

The Effects of Urban Regeneration on the City: The Case of Zagnos Valley of Trabzon Province

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, urban regeneration has become a topic discussed in almost all countries worldwide. Cities exposed to constant change can be compared to evolving living organisms. However, rapid population growth, migration, natural disasters and unplanned construction in cities require external intervention. The process of urban regeneration is in theory one of these needed interventions and should be put into practice in Turkey. Urban regeneration is an approach which seeks to ensure the reconstruction of cities in line with modern urban planning and principles. Urban renewal applications are increasing rapidly in almost every province in Turkey. Each urban regeneration project can have a large or small effect on the city. Trabzon has attracted attention as a city where urban regeneration has been applied intensively in recent years and selected as the pilot subject of this study. In this study, the urban regeneration projects of Zagnos Valley (28 ha), Tabakhane (17.2 ha), Ortahisar (19 ha), Narlibahce (22 ha), Ayasofya (2.13 ha) and Comlekci- 1st and 2nd Phases (2.26 ha) cover a total area of 90.59 ha was evaluated. Within the scope of the project, the urban regeneration of Zagnos Valley was examined. According to the findings, the urban regeneration projects in Trabzon revealed that spatial components are important for urban identity and it was determined that urban regeneration projects within the city should continue.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, urban regeneration practices have been realized in many cities in Turkey, on different scales and varying in quality. Rapid population increase, inadequate supply of affordable land for residential purposes, and economic reality of low-income residents have been the most important reasons behind the squatter settlements all over the world (Uzun and Celik, 2015). It is possible to classify urbanization in Turkey as a driving force that attracts people from the village to the city and as a compelling power that appeals to people in cities. The most important driving force in the migration of the villagers to the city was the replacement of human labor by machines with the emergence of agricultural technology in the 1950s. The rapid increase in the urban population reached a noticeable level as the villagers took their families

with them or brought them there shortly afterward when they migrated to the city (Celik, 2017). Urban regeneration in Turkey is commonly seen together with the problems of urbanization and is implemented as an inevitable "solution". However, in some cases, urban regenerations bring about problems and debates. The positive and negative effects of urban regeneration practices on the city and city dwellers are under discussion and remain a current issue. The fact is that urban regeneration is a popular issue in Turkey and the debates on this issue necessitate a multidimensional examination of urban regeneration projects in our country and their effects. Thus, the general concept of urban regeneration, different examples in our country, and in many instances, the effects of urban regeneration have little by little begun to be investigated by a number of researchers.

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When urban regeneration in Trabzon Municipal Province over recent years is taken into consideration, Trabzon attracts attention as a city where urban regeneration projects have been applied extensively, making it worth examining as one of the most important examples of urban regeneration in Turkey. Consequently, some urban regeneration projects in Trabzon and their effects have been examined by several researchers. On the other hand, the urban regeneration projects in Trabzon are interrelated and as such should be considered as a whole and in this respect, seen as a total sum of the applications. The effects of urban regeneration on the city must be considered, and in the case of Trabzon, the urban regeneration projects are ongoing, but their results and effects have only begun to emerge. In this respect, although an examination of the effects of urban regeneration in Trabzon provides a forward-looking idea, the process must be completed and a certain period of time must pass in order to examine these effects in reality and in all dimensions. Therefore, in this study, the effects of the urban regeneration of Zagnos Valley in the city of Trabzon were examined based on previous studies and the data available on the current situation.

The most distinctive feature of the city is that it has a differentiated and specialized non-agricultural work order and a differentiated and stratified population working in these occupations (Tolanlar, 2007). When moving back to the origin of the city, this feature is clearly seen in the leap from village culture to urban culture. According to Mumford (2007), in the new plane that emerged, the old elements of the village moved into the new urban unit and became part of it, but as a more complex and changing model than in the village. Under the influence of new elements, it was organized in a structure that was prone to other regenerations and developments. Within this new unit, the elements of the human group became equally complex. The hunter, the peasant and the shepherd, as well as other unsophisticated professionals entered the city and contributed to its existence. This new urban blend resulted in the tremendous development of human abilities in all directions.

