

V. Contexts and future visions

Transformation of workplaces in İstanbul: Some macro urban form suggestions

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Fig. 1: İstanbul, view from Kartal showing industrial production areas within their urban context.

Places of industrial production have long been regarded as the primary "workplaces." We are finding, however, that as societies progress, more people are being employed in the service sector than in industry. The capacity of the service sector for employment is enormous. For instance, in a five-star hotel in Turkey, there are one to one-and-a-half persons working for each bed. These statistics mean that one bed supports an average five-member family. By extension, a 500-bed hotel generates economic support for almost 2,500 people.

What we see as accommodations or leisure facilities are at the same time employment centers for workers. They are almost equal in number to the hotel guests, and are, perhaps, its primary beneficiaries. This simple example informs us that workplaces are no longer limited to places of industrial production, but also include facilities that provide services.

Work environments have always been divided into three sectors.

The first sector is the rural environment, where agricultural production is the primary economic activity. However, in time, through automation and the use of machines, it is absorbing less and less of the working population. In many cases, its seasonal nature also does not require the presence of a year-round working population.

The second sector is the industrial environment, where materials are transformed through technology into products. This sector has many different aspects and scales. It spans a large gamut of settings, starting from artisanal production in small workshops and proceeding to mega-buildings for production at a massive scale. Increased levels of industrialization usually result in small-scale, labor-intensive production being gradually taken over by larger establishments. While artisans, whether craftsmen or designers, will remain to address issues relating to tradition, quality, and innovation, large-scale industries are supplying more and more of the products we consume. Industrial production also has transformed modes of production in the rural sector since much of it is becoming increasingly mechanized and more extensively processed.

The third sector is the services environment, which addresses issues such as management, leisure, culture, and generally any activity that falls outside the fields of agriculture and physical production. With the development and spread of automation and robotics, manual labor has decreased at a great pace, and industrial settings have been empowered to produce more with less manual labor.

In fact, the expectations in the late 1960s were that this trend would grow exponentially, and, as a result, this third sector would expand in leaps and bounds. Moreover, it was anticipated that the growth curve in production and the lessening demand for manual labor would result in worldwide prosperity. Expectations even emerged that three or four-day work-weeks would be sufficient to sustain our total industrial production needs. This shortened work-week would translate into further developments in art, entertainment, and leisure. In this context, the emergence of counterculture youth movements during the late 1960s such as the hippies and the Flower Children, who committed themselves to various types of artistic expressions and lifestyles that were in line with such a view, was not accidental.

These aspirations unfortunately did not fully materialize. Rural production often could not provide as much economic value as industrial production. Moreover, the discrepancy between industrially-developed nations and agrarian societies continued to increase. Less-privileged societies accordingly came to view industrial development as their only route for significant and sustained economic growth.

Industrialization in Turkey beyond agricultural processing

This approach is evident in Turkey, where it was realized by the 1960s that the country would not be able to achieve significant economic development by remaining a producer and exporter of agrarian products. The development plans introduced at that time instead emphasized industrial production. In previous decades, industries had been primarily concerned with the processing of agricultural products. Leadership in shifting industrial development away from agricultural processing was assumed by a new generation of industrial families, who funded their enterprises through their pre-existing business activities. The source of capital for the Koç family, for example, was import; for the Sabancı family, it was the processing of rural products, particularly cotton. The Koç family assumed leadership in manufacturing durable household goods, then electronics. The Sabancı family concentrated on textiles as a natural evolution of their involvement in cotton production. Later, both became involved in producing cars under license from Western and Japanese manufacturers. Other industrial families joined in developing new, specialized areas of industrial production, thus diversifying the country's industrial production landscape. The Kale Group pi-

oneered in ceramics and building materials; the Eczacıbaşı family took leadership in pharmaceuticals, and then vitrified building materials. Turkey's industrial sector consequently emerged both as a major employer and an influential political lobby.

