenses (Collins and Jimenez, 2012:54; Adams et al., 2009:616). In Turkey, through recurrent references to the destructive effects of the 1999 İzmit earthquake and the recent earthquakes in Van, the AKP government and its supporters have found a fertile ground to convince people of the emergency of urban regenerations. During a meeting in İstanbul in 2012, the former TOKİ president and former Minister of Environment and Urban Planning, Erdoğan Bayraktar, declared that there are 19 million dwellings in Turkey and 40% of them need to be regenerated

(Mukul, 2012). Emphasizing "fatal risks of natural hazards", the "significance of human life and property", and the "need of constructing a safe life for everyone's sake", the AKP government prepared the Law No: 6306, namely the "Law about Regeneration of Zones under the Risk of Disasters" without including urban planners, chambers or academics in the preparation process. Despite widespread public debate and criticism coming from a wide range of circles, from *The Guardian*[2] to the Union of Chambers of Turkish Architects and Engineers (TMMOB)[3], the law was issued on May 31, 2012 and opened the way to seize public land, including forests, pasture lands, and coastal and military areas, by declaring them risky and transforming them into private property.

The two urban regeneration projects of the center left municipalities in Eskişehir instrumentalize the same Law no: 6306 even though they were opposing the law before. While they depend on this highly debated "regeneration law", both projects claim to be a "role-model project of Turkey" by being "social-democratic", "participatory", and "inclusive". The literature on Turkey has so far largely focused on the AKP's regeneration projects, their discourses and disempowerment effects. In my research, considering the accumulation of political power that goes with accumulation of capital and the tactics and rhetoric of political elites in the neoliberal age, I try to shed light on the strategies of the two municipalities of the center left party within the same city.

2.3. Anthropology of Policy Making

Conventional policy studies see policies as 'objective entities' that are the results of rational decisions which aim to solve problems for the most rational and logical outcomes (Yanow, 1996:8-22; Shore and Wright, 2011:4-7). Yet, together with the interpretative policy approach in political science, anthropology takes a critical approach against the normative and positivistic understanding of policy making to reveal the processes in the organization of power and governance in society (Yanow, 1996; Shore and Wright, 1997; Shore and Wright, 2011). Anthropologists see policies

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[2] http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/05/istanbul-needs-neighbourhood-regeneration?newsfeed=true. March 5, 2012

[3] http://www.tmmob.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=7938&tipi=9. February 20, 2012

as the fundamental 'organizing principles' of society which, like 'class', 'citizenship' or 'nation', provide a way of conceptualizing and symbolizing social relations, and around which people live their lives and structure their realities (Shore and Wright, 2011:3). Through inquiries into policy making processes, they analyze "how policies 'work' as instruments of power, what new kinds of assemblages and political subjects policies create, how policy is used to classify, manage and mobilize populations, what kind of metaphors and linguistic devices are created to convince populations, and how the discourses are shifted" (Shore and Wright, 1997:3; Shore and Wright, 2011:20).

Furthermore, anthropology's interest in a policy making process is not only limited to discourses or languages that they create. Anthropology also tries to understand the technologies that mediate authorities and populations, how they affect people's everyday life, people's interaction with planning processes, how they react to or involve in the processes, and what they make of them (Shore and Wright, 2011:8-12). Furthermore, anthropology asks questions of whose voices are included and whose are restricted. In the scope of Turkish urban literature, anthropological approach to policy making is simply non-existent. Although there is a body research that reveals what kind of discourses are produced to mobilize the public, it mainly focuses on AKP's projects. Yet, this research was not conducted through the anthropological eye that would shed light on how people interact with those discourses, genealogies, and flows of the policies in their everyday lives. My comparative research aims to understand the political legitimacies of the urban regeneration projects of two center left municipalities as well as the interaction of the local populations with the processes of policy making and reflections of these processes on their daily lives.