According to another definition, the city is not only a collection of intense structures designed to provide goods and services to its anonymous inhabitants, but also an active human unity and a moral and socio-economic community in its most developed state (Bookchin, 1999).

Urbanization, like the city, is a concept with a wide variety of definitions from different perspectives. Urbanization in the narrow sense refers to the increase in the number of cities and the population living in urban areas. However, urbanization should be considered and understood as a much wider concept than this because urbanization is not just a demographic phenomenon, but an expression of a multi-dimensional economic, social, political and cultural

process. Urbanization is the economic, social, political and cultural regeneration of society. It is the process of regeneration of a rural society into an urban society as well as the process of change and evolution of urban space and social practices. Taking all these into consideration, it is possible to define urbanization as follows:

“a population accumulative process that, in parallel with industrial and economic development, leads to an increase in the number of cities and the growth of today's cities, increasing the structure of society, creating a division of labor and specialization, and bringing about changes in human behavior and relations” (Kaya et al., 2007).

Although the emergence and history of urbanization is very old, the process of urbanization has gained a new dimension and great speed with the rise and development of industrial societies. The appearance of urbanization as the dominant spatial form on the world scale has arisen with the production-based industrial relations of the modern age. The urbanization process has increased rapidly throughout the world, especially post World War II, and continues to grow. Statistics show that the differentiation between the urban and rural population is constantly turning in favour of the city and thus, they show that the cities, especially the big cities, will shape the destiny and future lifestyle of the people. Therefore, today's urbanization does not appear as an increase in the number of small-scale cities, but rather as an increase in the number of medium- and large-scale cities. For example, in 1975, there were only three cities in the world with a population of more than 10 million, while in 2007 their number had increased to 25. An increasing proportion of the world's urban population is amassing in these big or medium-sized cities (Kaygalak and Isik, 2007).

Urban regeneration is also referred to as “a comprehensive vision and action that seeks to find a lasting solution for economic, physical, social and environmental conditions and provides an answer to urban problems and regional changes” (Turok, 2004). Another definition of urban regeneration states: “In the course of time, urban areas which have lost their character become degraded from the physical and environmental aspects and are faced with social and economic exclusion. With certain social and economic programs, these areas within the city are renewed and transformed” (Yuksel, 2007). Thus, in order for urban regeneration projects to come into play and become a solution, first of all, a part of the city must be in a decrepit state from which it cannot recover and become productive by itself (Ceylan, 2007).

Cities are as old as the history of civilization and have been in constant change since the day they emerged. At the root of the city, there is the phenomenon of the settlement that arose as a result of the necessity of living together with the desire to solve and eliminate the difficulties, problems and

inconveniences that people encounter and cannot solve alone (Kaya et al., 2007).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Evolution of Urban Regeneration in the World and in Turkey

The first applications of urban regeneration in the world emerged as the result of urban growth movements in Europe in the 19th century and the destruction and reconstruction of some areas

(urban renewal). In this period, the urban regeneration processes were realized by the public sector leadership model and were based on two different foundations. In the UK, urban policy was issued with the 1851 Housing Act. In France development interventions were issued for the city of Paris in 1851 –1873 (Sisman and Kibaroglu, 2009). From those years onward, urban regeneration began to spread all over the world (Acikgoz, 2014). The urban regeneration that has evolved is shown in more detail together with the variables in Table 1.

