



# An Evaluation in terms of Public Interest on Privatization and Regeneration of Public Lands: İstanbul

Kamu Arazilerinin Özelleştirilmesi ve Dönüşümünde Kamu Yararı Perspektifinde Bir Değerlendirme: İstanbul

Jülide Alp<sup>1</sup> 

## öz

*Kentsel dönüşüm, özellikle 1980'lerden sonra küreselleşmenin ve kentler arası yarışın hızlanmasının etkileriyle, kentsel planlama sürecinin önemli araçlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Bu süreçte, ekonomik performansı, kültürel/geleneksel kimliği ve turizm potansiyeli ile öne çıkan büyük şehirler, dünya genelinde yaygınlaşan sosyal, kültürel, teknolojik ve ekonomik değişimler ve beklentiler doğrultusunda yeniden yapılanmıştır. Geçmişte endüstriyel üretim alanları olarak işlev gören kentler, artık hizmet sektörünü de içinde barındıran yeni prestij alanlarına dönüşmektedir. Son yıllarda eski işlevini yitirmiş çöküntü alanları kentsel yeniden yapılanma süreçleri altındadır. Son zamanlarda kent merkezlerinde bulunan kamu arazileri de kentsel dönüşüm gündemine girmiştir. Bu tür yenileme süreçlerinde kamu arazilerinin özelleştirilmesi en temel yaklaşımdır ve bu nedenle kamu yararının korunması en kritik konudur. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, özelleştirme politikalarının kentsel dönüşüm sürecindeki rolünü belirlemek ve İstanbul'daki çeşitli kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin bu çerçevede analizini yapmaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kentsel Dönüşüm, Kamu Yararı, Özelleştirme, Kamu Arazisi, İstanbul

## ABSTRACT

*Urban regeneration has become one of the most significant instruments for the urban planning process particularly after the 1980's with the effects of globalization and the acceleration of the race between cities. Thus, the metropolitan cities that stand out with their economic performance, cultural/traditional identity, and tourism potential have been restructured due to the social, cultural, technological, and economic changes and expectations that spread throughout the world. Cities known for their industrial areas and productions in the past are now turning into innovative productions and new prestige areas where the service sector is concentrated. In recent years, old industrial areas, warehouses, which had lost their former functions, have undergone the urban transformation processes. More recently, public lands located in city centers have been incorporated into the agenda of urban regeneration. Privatization of public lands is the most basic approach in such regeneration processes and therefore protecting public interest is the most critical issue. The main objective of this study is to identify the role of privatization policies in relation to the urban regeneration process and to provide an analysis of several urban regeneration projects in İstanbul.*

**Keywords:** Urban regeneration, public interest, privatization, public land, İstanbul

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Maltepe Üniversitesi, [julidealp@maltepe.edu.tr](mailto:julidealp@maltepe.edu.tr), ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1180-5608



## INTRODUCTION

Urban regeneration has become one of the most significant instruments for the urban planning process, particularly after the 1980s with the effects of globalization and the acceleration of the race between cities. In this context, the metropolitan cities that stand out with their economic performance, cultural/traditional identity, and tourism potential, have been restructured in line with the socio-cultural, technological, and economic changes/expectations that have become widespread worldwide. Cities known for their industrial areas and productions in the past are now turning into innovative productions and new prestige areas where the service sector is concentrated. In this process, urban transformation projects are among the common implementation tools used for the redevelopment/refunctioning of these areas. In recent years, old industrial areas, warehouses, and ports, which had lost their former functions, have undergone urban transformation processes. These areas are particularly preferred for regeneration projects given that they are equipped with adequate infrastructure and are in central locations (Önal, F. & Sadri, S., 2007, pp.24).

More recently, public lands located in city centers have been incorporated into the urban regeneration agenda. Urban land demand for the needs of the increasing population and the increase in land values in the city center are the two leading causes. Privatization of public lands is the most basic approach in such regeneration/transformation processes. During these processes, protecting the public interest in the privatization policies is the most critical issue. In Turkey, the privatization of public lands on behalf of major capital owners is one of the main discussion points, especially last twenty years. The privatization of public lands in metropolitan areas such as İstanbul with a high population density is frequently criticized by the public. At the forefront of these discussions is the opportunity to create “accessible public spaces for all” of privatized areas and should be evaluated for this purpose. The main objective of this study is to identify and analyze the role of privatization policies in relation to the urban regeneration process. The paper discusses the relationship between urban regeneration and privatization policies and analyzes three urban regeneration projects in İstanbul.

