

Unveiling the role of the state in Istanbul's urban transformation: Insights from Galataport redevelopment

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Abstract: In recent decades, the redevelopment of waterfronts in global cities has become a focal point for large-scale real estate investments, often driven by neoliberal policies. These projects, characterized by the increasing involvement of state agencies, aim to transform obsolete industrial areas into lucrative spaces for tourism, commerce, and luxury living. This article scrutinizes the intricate dynamics of state-led waterfront re-development, through the lens of Istanbul's Galataport project. It analyzes the multifaceted dimensions of the transformation process, shedding light on the historical backdrop, socio-political underpinnings, and economic imperatives that have shaped the development of Galataport from 2002 to 2022. Through a comprehensive analysis of primary sources, including governmental reports, policy documents, and scholarly literature, the article accentuates the pivotal role of the state and state actors in orchestrating the transformation of Istanbul's urban landscape. Furthermore, it examines the implications of the Galataport project on urban governance and socio-cultural and spatial dynamics. It concludes that the central government pursued a speculative entrepreneurial approach in the Galataport project, clearing various legal obstacles while neglecting public interest. This case study takes the first step towards a comprehensive critical re-evaluation of the recent urban development/governance model to contribute to a nuanced understanding of contemporary urban/waterfront development paradigms in Türkiye and similar geographies.

Keywords: Galataport; state-led redevelopment; urban entrepreneurialism; waterfront redevelopment; urban transformation; Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier

1. Introduction

The world's cities have undergone significant spatial transformations and structural changes through the utilization of neo-liberal policies. Capital has intensified large-scale real estate investments in obsolete industry and infrastructure areas in urban centers (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2008). In addition to old factory and storage areas, former waterfront and port areas have attracted global interest as redesigned luxury residences, offices, shopping, entertainment, and tourism accommodation centers (Brownill, 2013; Davidson, 2020; Gonzales, 2010; Norcliffe et al., 1996; Rossi and Vanolo, 2015). In these waterfront developments, including those in European and other metropolises, one of the most essential variables in the last two decades is the increasing involvement of local and central state agencies as actors (Bassett et al., 2002; Kennedy, 2015; Oakley, 2009; Sandercock and Dovey, 2002). The institutional arrangements that global cities have adopted to compete with each other are distinguishing features from the early periods of neoliberal urban transformation (Machala and Koelemaij, 2019), which argue that urban problems can

be solved by market forces and by minimizing state intervention. Waterfronts, which provide significant land to redevelop, have become important elements of the entrepreneurial state approach in urban transformation in global cities (Hermelin and Jonsson, 2021; Jansen, 2015; Perić, 2019; Pow, 2002; Thompson et al., 2020).

In the last two decades, the redevelopment of Karaköy-Salı Pazarı Pier into Galataport illustrates the Turkish State's assertive leadership in urban transformation across Istanbul and Türkiye. Initiated in 2002 under a build-operate-transfer model for mixed development, the Galataport project encountered numerous legal hurdles, plan revisions, and conflicts involving central government agencies, local professional chambers, and non-governmental organizations. National and global investment firms also played integral roles in the project's tender and construction phases. Amidst these dynamics, professional chambers of local architects and planners with some local NGOs engaged in ongoing debates concerning public interest and socio-spatial impacts. Throughout these processes, the central government and relevant institutions assumed a dominant role, persistently and intransparently managing project obstacles through regulatory oversight, strategic planning adjustments, and legal interventions to force the project into compliance with their agenda. The purpose of this research is to reveal the state's role and approach by examining the redevelopment of Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier into the Galataport project, arguing that the central government adopted a speculative urban entrepreneurial approach through maneuvers taken over two decades to realize the Galataport Project

Following a short introduction to the evolution of urban entrepreneurialism and historical developments in urban waterfront redevelopment, this article explores the shift from public-led urban governance to a business-dominated governance model, highlighting the role of the state in waterfront redevelopment. Through a comprehensive literature review, legal document analysis, and supplemented by quantitative data on real estate prices, the article analyzes the economic and social impacts of the transformation of the Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier into Galataport project. The findings reveal how the Galataport Project illustrates the AKP government's broader urban transformation strategy in Istanbul, characterized by a shift towards centralized, neoliberal governance. The Galataport project, along with other large-scale urban initiatives, underscores the prioritization of tourism, commerce, and global competitiveness at the expense of public access and local involvement. This redevelopment process, marked by legal complexities and opposition, ultimately resulted in gentrification, limited public access, and the commercialization of a historically significant waterfront. So, instead of a multi-targeted local government/municipality initiative, the Galataport Project prevails as the central government's ambitious project to create a globally attractive urban environment to grasp the rising property values and transfer them to limited elites. Through the descriptive examination of the exemplary Galataport redevelopment process, this article argues that the AKP's state-led initiatives to foster economic growth through private capital investment in a speculative urban entrepreneurial manner led to the expense of social welfare and highlight the central government's strengthened position in intransparently shaping urban governance and the urban landscape. This study is significant as it takes the first step toward a comprehensive critical re-evaluation of the recent urban development/governance model, while calling for further scholarly

inquiry to understand the Galataport Project's long-term socio-economic consequences.

2. Literature review: Urban entrepreneurialism, waterfront development and state

In his seminal work Harvey describes the end of federal financial support to cities in the early 1970s as a shift from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism in the U.S. cities and in other major capitalist countries (Harvey, 1989). According to him urban governance was becoming much more important than urban government in reorganizing urban life (Harvey, 1989). Instead of providing welfare to the local community, in this era, urban governance became primarily preoccupied with the deployment of local resources to attract investment by private capital (Boyle and Hughes, 1994, p. 453). Besides announcing the end of Keynesian welfare economics, urban entrepreneurialism, according to David Harvey, is characterized by three key features. First, it involves a significant shift in urban governance from public-led to business-dominated models, often through public-private partnerships. This shift prioritizes economic growth over social welfare. Second, it emphasizes speculative flagship projects designed to enhance a city's image and attract investment, often at the expense of local communities. These projects frequently target declining urban areas, transforming them into gentrified spaces. Finally, the benefits of such development are often captured by external actors, such as tourists and mobile capital, rather than the local population. This spatial mismatch between investment and benefit distribution is a core critique of urban entrepreneurialism (MacLeod, 2002, p. 604).

Phelps and Miao (2020) in their essay scrutinize the term urban entrepreneurialism and define new varieties of governance models such as new urban managerialism, urban diplomacy, urban intrapreneurialism and urban speculation. Depending on local democratic conditions and public participation, urban policy might have these defined forms coexisting simultaneously. According to their work, however, urban speculation has become the latest standard for local governments in India, Malaysia and some cities in Africa to attract capital from newly emerging capital hot spots like Dubai, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Mumbai (Phelps and Miao, 2020, p. 12). Building on the concept of urban entrepreneurialism, we can now explore how it manifests in waterfront development.