Table 1. Evolution of urban regeneration (Demirkiran, 2008)

Period	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Type of Policy	Reconstruction	Revival	Renovation	Redevelopment	Regeneration
Basic Strategy and Orientation	Reconstruction and expansion of suburban areas; usually based on a master plan	Continuing the understanding of the 1950s; the growth of the suburbs; the beginnings of urban sprawl	Renovation and concentration on neighbourhood projects	Many basic development and re-development projects; naval projects; out-of-town projects	A more comprehensive approach to policies and practices; greater emphasis on integrated education
Key Actors and Financing Owners	Central and local government, private sector developers and contractors	Aiming to balance the public and private sectors	The increasing role of the private sector and decentralization in local governments	Emphasis on private sector and expert units; increasing partnerships	The dominance of partnerships
Field of Action Size	Highlighting of local and regional levels	The emergence of regional levels in actions	Regional and local levels first, then local levels to the fore	Focusing on a local scale at the beginning of 1980	Development of strategic actions; representation of regional actions
Economic Focus	Small private sector investment; public sector investments in general	The growing importance of the private sector in the late 1950s	Mandatory public resources and increases in private investments	Private sector dominance with selective public funds	Increasing balance between public, private sector and voluntary funds
Social Content	Improvement of housing and living standards	Improving social conditions and welfare	Community-based actions and increased powers	Selective government support and the community to see to their own business	Importance of the role of society
Physical state	Importance of internal regions and nearby environmental development	Improvement of 1950s areas and existing areas	Extensive renewal of aging urban areas	Preparation of basic projects for replacement and new development	More unobtrusive preservation/conservation than in the 1980s
Environmental Approach	Landscape and planting	Selective improvements	Environmental improvements with new inventions	Wider-perspective environmental approaches	Comprehensive presentation of the idea of sustainable environment

At first, in the 1980s, Turkey's foreign development was applied as an open export-oriented model. Migration from rural to urban areas began with the security concerns brought about by the political

turmoil in the eastern provinces, bringing about an increase in the urban population ratio. The rapid population growth brought with it squatters and shantytowns. In the 1970s, a holistic regeneration

project was created with the idea that the slum areas should be redeveloped. This was actually the first urban regeneration movement; however, it could not be implemented due to lack of resources. In the 1980s, when competitive policies were implemented, with the re-emergence of the slum problem, large-scale mass housing construction projects were realized with the cooperation of the Turkey Real Estate Bank, cooperatives, private entrepreneurs, TOKI (Housing Development and Public Participation Administration) and local governments.

2.2. Urban Regeneration in the city of Trabzon

The Metropolitan Province of Trabzon, located in the eastern Black Sea region of Turkey, covers an area of approximately 4685 km² and has a population of approximately 800 thousand people. The provincial capital of Trabzon is one of the three most important cities of the region. Zagnos Valley in the Trabzon City Ortahisar District, at an altitude of 37 m above sea level, was selected as the pilot region within the scope of the study (Figure 1).

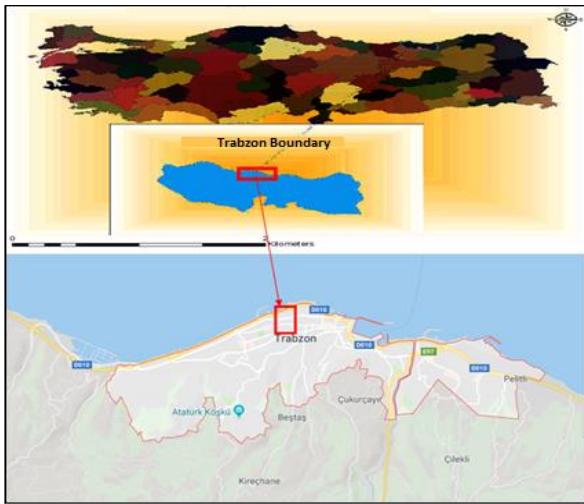


Figure 1. Zagnos Valley in the Ortahisar District of Trabzon

As time progressed, and with rapid population growth, a distorted, unhealthy, congested urban structure had emerged in Trabzon, as in many cities in Turkey, due to various reasons such as unsuitable practices and unplanned growth. As a result, the green valleys had disappeared, the city's airways had become congested and depressed areas devoid of aesthetic began to appear. In other words, urban regeneration had become an inevitable necessity for Trabzon. Therefore, in the last 10 years, various urban regeneration projects have been initiated, covering a large area of the city.