3. RESEARCH CONTEXT

3.1.   Urbanization of Eskişehir in the last fifteen years

In accordance with the discussion above about global neoliberal urbanism, in the last fifteen years, Eskişehir has undergone profound changes regarding the urban settings and, in consequence, situated itself within the city branding and development strategies. To a great extent, the ongoing restructuring of the city is traced back to the

election of the Anatolia University's former rector, Yılmaz Büyükerşen, as the mayor of Eskişehir's Metropolitan Municipality in 1999 from the Democratic Left Party (DSP), which has been the most significant milestone for the city's urban developments (Civelek, 2013). By claiming to change Eskişehir's destiny from being a "rural city" to a "modern city", Büyükerşen initiated a series of developments that would give the city what he considered would be a "European", "modern", and "cultural" outlook. He has been inspired by European cities, especially by Vienna and Amsterdam, as he explained to me. Rumor has it in the city that any time he visits a European city, he takes pictures of the river bridges, street lights, statues, sidewalks, and urban furniture, while he step by step has imported these models to Eskişehir.

In accordance with such strategies seen in many other cities of the neoliberal era, some of the initial modernization steps initiated by the mayor were cleaning and refurbishing the Porsuk River, construction of street trams which cover only a small portion of the city, and the founding of the Symphony Orchestra of the Metropolitan Municipality. In the following years, the city has seen an acceleration of various urban projects: "cleaning" the downtown-Odunpazarı, opening new museums and art centers, adornment of the central areas with decorative statues, and opening up new streets for leisure activities. Images of Eskişehir turned from a "dust city in summer and mud city in winter" into a "brand", "modern", "European", "livable" and a "culture and art" city[4].

While Eskişehir has been rapidly restructured to become a "modern" city since 1999, urban regenerations have come to the agenda only in the last couple of years. Compared to the big cities of Turkey that have seen enormous regeneration initiatives of municipalities, TOKİ, and public-private partnerships that invade downtowns and old industrial zones which have created much public attention and controversy for decades, the beginning of urban regenerations in Eskişehir is quite a new phenomenon. The first urban regeneration from a local authority was initiated in 2011 by TOKİ and the Odunpazarı Municipality, which was under the rule of AKP at the time.

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[4] For a detailed exposition and critique of that discourse see Civelek, 2013.

The Karapınar Valley *Gecekondu*[5] Regeneration Project was the case study of my master's thesis that I completed at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, in the University of Vienna, in March, 2013. My ethnographic research showed that the households on the regeneration zone do not represent a homogenous character in terms of legal status of their settlements or in terms of the expectations from the future housing conditions. On the other hand, TOKİ and the Odunpazarı Municipality have gained enormous financial profits through the construction of luxury villas, a five star hotel, commerce and shopping centers, while displacing the local inhabitants to new high-rise buildings with obligation to make varying monthly payments.

3.2. Two New Urban Regenerations

Since the summer of 2013, there have been two new regeneration projects in Eskişehir's agenda creating public debates even before their actual start. Both projects claimed to serve for the modernization process of the city, while making use of Law No: 6306, as discussed above. Yet, beyond the law, both regenerations put a very complex network of agents and concerns in motion: municipal authorities, professionals, inhabitants of different income-classes, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism, chamber associations, urban planners, tradespeople and business owners. The two projects differ in terms of the initiators, the types of the urban areas to be transformed, and the inhabitants whose lives will be influenced. The first one – the central regeneration – was initiated by the social democrat Metropolitan Municipality – the engineer of the urban developments in Eskişehir – on the basis of risky conditions of the seven to eight story buildings situated in the city center. The Metropolitan Municipality claims to carry out a "participatory", "inclusive", "sustainable", and "on-site" regeneration which, as "the first good project in the regeneration category", would be a "role-model" for Turkey. It aims to be suitable for the needs of the citizens, and to be a "modern European city" that would be "entirely" distinctive from what Turkey has seen in terms of regenerations, as they claim.

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[5] Literally means "landed overnight".