Urban waterfront development has its origins in imperial trade and military expansion, particularly beginning in the 14th century. It accelerated and intensified during the industrialization of the 19th and 20th centuries (Davidson, 2020; Hein, 2016). However, by the late 20th century, industrial decline led to a decrease in industry-supported ports, posing challenges in urban contexts worldwide. As a global trend since the 1970s, the redevelopment of declining ports and waterfronts has become integral to urban policy (Avni and Teschner, 2019; Davidson, 2020; Hein, 2016; Hoyle 2002; Kostopoulou, 2013). These initiatives represent postindustrial urban renewal schemes predominantly influenced by a neoliberal framework (Davidson, 2020). Postindustrial port redevelopment under neoliberal urban policy schemes often involves private sector-led development and the circumvention of traditional planning protocols, leading to a lack of public accountability (Davidson,

2020; Sandercock and Dovey, 2002). This approach prioritizes the discourses of the private sector and its place marketing, resulting in gentrification and the commodification of waterfront spaces, while frequently overriding local interests and democratic procedures (Davidson, 2020, pp. 247–249; Oakley, 2009). Brownill (2013) identifies shifting phases of waterfront development dominated by different actors since the 1970s. According to her, waterfront redevelopment began in the 1970s with high-profile projects in Baltimore and Boston, transforming abandoned port areas into mixed-use spaces through public-private partnerships. By the 1980s, the focus shifted to mega-projects like Canary Wharf in London, emphasizing private sector investment, which highlighted both the economic potential and controversies of such regeneration efforts (Brownill, 1993; Ward, 2011). Schubert (2011a) identifies the third phase in the 1990s in continental European ports like Barcelona and Hamburg, which used participatory planning approaches within broader city strategies. The fourth phase, as noted by Shaw (2001), saw the concept spreading globally to smaller cities and various waterfronts, with developments in cities like Dubai and Shanghai becoming symbols of modern global city status (Brownill, 2013; Yiu, 2011). What we distinctively see in that phase is the involvement of the state through its agencies and enterprises, which has been labeled as the age of urban entrepreneurialism (Bruns-Berentelg et al., 2020; Phelps and Miao, 2020; Rossi and Vanolo, 2015; Taşan-Kok, 2010). The state's role in urban development is multifaceted, particularly in waterfront projects.

As a distinct form of urban redevelopment (Avni and Teschner, 2019), port transformation has been the subject of urban politics and studies, highlighting the recently increasing role of state actors. As noted elsewhere, the state's role is significant in both urban and port transformations. Despite expectations that neoliberal politics would reduce state power in governance (Peck and Tickell, 2002), the state's involvement in urban redevelopment has intensified over the last two decades (Weber, 2002). Conservative liberalism, as noted by Swyngedouw (2002), maintained a close relationship with state intervention, using urban revitalization to address interurban economic crises. Governments have built “cultural spectacles, enterprise zones, waterfront developments” to meet urban entrepreneurialism demands (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Taşan-Kok, 2010). They devised strategies to adapt the built environment to real estate capital's investment preferences (Weber, 2002). The state and its related agencies have become more involved in redistributing urban land and utilizing public properties through urban transformation processes, involving real estate investment trusts, major developers, and specific state agencies (Miraftab, 2004; Weber, 2002). On a global scale, through big urban projects, governments aim to attract global capital and increase land rent to redistribute the wealth from local to global (Aalbers and Haila, 2018). Neoliberalism has fostered collaboration with the state to initiate prestigious projects aligned with global city aspirations, leveraging urban space transformation for broader state initiatives, particularly in the global South (Arıcan, 2023; Bogaert, 2018; El-Kazaz, 2014). Local and central governments have embraced this process as “entrepreneurial” actors (Harvey, 1989). Having established the significant role of the state in urban redevelopment, we now turn our attention to the specific case of waterfront redevelopment.

Waterfront redevelopment is a complex process driven by a combination of

factors including technological advancements, increased environmental awareness, sustainability goals, economic revitalization, social benefits, and political aspirations (Hein, 2016; Oakley, 2009; Sairinen and Kumpulainen, 2006). The growing urgency of climate change and rising sea levels has further accelerated this trend (Brownill, 2013). Historically, economic development was the primary focus in port redevelopment projects, as exemplified by Baltimore's Inner Harbor. However, since the 1980s, a shift towards mixed-use developments in former port areas has become prevalent, such as in Barcelona, London, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Hamburg. While often framed as urban regeneration and social uplift, these projects frequently prioritize aesthetics and commercial interests over the complex needs of existing communities (Russo, 2016). Although social justice and sustainability concerns have emerged since the 1980s, they often remain secondary as illustrated by Sandercock and Dovey (2002) in Melbourne's Riverscape Revitalization. The extent to which these developments genuinely benefit residents or urban identity, rather than merely serving as showcases for architectural and economic prowess, is a subject of ongoing debate, as they often concentrate wealth through large-scale urban transformation (Jauhiainen, 1995; Merrifield, 1993).

The actors involved in waterfront redevelopment have diversified as well. Initially dominated by public sector entities, the process now increasingly involves public-private partnerships with a wider range of stakeholders, including private developers, financial institutions, experts (architects, engineers, and planners), community groups, and residents (Brownill, 2013). Examining specific case studies can illuminate the diverse approaches cities take to waterfront redevelopment.

Doucet's research on repurposing obsolete ports in Western Europe highlights examples like Rotterdam's Kop van Zuid and Glasgow's Port initiatives (Doucet, 2012). In Glasgow, the public sector facilitated the project due to substantial private land ownership, while Rotterdam's local government led the project, fostering "entrepreneurial city" attributes crucial for global competitiveness, but at the same time maintained the project to meet some crucial urban issues (Doucet, 2012). Three European redevelopment projects—in London, Barcelona, and Rotterdam—illustrate different facets of the transformation process with different driving factors.

In the early 1980s, the London Docks Development Company (LDCC) began managing the London Harbor Transformation under Thatcher's government. Although a public-private cooperation, LDCC operated independently, transforming the area into a free enterprise zone with minimal regulations (Brownill, 2011; Schubert, 2011b). In the 1990s, a shift towards participatory planning focused on social integration and effective governance, emphasizing social housing, mixed land use, and infrastructure development under the Greater London Authority (Brownill, 2013).

Barcelona's Port Vell underwent a transformation after winning the 1992 Olympic Games bid, transitioning from an industrial to a tourist-centric city, reshaping its industrial identity (Schubert, 2011b). The city's entrepreneurial urban management model emphasized underground infrastructure, pedestrian-friendly designs, and tourism-oriented attractions, creating a globally competitive city (Schubert, 2011b).

Rotterdam responded to the 1970s economic downturn by modernizing its port, adding industries, refineries, and logistics services (Schubert, 2011b). Entertainment

areas and housing projects for various social groups were developed, balancing public and private investment for social sustainability (Schubert, 2011b; Taşan-Kok and Sungu-Eryılmaz, 2011).

Starting in the 1970s, global port redevelopment initially focused on enhancing attractiveness through office and leisure activities. Early examples like Baltimore and Boston Harbors were private sector-driven, focusing on city beautification rather than social welfare. Subsequent projects like those in London and Amsterdam saw a shift towards collaboration between public and private sectors aiming at both project development and social benefit (Brownill, 2011, p.124). While London's local state prioritized entrepreneurs, Rotterdam exemplified state, primarily local government, intervention to regulate projects prioritizing the public interest (Taşan-Kok and Sungu-Eryılmaz, 2011, p.260). Even though their success rate remains open to debate, these port renewal projects have diversified their targeted issues by including social and sustainability challenges, housing needs, and employment opportunities, with broad public participation and public investment to achieve these objectives.

3. Materials and methods

This article aims to demonstrate the prominent role of the Turkish government in urban redevelopment processes by examining the transformation of Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier and its surrounding area. It primarily examines the trajectory of changes from 2002 to 2022, but whenever necessary, some major developments are included before and after this period, as well. The research is grounded in a comprehensive and systematic literature review of the redevelopment of Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier/Galataport project, which served as the foundation for data collection and analysis. A systematic exploration was conducted encompassing scholarly literature and professional publications all focused on the Galataport project and Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier. This thorough examination covered the period spanning from the project's inception in 2002 through June 2022, including printed and online academic and professional publications, and news articles, all centered around the keywords "Karaköy", "Salıpazarı Pier" and "Galataport" (**Table 1**). For this purpose, academic publications were gathered from reliable international and national sources including Web of Science, Scopus, and Dergipark databases. Additionally, Master's and PhD theses within the archives of the Turkish Council of Higher Education-National Thesis Center were also examined.

