# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL REGENERATION PROJECTS IN TURKEY

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## Abstract

Renewal of squatter housing areas has been the central element of urban discussions in Turkey since the 1950s, with different approaches from clearance to upgrading with the aim of decreasing the negative effects of these areas in the urbanization process of Turkish cities until the 1980s. Following the 1980s however squatter housing areas, especially the ones located in inner-city areas have become the focus of attention with an increasing element of devalorization of the land market within the sphere of neo-liberal urban policies of the governments under the effect of the new global economy. Thus, once considered to be the physical expression of a socio-economic problem and so tried to be solved with either radical or populist approaches facing with the ineffiencies of the economy, squatter areas are now the preliminary concern of the municipalities to take the advantage of the devalorized market there. Currently the local state's involvement adheres to the rules of the market with an increasing element of public-private partnerships in community-based regeneration projects.

Municipalities which have squatter housing areas within their boundaries, use urban transformation projects to improve their living conditions with the standards of a contemporary life style while transforming these areas into prestige zones of their governmental success also by using the great economic potentials of centrality on space. Thus, while using community-based approaches to local regeneration to promote social inclusion, municipalities find themselves in a globalized environment of the market economy with an unprecedented amount of capital flow into these areas both from the governments with new public programs and from the professional developers discovering

the great potential of locational rent.  So primarily because of these conflicting elements of urban policy, social exclusion appeares to be a necessary cost of urban regeneration in Turkish experiences although "preserving the original population of squatter housing areas in transformation projects" is put as the preliminary goal of project implementations.

In this paper , first the reasons of social exclusion will be discussed in a comparative analysis of four urban transformation projects implemented in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, based on the results of an area research. Secondly, the community component in project formations will be discussed with the help of questionnaire results trying to depict the percentage and way of community involvement in local regeneration. The aim of this research is to find out the net effect of community involvement in social inclusion within the sphere of local regeneration projects and/or policies with a critical aprroach of discussion on project formulations under the pressures of market economy.

## 1. Renewal of Squatter Housing Areas in Turkey

Renewal of squatter housing areas has been the central element of urban discussions in Turkey since the 1950s, with different approaches from clearance to upgrading with the aim of decreasing the negative effects of these areas in the urbanization process. Following the 1980s however, squatter housing areas, especially the ones located in inner-city areas have become the focus of attention with an increasing element of devalorization of the land market within the sphere of neo-liberal urban policies of the governments under the effect of the new global economy. Thus, once considered to be the physical expression of a socio-economic problem and so tried to be solved with either radical or populist approaches facing with the ineffiencies of the economy, squatter areas are now the preliminary concern of the municipalities to take the advantage of the devalorized market there.

## 1.1. Development of squatter housing in Turkey

The squatter housing problem appeared as a result of unprecedented dimensions of rural-urban migration during the 1940s in Turkey. Migration was started by the transformation of agricultural cultivation technology and further stimulated by a rapid industrialization process and newly developing highway network. Although the governments and the industrialists supported migration because this population offered them cheap labor force, they could not provide housing in face of the ineffectiveness of the ways of legal housing provision in Turkey. So squatter housing, a form of make-shift housing, was rapidly built by the incomers and extended with the addition of necessary space in time and developed into extensive neighborhoods constructed on vacant or public land or on farms under absentee ownership surrounding the urban cores (Dündar,2001:391).

These neighborhoods were first met by a negative reaction and demolitions followed by the building of social housing instead. This approach was later followed by a series of amnesty laws which legalized the existing gecekondu neighborhoods. Within this period political approaches in favor of populism especially in the share of urban rent, have given this population power in the urban land market (Tekeli,2000:49) and squatter population gained a new status with the power of speculation. Thus, squatter housing areas which formed extensive neighborhoods especially in inner-city areas turned into transition zones

physically deteriorating and became more problematic for the future of cities (Dündar, 2002:212).

## 1.2. Improvement plans

The first solution was improvement plans involving a wholesale clearance and redevelopment from 1-2 storey squatter houses to 4 storey apartment blocks on regular plots (400 m2 each) with the help of small contractors. But, while transformation can be achieved in areas located in inner-city areas with the locational attractiveness of development, transformation cannot be achieved in areas not attractive for the contractors.