Both primary and auxiliary industries needed to be spatially close to each other and to transportation facilities. Proximity to railroad lines, highways, and ports became essential. Since they had a ready population supply for industrial labor, İstanbul and İzmit became Turkey's main industrial hubs. The industrial sector's large appetite for cheaper land meant that the non-urban areas between İstanbul and İzmit—and even beyond—evolved into one continuous conurbation. The workforce needed for these industrial facilities also grabbed land, and more than seventy percent of the population fulfilled their housing needs through de-facto self-help building methods or by buying cheaply-built flats from greedy speculators. These self-help building methods in fact have found their place in the international literature on low-income housing—along with *bidon-villes*, *proshigika*, *basti*, and *kampungs*—as *gecekondus*, literally meaning “built overnight.” For this uncontrolled and unregulated development, Turkey paid an unforgivable price in August of 1999, when a severe earthquake hit the area and killed tens of thousands of people.

This new phase of industrialization unfortunately did not bring new energies into the architectural scene. Though designed by architects, simple frame structures covered by corrugated steel and asbestos sheets became sore elements along the shores of the Marmara Sea. Moreover, the vast use of asbestos without any cognizance of its severe health effects resulted in environmental and health disasters in the following decades.

Not everything was devoid of quality, however. The architectural partnership founded by Doğan Tekeli and Sami Sisa emerged as a leader in large-scale building for industry, and designed factories as well as industrial complexes for many industrial holdings. Koç, Sabancı, and Eczacıbaşı were among those who cared for the quality of industrial environments as well as the efficiency of the workplace. The leadership they provided in emphasizing factories not only as places of production, but also as places where workers and other personnel spent at least one third of their time, created positive echoes in the architectural profession.

It is not possible to assert that these echoes were widespread enough to dominate the landscape and heal the

scars of the preceding decades. They, however, were significant enough to eventually change the mentality of other industrialists. I will never forget the textile industrialist Atilla Türkmen telling me: “I am producing textiles for top designers who will transform them into garments of artistic value. Why should I not have a factory that is good enough for them to use for conducting their fashion shows?” He added, “Whether it is straight and neat or shabby, I pay the same price for every feature of the factory; why should I not have every component at its best?” This vision yielded a wonderful industrialist-architect partnership with Mehmet Konuralp. The result is the 1996 ATK Textile Factory in Tekirdağ, to the west of İstanbul, which perfectly manipulates daylight, creates a comfortable work environment, and presents an elegant architecture that addresses all types of work conditions with appropriate spaces. Along with Konuralp, Nevzat Sayın as well as Murat and Melkan Tabanlıoğlu joined the professional scene by designing workspaces of remarkable quality, which even occasionally became settings for feature films because of their unique architectural quality.

The ramifications of industrialization and post-industrialization on İstanbul's urban development

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, İstanbul, with its population of fourteen million people, remains a suffocated city. The responsibility of planning for it is bewildering, and the challenges are enormous. Strategic decisions need to be made and new land-use master plans need to be developed in order to make better use of the city's urban spaces. It is very common in İstanbul to complain about traffic. Traffic problems, however, cannot be solved or alleviated by building additional roads, junctions, and flyovers. Permanent solutions lie in achieving better use of urban land and in removing industries that require long commutes. Also, issues relating to İstanbul's industrial development need to be incorporated in the strategic master plan being developed for the city, known as the 1/100'000 Scale İstanbul Land Use Plan (*1/100'000 Ölçekli İstanbul Çevre Düzeni Planı*; fig. 2). Although the following ideas seem simple to suggest, their implementation will take decades to realize.

The first aspect that needs to be realized in planning İstanbul's evolution relates to the fact that the Bosphorus divides it into two cities: an Anatolian and a European one. After the first bridge across the Bosphorus was built in 1973 (a second one was built in 1988) and as car ownership rates in-

