



The new face of urban transformation: Fener-Balat example

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Abstract

Cities have been subject to deterioration due to changing physical conditions, changing socio-cultural habits and economic reasons. These deteriorations can sometimes occur in the urban fabric and sometimes in all components that make up the city. Deteriorations in the city cause the areas in the city centers to deteriorate physically, lose their quality and become derelict areas. Urban transformation applications are required to prevent this situation. In this context, urban transformation applications can be explained as the restoration of deteriorated areas to the city together with the right policies in a way that is suitable for the urban fabric and meets the socio-cultural needs of the people living in the region. The purpose of this research is to examine the urban planning model applications that are compatible with the principles of new urbanism; on the neighborhood-district scale, through the example of Fener Balat District. The basic elements of the New Urbanism Movement and the second scale of the Movement are neighborhood, district and corridor. Neighborhoods are urbanized areas that are a balanced mixture of people's daily lives, districts are areas dominated by a single activity and corridors are areas that connect or separate neighborhoods and districts. The principles see these three levels as the basic elements of development. Through these levels, New Urbanism is the resolution of conflicts between traditional urbanism principles, traditional urban form and modern institutions and technological needs. This research is the examination of urban planning model applications that overlap with the basic principles of new urbanism through the example of Fener Balat, a historical and organic settlement area.

Keywords

Urbanization. Urban transformation. New Urbanism. Fener-Balat Street. Istanbul.

1. Introduction

A district is a functionally specialized and urbanized area. Districts are also organized in a manner parallel to the design principles of neighborhoods. They should be designed considering the public transportation network, a park area where employees can have lunch should be created, a square and a covered shopping mall should be a meeting point for people, a network of interconnected streets and a circulation system that allows for healthy and safe pedestrian movement should be created. The location and shape of corridors defined by and providing access to neighboring neighborhoods and districts should be determined by the density of

the neighborhoods nearby (Duany & Plater-Zyberk, 1994:17). As stated in the principles, urban centers see the problems of uncontrolled urban sprawl, increasing discrimination based on ethnicity and income level, environmental pollution, destruction of agricultural areas and wild nature, and erosion of the built heritage of the society as interrelated and obstacles to social unity.

For this reason, the improvement of urban centers; as in the case of residential neighborhoods spreading out of the city, reorganization according to real living spaces; It is emphasized that the natural and built environment

should be protected. In addition, it is based on the awareness that physical solutions alone will not be sufficient and the fact that economic vitality, social stability and environmental health cannot be sustained without physical environments that are compatible with and supportive of these (Andreescu & Besel, 2013:15-28). Therefore, the main goal is to restore the city centers that have become derelict, to restructure the construction that is spreading outside the city, to protect the natural and built environment, to create urban ecology (Kusak & Kucukali, 2024). in accordance with the principles, and to redefine urban areas with a certain physical design and settlement standards that remind us of traditional neighborhoods.

The movement is based on the belief that the physical environment has an impact on happy and prosperous lives, and underlines that it will contribute to the formation of well-designed cities based on this idea. Therefore, New Urbanism aims to improve housing, urban blocks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, towns, cities, regions and the environment; thus, it aims to form a unity through mixed neighborhoods consisting of real neighborhood units. In summary, it is possible to describe the movement within the framework of the following characteristics (Kelbaugh, 2000:285-289; Kelbaugh, 2001:14):

- New Urbanists want to return to human-scale neighborhoods.
- New Urbanists place great importance on placemaking and public space. It is useful in correct implementation; if it cannot be put into practice and built, great designs are useless. It focuses on the design criterion that is most important for the functioning of cities.
- It is holistic; it covers all scales up to a single building in the metropolitan area.
- It attaches importance to the recovery of unused and neglected idle areas.
- It supports green space and formation.
- It is committed to the principle of sustainability. For this reason, it pays attention to the minimum environmental impact of development and related initiatives.
- It is prescriptive, because it argues that good design is important for a healthy and sustainable society, and

that this has positive effects on space and the sense of living together.

- It is constructivist, or at least deterministic, because it argues that there is a direct, structural relationship between social behavior and physical form.
- It is idealistic, because it believes that neighborhoods can be structured by combining people's incomes, ethnic origins, ages and different architectural styles.
- It starts from the principle of simplicity. Buildings exhibit a more humane appearance thanks to dynamic designs and public spaces suitable for pedestrian traffic.
- It is necessary to distinguish between the design principles within the scope of new urbanism and special design solutions. New Urbanists have determined design principles, not design solutions. The main reason for this is that design principles have different application and interpretation possibilities according to the content, region and locality that is suitable as a solution. In other words, New Urbanism foresees changes at different spatial scales and the areas of application vary at the levels of "region", "neighborhood, settlement, corridor" and "street, building block, building" (Steuteville, 2018:133)
- These principles are "having defined boundaries; a circulation system suitable for pedestrian scale, bringing public spaces to the forefront; having diversity in the way spaces are used and the population using these spaces; traditional neighborhood structure.