This attitude continued until the 1980s, by which time squatter houses covered almost half of the urban space, some of which located in central areas, gained a new meaning as sources of potential location rent (Dündar,2001:392). So the governments developed new measures in the name of urban transformation first to get rid of these spontaneous settlements in the way to increase the physical competitiveness of big cities in the global context and secondly to obtain a share from the increasing rent gap on urban land.

## 2. Urban Transformation Projects

In addition to the impossibility of improvement plans' implementation in every squatter housing area, the large-scale urban renewal projects approach which has become dominant in all over the world in the second half of the 1980s with an idea of renewing central city deteriorating areas to become prestige areas which will give attractiveness to the city, has determined the development of a new alternative for the transformation of squatter housing areas in Turkey.

The main idea has been the maintenance and improvement of the economic strength of cities to be critical to the competitive performance of the country as a whole. In fact the physical, economic and social decline of inner city areas over the past three decades has resulted in growing pressure for more effective urban regeneration (Adair et. al., 2000: 2). Thus urban regeneration has merged to be one of the forces to promote the city to compete in the world of global, mobile capital and a rapidly changing space economy. Cities are

currently marketing themselves to create and change their image with the intended goal of attracting international business and upper- class residents.

In this general framework, urban transformation projects are to leave a mark in the way the local authorities approach the problem in Turkey within the framework of current developments of urban regeneration based upon new concepts such as entrepreneurial models of spatial governance, citizen participation and public-private partnerships also proposing new elements of spatial transformation. Governments in fact try to develop city-wide strategic approaches in corporating the principles of sustainable development and equity thus reaching to a level of development within the scope of global urban restructuring.

In the beginning of the 1990s, Municipality of Greater Ankara developed two urban transformation projects with the aim of renewing two valleys of Ankara which were full of squatter houses. The idea was centered around the goal of regenerating these prestigious inner-city areas into luxury housing areas with office and central facilities, also preserving the green character of the valleys. Then following these two projects, district municipalities of Ankara developed similar transformation projects for the squatter housing neighborhoods located within their boundaries. Currently, the district municipalities are in a race to regenerate inner-city squatter housing areas with the help of urban transformation projects.

## 2.1. A new organization model

The aim of urban transformation projects as it is written in all project reports, is to bring a different solution to the squatter housing areas which cannot be transformed until now. However, although it is not written, they have also the goal of regenerating them into prestige areas of high-rise, luxury housing in order to fulfil the aim of using a model to enable contracting/finance firms to undertake construction by sharing the rent. Thus one of the goals is to share the increasing rent gap between land and property produced by inner-city development that is more visible and easier to get in squatter housing areas. Yet inner-city squatter housing areas present a suitable environment for regeneration with deteriorating building and life quality characteristics conflicting with the increasing land

values and attractiveness in central areas. So, the reflection of transformation on physical space is from low density, 1-2 storey garden houses to high density, 4-12 storey luxury apartment houses (Figure1).

Figure1: Up: A squatter housing area

       Down: An urban transformation project area

Within this perspective the aims of regeneration can be classified into four:
1. To change the urban structure;
2. To realize a self-financing project without making the government to reserve huge amounts of financial resources;

3. To preserve the squatters in their existing locations as according to the laws for squatter housing in Turkey (laws number 775 and 2981), renewal of squatter housing areas should suggest to give lands for the squatter population in an uprading area close to their current settlement areas;

4. To organize the squatters in cooperatives.

As it can be seen from the above discussions, urban transformation projects bring two new elements into the organizational structure of urban planning in Turkey. First is a public-private partnership model to realize a self-financing mechanism in the hands of private investors. In fact the 1980s was the period of transition from managerialist to entrepreneurial models of spatial governance in all over the world. The main role of the entrepreneur state is to support private initiatives for the improvement of local potential thus redefining the role of city planning authority from being the main exponent of the traditionally regulative approach towards a greater emphasis on its role as an "enabler" (Simpson, Chapman, 1999: 3). Yet most experiences prove the fact that successful urban regeneration founded upon strong democratic local leadership, public participation and the use of public finance to attract increased private investment. In this context the continuing role of private finance in funding existing programmes is seen as the central element in realizing effective urban regeneration (Adair et. al., 1998 in Adair et. al., 2000: 2).

The second is the element of public participation with the increasing effect of community initiatives in the hands of building cooperatives.

