

Resilience and Urban Transformation: A Review of Recent Interventions in Europe and Turkey

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Abstract : Cities are high-complex living organisms and are subjects to continuous transformations produced by the stress that derives from changing conditions. Today the metropolises are seen like “development engines” of the countries and accordingly they become the centre of better living conditions that encourages demographic growth which constitutes the main reason of the changes. Indeed, the potential for economic advancement of the cities directly represents the economic status of their countries. The term of “resilience”, which sees the changes as natural processes and represents the flexibility and adaptability of the systems in the face of changing conditions, becomes a key concept for the development of urban transformation policies. The term of “resilience” derives from the Latin word ‘resilire’, which means ‘bounce’, ‘jump back’, refers to the ability of a system to withstand shocks and still maintain the basic characteristics. A resilient system does not only survive the potential risks and threats but also takes advantage of the positive outcomes of the perturbations and ensures adaptation to the new external conditions. When this understanding is taken into the urban context - or rather “urban resilience” - it delineates the capacity of cities to anticipate upcoming shocks and changes without undergoing major alterations in its functional, physical, socio-economic systems. Undoubtedly, the issue of coordinating the urban systems in a “resilient” form is a multidisciplinary and complex process as the cities are multi-layered and dynamic structures. The concept of “urban transformation” is first launched in Europe just after World War II. It has been applied through different methods such as renovation, revitalization, improvement and gentrification. These methods have been in continuous advancement by acquiring new meanings and trends over years. With the effects of neoliberal policies in the 1980s, the concept of urban transformation has been associated with economic objectives. Subsequently this understanding has been improved over time and had new orientations such as providing more social justice and environmental sustainability. The aim of this research is to identify the most applied urban transformation methods in Turkey and its main reasons of being selected. Moreover, investigating the lacking and limiting points of the urban transformation policies in the context of “urban resilience” in a comparative way with European interventions. The emblematic examples, which symbolize the breaking points of the recent evolution of urban transformation concepts in Europe and Turkey, are chosen and reviewed in a critical way.

Keywords : resilience, urban dynamics, urban resilience, urban transformation

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