### 1. Relation Between Urban Regeneration, Public Interest and Privatization Policies

The urban regeneration concept that has been studied by many researchers has several definitions and perspectives. It is generally defined as developing the physical, economic, social, and ecologic conditions of the deprived areas and their reintroduction to the city. Urban regeneration is a comprehensive and integrated vision and action that leads to the resolution of urban problems and seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social, and environmental condition of an area subject to change. (Roberts, P., 2000 & Sykes, H., (2000) From another perspective, urban regeneration refers to the renewal of the decayed parts of urban areas, a complete transformation of empty urban lands, rehabilitation of deprived squatter housing areas, and infrastructure redevelopment. (Ergun, C. & Gül, H., 2011, pp.157) As a general approach main objectives of the urban regeneration concept are; sustainable development, preserving urban identity, revitalizing economic life, ensuring participation, and improving/maintaining the quality of urban life (Kocabaş, A., 2006). Add to these definitions, urban regeneration is a set of actions in which various actors can participate and many socio-economic urban planning actions, policies, and economic decisions are associated. (Kalağan, G., Çiftçi, S., 2012, pp.123)

In many European countries after 1980, public-private partnerships with the participation of different actors are seen in the revitalization strategies created to ensure economic recovery. In this process, while the public sector initiates the project, the private sector is active in the implementation process. The possibility of the private sector having other long-term demands regarding the environment of the

project area conflicts with the responsibility of the public sector to protect the principle of public interest. Therefore, in this “dual role” in public-private partnerships both being a party to the collaboration and trying to preserve the principle of public interest are challenging for the public sector. (Özdemir D., 2004)

In this context, it is necessary to develop a "public interest" perspective that considers different socio-economic groups in a sustainable and inclusive urban transformation process. There are many different opinions from different disciplines regarding the concept of public interest. The concepts of public, public space, public opinion, and public interest are widely discussed in social sciences, urban planning, and architecture disciplines. Before considering the concept of public interest the meaning of the “public” must be defined correctly. In the Turkish Language Institution general dictionary, the first definition of the word public is: “All state organs serving the public” and the second is: “The whole of the people in a country”. Today, the first thing that comes to mind when “public” is mentioned, like its first equivalent in the dictionary, is the institutions. However, contrary to the definition in the dictionary, the first/original meaning of the word “public benefit” should be the benefit of the people. (Karaca S., Kiper, N., 2011, pp:78)

Urban planning discipline discusses the issue of public interest from the perspective of social state understanding. In this framework, the planning institution defines itself as the defender of the public benefit and builds its plan approach on this main philosophy. (Karaca S., Kiper, N., 2011, pp:80) But in today’s conjuncture, the public interest approach is a matter of discussion again due to neo-liberal policies and capital hegemony. In particular, the conflict between the demands/expectations of large capital groups and the public interest is one of the main topics of the discussion.

In this process, the existence of public lands makes it easier for urban planners to direct urban development despite market trends. Public lands are the main source that strengthens the hand of urban planners in establishing the public interest and creating public spaces. It can be said that these areas are like an oasis in the desert, especially in metropolises such as İstanbul, which are under pressure of intense construction and where land values are top. The privatization of public lands has been one of the vital components of urban regeneration policy since the 1980s, given that lack of land has become an important issue during the city development process. The general meaning of privatization corresponds to withdrawals from public spheres (Star,P., 1988, pp:9). The privatization approach, which emerged with the basic philosophy of downsizing the state after the 1980s, has come to the fore in many countries with the effect of globalization and the increase in the race between cities. Nowadays, privatization is performed in a way that hands resources and usage rights over to the private sector. Public lands are among the areas that are the subject of privatization. Due to the intensification of urban regeneration projects in cities, public lands have become one of the most popular areas for the private sector.

## 2. Privatization of Public Lands Through Urban Regeneration Projects in İstanbul

Over the last two decades, urban regeneration has been widely recognized as a comprehensive and integrated vision and action to resolve the multi-faceted problems of urban areas and to improve the economic, physical, social, and environmental conditions in deprived areas (Müge Akkar, 2011). During this reconstruction process, depressed areas in the core of the cities were usually rearticulated into the city in terms of physical and socio-economic aspects through urban transformation projects. The developments described above are seen in many developing country cities like İstanbul. With that process, the regeneration of old industrial areas was carried out first, and public lands in the city center were then included in the agenda.