creased, the relatively plentiful job opportunities available on the European side and the less expensive housing available on the Anatolian side transformed pre-existing functional divisions between the two. The bridge made it very convenient to move between the two sides by car. Not surprisingly, traffic increased drastically and gridlock resulted. In order to address this situation, projects currently are being developed to provide the city's residents with opportunities to both live and work on each side of the city. The most significant of these includes the large-scale multi-use urban project being designed by the Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid of Zaha Hadid Architects. Located in the Kartal district of Asian İstanbul, it is conceived as the Asian side's new urban center. I have directed the Kartal Urban Sub-Center Competition and the post-competition project development, where Zaha Hadid designed 555 hectares of new development as part of the İstanbul Land Use Plan (figs. 3-7). The project will serve a population of 2.5 million people and is expected to create 170,000 new jobs. On the European side, in Küçükçekmece, an equivalent project is being designed by the Malaysian architect Ken Yeang of T. R. Hamza & Yeang (figs. 8 & 9). When these two sub-centers are realized, they will generate inwardly-oriented urban traffic patterns and will consequently relieve current pressures on areas along the Bosphorus.

The second aspect that needs to be addressed in planning

the city's evolution relates to the fact that İstanbul is among the very few large cities of the world where import facilities are located in its center. Even though a growing capacity for such facilities is emerging in Avcılar at the western edge of the city, the centrally-located Haydarpaşa in its Asian Üsküdar district, along the Marmara Sea, remains the city's main harbour with container facilities (fig. 10). This harbour is an eyesore among the spectacular complexes that mark one's entry into the city from the Marmara Sea. In addition, bringing in goods by large containers into the heart of the city and then distributing them in smaller quantities seems inefficient and illogical. İstanbul needs two major logistics centers, one on each side, that are accessible by sea, rail, and highways. The logical locations seem to be Avcılar or Silivri in the west, and Pendik in the east. As for Haydarpaşa, because of its central and historical location, it should not continue to be used as a port area. Instead, it should be developed as a vibrant and engaging urban district.

A third aspect to be addressed regarding İstanbul's urban evolution is that it must change its function and identity. İstanbul has performed for over half a century the role of a center for industrial production. Many of its old and old-fashioned industries are moving to its outer areas and also to the provinces. The availability of a suitable workforce in these other areas is no longer a problem. Indeed, Turkey's popula-