## 2.2. Development of community involvement in squatter housing areas

Until mid-1960s, urban renewal approaches in Turkey have a negative attitude to squatter housing areas and their populations which are seen as the sources of all social ills in the urban system. Thus, renewal was defined as the clearance and redevelopment of such problem areas, displacing their populations who are termed to be marginal to urban life. In addition to clearance, new constructions were prevented as well.

Community involvement however was only possible through either objection in a 30-days period (citizens can make objections to plans in 30 days after preparation) or application to the Administrative Courts to stop plan implementations.

Under these circumstances, squatter population began to search for the ways of community development in the way to become a legal element of the urban population within the framework of an administrative organization. The aim was to attain a status of neighborhood, which would integrate them into the urban administrative system and so to urban life. The political potential of the squatter population had also been realized and in the same period squatter population constituted a source for increasing the votes of political parties. Thus, organization of squatter housing areas to become neighborhoods was supported by the Municipalities as well to open the way to populism in urban development and planning procedures. In fact populism would characterize the coming years from now on with unfair distributions of title-deeds during the elections (Şenyapılı,1985:24).

However coming to the 1980s, global urban restructuring policies decreased the effectiveness of populism in policy concerns. Contemporary discussions rest on the availability of strategic planning and policy making engaged with a broad range of policy stakeholders and local interest groups. Thus not only in advanced countries but in the developing world as well, new institutional responses at the urban level have emerged such as city leadership (public/private partnerships; growth coalitions), urban entrepreneurialism

and city marketing and the continued marketization of urban regeneration (Simpson, Chapman, 1999:2) with an increasing element of partnerships bringing different levels of co-operation between decision makers in the city from the local authority to the citizens.

But it is a fact that the issue of partnership will continue to be dogged by selective community representation, legitimacy and exclusion within the sphere of global urban restructuring policies. During the course of the 1980s, policy became refocused not on people and communities but on property and physical regeneration. Through the 1990s, however the limitations of the trickle-down approach to regeneration initiated a series of changes in urban policy ostensibly geared to increasing the degree of community participation and empowerment within policy-making process (Lawless, 1996 in Raco, 2000:3).

However the refocusing of urban policy in the 1990s is associated with the shift in emphasis from property-led regeneration towards a broader-based partnership agenda with a focus upon community interest. A central theme of the former was the need for the local authority to forge effective partnerships with the private sector, voluntary organizations and community groups, the latter's emphasis is upon the role of local communities (Adair, et. al, 2000:2). The recent forces in action depend upon individualistic preferences rather than a unique whole, identifying the concept of pluralism in all aspects of life.

Pluralism not only provides people to tell their ideas but also enable them to live their lives as they like and that's how different lives and spaces will be formed in the near future. These developments through pluralism in both the ideological setting and life styles, will provide the development of new possibilities in planning. Planners no more dictate the pre-determined frameworks but they are now more flexible in creating the necessary background for the likeness of different life styles. Thus, people will be free to choose the best suitable place for their own life style in a pluralistic society. Moreover, in such a pluralistic society participatory mechanisms will be more easily organized because these mechanisms can be more actively applied in small homogeneous societies.

Within the perspective of these discussions, the 1990s have brought the model of cooperatives into the planning agenda of the municipalities in Turkey, as a reflection of contemporary conceptual developments through pluralism and community development in order to create the suitable environment for voluntary organizations in regeneration areas. Squatter population has been considered as project participants to be organized under cooperatives to initiate their involvement in policy concerns related with their living environment. Currently, the model of building cooperatives are seen as the leading force behind an active participation process which is thought to be the basis of local democracy in Turkish planning system and which is thought to be the factor of community involvement to prevent social exclusion in urban transformation projects . Thus three main groups were identified as participant parties; the district municipality; the private sector (construction companies); and the building cooperatives which would be established by the squatters.

The cooperatives and the Municipality are the two parties coming face to face in all project discussions. The Municipality will undertake the provision of land, organization of squatters, the preparation and introduction of the development plan, handing over the project to the construction companies and playing a role of an intermediary body between the company and the squatters, and finally approval of the project. However the role of the Municipality will not finish after land assignments but continue until all project participants settle into their houses. Cooperatives will solve the problems between property owners related with share differences, remove the idea of gaining unfair rents from urban lands, increase the demands for contemporary houses and environments and increase the consciousness of being a citizen.