When we look at the urban regeneration projects in Trabzon as a whole, the great extent of the urban regeneration can be understood more clearly. In this respect, Trabzon is a living laboratory for studies on urban regeneration. When

seen as a whole, the urban regeneration projects in Trabzon, including those of the Zagnos Valley (28 ha), Tabakhane (17,2 ha), Ortahisar (19 ha), Narlıbahçe (22 ha), Ayasofya (2.13 ha) and Comlekci Phases 1 and 2 (2.26 ha), cover a huge area totaling 90.59 ha. Trabzon is a large city, with the boundaries of Trabzon Municipality encompassing 3,980 ha, which means that 3% of the provincial capital of Trabzon Province is undergoing urban regeneration.

The Zagnos, Tabakhane, Ortahisar and Narlıbahçe projects, which are located in the vicinity of the old city center of Trabzon, are linked to each other via their different phases and seem like parts of a whole as each project is completed (Figure 2).

It is impossible for all these projects not to have an impact on the city. Each urban regeneration project will make a positive contribution to the city. Within the scope of the study, the urban regeneration of Zagnos Valley was investigated in light of the data that was possible to access.

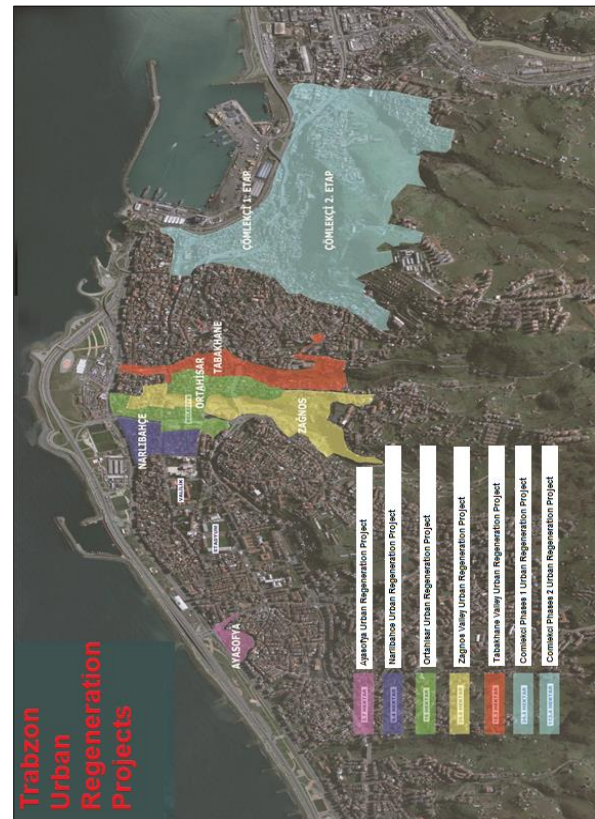


Figure 2. Boundaries of urban regeneration projects in Trabzon

2.3. Zagnos Valley Urban Regeneration Projects

Zagnos Valley is one of the valleys surrounding the ancient city of Trabzon. Zagnos Valley is located close to business centers and government offices. The 1st class historical site of the Ortahisar fortress and settlement is adjacent to Zagnos Valley, with the İmaret Creek to the West, and Tabakhane Valley

and Kuzgun Creek to the East. This valley, which is an important air corridor for the city and which is shown as a green area in the development plans, had become a texture containing negative examples of irregular and shoddy structures and distorted and unhealthy urban construction. Within the historical development process of the city, Zagnos Valley provided a ventilation and green space corridor and had fulfilled this function well until the 1960s (Oksuz, 2010). However, in more recent times, the rapid urbanization and unplanned development generally seen in other countries also appeared in Trabzon, and showed up in this valley. In order to learn more about when and how these developments occurred in the valley, the change in the valley's structure over time was analyzed using geographic information systems (Figure 3 and 4).