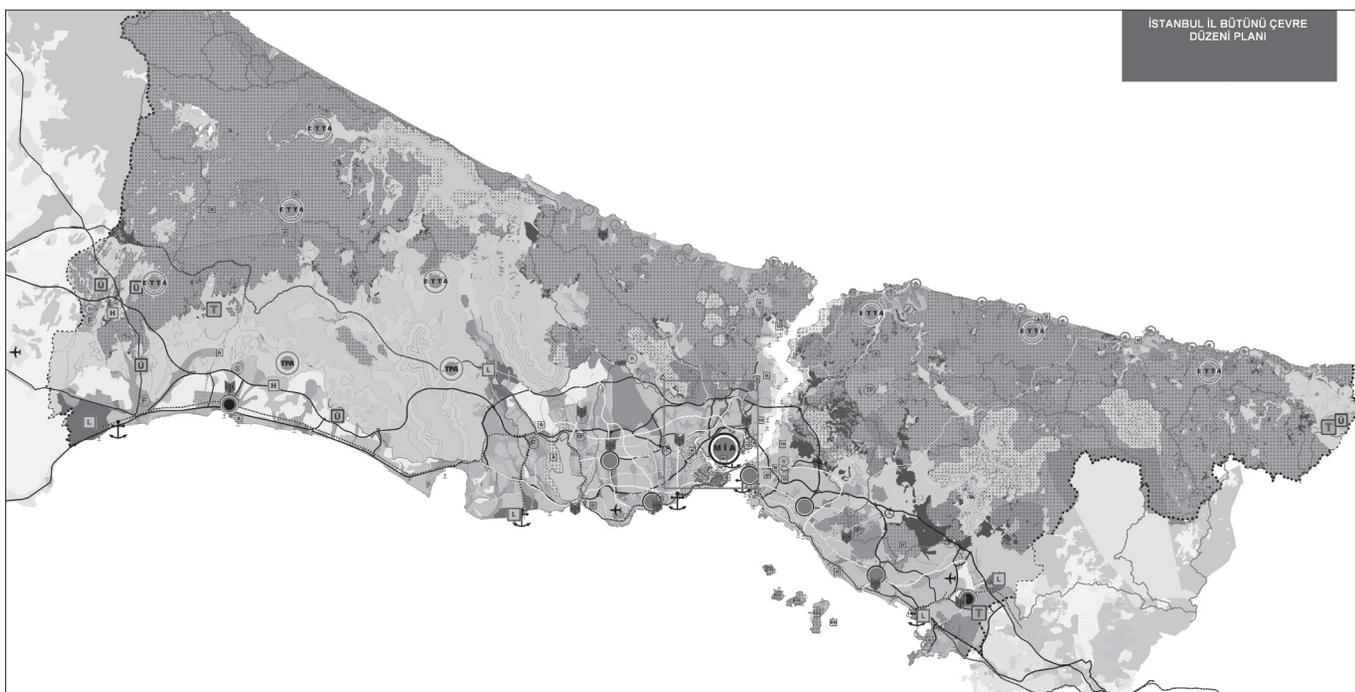


Fig. 2: 1/100,000-scale İstanbul Land Use Plan. The plan was approved in 2006 and altered in 2009.



Fig. 3: The Kartal Urban Sub-Centre competition site.



Fig. 4: The Kartal Urban Sub-Centre, site plan, first prize competition entry by Zaha Hadid Architects.