### 3.  Research

The aim of this paper is to examine the element of community involvement developed to prevent social exclusion which is argued to be the preliminary reason of displacement in urban transformation projects which have been implemented in Ankara, the capital of Turkey since 1990. The paper will be centered around two sets of discussions in a comparative analysis of four urban transformation projects; first is the degree of displacement. The Vice-Mayor of Çankaya Municipality in 1996 was claiming that their

organization model in an urban transformation project was a successful one because they were sure that project participants would not sell their houses because they had made a lot of meetings, 2-3 times a week in order to make these people to be devoted to the project as in the case of their former living areas. They considered the social aspects of planning and this was reflected on the area with the help of cooperatives. On the other hand the municipality gave them a share from the transformed area in order to prevent displacement. In other words, displacement would have been avoided by preventing social exclusion thus the original squatter population was considered as project participants.

A second set of discussions is on the community component in project formations in order to depict the percentage and way of community involvement in local regeneration. The aim of this research is to find out the net effect of cooperatives proposed as an element of community involvement and thus social inclusion within the sphere of local regeneration projects and/or policies with a critical approach of discussion on project formulations under the pressures of market economy.

## 3.1. Degree of displacement

Displacement is the central discussion of urban regeneration projects in all over the world. Most experiences have proved the fact that regeneration of inner-city deteriorating areas changes both the physical and social character of the entire neighborhood providing prestige on space. Thus whatever the name given to the process, urban transformation or renewal, regeneration brings gentrification; invasion of an area by an upper income/status population. Gentrification literature provides a wide range of discussions on its origins and its geographies but these are not the subject of this paper. Whatever the theoretical discussions on gentrification, displacement seems to be a necessary cost of regeneration.

Researches show that the goal of preventing displacement can not be achieved in the long-run and more than half of the project participants prefer to leave the project areas to upper income groups. Especially in inner-city upper-income areas such as in Yıldız neighborhood 62.50 % of the current population is composed of gentrifiers. In Yıldız neighborhood, the newcomers belong to a higher status group with an increasing level of university education (Table 2) and an increasing number of managerial workforce (Table 3). Huzur neighborhood follows Yıldız with its increasing managerial workforce as well.

**Table 1: Population change (%)**

| Research area | Population change | | Ownership pattern | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | original population | newcomers | owner | tenant |
| Yıldız. | 37.50 | 62.50 | 68.75 | 31.25 |
| Şirindere* | 100.00 | - | 60.00 | 40.00 |
| Aktaş-Atilla | 60.00 | 40.00 | 75.00 | 25.00 |
| Huzur | 56.00 | 44.00 | 56.00 | 44.00 |

*project area has not been transformed yet


**Table 2: Education level (%)**

| Research area | Illiterate | primary school | secondary school | high school | university |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 6.25 | 25.00 | - | 43.75 | 25.00* |
| Şirindere | - | 37.50 | 12.50 | 25.00 | 12.50 |
| Aktaş-Atilla | 10.00 | 30.00 | 20.00 | 35.00 | 5.00 |
| Huzur | - | 16.00 | 20.00 | 60.00 | 4.00 |

*all newcomers


**Table 3: Job status (%)**

| Research area | manager | trades men | government staff | unqualified workers | marginal jobs | retired | un employed | other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 25.00 | 31.25 | - | 12.50 | - | 18.75 | - | 6.25 |
| Şirindere | - | - | - | - | 80.00 | - | 20.00 | - |
| Aktaş-Atilla | - | 17.00 | 36.50 | 35.50 | - | 40.00 | - | - |
| Huzur | 24.00 | - | - | 36.00 | - | - | - | 40.00 |

In less prestigious areas however, the level of displacement is lower. In Aktaş-Atilla with a percentage of 40 and in Huzur 44 (Table 1). But in Aktaş-Atilla 50 % of the survey population said that they would sell or rent their houses in the future.

There appears two levels of displacement. In prestigious locations, inner-city squatter housing areas surrounded with upper-income neighborhoods, private developers expect high profit returns thus implementation of a public-private participation model is easier.

Profit shows itself with an increasing element of prestige and luxury on space. At the other end of the spectrum it is an upper income population who seeks for and can afford this luxury and prestige on space. Thus gentrification is unavoidable in the short-run.