In this context, while all these documents and studies encompass academic research on the redevelopment process, they generally remain somewhat neutral in presenting different perspectives on the process. Our aim in this study is not merely to track developments in the process but to identify different opinions that emerged during these developments, including those who experienced the process together yet held differing views, and even those who offered critical perspectives on this project and the redevelopment process. Therefore, we aimed to access writings presenting different ideas about the project, the redevelopment process, and even those critical. In this regard, we systematically scanned articles published in publications related to the fields of planning and architecture, including publications of professional bodies opposing-criticizing the project through legal means since the beginning.

Consequently, we included publications from the Turkish Chamber of Urban Planners and the Chamber of Architects including Planlama (Planning), Mimarlık (Architecture) and Mimar.ist., and urban and architecture related digital platforms including Arkitera, and XXI. Furthermore, some news articles and internet sites were also included in the exploration when necessary. In addition to keyword searches, the laws influencing urban transformation processes and practices were assessed as part of the literature review. The literature review also encompassed waterfront redevelopment worldwide and urban redevelopment challenges in Türkiye and Istanbul, although not with the same systematic approach as the Karaköy/Salıpazarı Pier redevelopment section.

Table 1. Literature search* sources-types, document numbers for Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier and Galataport project.

Source	Search result	Screened Documents
Web of Science (WOS)	10	10
Scopus	7 (2 of them excluded because of the duplicate with WOS)	5
Dergipark	9	9
YÖK-Thesis Center	106	106
Publications of the Chamber of Architects & the Chamber of Urban Planners	Mimarlık	8
	Mimar.ist	7
	Planlama	0
Articles/News from urban and architecture related digital platforms	Arkitera	159
	XXI	1
Total Number of Documents		305

* Note that for the all inquiries the same keywords (Galataport; Karaköy; Salıpazarı) and time periods (2002–2022) were used.

The outcome of these efforts resulted in the creation of a detailed bibliography about the Karaköy-Salıpazarı port redevelopment and the Galataport Project organized in five-year increments spanning 2000 to 2024. The amassed data from the detailed bibliography was synthesized with theoretical foundations, leading to the presentation of results delineating developments spanning a two-decade interval.

While the conceptualization was based on qualitative data from the literature, pre-project and current real estate prices of some representative streets in the Galataport area were compiled and quantitative indicators were also used to explain and verify the increased real estate value after the urban transformation and the indirect economic and social effects related to it. For this purpose, the market value of the real estate in each street representing the period between 2000 and 2024 was retrieved from the related website of Beyoğlu Municipality. The current price (market value) of real estate is a tax-based value determined per square meter by the local government to determine the annual real estate tax.

4. Findings: The position of the state and the development of the Galataport project

4.1. Urban transformation in Istanbul

Since the early 2000s, under the neoliberal economic program of the new AKP (Justice and Development Party) government, the adoption of fragmented project approaches in cities emerged as a significant factor contributing to economic growth. As an indicator of the AKP government's urban-based economic growth strategy, the share of the construction sector in national income was 4% in 2002, exceeded 7% in 2007, and was recorded at around 8% in 2017 (KPMG, 2021). In globalization, the focus shifted towards making spatial arrangements to enhance the global attractiveness of urban environments, prioritizing the competitiveness of big cities in the global real estate market over the mobilization of productive capital. With its rich cultural and historical areas, Istanbul was seen by the AKP government not only as a part of economic growth but also as an area for a socio-political transformation project with its large urban projects and renewal initiatives in this period (Eraydın and Taşan-Kok, 2014; Lovering and Türkmen, 2011). In this context, it was observed that the urban transformation movement in Istanbul is clearly distinguished from similar examples in Europe and North America (Lovering and Türkmen, 2011).

Until 2011, the AKP government's primary objective, according to Aksoy (2014), was the implementation of neoliberal policies to enhance Istanbul's global competitiveness. However, this period shifted towards increasingly centralized decision-making processes, sidelining local governments and professional organizations in urban planning, indicative of an authoritarian approach. The transition from the developmental state model to the globalist state paradigm, initiated in the 1980s and solidified in the 2000s, marked a significant ideological transformation (Gündoğdu and Gough, 2009). Under the AKP's leadership, the vision for 2023 prioritized advanced democracy, economic growth, societal strength, environmental sustainability, and city branding, aiming to elevate per capita income from \$14,000 in 2011 to \$25,076 in 2023 (AKP, 2011 as cited in Aksoy (2014, p. 28)). This trajectory reflected a strategic reorientation towards global economic integration, with Istanbul as a focal point for transformative policies.

Within the framework of this vision, it was aimed that Istanbul would be one of the ten largest financial centers in the world by 2023. The total population was expected to reach 17 million by adding two new cities to the existing city. For this purpose, the vision of the Istanbul Metropolitan Master Plan prepared in 2009 for the reconstruction of Istanbul in the process of globalization was determined as "...a world metropolis that can compete on a global scale, has a high quality of life and is part of an information society" (İBB, 2009; Lelandais, 2014). To achieve this vision, during the AKP government, the city underwent a comprehensive structural transformation aimed at reducing the manufacturing industry's share of the workforce to below 25% by 2023. The transformation aimed to establish a globalized urban economy focused on information and information-based services with particular emphasis on the finance and informatics sectors. Creating such an environment sought to increase the spatial quality to lure global investors (Aksoy, 2014). However,

concerning the transformation of Istanbul in the new period, there have been significant alterations in spatial intervention policies, aligning with the government's emphasis on bolstering the construction sector for economic growth. Over the past two decades, local municipalities have lost authority in planning decisions, which have been transferred to the central government-affiliated institutions. Notably, the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) of the Presidency of Türkiye, primarily tasked with providing housing for low-income social segments, has gained increased powers, converting publicly owned lands into profitable real estate projects, often emphasizing luxury housing in collaboration with private capital through revenue-sharing practices. Between 2002 and 2008, the legal and administrative framework regulating TOKİ's activities underwent fourteen revisions, reflecting the construction economy's strategies and financial resource creation approaches in this field (Balaban, 2016).

Another significant legal document impacting the urban planning agenda was Law No. 6306 dated 2012 on the Transformation of Areas Under Disaster Risk. This law primarily seeks to accelerate urban renewal by leveraging disaster risk. Empowering the Council of Ministers to designate "risky areas" centralizes planning authority only in the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change. Activated by risk reports or approval from two-thirds of property owners, the law facilitates renovation at different scales, including individual parcels (Kuyucu, 2020, p. 15). After the 2010s, disaster threats were instrumentalized by the central government to encourage rent-oriented urban transformation projects that attracted the attention of both domestic and foreign capital. Although initially aimed at earthquake preparedness, the law has come under criticism for accelerating short-term land-rent transfers and encouraging gentrification, ultimately leading to social exclusion and displacement (Elicin, 2014).

Regarding the transformation of Istanbul increasing the recognition of the city on a global scale and securing inflows of financial resources from outside with investments to be made in the field of real estate are some of the most important policies of the AKP government (Şengül, 2015). With the announcement of Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture in 2010, large-scale urban projects such as Haydarpaşaport, Galataport, Kanal Istanbul, and Haliçport, which aimed to increase the global recognition of the city as a whole, came to the fore (İslam, 2010). These projects have been subjected to intense criticism due to the restrictions imposed on the public use of waterfront areas and the ecological inconveniences they will create due to their scale. In addition, the lack of participation of local people in the formation process of these projects, the exclusion of NGOs operating on the rights of the city and citizens from the process, and the lack of transparency are seen as the most crucial shortcomings (Karaman, 2008).

4.2. Redevelopment of Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier: The Galataport project

The Karaköy-Salıpazarı port, situated on Istanbul's historical peninsula, has traditionally served as a pivotal hub for both freight and passenger traffic, as well as foreign trade (Erbil and Erbil, 2001, p. 186) (**Figure 1**). By the early 1990s, it became evident that the port couldn't maintain its competitiveness as a freight terminal due to its size and location. The central government started to take steps to develop the port

not only for cruise passenger activities but also a tourism and commercial-oriented project through urban transformation. Consequently, the focus shifted towards developing a publicly-owned land into a tourism and commercial district. Even before the AKP government, The Turkish Maritime Corporation (TMC), which fully owned the land of around 100,000 square meters, initiated an international design competition in 1990 to conceptualize a modern cruise port, hotels, offices, and commercial spaces (Gönül and Gürsel, 2016).