In order to implement such a project, the municipality asked for advice from the Chambers of Architects and Civil Engineers about the risk zone of the city center. Later, a group was formed under the name of "Eskişehir's Working Team of Urban Regeneration" consisting of 14 members from the three municipalities, the Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization, the Chamber of Architects, the Chamber of Civil Engineers, and the Chamber of Urban Planners. The objective of the working team has been to discuss and take decisions about the risk zone and regeneration. After the meeting sessions, they signed a proclamation about the missions of urban regeneration.

A crucial point to touch upon is the debates on "consensus". The Chamber of Architects and the Chamber of Civil Engineers are optimistic about the "working team of the urban regeneration". As they explained to me, instead of always representing an oppositional position towards regenerations or local authorities, this time creating a consensus sphere to discuss the regeneration together and insist on a "good project" which would consider the real needs of the inhabitants and the city has been essential for them. Both the chambers and the Metropolitan Municipality mention that Turkey needs a "good project" which does not seek rent activities and which contemplates the psychological, environmental, cultural, and social needs of the neighborhood.

Currently, the Metropolitan Municipality conducts research about the zone and works on planning ideas. In order to apply the regeneration project, the municipality must convince two thirds of the right owners and propose the plans to the ministry. However, the ministry has the right to disclaim the plans. The zone has a dense multi-story built environment with the ownerships of middle and lower income classes and several commercial areas, such as two and three stars hotels, private hospitals, and shops. Hence, convincing the right owners of this heterogeneous zone might be expected to be complicated and might need different convincing strategies compared to the poor zones or settlements of illegal housing.

Keeping the current stage of the central regeneration, the forthcoming steps of the project are unclear which is already far from being participatory. The inhabitants and small business owners complain about the lack of information. Lately, the local

newspapers have announced the inadequacy of the Metropolitan Municipality to acquaint the right owners and citizens with the proper information about the actual process of the regeneration. Since the zone has been declared as being situated under the risk of earthquakes, all of the current constructions have been stopped by the municipality in the last years. Moreover, as the elected executors and the inhabitants of the neighborhoods informed future planning in terms of housing and therefore selling and buying activities in the zone has totally stagnated.

On the other hand, the second "zone of risk", namely the Gündoğdu Neighborhood, has a completely different story. It was initiated by the Odunpazarı Municipality – of the AKP – in a peripheral lower income area which houses single-story buildings. Presumably, the municipality wanted to implement a regeneration with TOKI which would be similar to their Karapınar Regeneration Project. As *sine qua non*, the Odunpazarı Municipality asserted the mission of being "participatory", "inclusive", and "democratic" which is supported by the discourse of "everyone will win". Thus, this project seemed to bear more resemblance to other regenerations that Turkey and the world have been experiencing in the sense that "cities being turned into a means for profit, not for people" (Brenner et al., 2010).

However, there has been controversy about whether the zone carries a real earthquake risk or not[6] which led to opposition by the inhabitants and the main opposition party of CHP. The criticisms claimed that the project is oriented through political and economic benefits[7]. Later, due to the ongoing debates and criticisms about the regeneration, the Odunpazarı Municipality withdrew from the project before the local elections of March, 2014. The withdrawal resulted in the delegation of the regeneration project to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism. On the other hand, the local election resulted against the AKP at the Odunpazarı Municipality and the new local government has been formed by the CHP. Currently, the CHP hopes to take the delegation of authority back from the Ministry of Urbanism to conduct the

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[6] As I learnt through a bureaucrat who works in this project, although the ministry initially did not find major risk of disasters, the political channels between the municipality and the ministry led the zone to be declared as a "risk zone".