New Urbanism Movement Design Scales

There are 3 scales that include the movement forms and design rules determined in the first New Urbanism Congress held by New Urbanists in 1993:

1. Region
2. Settlement- Neighborhood- Corridor
3. Street- Block- Building scales (Fulton, 1996).

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2. The aim of the study

The purpose of this research is to examine the urban planning model applications that coincide with the basic principles of new urbanism through the example of Fener Balat, a historical, organic settlement area.

This study is limited to examining the current structure of Fener-Balat and the spatial changes it has undergone and the physical interventions aimed at improving worn-out urban environments within the scope of new urbanism principles, and analyzing them at the street

scale determined within the scope of new urbanism principles.

3. Method

The method of this study consists of scanning secondary sources within the scope of the purpose, field analysis, examination of visual data and evaluation of project studies. Fener-Balat was examined by extracting the information obtained from secondary sources and in the context of urban transformation principles.

4. Study area, Fener-Balat District Settlement Analysis

Located on the Historical Peninsula and hosting a cosmopolitan culture, Fener-Balat district was a district where aristocratic Greek families predominantly resided in the 18th century, but its identity began to change with migrations from this region to districts such as Tarabya and Arnavutköy in the 19th century. It continued its existence as a Greek district until the 1960s (Erkan & Altıntaş, 2018:292-335).



Figure 1. Fener and Balat Housing Renovation (Before and After)

In the 16th article of the Declaration, it is envisaged that urban, institutional and commercial activity centers should be “accessible to everyone within neighborhoods and districts; they should not be isolated within complexes with a single-use function away from living areas.” Schools should be positioned within living areas so that children can reach them on foot or by bicycle.

When the Fener-Balat urban project and the technical details and architectural approach of the project are analyzed, “if the registered structures in the region can stand statically, they will be renovated in accordance with the restoration technique, but if there is a problem with the static structures, in this case, the registered structures will be demolished and rebuilt in accordance with the original” the project will be planned. In addition, while the plan scheme and facade of the structures that constitute a monumental work in the region will be preserved as they are, only the facades will be protected in structures that do not have an architectural value on their own and that need to be protected with their facades, proportions and the values they add that complete the street (Şişmanyazıcı & Turgut Yıldız, 2010).

Urban Fabric and Design

As foreseen in Article 17 of the New Urbanism Manifesto, “The economic sustainability and orderly development of neighborhoods, districts and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that will guide change.”

As stated in Article 13 of the New Urbanism Manifesto, “The provision of different housing types and a wide range of prices in neighborhoods strengthens interpersonal and social ties that are the basis of a peaceful society by providing daily interaction between people of different ages, ethnicities and income levels.” Although the parcel/ownership system is one of the important tools for understanding and preserving the development of historical cities, the biggest intervention made to the urban fabric of the area is parcel combinations. This planned change does not only include the ownership status and occupied-empty relationship of the area, but also the unchanging of the city inventories and urban identity that have remained from history to the present (Dinler & Şahin Güçhan, 2016:233).