In the 1980s, migration from rural areas to cities and the increase in urban population density have been decisive in the development of cities in Turkey. Neoliberal policies became prevalent in Turkey in the 1980s after European countries in the 1970s. In this period, the opening of the Bosphorus Bridge I (1973) was one of the important breaking points in the formation of İstanbul. The rapid industrialization and the formation of residential areas on the west side moved to the east side with the construction of the bridge. Until this period the E-5 corridor was used as the middle and upper income group housing areas of the city. In parallel with the rapid urbanization process, these areas evolved into industrial and lower income group residential areas. As a result of these developments, the upper income groups preferred to settle along the shores of Bosphorus and Marmara. The main determinant force in the growth of the city in this process is the location choice of the industry. It is seen that the upper-middle-low income groups are constantly changing their place in the city with the effect of the displacement of the industrial areas. (Akin, O., 2012)

After 1980, public lands especially in the city center and its immediate surroundings began to be seen as a new source for public deficits. In this period, with the Tourism Encouragement Law No. 2634 (1982), many private and public entrepreneurs were encouraged to make large-scale investments (hotels, marinas, swimming pools, etc.) in the central points of the city. By the beginning of the 1990s, globalization, and regional economic integration approaches started to appear. With this period, the industrial function which constitutes the dominant center power of the city tends to go out of the city periphery and afterward. İstanbul, with its increasing land/rent values, is in the process of transformation/concentration from industry to a central function and spreading towards the city periphery. The areas emptied by the industry were rapidly becoming the subject of services sector structures and big housing projects. (Akin, O., 2012) In this period, so many large-scale redevelopment/regeneration projects were commenced in big cities where industrial areas were heavily concentrated. In particular, the privatization process brought about by the transformation in the fields of public industry areas/lands has opened the public interest to discussion.

The 2000s in Turkey was a period when new economic decisions were made. During these years, the government in Turkey decided to boost the economy by means of real estate and land. For this purpose, investments in the banking sector were promoted. Interests for housing and consumer loans were cut down, and loans were given to anyone who fulfilled the conditions. Throughout this period, the primary objective was to generate land for new investments. Thus, new laws were enacted, and out of these laws, the most important law was about the restoration and usage of dilapidated historical and cultural immovable properties. In the shortest and most explicit term, the law in question can be referred to as the “Urban Transformation Law” (Law No.5366) (Tanrıverdi & Alp & Görgülü, 2014)

In this process, urban transformation projects have been seen in squatter settlements & depressed traditional housing areas & districts that lost their function (for example, old manufacturing sites, terminal areas, and docks). With these projects, gated sites for upper and middle-income groups (located in forest areas on the periphery of the city), high-rise sites (in old shanty regions of the city center), and gentrification interventions (historical city center) have been seen.

As a consequence of all these developments, many urban regeneration projects have come to the agenda, particularly after the 2000s. In this process, the risk of earthquakes and buildings under threat have played a significant role. The underlying reasons were the devastating earthquake in 1999, and the political will to focus the economy on construction. After the 2000s, the Privatization Administration and TOKİ were granted increased authority through the amendments made to the privatization and housing laws. In addition, the control of the local government to make plans has been transferred to the central government.



Figure 1. Some of the Privatized Public Lands in İstanbul (Alp, J.)

1. Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory, 2. Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority, 3. Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology, 4. Paşabahçe Tekel Factory., 5. Ali Sami Yen Stadium, 6. Galataport, 7. Haydarpaşa Port, 8. Koşuyolu Darüşşafaka Land, 9. Beşiktaş Tobacco Warehouse, 10. Cevizli Tekel Factory, 11. Lengerhane, 12. Alibeyköy Power Plant, 13. Cibali Tekel Factory, 14. Feshane, 15. Erenköy Provincial Directorate of Agriculture.

After the 2000s, it is seen that urban transformation projects are mostly in the districts located in the city center. TOKİ, whose authority has been expanded with the legal regulations, cooperated with the private sector in many business centers, luxury residences, and shopping mall projects developed especially on public lands. The Torun Center, Quasar İstanbul, and Zorlu Center can be listed as examples of the architectural projects that were constructed utilizing the laws mentioned above. In addition, especially in public lands adjacent to the Bosphorus and Golden Horn shores such as Haliçport, Galataport, and Haydarpaşaport are hot topics on the agenda, particularly with their privatization and implementation processes. (Figure 1). The most critical discussion about these projects is that the central government doesn't consider public objections during the privatization and the new plan decision process developed against the local government plan decisions.



