

Socio-Spatial Transformations in Obsolete Port Regions: A Case for Istanbul-Karaköy District

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Abstract : While, port function had a major role during the antiquity and medieval times, it has started to lose its significance in 19th century. In many port cities, while heavy industrial functions and ports have been moved out of the former port districts, the resulting derelict spaces have been transformed to new waterfront quarters to accommodate commercial, tourism, cultural, residential and public uses. Primary aim of these operations is to revitalize abandoned spaces of historical potential and re-establish a relationship between the city and the coast. Karakoy Port, field of this study, located in the Bosphorus, was surrounded by the city centre in time due to the transformation of urban functions, and as a result it has lost its former significance. While Karakoy has 24 hours lively residential and commercial uses in old times; in early 1980s, became a district of mechanical, plumbing and electronic parts suppliers during the day and a place for homeless at night. Today, activities for revitalization of this region continue in two forms and scales. First of these activities is the "planned transformation projects," which also includes the most important one "Galataport project", and the second one is "spontaneous transformation," which consists of individual interventions. Galataport project that based on the idea of arranging the area specifically for tourists was prepared in 2005 and became a topic of tremendous public debate. On the other hand, the "spontaneous transformation" that is observed in the Karakoy District starts in 2004 with the foundation of "Istanbul Modern Museum". Istanbul Modern, the first contemporary arts museum of the city, allowed the cultural integration of old naval warehouses of the port to the daily life. Following this adaptive reuse intervention, the district started to accommodate numerous art galleries, studios, café-workshops and design stores. In this context, this paper briefly examines revitalization studies in obsolete port regions, analyzes the planned and ongoing socio-spatial transformations in the specific case of Karakoy under the subjects of "planned transformation projects" and "spontaneous transformation", and realizes a critical review of the sustainability of the proposals on how to reinstate the district in the active life of Istanbul.

Keywords : port cities, socio-spatial transformation, urban regeneration, urban revitalization

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