

The Earthquake Discourse as a Strategy of an Urban Renewal: A Case Study into the Karapınar Valley Regeneration Project in Eskişehir, Turkey

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Abstract : The flexible and uneven character of neoliberalism has provided adaptation of urban strategies into the constantly changing circumstances in order to renew and reproduce the neoliberal accumulation model. Instrumentalization of catastrophic events to this end has been one of those global urban strategies. Regarding Turkey, exploitation of natural disasters has been the latest tactic of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government to achieve radical economic goals. 'Unhealthy' and 'risky' structures of squatter settlements have often been articulated while the regenerations, expropriations, and exclusions have been sugarcoated through the discourses of 'reintegrating the shanty zones into the cities', 'supplying healthy housing', and 'win-win' character of the projects. Being the first regeneration project of Eskişehir, the Karapınar Regeneration Project has been initiated in 2011 by the partnership of the Odunpazarı Municipality of the JDP and the Mass Housing Organization. Discourses around the forthcoming disasters, 'risky structures' of the squatters, and the importance of the 'security of life and property' have been utilized, even though the zone is situated on a geotechnically stable area. Yet, many of the locals are worried about the payments while some have already decided to move elsewhere at the outskirts of the city.

Keywords : neoliberal urbanism, urban regeneration, illegal settlements, discourses

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