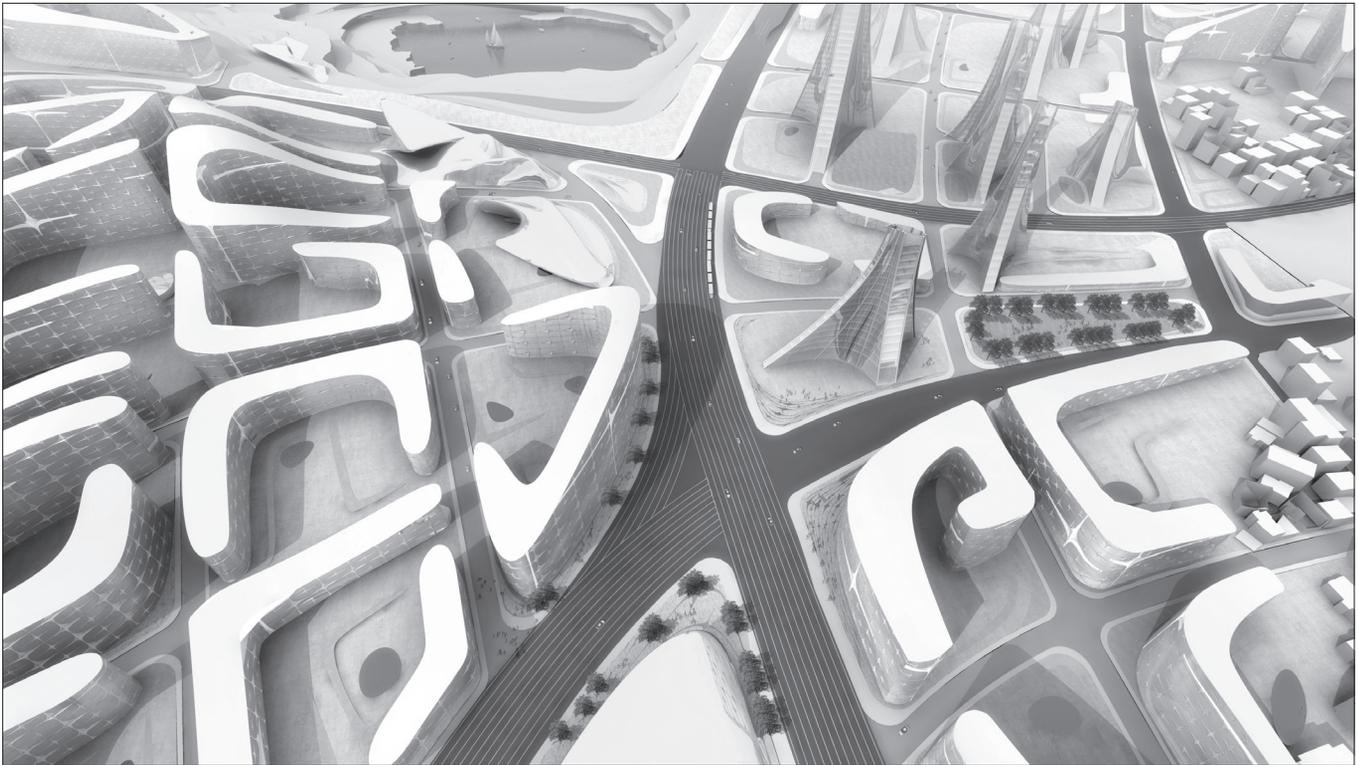


Fig. 5: The Kartal Urban Sub-Centre, proposed building layout/urban texture, Zaha Hadid Architects.

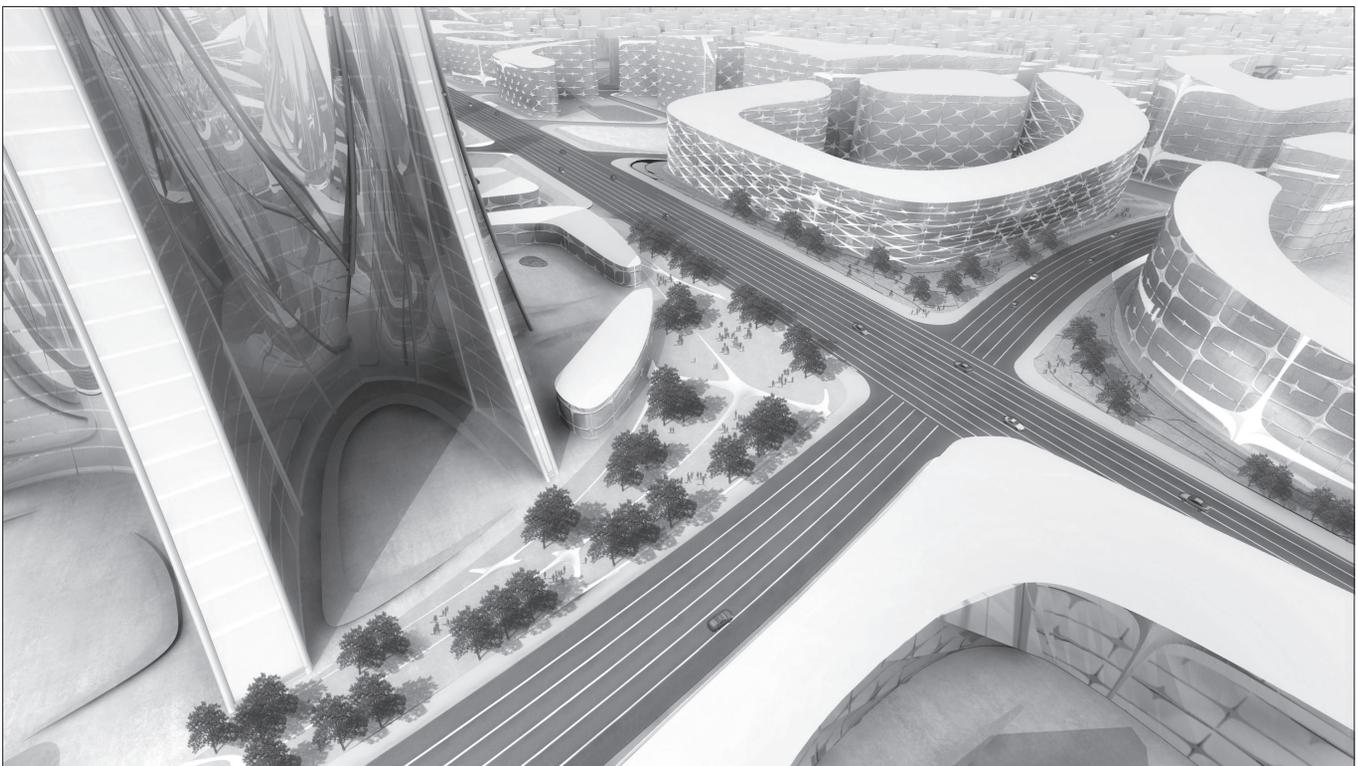


Fig. 6: The Kartal Urban Sub-Centre, detail of proposed building layout/urban texture, Zaha Hadid Architects.