### 3. Sample Project Areas

In recent years, public lands/buildings in the city center and its immediate surroundings have been the topical areas for transformation and privatization projects. The most common means of transforming public lands is privatization by the government and opening them up for construction in favor of capital. Therefore, the privatization of public lands and the transformation of these areas against the “public interest” has been criticized the whole time by the public, professional chambers, and non-governmental organizations. In order to analyze this situation, three recent examples from İstanbul are chosen. These cases were chosen based on the fact that:

- They were located in the city center in areas with high rent values,
- They were located in areas with high-density construction where the need for public open space is high,
- They have potential large lands that can provide the diversity of use of open public spaces for all citizens,
- They were the subject of numerous appeals submitted by NGOs particularly due to the privatization processes and the high floor area ratio (FAR) values,
- They were completed in recent years, and
- They have led to and still lead to heated debates.

Quasar İstanbul Project (Mecidiyeköy Liqueur and Cognac Factory Public Land), Zorlu Center Project (Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority Public Land) and Four Winds Project (Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology Public Land) forms the main material of this study.

#### 3.1. Transformation from Mecidiyeköy Liqueur and Cognac Factory to Quasar İstanbul

The Liqueur and Cognac Factory located in Mecidiyeköy was one of the important industrial structures of İstanbul’s industrial heritage. (Table 1). The building was designed by French Robert Mallet-Stevens and it’s his only structure outside of France. The Liqueur Factor building was designed with an approach that carries Art Deco lines. Stevens designed the entrance pavilion as a plain mass with curved lines and the main production factory structure as a gallery and multi-storey. The Mecidiyeköy Liqueur and Cognac Factory was settled in a field of full mulberry trees. The Liqueur and Cognac Factory production, which started in 1930, continued its function until 2000. After the end of production in 2000, the building was used as an office for different public administrations till 2008.

The old Liqueur and Cognac Factory and its marvelous mulberry garden had an essential role in İstanbul’s urban identity and memory because of their historical, environmental, spatial, and social characteristics. The factory was registered because it was the first factory that produced liqueur from natural fruits in surrounding land, and it was one of the notable examples of modern industrial architecture in our country. İstanbul Board of Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation No. 2 registered the building in 2006.

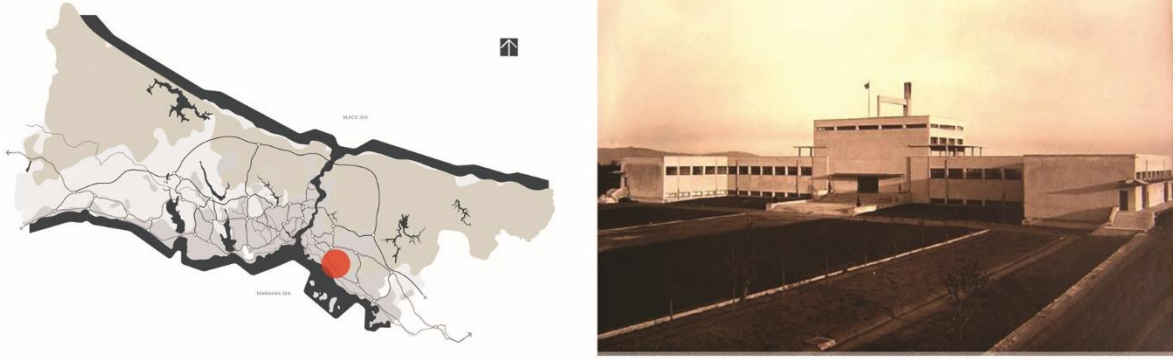


Figure 2. Location map and image of the Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory

In 2007; it was announced that the property of the land was transferred to TOKİ<sup>2</sup>. TOKİ, then, permitted to build a mix-used function on the land. In 2008, a new plan was prepared according to new functions, and the IMM<sup>3</sup> approved the change in the plan. After plan decision changes in the land, three different tenders were held in April, May, and July in 2008 for the sale of the land. A partnership consisting of four companies won the third tender with the peak offer. In 2009, a lawsuit was filed by the Chamber of Architects on the grounds that the plan change approved by the IMM was contrary to the public interest. The 10th Administrative Court of İstanbul judged for the suspension of execution.

In 2011, the CNHB<sup>4</sup> drew attention to public objections and wrote a report demanding a reconsideration of the project. In response, The IMM stated that the project proposal is suitable for the environment in terms of aesthetics and placement. Then, the central government decided to split the CNHB into two separate boards to avoid these objections. In the process of making all these legal arrangements, a decision was taken by The CHCB<sup>5</sup> to protect the current factory building. In this process, the government's approach to transforming the land into an investment tool and the approach of the boards to protect the factory building and land came face to face. Due to the ongoing discussions and the need for a common approach, in 2012, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Development established a new board and gave the approval authority on the land to this institution. The new board, the NHCB<sup>6</sup> No. 2., approved the project in a very short time.