[7] As explained to me by an officer of Directorate of Environment and Urbanization of Eskişehir and representatives of the Chamber of Architects, and of the Chamber of Civil Engineers.

regeneration. While the new mayor still criticizes the "rent-seeking regeneration understanding" of the AKP governments, this time, he claims that, if there is a "rent" created by their regeneration, this will be distributed among the inhabitants of the area, which would prove them to be a "social-democratic" government. Before the elections he and his supporters had mobilized the public arguing that the zone does not carry a risk factor. However, after the elections, the direction of the new mayor's words changed. During an interview with me, he claimed that if the zone has already been declared to be a "risky" one, the best step to deal with it is to carry out a participatory, role-model project and if an authority will be given to proceed with the regeneration, it should definitely be given to them since they would apply a social, democratic, and inclusive project which would share the rent with the locals. I asked him if the buildings would be similar to TOKI's high-rise ones which have been much criticized. He responded that, if they want to create rent to share, they obviously have to construct multi-story apartments for the sake of the project. In the summer of 2014, popular national newspapers ran stories about the mayor who visited Narlıdere Municipality of CHP in İzmir to learn from their 'successful' regeneration projects[8]. The Narlıdere projects are known for numerous high-story buildings which replaced the former *gecekondu* units. The projects were far from being participatory which created social exclusion of the poor (Arslan, 2013).

4. CONCLUSION

Taking stock of the Karapınar Regeneration Project which represents the general features of the AKP and TOKI's regeneration perspective, as well as urban developments in Eskişehir in the last 15 years, and outlining the complex features of these two new urban regeneration projects, an ethnographic and comparative approach to the planning processes of these urban regenerations investigates the meanings and use of the declared missions – democracy, participation, and inclusiveness – for the local authorities and planners as well as on how they are perceived by the inhabitants. Significantly, 'participation' and 'inclusiveness' have quite different meanings for policy makers of different regions, states, or local

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[8] http://www.milliyet.com.tr/baskan-batur-odunpazari-belediyesi-ne-izmir-yerelhaber-400698/

authorities (Silver et.al, 2010:472). These terms have ambiguous meanings that would be shaped for various levels of political legitimacy (Shore and Wright, 2011). Is there a difference in the meaning of "inclusiveness" for the municipal authorities and the right owners? Will the assertion of being "participatory" and "role-model" correspond to or appeal as an advertising strategy? To what extent will the zoning plan of the regeneration be prepared according to the needs of the locals? As Silver et. al. (2010:463, 471-472) point out "getting to the table" under the shadow of participation is not enough; thus, rather than exclusively focusing on the procedure of participation, one should ask "Who gains? Who loses?" as well as "Are the goals redistributive? Do they promote social justice?" Increasing citizen participation does not guarantee empowering and reduction of inequalities between social groups (Silver et.al, 2010:455, 463).

Ong (2006:3) illustrates how different regimes, i.e. authoritarian, communist, liberal, impose neoliberal regulations in their urban projects by aiming to better position their cities, regions, or countries in the global competition. Considering the flexibility and systemically uneven character of neoliberalism, Mayer and Künkel (2012:10-17) indicate co-occurrence of neoliberal practices with other social formations, for instance in Latin America where left wing parties came to power. Rather than simply evaluating these countries as "anti-neoliberal" Mayer and Künkel (2012:17) emphasize the continuities of the neoliberal hegemony or the new phase of capitalist socialization. Since Büyükerşen has come to power at the Metropolitan Municipality, his projects in Eskişehir have carried akin characteristics of global city restructuring strategies. On the other hand, the new social democrat local government at the Odunpazarı Municipality fosters the regeneration ideas at Gündoğdu, although they once opposed the former government by claiming that the zone did not need to be regenerated.

Within the scope of my research, therefore, I investigate in policy making and planning strategies of the two regenerations in order to see continuities, variations, and singularities of neoliberal urbanism whereas the anthropological perspective I adopt enables me to investigate further into the different agents of city making in the world

and their empowering and disempowering effects on different segments of society. The overall goal of my research is to provide comparative anthropological insights into the rhetoric, language, meanings, and explicit goals of the policies that are created by their implementers (Yanow, 1996:23), for whom and how they are made (Shore and Wright, 1997), and responses from the inhabitants, in order to understand the "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the policy discourses.

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