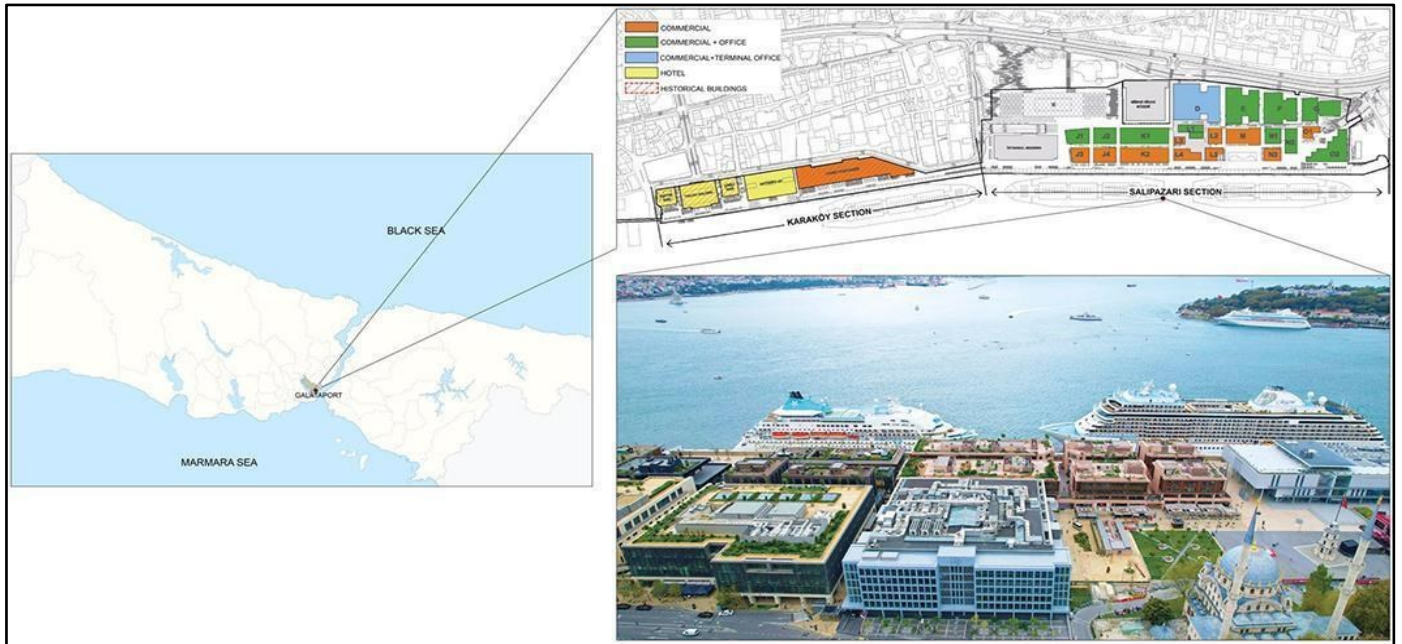


Figure 1. Galataport Project and its location in Istanbul.

Map: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>; Plan: Leaflet. (n.d.); Photo: Trthaber. (n.d.).

To expedite the urban transformation independently of local planning authorities like Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Beyoğlu District Municipality, the government before AKP, designated the entire area as a “Special Tourism Zone” as early as 1995 (Yapıcı, 2008). This moves vested planning authority in the Council of Ministers, removing it from local administrations at both metropolitan and district levels. This strategic maneuver aimed to streamline decision-making processes and accelerate the transformation of the area into a vibrant tourism and trade hub, illustrating the complexities of urban development and governance in historical urban centers like Istanbul.

Regarding the transformation in the area, both the local neighborhood associations in the same region and the professional organizations in Istanbul began the process of objecting to the project through legal means, claiming that the transformation of the area into a commercial function would prevent public access to the waterfront. First, the Istanbul Branch of the Chamber of Architects objected to the regulation that envisaged the transfer of local planning authority to the central government with a lawsuit filed in 1995. However, this objection was not accepted by the high court’s decision in 1998. Similarly, although they did not initiate a legal process, Cihangir and Galata neighborhood associations stated that the project would cause more problems than solving the current difficulties experienced by the

residential areas (Erbil and Erbil, 2001, p.188).

4.2.1. Shifting gears (2002–2005): From industrial port to tourist hub

This was the period when the initial vision was set to transform the port. With the rejection of the lawsuit filed in 1998 regarding the suspension of the project, TMC, as the sole representative agency of the central government, began preparing a “build-operate-transfer” project in March 2002 for the transformation of the Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier. A prominent Turkish architect prepared the first architectural project for the area. The project related to the area was approved by the Istanbul No. 1 Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in April 2005. In the same year, the first tender for construction was held and, the consortium led by Royal Caribbean Cruises won the project, which was to be realized with the “build-operate-transfer” model at a cost of 3 billion 538 million Euros (Yıldız et. al, 2015).

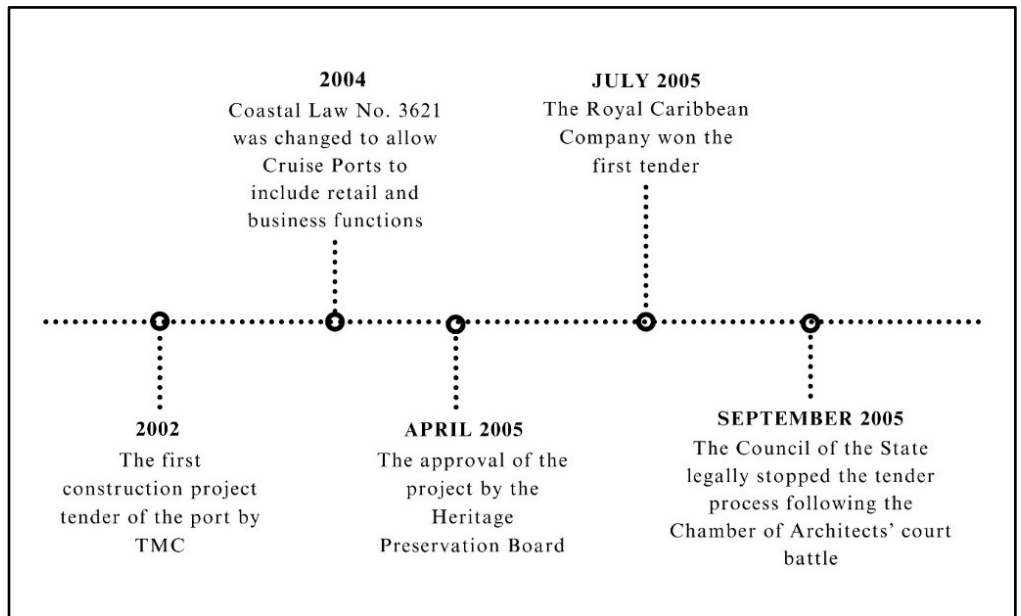


Figure 2. Timeline for the major developments between 2002–2005.

However, due to the lawsuit filed by the Istanbul Branch of the Chamber of City Planners against the zoning plan amendment developed for constructing the cruise port, the 6th Chamber of the Council of State decided to stop the execution in September 2005. The project tender that was made with this decision was also canceled (**Figure 2**). The Minister of Transport at the time, Binali Yıldırım, stated that they would immediately pursue the appeal process against the court’s decision and that the project’s tender process would continue without interruption. The 6th Chamber of the Council of State also ruled that since the area was a region in the privatization process, the authority to make plans here was not the Ministry of Culture and Tourism but the Privatization Administration of the Prime Ministry of Türkiye (**Figure 3**).