The zoning plans approved by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in 2013 were canceled again with the decision of the İstanbul 5<sup>th</sup> Administrative Court dated 07.10.2015. However, the construction process started and continued without waiting for the conclusion of the lawsuit filed in 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Housing Development Administration of Turkey

<sup>3</sup> İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality

<sup>4</sup> Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Board

<sup>5</sup> Cultural Heritage Conservation Board

<sup>6</sup> Natural Heritage Conservation Board

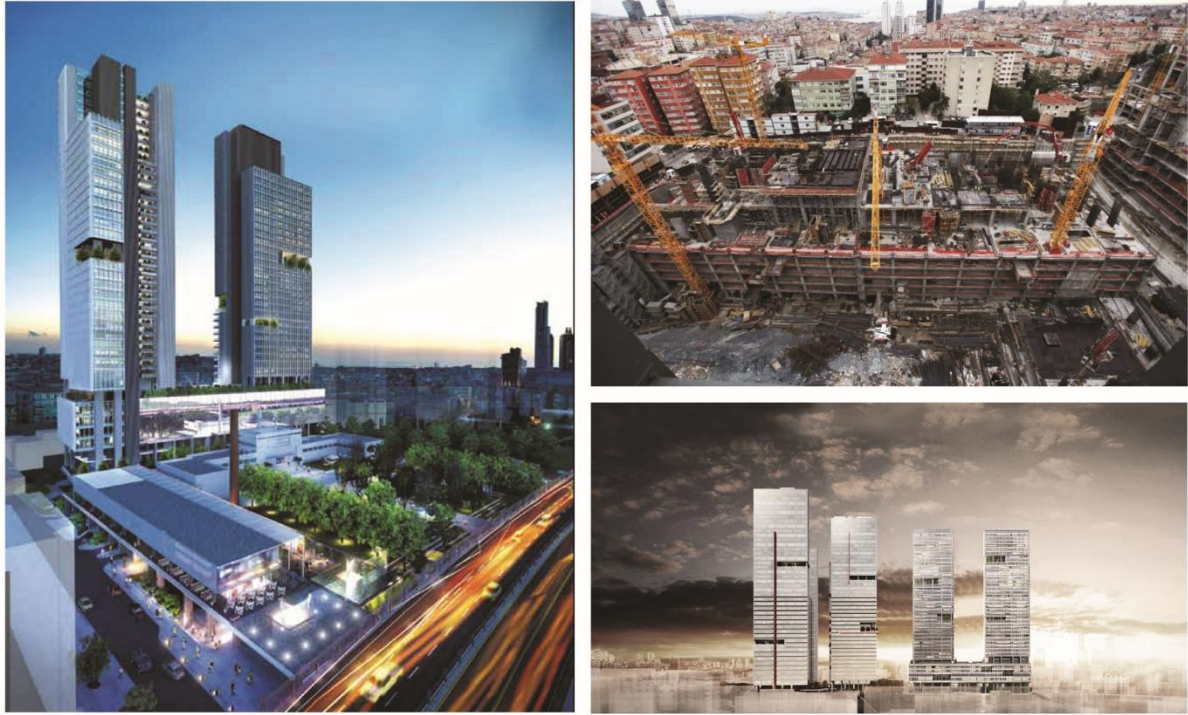


Figure 3. Images of the the Quasar İstanbul

In 2013, the project designed by Emre Arolat Architects was put up for sale under the name “Quasar İstanbul”. The project area is 23,700 sqm, and the construction area on this land is 189,620 sqm. Quasar İstanbul is located very close to Mecidiyeköy Square, and it is a mixed-use project including residences, offices, and shops (Table 1).

	Before Privatization	After Privatization
<b>Name</b>	Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory	Quasar İstanbul
<b>Land Property</b>	Public land	Aşçıoğlu-Ofton-Meydanbey-Omak Construction Partnership
<b>Main Function</b>	Industry (4600 sqm)	Mixed-use: residential, office, commercial (189.620 sqm)
<b>Tender Price of the land</b>	-	Privatized 83,150,000 US dollars
<b>Urban Identity</b>	Industrial building	Mixed-use
<b>Public Used</b>	-	-

Table 1. Details of the Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory and Quasar İstanbul

The controversial aspects of the project include the regeneration of public land, the high-density development (previous FAR<sup>7</sup> on the project site: 0.20, approximate FAR of the project: 5.60, FAR in the immediate surroundings of the project site: 2.50), the demolition of registered industrial heritage, and the neglect of public interest. In this context, the privatization of public land that is located at the heart

<sup>7</sup> FAR: the ratio of the total construction area to entire land area.



of Mecidiyeköy; the detriment of the public sector, and the demolition of the Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory despite the board's opinion in favor of the protection of the building have been widely discussed and criticized.