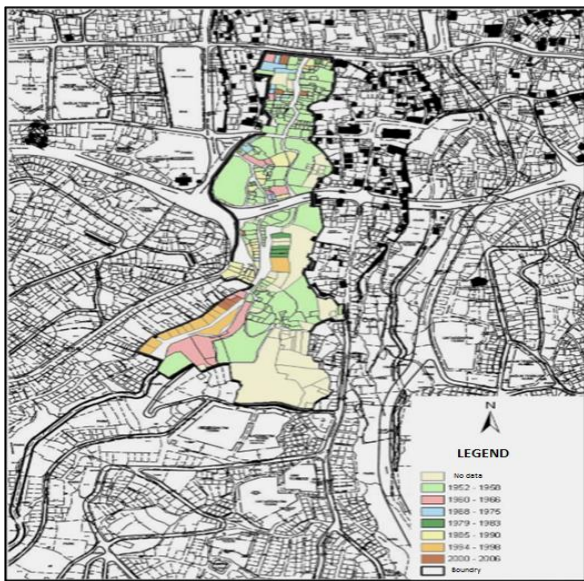


Figure 3. Distribution of parcels in the Zagnos Valley according to their first acquisition date

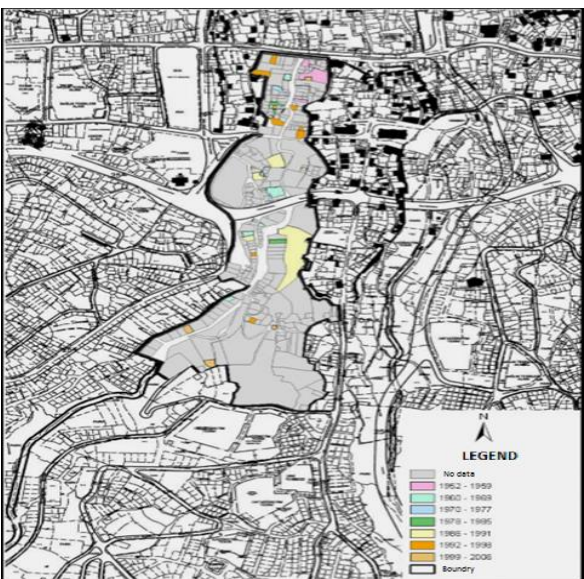


Figure 4. Distribution of the parcels in the Zagnos Valley according to the reasons for their acquisition

According to this data, the majority of the parcels in the area were obtained via a cadastral / allotment process, with intense activity observed during the early acquisition dates between 1952 and 1958. It was determined that some of the parcels in the regeneration area were licensed by taking advantage of the zoning amnesty in 1984 although most did not have a registered license or building permit. When the 1977, 1984 and existing (pre-demolition) construction statuses were compared, a high concentration of construction was observed in the valley in 1977, whereas there was no escalation in construction between 1977 and 1984. After the zoning amnesty in 1984, it was determined that the construction in the valley was gradually expanding and it had reached its final state before the demolition. The urban regeneration process for Zagnos Valley was completed between 2004 and 2014. In this process, a huge area of approximately 28 ha was expropriated (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Buildings in Zagnos Valley before expropriation for urban regeneration

The total cost of the expropriation was 170,308,991.40 TL including additional protocol expenses. In total, 736 buildings were completely demolished under the additional protocol. A total of 580 flats were constructed in place of the demolished buildings, 354 in the first phase and 226 in the second phase. After the regeneration, the valley became wrapped in a breath of fresh air and was transformed into an area of urban organization (Figures 6, 7 and 8).