One of the most critical legal obstacles the central government faced in the Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier transformation project was the relevant implementation regulation of Coastal Law No.3621 dated 1990. The Ministry of Public Works and Settlement in 2004 amended the Implementation Regulation of this law. The term

“Cruise Port Function” was added to the regulation. With this change, it became possible to add functions such as food and beverage facilities, shopping centers, accommodation facilities, and offices as complementary parts of a contemporary cruise port, which were prohibited previously by law in coastal and filling areas. This change prepared the legal ground for tourism, business, and shopping functions in the Karaköy-Salıpazarı project as well as for the Haliçport and Haydarpaşaport projects, which were in the process of transformation in areas with similar spatial conditions (Aydemir et al., 2015).

ACTORS (2002-2005)	
Proponents	Opponents
*Turkish Maritime Cooperation *Istanbul No.1 Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board *The first architect of the project (M. Tabanlıoğlu) *The consortium led by Royal Caribbean Cruises *The Ministry of Transport *The Ministry of Public Works and Settlement	*Istanbul-Chamber of City Planners *The Council of State

Figure 3. Major actors in the period.

4.2.2. Legal labyrinth (2006–2010): Centralized control and legal obstructions

As the central government’s politics insist on completing a modern cruise port with many commercial units on a publicly owned waterfront, various legal complexities that arose during the planning process marked this period. In November 2006, the Privatization Administration (PA) of the Prime Ministry of Türkiye, which took over the land from the TMC, prepared a new zoning plan and applied for approval to the Istanbul No. 1 Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board. However, the Board canceled the plan proposal by sending it back in February 2007 on the grounds of violating of the relevant regulations. Similar to the practices seen in many urban transformation projects in the 2000s, the planning authority in the Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier transformation process was carried out under the domination of the central government agencies. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, TMC, PA, Heritage Preservation Boards, and metropolitan and district municipalities supported the project in line with the opinion of the central government. In this process, however, as observed in many other urban projects of the era, public participation in the planning process often did not go beyond the “catalog promotion” dimension. For this reason, legal objection processes have been the most effective way of expressing the views and reactions of local administrations, civil society, and city dwellers regarding the relevant projects. Similarly, in the Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier project, at almost every stage, professional organizations brought aspects of the project to the judiciary through legal objections (Figure 4).

In addition to being interrupted many times by directly related judicial processes (Figure 5), the project also experienced interruptions in the planning processes that

affected the entire city of Istanbul. The most important of these was the decision of the Istanbul 2nd Administrative Court to stay execution in March 2008 upon the lawsuit filed by the Chambers of Environmental Engineers Istanbul Branch for the cancellation of the 1/100.000 scale Istanbul Metropolitan Master Plan. With the cancellation of this plan, which was expected to guide the city for the next 25–30 years, the upper plan framework that would have enabled a project on the scale of Galataport to come to life also disappeared. The new Istanbul Metropolitan Master Plan, which was prepared within a year, was accepted and entered into force in June 2009, and thus, the upper-scale plan that would form the basis of the Galataport project emerged.

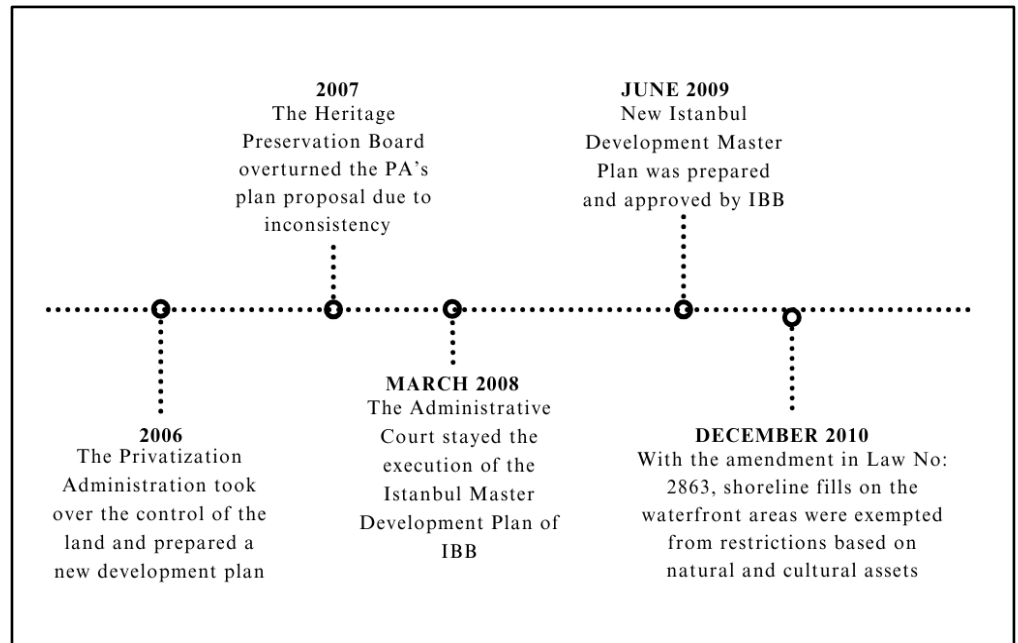


Figure 4. Timeline for the major developments between 2006–2010.

ACTORS (2005-2010)	
Proponents	Opponents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The Privatization Administration *The Ministry of Culture and Tourism *The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization *Ministry of Public Works and Settlement *Istanbul Metropolitan and district municipalities *Istanbul 2nd Administrative Court *Istanbul Museum of Modern Arts (IM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Istanbul No.1 Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board. *Istanbul Chamber of Environmental Engineers

Figure 5. Major actors in the period.

One of the most important legal obstacles to the realization of projects that will enable the transformation of old port areas, such as Galataport, Haliçport, and Haydarpaşaport, is the Coastal Law No. 3621 regulation. As mentioned in the previous

section, to enable investors to include commercial uses in those projects, the coastal law was revised in 2004 to allow the projects various commercial functions if a project was designated as a 'Cruise port'. Additionally, another change was made by the central government again in December 2010 to provide more opportunities for investors to meet the demands of the spatial arrangement of the waterfront areas. With the amendment that was made, it was stated that the provisions of Law No. 2863 dated 1983 on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets could not be applied in the areas obtained through shoreline fill in the waterfront areas. Thus, in addition to permitting the construction of commercial buildings, the law regulating land use in historically registered areas was removed from being an obstacle to the project. Due to the presence of registered historical buildings such as the Turkish Maritime Corporation building, the historical Passenger Terminal, the Çinili Han, and the historical Post Office within the scope of the Galataport Project, a part of the area was classified Historical Urban Heritage Site. With this law amendment, the authority to approve the zoning plan in the area, including the registered buildings, was given to the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, thus expanding the intervention area of the central government regarding the project. Consequently, in 2005, an amendment was introduced to the same law, resulting in a substantial relaxation of construction restrictions in coastal areas, and the planning authority in the area was predominantly handed over to the relevant unit of the central government (Topçu, 2017).

Since the beginning of the 2000s, when the Galataport project came to the fore, it has been evident that the warehouse areas built for the old port functions have been reserved for alternative uses. The warehouse building, numbered 4, was reserved for the use of the Istanbul Modern (IM) Museum. This building was intended to serve temporarily for the Museum until the actual construction of the Galataport project was completed. IM, which was opened with the participation of Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2004, was a momentous investment in terms of creating a triggering effect in the combination of fine arts activities with tourism, entertainment, trade, and office activities in the Galataport project and the urban transformation process around Karaköy (Polo, 2013). Despite operating in a temporary building and under spatial conditions that were not satisfactory in terms of international standards, IM has led to the opening of new studios and galleries in the Karaköy and Tophane neighborhoods, which has led to rent hikes and gentrification in the surrounding quarters (Polat, 2016).