On the other hand although the level of displacement increases, its speed decreases respective of life preferences and/or life satisfaction criteria of the squatter population in less prestigious locations. As it has been stated before, in Aktaş-Atilla 50 % of the survey population said that they would sell or rent their houses in the future because they were mostly dissatisfied with the physical environment (70 %) and because they were missing their former life styles outdoor in gardens (30 %). When they were asked "what kind of a project would you prefer?", 70 % gave the answer of "less dense garden houses" and 10 % "squatter houses", only 20 % are satisfied with the current project. Also in Şirindere where project implementation has not been started yet, 60 % of the survey population said that they wanted houses similar to their existing squatter houses.

Table 4 shows that it is not the reason of dissatisfaction with the housing units that pushes the project populations to sell or rent their houses. Most of them are seem to be satisfied with their new houses.

**Table 4: Reason of satisfaction with the new housing units(%)**

| Research area | Housing quality | proximity to the centre | quietness | neighbors | prestige | being an owner | environment | economic reasons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 37.50 | 25.00 | 12.50 | 6.25 | - | - | - | - |
| Şirindere | - | - | - | 31.25 | - | 18.75 | 12.50 | - |
| Aktaş-Atilla | 50.00 | 30.00 | - | - | - | - | - | 20.00 |
| Huzur | 96.00 | - | - | - | 4.00 | - | - | - |

Most of the survey population is satisfied with the new environment as well except of Aktaş-Atilla neighborhood (Table 5) (Figure 2) with the reasons of high density and lack of a garden (60.00 %) and low socio-cultural quality (20 %). The reasons of satisfaction in Yıldız are increasing socio-cultural quality (37.50 %), being together with the former neighbors (18.75 %) and quiteness (12.50 %).

**Table 5: Satisfaction with the new environment (%)**

| Research area | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 75.00 | 25.00 |
| Şirindere | - | - |
| Aktaş-Atilla | 40.00 | 60.00 |
| Huzur | 66.70 | 33.30 |

Figure 2: Aktaş-Atilla neighborhood before and after transformation

So there appear two sets of discussions on the origins of displacement in urban transformation projects. First is displacement through gentrification originating from the increasing luxury on space in prestigious inner-city areas. This type of displacement takes place in the short-run as a function of both the newcomers' invasionary movements seeking for increasing economic and social status and the squatter population's speculative behaviours trying to earn from the increasing rent gap between land and property in regeneration areas.

Second is displacement through life style preferences of the squatter population finding its reflection in semi-rural characteristics of squatter housing areas. As a matter of fact the squatter population is devoted to their living environment, these places are the only ties to their rural-origin. When they migrate from a rural area, they choose to locate in an area together with their fellow countrymen and in 30-40 years they regenerate their previous lives in the city. So they prefer to live in squatter housing areas together with their former neighbors rather than living with an upper income/status group. In fact these two different status groups push each other in living environments. 12.50 % of Yıldız survey population is not happy with the squatter population (Table 6). This coincides to 20 % of the newcomers. This reason of dissatisfaction increases to 20 % in Huzur. However in Şirindere where the project has not been implemented yet, neighborhood relations are stated as the preliminary reason of satisfaction with the squatter housing units (31.25 %). For instance in Aktaş-Atilla 75 % of the original population do not have any relation with the newcomers (Table 7).

**Table 6: Reason of dissatisfaction with the new housing units (%)**

| Research area | Lack of comfort | squatter housing population | number of apartment units | Physical environment | Inproximity to the centre | lack of municipal services | lack of a garden | none |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 18.75 | 12.50* | 6.25 | - | - | - | - | 62.50 |
| Şirindere | - | - | - | 12.50 | 12.50 | 43.75 | - | 31.25 |
| Aktaş-Atilla | - | - | - | 70.00 | - | - | 30.00 | - |
| Huzur | - | 20.00 | - | - | - | - | 4.00 | 76.00 |

*20 % of the newcomers

**Table 7: Relations with the newcomers (%)**

| Research area | good | bad | have no relation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 62.50 | 37.50 | - |
| Şirindere | - | - | - |
| Aktaş-Atilla | - | 25.00 | 75.00 |
| Huzur | 66.70 | 33.30 | - |

## 3.2. Degree of community involvement

As it has been stated above community involvement in urban transformation projects is achieved through cooperatives. Additionally, the municipalities send planning brochures describing the plans but more to sell the projects rather than explaining and opening discussions. The cooperatives on the other hand make meetings with the project populations but how much percent of their ideas are taken into consideration and reflected on the plans is still a question.