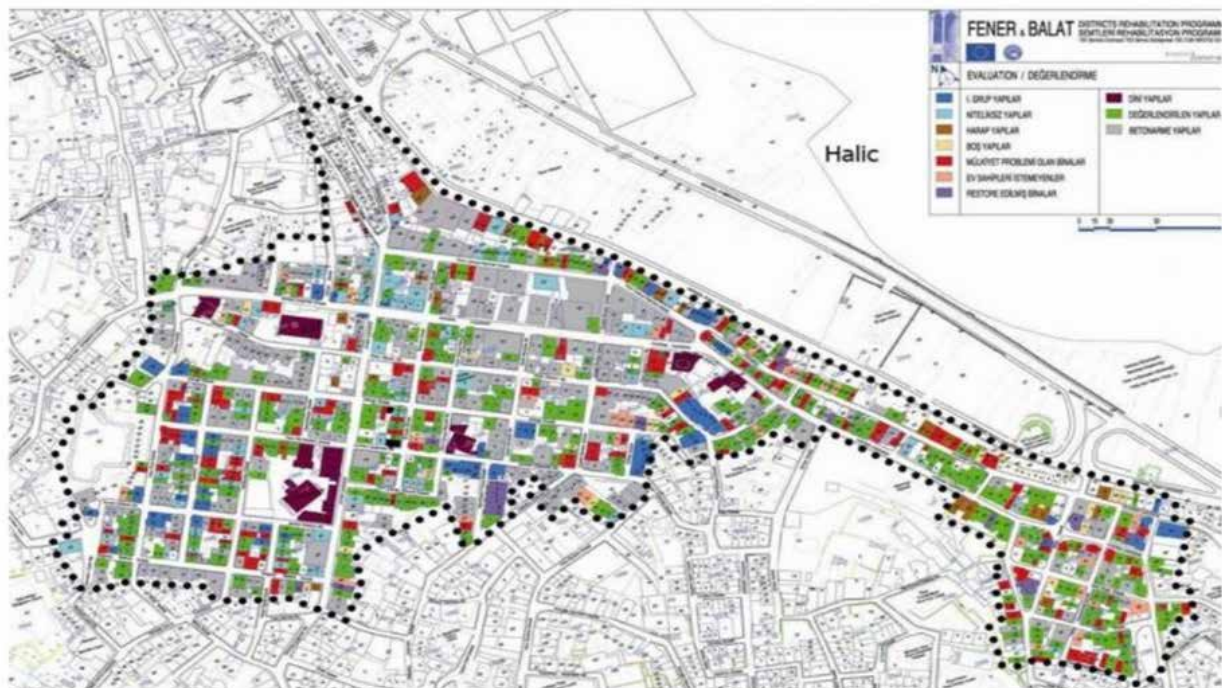


Figure 2. Data on the Fener-Balat project area and physical urban fabric (Dinler & Şahin, 2016)



Figure 3. Fener-Balat Open Space Project (Dinler & Şahin, 2016)

According to Article 18 of the New Urbanism Manifesto, in the district, "Different green areas and uses such as sports areas, pocket parks, natural green areas, neighborhood parks should be expanded in the neighborhoods. Open green areas and conservation areas should be used to define different neighborhood boundaries and connect these neighborhoods and

districts. Many activities of daily life should be within walking distance, and freedom of movement should be provided to groups such as the elderly and the young, who do not use cars in the city. Interconnected street networks should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the duration and distance of car use, and provide energy savings."



Figure 4. Proposed Open Space Use for Fener-Balat Coastline

Open space in the Fener-Balat district Urban/public open spaces in the inner parts of the district are extremely scarce. The wide open space along the Golden Horn, located on the coastal part of the district, exhibits a different appearance from the densely built-up situation in the upper parts.

In the project area located between the dense urban texture of the Fener-Balat region and the sea, squares that are the continuation of the street axes and developed around historical elements were created. Afterwards, the cultural texture and connections developed around these squares were associated with the sea and the existing settlement area and were made to act as a bridge. While doing this, a construction model created with light systems that would not compete with the historical texture and green texture was adopted.

5. Results and Recommendations:

The evaluation of New Urbanism principles in urban development projects has shown their potential to create more livable and sustainable communities. Although there are challenges and limitations, their positive impact on the urban environment is clearly evident. Urban planners, policy makers and developers should be encouraged to create vibrant and environmentally friendly urban areas by integrating the New Urbanism principles into their applications by combining the above-mentioned suggestions. Resistance to change, limited availability of suitable land and financial constraints from traditional urban development approaches have prevented the full implementation of New Urbanism principles. To overcome these challenges, cooperation among stakeholders involved in urban development such as urban planners, public authorities and developers should be encouraged by providing a comprehensive and integrated approach. Prioritizing social equity and affordable housing in mixed-use projects, integrating sustainable design practices and renewable energy sources and investing in robust public transportation systems are important for future applications. The urbanization problem that exists throughout Turkey is encountered in almost every district of Istanbul. The new urbanism movement has been tried to be implemented in Fener-Balat district with a permanent urban planning

and design approach and it has been concluded that the new urbanism principles and scales are applicable to the district. Although the New Urbanism principles have shown their potential to create more livable and sustainable communities, there is room for improvement. By addressing the challenges and implementing the suggested strategies, stakeholders can further improve the implementation of the New Urbanism principles and promote the development of inclusive, vibrant and environmentally friendly urban areas.

As a result of the topics covered in the study and the examples investigated, the New Urbanism movement serves as a basis for future research and informs decision-making processes in urban planning and development. It should be kept in mind that this is a first-stage plan. In the future, its examples can be multiplied and its continuity can be ensured and much more livable cities can be created thanks to technological advances. Making such a future possible is possible with ideas based on reason and science and increasing adaptation, as well as preserving design and planning criteria specific to regions and transferring them to new generations.

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