4.2.3. Public vs. private (2011–2015): The battle for the waterfront

By the late 2000s, a debate arose concerning public access to the waterfront area and the project's impact on it. The discussion centered on the limitation of public use due to the increased presence of commercial buildings, including a five-star hotel with a shoreside garden and swimming pool, which effectively restricted waterfront access. After the first tender for the Galataport project, held in April 2005 and canceled by the Council of State in September 2005, the second tender was held in May 2013. Unlike the conditions in the first tender, the 'transfer of operating rights' method was adopted instead of the 'build-operate-transfer model' in the new tender (**Figure 6**). While the right to operate was given for 49 years in the first tender, this period was reduced to 30 years in the tender in 2013. Doğu Holding, which submitted a bid of 702 million USD in this tender, won the bid. In the statement made by the company, it was stated

that the project cost would be 1.4 billion Euros (Megaİstanbul, n.d.; Yılmaz, 2014).

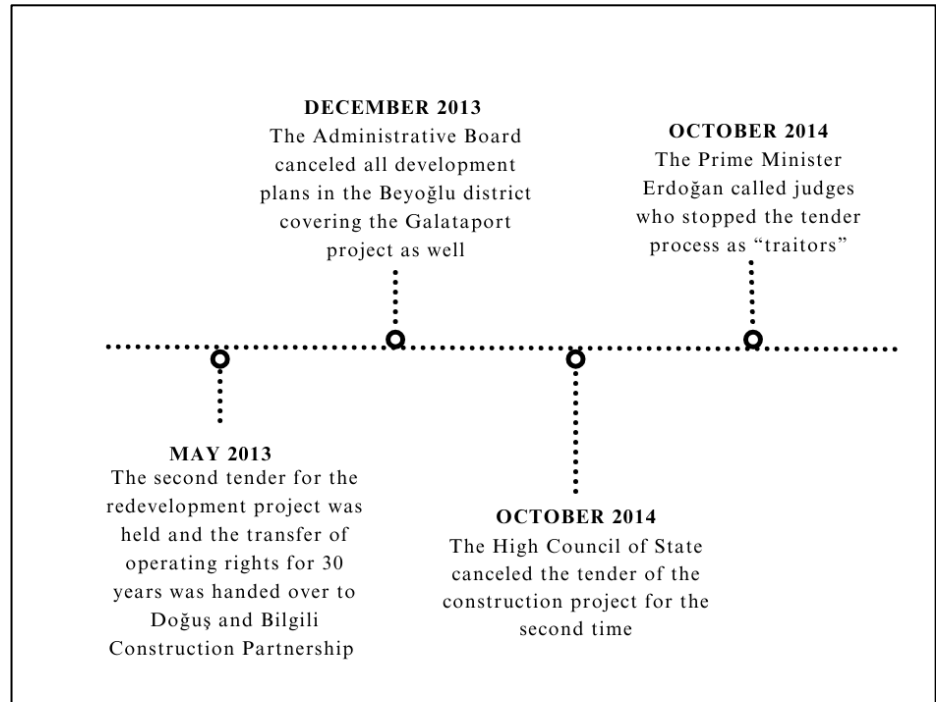


Figure 6. Timeline for the major developments between 2011–2015.

Within this project’s scope, the historical buildings known as Çinili Han, the historical Package Post Office, and Maritime Enterprises were to be restored and used as a five-star hotel with a total area of 112,000 square meters. The project included constructing a bonded passenger reception area below sea level, a parking lot for 1400 vehicles in the port area, and accommodation, culture, arts, offices, and trade and shopping areas instead of demolished warehouses. Like the previous project, this new project has also been criticized due to the construction of commercial buildings such as offices, entertainment, and shopping close to the sea, apart from business areas such as maritime, fishing, and shipyard. As the public’s access to waterfront areas was gradually limited, greater privatization of public space occurred, and it received many criticisms because it represented a disproportionate occupation (Demirdizen, 2013; Karlı, 2015).

ACTORS (2010-2015)	
Proponents	Opponents
*The Privatization Administration *Doğuş Holding *Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdoğan	*Istanbul Chamber of Planners *Istanbul Chamber of Civil Engineers *Istanbul Chamber of Architects *The Council of State

Figure 7. Major actors in the period.

Since the project would not provide public benefits for the above reasons, chambers of city planners, civil engineers, and architects filed a lawsuit to stop the project in October 2014 (Figure 7). The Administrative Lawsuit Board of the Council

of State decided to stop the Galataport project, which Doğu Holding had already won for \$702 million. However, the Prime Ministry Privatization Administration argued that the Council of State's decision did not mean stopping the execution of the development plans for the Galataport project, and then the prime minister, R. Tayyip Erdoğan, accused the judges of treason (Diken, 2014; Tuna, 2021).

4.2.4. Overcoming hurdles and reaching the finish line (2016–2022)

The central government's determination to implement the project despite the high court's verdict to stop it became obvious during this period. Legally, even the court verdict was not powerful enough to weaken the central government's ambition to realize the project, so the construction continued. As the construction continued, in February 2017, the Karaköy Passenger Hall, a registered historical building in the area, was completely demolished without the necessary clearance from the Heritage Preservation Board (Figure 8). With prompt action, İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality sealed the site and halted the construction process. A major criminal complaint was filed to the State Prosecutor's office by the chamber of Architects (Erbil, 2017). However, the related court dismissed the case due to lack of jurisdiction and ruled for the continuation of the construction.

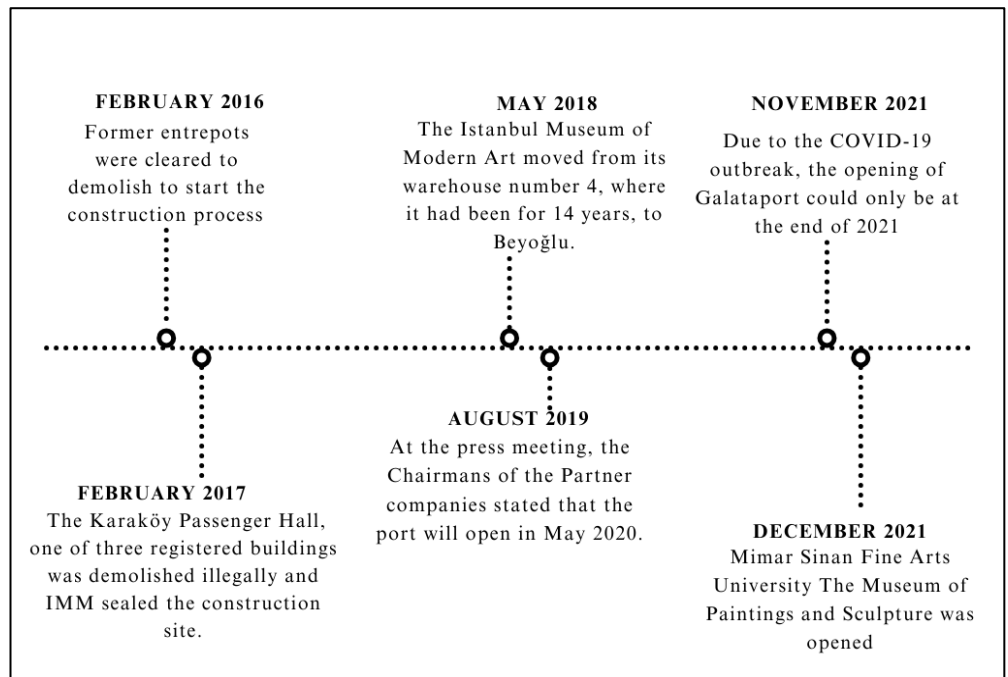


Figure 8. Timeline for the major developments between 2016–2022.