### 3.2. Transformation from Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority Building to Zorlu Center

The building of the 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority in Zincirlikuyu was one of the registered contemporary architecture buildings in Turkey (Table 3). Mehmet Konuralp was the architect of this building. The building is a part of the whole complex which was built by the 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority to handle and overhaul the Istanbul Bosphorous Bridge and the highways. There were administrative, technical, and social functional buildings (Directorate Office Buildings, Traffic Safety and Control Services, Warehouses and Ateliers, Social Facilities, Guesthouses, Public Housing, etc.) on the site. The implementation of buildings other than the Regional Directorate Building was between 1973 and 1976.

The Regional Directorate Building (1980) was one of the important examples of contemporary architecture in Turkey and was the first building that constituted a curtain wall. On account of two main features, İstanbul Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Boards No. 3 registered the building in 2004.



Figure 4. Location and image of the Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority

In February 2007, the Directorate of the Privatization Administration initiated a tender for the public-owned Highway Authority site. In March 2007, Zorlu Group won the tender, and the site was transferred to the group with a ceremony held in May 2007. In June 2007, a design competition was launched called "Zorlu Center Architectural and Urban Design Competition". In March 2008, the projects submitted by Emre Arolat and Murat Tabanlıoğlu won the competition, and the two architects designed the project together. In May 2008, the Chamber of Architects, Survey Engineers, and Civil Engineers filed a lawsuit against the privatization of the Highway Authority site. The Council of State judged the suspension of execution, and thus, the construction on the site came to a halt. The Zorlu Group objected to the decision. In September 2009, the Council of State accepted the objection submitted by the Zorlu Group, and the construction resumed.