Most of the survey population in Yıldız (62.50 %) and Şirindere (87.50 %) said that they were not informed about the transformation projects beforehand. Of the ones who said that they were informed, more than half are not satisfied with the information given (50.00 % in Yıldız and 66.60 % in Şirindere). On the other hand, in Aktaş-Atilla and Huzur where most of the survey population said that they were informed about the projects (80.00 % and 91.70 % respectively), more than half ( 60.00 % in Aktaş-Atilla and 50.00 % in Huzur) are not satisfied with the information given (Tables 8 and 9).

**Table 8: Was the project population informed of the project beforehand or not? (%)**

| Research area | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 37.50 | 62.50 |
| Şirindere | 12.50 | 87.50 |
| Aktaş-Atilla | 80.00 | 20.00 |
| Huzur | 91.70 | 8.30 |

**Table 9: Are you satisfied with the information given? (%)**

| Research area | yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Yıldız. | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| Şirindere | 33.40 | 66.60 |
| Aktaş-Atilla | 40.00 | 60.00 |
| Huzur | 50.00 | 50.00 |

Researches show that community involvement in urban transformation projects can not go beyond information giving. It seems that cooperatives worked as governmental bodies reflecting municipal decisions to project participants. Such an organization model can not be evaluated as an element of community involvement unless it is an element of an institutionalized community development procedure.

Yet squatter housing population has no right to make any objections to the plan proposals beforehand according to the related laws. Besides there is not an active participation model preparing the necessary grounds of community involvement in Turkish planning system. Thus the citizens neither see community development as a right nor know the ways of participation. The local authorities on the other hand are still acting as the only power in planning. Nonetheless development of a model of cooperatives seems to be the outcome of preventing rejection to regeneration in urban transformation projects rather than being an element of community involvement.

## 4. Conclusion

Discussions on the degrees of social inclusion and community involvement in urban transformation projects in Turkey have proved the fact that the new local partnerships of urban transformation projects as Peck and Tickell has argued (1994 in Raco,2000:3) do not represent a new devolved localism, geared to the development of strategic policy

programmes through the integration of bottom-up, community proposals. Instead, they can be characterized as "corporatist-style coalitions, constructed with a view to getting one over the competition and, above all, getting public money". This is due to the fact that there is an increasing rent gap between land and property in inner-city squatter housing areas and because these areas are seen as problem zones of urban development by the community, they will be the first to be regenerated. On the other hand, the squatter population is also aware of the profit on their land and they also wait to gain in a speculative environment prepared by the governments for years with an increasing element of populism in policy adjustments.

But municipalities are also in an anxiety to prevent displacement in project areas contrary to the regeneration policies of European countries. Thus preventing displacement appears to be one of the goals because of two reasons. First, the squatters must be preserved in their existing locations according to the laws for squatter housing in Turkey. The municipalities have to consider the squatter population as project participants and give them a share from the urban transformation projects in accordance with the legal adjustments. Secondly, until urban transformation has been developed as a new alternative for the renewal of squatter housing areas, improvement plans were the only solution involving a wholesale clearance and redevelopment from 1-2 storey houses to 4 storey (8 apartments) apartment blocks on regular plots (400 m2 each) with the help of small contractors with a share of 50 %. Thus the squatters were given the right of getting 4 apartments for one squatter house. 50 % of the rent gap had been transferred to the squatter population but currently they are getting only one apartment with a little share of the rent gap. So the municipality should come to a consensus with the squatter population to prevent rejections. This can be achieved by consensus building bodies that will make the necessary agreement with the squatter population and be a mediator between them and the municipality.

However researches show that displacement is unavoidable. The squatter population leaves the project areas in the long-run and most writers claim this to be unprecedented considering the municipalities' attempts in preserving the original population. Yet as Smith (2002:4) argues one way or another gentrification is welcomed by urban boosters as a potential sign of cultural and economic reversal after decades of apparent urban decline.

Seeing the increasing benefit in inner city areas, first corporate developers and then the financial institutions showed a greater willingness to invest in areas they had previously avoided and once blighted neighborhoods soon became more systematic targets.

Thus social consciousness does not have any chance in such a speculative environment mostly shaped by the short-term interests of the power groups. Nonetheless, no matter what is proposed as an element of community involvement in project discussions, it is first the rent gap between land and property and second the life style preferences of both the original population and the newcomers that shape the outcome of urban regeneration process in Turkey. Within the circumstances of a developing country under the effects of global urban restructuring policies, preventing displacement of squatter population in an increasingly prestigious location is a myth.

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