In 2018, the IM Museum, operating in warehouse No.4, was demolished to start the construction work of the Galataport, which reopened its doors at 2023. Along with the IM Museum, the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture (IMPS), owned by Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, relocated its building from Dolmabahçe Palace to warehouse No.5 and opened its doors to visitors in 2021. These two museums became new partners in the Galataport project and contributed to the promotion of the area as a new cultural hub in the city (Figure 9).

ACTORS (2015-2022)	
Proponents	Opponents
*Galataport Inc. (Company) *Key figures in design and marketing of Galataport Project *Istanbul Modern Museum *Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture	*Istanbul Chamber of Architects *Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

Figure 9. Major actors in the period.

The presentation meeting of the Galataport project was held by the CEOs of the investor companies in 2019, and it was stated that the project would be operational in May 2020. However, the major reduction in cruise voyages due to the worldwide COVID-19 crisis caused a significant delay, and consequently, the project was barely finalized in October 2021. Shortly before its opening, supporters of the project promoted its features and advantages to the city and the public through various media channels. An example was an article written on an art-related digital platform, detailing the features of the completed Galataport project and giving voice to key figures in design and marketing (Mut, 2021).

During this period, while press releases and public announcements by professional chambers and concerned professionals continued (Karakoç, 2017; Karabey, 2021), critical articles expressing concerns about the phases the project had undergone, its current state, and its future social, cultural, and economic impacts also appeared in the media (Eraldemir 2019; Kazaz, 2017; Pişkin, 2017).

4.2.5. A new İstanbul “landmark”: The completed Galataport project (2022+)

The final form of the project has become a center for arts, tourism and shopping in the city, but it also raised concerns regarding public use, land speculation and gentrification in the area. Perhaps more importantly, it demonstrated the central government’s growing influence, which could impact not only the Galataport area but also other (mega) projects across the country.

When the Galataport project was completed, it created a new attraction in the historical city center with a 1.2-kilometer coastline. Located on the shore of the Bosphorus and close to the historical city sites such as Topkapı and Dolmabahçe Palaces and the historical peninsula, the Galataport project includes an arrangement that has the potential to affect the urban area both physically and socially. Within the project’s scope, a complex that includes trade, tourism, art, and culture transportation facilities was built on an area of 112.000 square meters. With the investment of approximately 1.7 billion USD, 52.000 m² of space was planned to be allocated to stores and restaurants and 43.000 m² was reserved for office function. In the area, there is a 5-star hotel with 177 rooms, historical buildings such as the historic Post Office, Çinili Han, the old Karaköy Passenger Hall, the IM, and the IMPS Museums. Galataport Inc. stated that with the completion of the Galataport project, 5000 jobs were directly and 20,000 jobs indirectly were created. In the first two years following the port’s opening in December 2021, the port hosted nearly 30 million visitors and became an attractive shopping and gastronomy center with 230 retail and dining points

(GalataportIstanbul, n.d.).

Even before its completion, due to price hikes in real estate, the Galataport project had influenced its surroundings and created or intensified the gentrification effects in nearby neighborhood districts. As the authors’ own research revealed, between 2000 and 2024, land value in the nearby streets of Galataport has experienced extraordinary increases (**Table 2**). According to the Beyoğlu District municipality’s data, between 2005 and 2010 the average property prices on some selected nearby streets rose by about 753% in USD and 870% in TL terms. As the current study shows, this period reflects the central government’s determination to advance the project’s transition from design to implementation phase intensified. While we still see significant increases in property prices during the 2000–2005 period as well, after the start of the project in late 2015, land prices tended to fall in USD terms (beyoglu.bel.tr).

Table 2. Average real-estate price* changes in some of the selected nearby streets (2000–2024).

	Increase Rate (%)				
	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	2020–2024
USD	291	753	–20	–24	–13
TL	764	870	32	99	300

*Note: Data on average real estate prices in TL were taken from www.beyoglu.bel.tr. The dollar equivalents of these prices and their increase rates over the years were calculated by the authors.

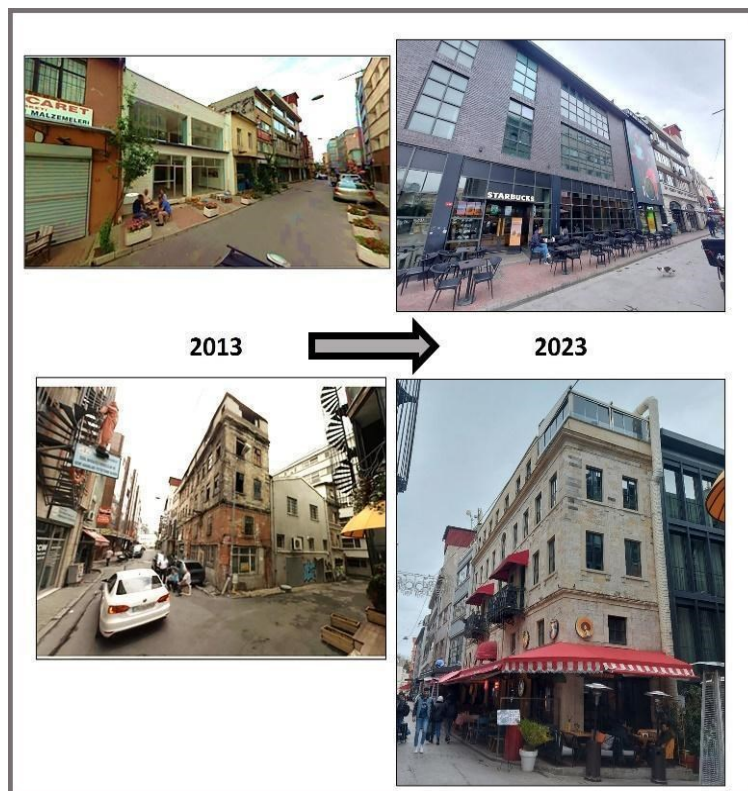


Figure 10. Gentrification and touristification in nearby neighborhoods.

2013 photos: <http://sehirharitasi.ibb.gov.tr>; 2023 photos: Authors’ archive.

Once housing small harbor-related shops and workshops, these properties gradually evolved into design-art galleries and upscale touristic venues after the

project was announced (Yazman, 2011). The rapid development of design-art-related businesses and workshops has boosted the gentrification effect in the traditional Tophane neighborhood (**Figure 10**). In addition to the rise in the rental prices, the increasing concentration of newcomers in the social spaces' of Tophane after the opening of the İstanbul Modern Art Museum in Galataport has caused clashes between the traditional residents of the district and the new influential gentrifiers (Öz and Eder, 2018). A rapid change in the social, cultural, and material life of the neighborhood has caused residents to feel insecure due to rising rents, displacement, and unemployment. A study revealed that as the traditional small shopkeepers were replaced by new arts galleries and design businesses, a pivotal element in the morality of the neighborhood was gradually lost, and violence and crime within the district increased (Woźniak, 2018).

While the project was first put into service in October 2021, individuals could pass to the shore and other businesses and art museums in the area without any security screening. However, only one year after its opening, in September 2022, due to open-air security concerns, all entry points to Galataport were refurbished with x-ray screening systems by the order of the İstanbul Governor (Yılmaz, 2021). Thus, contrary to what was claimed at the beginning of the Project, Galataport as a waterfront area has become a semi-private area like a shopping mall in other parts of the city.

Another development that triggered reaction to the project was the opening of a world-renowned luxury hotel chain right at the waterfront. Despite the Constitutional article stating that the waterfront must only be used for public benefit, the hotel's garden and pool were built right on the waterfront, and non-hotel customers were not allowed access to a significant portion of the seashore (**Figure 11**), (Cumhuriyet, 2014).



Figure 11. The luxury hotel prevents people to access the waterfront.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Since the declaration of the intention to transform Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier in the early 1990s, the Galataport project has been promoted as a large-scale port and waterfront revitalization that could bring numerous opportunities to the city of İstanbul. Initiatives intensified in the early 2000s regarding this extensive space revitalization and ended with the completion of the Galataport project at the end of

2021.