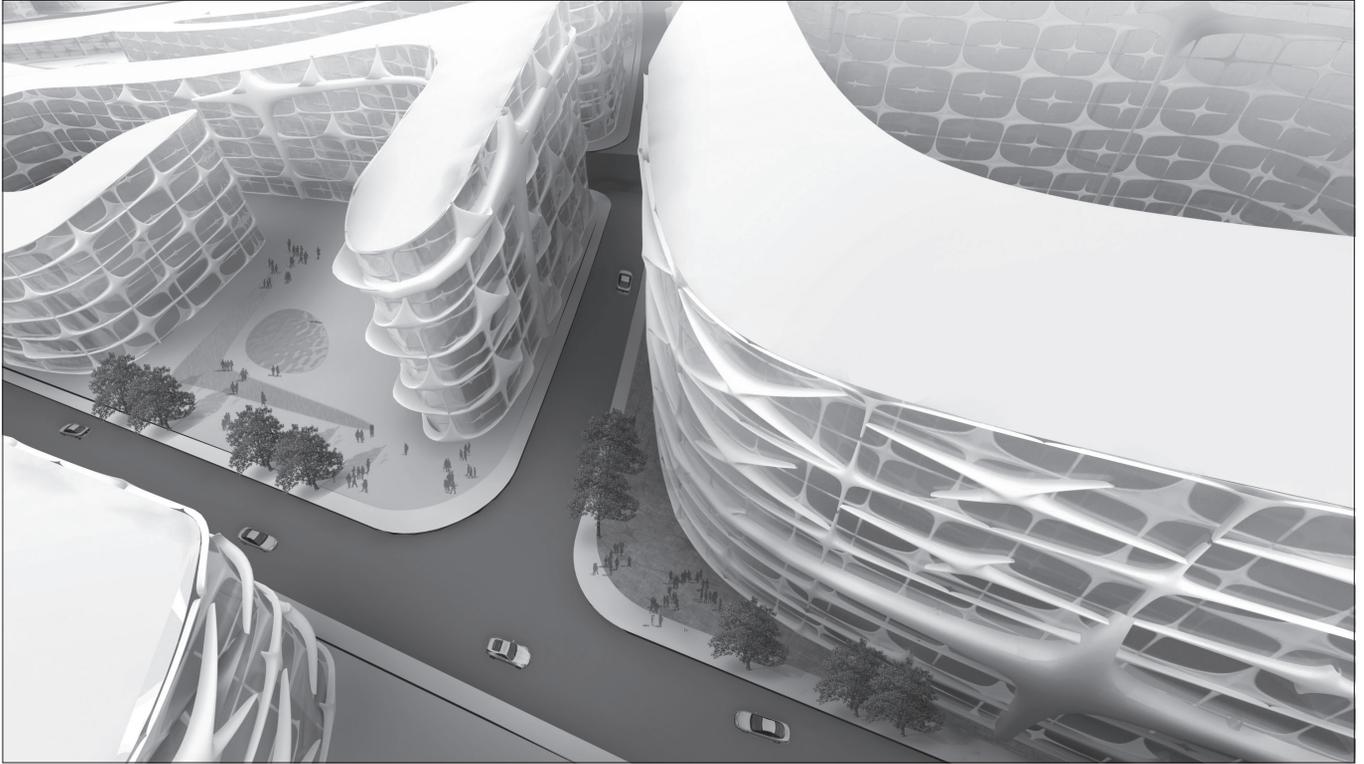


Fig. 7: The Kartal Urban Sub-Centre, sample street-building-open space interrelationship, Zaha Hadid Architects.