Figure 6. Zagnos Valley urban regeneration (Phase 1)



Figure 7. Zagnos Valley urban regeneration (Phase 2)

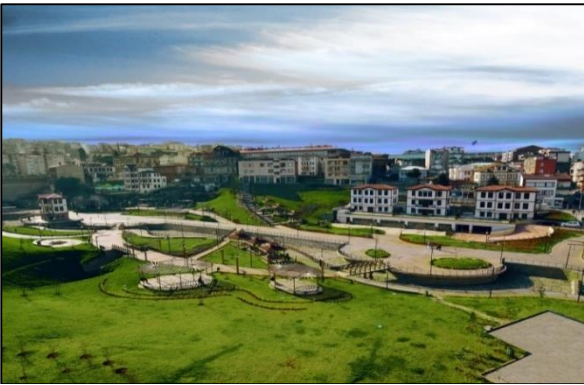


Figure 8. Zagnos Valley urban regeneration (Phase 3)

3. RESULTS

It is a fact that the urban regeneration practices completed and ongoing in Trabzon will have many effects on the city. These effects that begin to emerge are likely to be addressed in a multifaceted manner. The most evident finding from the urban regeneration example in the study was that the urban regeneration practices were a necessity arising from the urbanization problems in Trabzon. The city appears to have rid itself of distorted structures and image pollution and to display a more modern city image, but this was made possible only through urban regeneration. In addition, the urban regeneration project, which covered a large part of the historical area of the city, has helped to reveal the historical texture of Trabzon, made its historical identity more visible and increased its tourist attraction. This aspect of Trabzon is becoming more prominent, especially with the completion of the Zagnos regeneration project. Together with the Zagnos Valley urban regeneration another historical attraction of Trabzon, the city ramparts, has come to the fore. The green areas, which had been destroyed as a result of unhealthy and unplanned construction, have been reintegrated into the city. Increasing these green areas contributes to the creation of a new living space for people. Thus, there has been a

significant environmental impact on the city. Zagnos Valley is in a strategic position and due to its location has a positive effect on the climate of the city with its open-green area and its influence on the city's microclimatic features.

One of the most important criticisms of many urban regeneration practices has concerned the reduction of public spaces. According to this view, as a result of urban regeneration, public spaces are shrinking with each passing day and access to existing ones is becoming increasingly limited. This criticism was taken into consideration for this project. With this regeneration, many commercial areas located in the city centre of Trabzon are very close to public buildings and residential areas and are easily accessible, and new and wide public spaces were gained, with areas for recreation and parking. In this way, the regeneration has made a significant contribution to the people in the city by enabling them to enjoy their free time and carry on their social life.

Apart from all these positive impacts, the most important problem of urban regeneration, that of displacement, has emerged here. The area that was evacuated with the Zagnos Valley urban regeneration project was projected as a recreation area available to the public, making it impossible for the rights holders living in the expropriated areas to be resettled in the same area. For this reason, urban regeneration in the Zagnos Valley was criticized because of the fact that it only dealt with the physical aspects of the process, whereas the social dimension was neglected.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Urban regeneration is a spatial, economic, social and physical reproduction process brought about through conscious interventions in the city. In this respect, urban regeneration is undoubtedly versatile and directly or indirectly brings with it many effects. In the case of Trabzon, the urbanization of the city has been the main characteristic of urban development in recent years, and has defined its direction. In this respect, the effects of urban regeneration in Trabzon should be considered as a whole. Indeed, the parts of this urban regeneration, already mentioned as project phases that complement each other, are tightly bound to each other. However, some parts of the urban regeneration are on-going. Although the consequences and impacts of urban regeneration have partially begun to emerge and can provide an idea of what to expect, in order to examine these effects in all their economic, social and spatial dimensions, the urban regeneration process needs to be completed and a certain period of time needs to pass. On the other hand, when we look at the possible effects of the current urban regeneration in Trabzon, it can be seen that the positive effects outweigh the negative on the scales by a very big margin.

Urban regeneration in Trabzon has contributed to the economic and social development of the city, eliminated its polluted image, and increased the green areas and public spaces as a whole, in addition to improving the quality of life. Moreover, as a result of this study, the city's historical identity, its ramparts and its identity as a seaport have demonstrated that urban identity has a vital function and reveals very important spatial components. For this reason, the other urban regeneration projects in the city of Trabzon should be completed and additional ones should be designed and implemented. Local governments and decision-making bodies should set new goals.

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