As we examine the literature on the topic, two notable aspects emerge; a distinct and explicit governmental intention toward showcasing a neoliberal approach to urban transformation, and a growing and sustained critique of the transformation setting and process.

Critique of this transformation during the twenty-year period has persisted, if not increased. While advocates of the project have argued that it was vital for urban transformation and a necessary step for global competition, opponents have stated that the AKP government has been using public land as the primary source of urban rent and creating privatized spaces with no equal access for all social classes (Gökşen, 2016). Contrary to what the project advocates claimed, the most important criticisms of the project centered around concerns regarding the commercialization of the area, which restricts public access in various ways, including turning the area into an open-air shopping mall with luxury stores, making it a high-end meeting point with upscale restaurants, requiring security screenings to enter these areas, and partially or completely closing the waterfront off by luxury hotels and cruise ships. Since the Galataport project was first initiated, the problem of public access to the waterfront area has been one of the most debated issues. A large part of public opposition has stated that the Galataport project, with its proposed layout and functions, would limit public reach to the waterfront and create an urban space that unconstitutionally limits public use. In many port area revitalization projects in the US and European cities, the redevelopment process has been considered an opportunity for a city to increase open spaces for urbanites, with amenities like playgrounds, pedestrian and bicycle paths, recreational facilities, green areas, and art and science centers. As one of the most historical parts of Istanbul, Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier would have offered almost a two-kilometer-long shoreline between Karaköy and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University for many public amenities. However, with the Galataport project's realization, a public space has become semi-private urban land. A significant portion of the waterfront was reserved for a luxury hotel, and x-ray checkpoints control public access to the rest of the port area

The government in Türkiye exhibited a distinct and explicit intention to showcase a neoliberal approach to urban transformation. As a reflection of the neoliberal urban development policies of the AKP government, which have intensified since the beginning of the 2000s, the Galataport project has emerged as an example of entrepreneurial state policies directing urban development. Through rent generation, the government used public properties to attract foreign and local capital to invest in the historical center of the city. Many government agencies have directly acted as keen supporters of entrepreneurial urban development policies while sidelining the social consequences of urban spatial change. In the Galataport case the Prime Minister, Ministries of Transportation and Environment and Urbanism, the Privatization Administration and Turkish Maritime Corporation all acted as the main supporters of waterfront development.

In this process, it is evident that the AKP government, regarding the control of urban rent, remained largely indifferent to the objections of local governments in Istanbul, as well as professional and non-governmental organizations related to the city. Bypassing all district and metropolitan plan restrictions, the project inserted into

a historical area surrounded by old warehouses and decaying neighborhoods. The entrepreneurial appetite of the government was not limited to evading plans. When necessary, even project-specific amendments were made to the Coastal Law and the Law of Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets to avoid restrictions and enable the deployment of commercial uses. As with neoliberal urban development projects elsewhere in the world, governments have sought to capitalize on global capital flows over the last two decades by revising legislation that hinders the realization of major urban and infrastructure projects (Clifford and Morphet, 2023, p.11). Through this project and process, the central government has paved the way for future redevelopments and created an example and a political-legal framework that initiates similar urban transformation processes.

In the initial phase of the project, judicial battles were the only means of public participation. Mainly under the guidance of chambers of urban planners, architects and environmental engineers, a substantial number of cases were brought to the different levels of courts. Even though in many cases legal verdicts caused long delays in the completion process, major demands of the professional chambers such as public access, provision of social amenities, and reduction of economic and social effects in neighboring areas have never been fulfilled. Besides the chambers, neighborhood associations and some concerned NGOs were also critical of the project and raised their voices in some cases. But they were not powerful enough to raise awareness on the issue among the public.

Contrary to similar old harbor projects in other parts of the world, the Galataport project did not initiate any social dimensions to prevent social and economic degradation at the neighborhood level. Both local and central governments left the surrounding areas to market forces in the urban transformation. The AKP government facilitated a significant urban renewal project in a historic section of the city by allowing private investors to utilize public land primarily for profit-driven enterprises while disregarding the impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, the benefits from the transformation process were transferred dominantly to private interests through this transformation without preventing further decay of the area.

The Galataport project provides a clear example of the central government's policy approaches that prioritize the interests of market-based actors rather than considering social dimensions in the renewal process of urban areas. Our evaluation illustrates that Galataport differs from European and North American port transformation experiences. It does not reflect the contemporary approach that diversifies targets and includes social dimensions, environmental sustainability, and spatial justice. These diversified targets present opportunities to provide solutions for housing, open spaces, and employment through different levels of government. However, the transformation of the Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier area into Galataport reflects the characteristics of early 1970s projects, with a strict focus on economic concerns and transferring urban rights to the private sector.

Instances of successful "port transformation" worldwide have transitioned from projects initiated under the neoliberal paradigm in collaboration with the private sector to an approach where the state plays a more moderator role, prioritizing public interest. However, over the two decades of the Galataport project, there has been a shift towards a more stringent state involvement, bolstering the central government and its

extensions and leading to an authoritarian turn in governance. Adopting this state-led strategy has resulted in gentrification, marginalized public involvement, and limited access to the waterfront area.

In short, after a span of twenty years, the concerns highlighted by different segments of the public about this redevelopment process have become more troubling, even deepening and expanding. Thus, certain policy recommendations that call for a change in the central government's approach no longer hold relevance. This study makes a dual contribution. First, it examines the intricacies of state-led redevelopment, situated within the overarching framework of the neoliberal approach that has shaped the predominantly entrepreneurial urban policy in Istanbul and Türkiye over the last two decades. It specifically examines how this approach materialized through the Galataport project. Secondly, the study draws a clear inference from the outcomes of a state-managed, large-scale project conducted with an authoritarian stance that, with the power of various central state agencies and project-specific amendments in governing regulations enabled the process.

It also highlights that in such ventures where capital and business take precedence, public interest tends to be minimized, the scope of large public uses is restricted, and private business interests are maximized. The study underlines that the state in Türkiye has adopted an oppressive and legally limiting stance to maximize the interests of the private sector rather than prioritizing the public interest.

Additionally, this study sheds light on how the Turkish government has taken on a speculative role, transforming into a speculative urban entrepreneur. Unlike other examples around the world that have characteristics shaped by global influences, the Galataport example has shown that in Türkiye, the central government has made significant efforts to ensure that the project is carried out under conditions it has determined, almost entirely insulated from global influences. This effort was driven by the aim of creating an environment that not only facilitates the execution of this project but also ensures that all similar future urban redevelopment projects will be managed under the control of the central government, allowing the government-supported private sector to maximize its interests.

However, it is valuable to identify the research gap in comprehending this transformation process's effects. Despite the two-decade duration of the Galataport project and its attraction for engaging various segments of society, as evidenced by legal actions and media coverage, comprehensive research is insufficient to systematically map and elucidate the socio-economic consequences stemming from this urban transformation. Particularly, the effects on aspects such as the gentrification of local enterprises and residents have lacked explicit exploration. Another subject that necessitates thorough investigation is the commercializing of coastal areas and the loss of public space. Alongside the gentrification of businesses, Galataport has introduced fresh commercial frameworks primarily oriented towards tourism activities. Research concentrating on the extent of this newly established milieu will facilitate comprehension of this redevelopment initiative. An essential research aspect yet to be explored involves a comprehensive analysis of the spatial change within the Pier area and its surroundings. While prior investigations have looked into this spatial transformation, they tend to be fragmented and often lack coverage of the full two-decade span encompassing the transformation process. These three highlighted

aspects, outlining the gaps in existing research, offer potential avenues for future scholarly inquiry. The transformation of Karaköy-Salıpazarı Pier into Galataport holds significance for the city of Istanbul and the broader nation, underscoring its multifaceted implications.

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