Fig. 8: İstanbul, the Küçükçekmece Ecological Revitalization and Urban Regeneration competition site.

tion dynamics provide one of its greatest potentials for development, and a skilled workforce exists wherever it may be needed. The land currently occupied by industries is precious and is getting more valuable as time passes. New functions therefore need to be given to these areas. In time, İstanbul must become a city for culture, tourism, conferences, business, and banking, along with all the other services necessary to sustain this metropolis. The problem here is with bulky,

heavy industries. These are the ones that need to be relocated (fig. 11). Artisanal types of production, in contrast, can and should remain in the city, and must be integrated within its urban fabric to provide economic opportunities to urban populations.

İstanbul in fact already enjoys the status of a preferred city worldwide for congresses and conferences. Moreover, Atatürk Airport has emerged as a hub connecting international travel along east-west as well as north-south routes. In this geographic context, İstanbul is benefiting from the current shifts in the centers of international economic gravity from the West to East Asia.

However, having only one functioning congress center (The Lutfi Kırdar Conference and Exhibition Center)—with another one about to be completed along the Golden Horn—is not enough to satisfy existing demand, and conference facilities in the city often need to be booked more than a year in advance. In this context, it is interesting to note that İstanbul's music and art festivals and biennales now enjoy a worldwide reputation and have made İstanbul an interna-

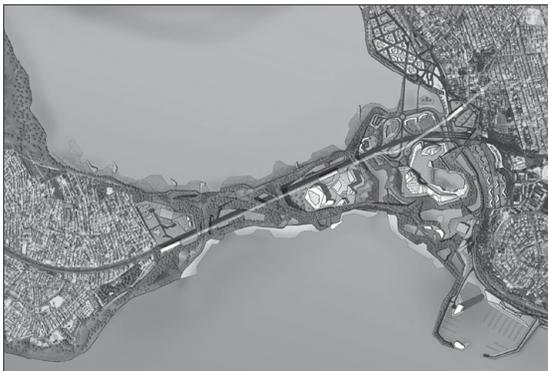


Fig. 9: The Küçükçekmece Ecological Revitalization and Urban Regeneration project, site plan, first prize Entry by T. R. Hamza & Yeang.



Fig. 10: İstanbul, view of Haydarpaşa Port within its urban context.



Fig. 11: İstanbul, view of a typical urban development pattern near production sites.

tional summer destination. In addition, the rental value of office space in the city has tripled over the last three years. The demand for making İstanbul an international business hub clearly is already there. What remains is to transform the types of work opportunities available in the city and to provide the necessary architectural and urban design solutions that would welcome and accommodate this new demand. This involves introducing talent and handicrafts into the city by establishing art centers and crafts enhancement studios, as well as non-intrusive, non-polluting means of artistic production and services, as with small repair and maintenance workshops.

Environmental and ecological issues cannot be ignored. İstanbul is surrounded by prime forests that so far have resisted the pressures of encroachment. But for how long will this be possible? The Land Use Plan, in addressing environmental issues, must reduce developmental pressures on these areas. Reducing these pressures can only be achieved

by encouraging development along the Marmara Sea in the south in a manner that accommodates efficient mixed-use zoning.

There also is the encroachment of building on water reservoirs. İstanbul has enjoyed a tremendous capacity for collecting fresh water from surrounding areas. The city has celebrated this capacity through various architectural and urban projects such as the aqueducts that the Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans built. Water is a setting for calm, pleasant environments. Therefore, the speculation and building taking place in the city's drinking water collection areas should be unthinkable, and must be stopped. Satisfying the pleasures of a privileged few at the cost of contaminating the city's daily water supply is criminal and must be treated as such (fig. 12).

Clearly, a major strategic policy shift is necessary to address the challenges facing İstanbul's urban evolution. The local authorities are aware of the challenges facing the city,

and are directing their full resources towards achieving meaningful solutions. They cannot carry this out on their own. There accordingly is a need to devise an integrated policy that would bring together all relevant parties to develop

what might be termed the "Commandments of Urban Development." This would positively affect the quality of life in İstanbul, including the quality of its work environments.



Fig. 12: Urban sprawl is threatening İstanbul's water reservoirs.