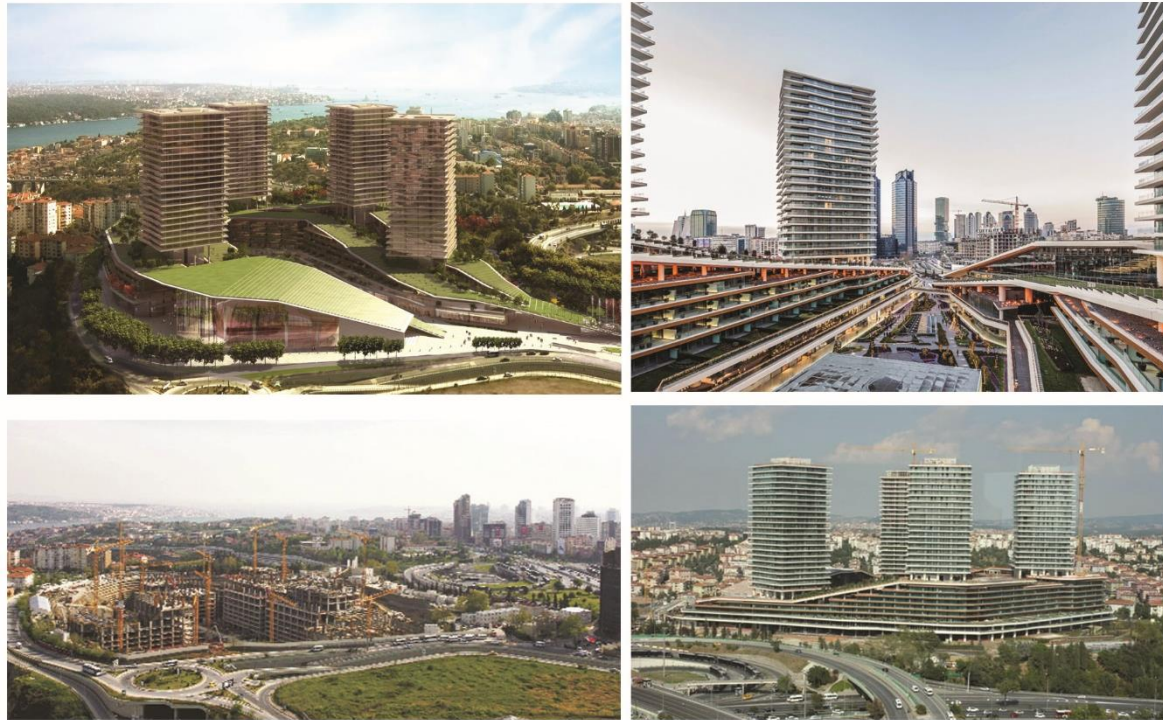


Figure 5. Images of the Zorlu Center

In 2013; the project designed by Emre Arolat Architects and Murat Tabanlıoğlu Architects was introduced to media with the name of “Zorlu Center”. The total size of the project area is 102,000 sqm, while the total construction area is 615,885 sqm, and the entire green area is 72,000 sqm. Zorlu Center is very close to Zincirlikuyu, and it is a mixed-use project featuring a mall, residences, offices and shops. (Table 2)

	Before Privatization	After Privatization
<b>Name</b>	17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority	Zorlu Center
<b>Land Property</b>	Public	Private (Zorlu Group)
<b>Main Function</b>	Public Building (7000 sqm)	Mixed-use (615,885 sqm)
<b>Tender Price of the land</b>	-	Privatized 800,000,000 dollars
<b>Urban Identity</b>	Contemporary architecture building	Mixed-use (mall, residential, office, commercial)
<b>Public Used</b>	Social facility, guesthouse, public housing	-

Table 2. Details of the Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority and Zorlu Center

The controversial aspects of the project include the regeneration of public land, the high-density development (previous FAR on the project site: 0.10, approximate FAR of the project: 4.25, FAR in the immediate surroundings of the project site: 2.50), the demolition of registered industrial heritage, and the neglect of the principle of public interest. In this context, the privatization of public land located at the heart of Zincirlikuyu in favor of the private sector and the demolition of the 17th Regional

Directorate of the Highway Authority which was one of the registered contemporary architecture buildings have been widely discussed and criticized by the general public.

### 3.3. Transformation from Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology to Four Winds

Located near the Göztepe Freedom Park, the plot of the Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology that was one of the significant urban open areas in Göztepe-Kadıköy. In 2004, the property was privatized by the State Treasury. Taşyapı Group won the tender, and it was agreed that Taşyapı Group would receive 40% of the benefit while the State Treasury would receive 60%. The State Treasury held a new tender to transfer its share when the construction was finalized. Thus, the entire plot was privatized.



Figure 6. Location and image of the Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology

A portion of the green area in the plot was zoned for construction, and this decision triggered the first objection against the privatization of the plot. In May 2008, the Chamber of Architects and the Kadıköy Municipality sued against the plot. The Council decided on the suspension of execution in 2008. Despite objections, Taşyapı Group drafted a new construction plan that includes new construction areas such as basement floors, which was approved by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipal Council. Kadıköy Municipality filed an appeal to the Council of State regarding the new plan. However, the construction continued, and the 45-floor-high “Four Winds” towers were completed.



Figure 7. Images of the Four Winds

Taşyapı’s “Four Winds” project, located very close to the Göztepe Freedom Park, commenced in 2004, and it is a residential project. The total land area is 44,500 sqm, and the total area of construction is 116,500 sqm. (Table 3)



	Before Privatization	After Privatization
<b>Name</b>	Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology	Four Winds
<b>Land Property</b>	Public	Private (Taşyapı Group)
<b>Main Function</b>	Public Building	Residential
<b>Tender Price of the land</b>	-	First, a flat-for-land agreement was made (40% Taşyapı, 60% public), and then the publicly-owned 60% share was privatized for a total of 105 million dollars
<b>Urban Identity</b>	Weather station	Luxury residence
<b>Public Used</b>	-	-

Table 3. Details of the Göztepe Meteoroloji Public Land and Four Winds

The Regional Directorate of Meteorology asked for an opinion from the Kadıköy Municipality to make an Automatic Meteorological Observation Station in the Göztepe Freedom Park which is just near the “Four Winds” towers. The mayor of Kadıköy, Aykurt Nuhoğlu said “Public lands need to be used according to the needs of public interest, especially in metropolitan areas. Formerly, the opinions of all the institutions were taken into consideration for the sale of public lands. The Regional Directorate of Meteorology has been making measurements in Kadıköy for 80 years. After the privatization of the meteorology’s plot, the measurements were made in the two new stations located in Moda and Marmara University. Then, due to the commencement of construction at Marmara University, they have to search for a new location for the station. From a scientific point of view, making measurements in an area for 80 years is quite significant. Being aware of this, we assigned an area to them. We should all take a lesson from this story. There is now a need for this area that was sold 13 years ago. Luckily, the Göztepe Freedom Park is here, and they can establish a weather station there...” (URL 16)

The controversial aspects of the project include the regeneration of public land, the demolition of the weather station, the construction of a massive high-density development (previous FAR on the project site: 0.40, approximate FAR of the project: 2.85, FAR in the immediate surroundings of the project site: 2.00), and the failure to adopt the principle of public interest. In this context, the privatization of the public land located near the Göztepe Freedom Park to the detriment of the public sector and the demolition of the weather station has been widely discussed and criticized by the general public.

