

## Chapter 7

# CRITICAL READING OF A PARTICIPATORY MODEL OF URBAN REHABILITATION IN AN INNER CITY MULTI-ETHNIC LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD: 'İZMİR HISTORY PROJECT'

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### INTRODUCTION

Turkish cities have undergone an unparalleled drive of 'urban transformation', particularly in the last two decades, due to the punitive neoliberal urban policies of the governing *AKP* (Justice and Development Party). What seems unique about the way that urban transformation projects have been handled during that period, is the institutional and ideological framework that facilitates on the one hand, deregulation/informality and on the other, authoritarian practices for the speedy and efficient conduct of the projects (see Lovering & Türkmen, 2011; Demirtaş-Milz, 2013; Eraydin & Taşan-Kök, 2014). The extensive executive and regulative authority acknowledged to *TOKİ* (Housing Development Administration) and provincial governor offices, with regard to the definition of investment schemes in large cities of Turkey<sup>2</sup>, enable the tutelage of the government on the activities of municipalities at the local level and sustain, at the same time 'neoliberal flexibility' by the involvement of private stakeholders. What is referred to as 'urban transformation projects' (UTPs) in public and academic debate, therefore

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<sup>2</sup> With the Municipal Law no. 5393 (3/7/2005), a more extended capacity of decision-making and execution at the local level is acknowledged to Metropolitan Municipalities and with Law no. 6360 (12/11/2012), 'Investment Monitoring and Coordination Commissions' are established in the provinces that operate directly under the authority of the central government (Ministry of Interior) via provincial governors (valis) and they are given the authority to take all decisions with regard to the investment planning in cities. Therein emerges an issue of concurrency with regard to metropolitan municipalities and provincial governates in terms of defining the planning and investment priorities of the cities. With urban transformation law no. 6306 (16/05/2012), *TOKİ* (Housing Development Administration) is given extended executive capacity to define the urban transformation zones in cities under 'risk' and conduct urban transformation projects in collaboration with municipalities and private firms.  
<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5393.pdf>  
<http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6360.pdf>  
<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6306.pdf>

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