#### 4. Conclusion

Privatization which has become a prevalent tool of globalization can be seen all over the world with many different approaches. Particularly, the privatization of public lands in favor of capital owners, the making of plan decisions according to the interest of privileged groups, and the transformation of natural, historical, and cultural values into investment tools are the general approaches in the transformation of cities.

As mentioned above, privatization policies and many transformation projects in İstanbul are examples that cause these discussions. The pieces of land that are the subject of privatization activities performed with the motivation to generate economic resources are generally located in central areas of the city. These privatization activities may seem to be for public benefit, but they enable the



conversion of public interest to private interest and the transformation of public spaces into private spaces.

When the interventions transformed by privatization policies on public lands in İstanbul, it is apparent that there are so many discussions. The privileged zoning decisions taken in favor of entrepreneurs and investors; the privatization of public lands/areas of public use; the transfer of ownership and property rights to the private sector by sale or long-term lease; the destruction of natural/historical/cultural areas/assets; ignoring urban areas and structures that are important for urban identity and memory are approaches that do not consider the public interest.

An overall assessment based on the case studies presented above reveals that many NGOs (particularly the Chamber of Architects) filed appeals during the preparation and implementation of the projects on three former public lands, which are in a central and valuable location. All three projects were primarily criticized because privatization policies that neglect public use/public good were adopted, the privatization processes were not transparent to the public, the construction resumed regardless of the objections of NGOs as well as the general public, and the projects were assigned with FAR values way above the vicinity of the project. Without a doubt, the main disadvantage of all three projects is the approach that ignores “public benefit”, and that overlooks the sustainable-participatory planning approach (Table 4).

Consequently, looking at all the above discussions and sample project example processes, defending the public interest and ensuring its sustainability is quite challenging. The approaches of different actors that prioritize/not prioritize the public interest in the process are decisive. Therefore, the key to success is the consensus of all stakeholders (public & private) from a public interest perspective. In this context, the development of new planning policies, legislation, and participation mechanisms are necessary for the public use of public lands. Public lands are an essential opportunity for metropolises such as İstanbul to create “accessible public spaces for all citizens”. In this sense, these areas should be redesigned and included in urban life with a public interest perspective.

Table 4. Details of Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory, Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority and Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology

Project Name	Date on which the site was privatized	Date when the project was prepared	Stakeholders (public)	Stakeholders (private)	Appeals filed against the project	Previous & new land-use of the site		Status of the project
Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory Public Land – Quasar İstanbul	2007	2013	Mecidiyeköy Liqueur Factory, TOKİ	Aşçıoğlu-Ofton-Meydanbey-Omak Construction Partnership, Emre Arolat Architects	In 2009, the 10th Administrative Court of İstanbul judged for the suspension of execution. In 2012, the Natural Heritage Conservation Board No. 2. approved the project.	Public Factory	Mixed-use (residence, office, shops)	Complete
Zincirlikuyu 17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority - Zorlu Center	2007	2013	17th Regional Directorate of the Highway Authority, Directorate of the Privatization Administration, the Chamber of Architects, Survey Engineers and Civil Engineers	Zorlu Group, Emre Arolat and Murat Tabanlıoğlu architects	In 2008, the Chamber of Architects, Survey Engineers and Civil Engineers filed a lawsuit against the privatization of the Highway Authority site. The Council of State judged the suspension of execution. The Zorlu Group objected to the decision. In September 2009, the Council of State accepted the objection submitted by the Zorlu Group, and the construction resumed.	Public Office	Mixed-use (mall, residential, office, commercial)	Complete
Göztepe Regional Directorate of Meteorology – Four Winds	2004	2013	State Treasury, the Chamber of Architects, Kadıköy Municipality	Taşyapı Group	In May 2008, the Chamber of Architects and the Kadıköy Municipality sued against the plot. The Council decided on the suspension of execution in 2008. Despite objections, Taşyapı Group drafted a new construction plan and the new was approved by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipal Council.	Public Weather station	Luxury residence	Complete

## Compliance with the Ethical Standard Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethics Committee Permission: Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.

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