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# HOW AND WHY WE CAN'T MAKE PLANS THAT WORK: DIFFERING DIFFUSION PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL MODELS IN ISTANBUL<sup>1</sup>

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This article is one of the by-products of ongoing research on the urban production practices, the planning system and their implications on the development of Istanbul. It focuses on the diffusion of international ideas and experiences and its effects on the constitution of the urban planning system in Istanbul. The differing diffusion patterns of these ideas and experiences seem to provoke two conflicting processes, one in favour and the other against the urban planning system. This duality seems to be one of the reasons of the ongoing deficiency of the urban planning system.

**key words: diffusion, urban planning, local specificities, Istanbul**

## INTRODUCTION

This article addresses the question of diffusion processes and their impact on the urban planning system and practice in Istanbul, the economic and cultural capital of Turkey. The “western city” constitutes a source of inspiration for public authorities and the elites of, first, the Ottoman Empire and then, the Turkish republic. The model of first the European and then the American city has occupied the urban planning scene since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The urban planning system and practice have been launched and evolved in close contact with international experts/professionals, concepts and practices. These contacts along with numerous attempts at reform and institutionalisation have failed to constitute a functioning urban planning system in Istanbul as in other Turkish cities. Tekeli(1994) explains that “the common impression of those involved in planning practice in Turkey is that the built environment and spatial planning are generally neither successfully implemented nor effective in their outcomes.” Urban planning constitutes a fragmented process which serves mostly as a tool of regularisation: plans are often revised to suit the demands of different stakeholders. The city is mostly made at the scale of micro-actions and real estate developments that are not in accordance with the master plans.

Urban planning practice in Istanbul is the subject of numerous studies. Some authors privilege a historical approach questioning the urban planning practice through a detailed chronological accounting of events, interventions and conflicts: international contacts, especially those professionals who have worked in Istanbul in one capacity or another and their impact occupy an important part of these studies. They do not however directly address the issue of their influence on the constitution of the urban planning system nor how institutional and operational arrangements influence their work and impact<sup>2</sup>. The second group of studies addresses the deficiencies of the existing urban planning system, but do not analyse the implications of international contacts as a possible component of the problem. Their results are mostly influenced by urban planning theories/models developed in other countries which constitutes another attempt at transfer.

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<sup>2</sup> The author basis this evaluation on the bibliographic corpus constituted for an ongoing research project on the urban production practices, the urban planning system and its implications on the development of the city of Istanbul.

Yesterday it was the “comprehensive plan” and the “welfare state”, today it is the “strategic spatial planning” and “urban projects as strategic tools” that occupy the intellectual and professional scene. We believe that studying the influence of contact with international ideas and experiences may help better the understanding that we have of the current urban planning system and practice. This is why we want to discuss, within the context of this paper, if and how contact with international models and actors influences the urban planning system and contributes to its constitution in Istanbul.

## WHAT IS DIFFUSION ? A BRIEF STATE OF THE ART

Urbanism as knowledge, public policy, and practice evolves through the circulation of ideas and experiences and through trans-national connections, contacts and exchanges (Saunier 2005). where one city inspires another, a concept inspires a key personality or one planning professional the practice of another: these inspirations govern city making practices to a great extent. Concepts like “the garden city”, “the functional city” and “the global city”, theories of strategic spatial planning, images of cities and/or specific projects and practices circulate over borders and influence and are, in return, influenced by national/local contexts (Saunier 2004). This is why the circulation of ideas and experiences, their diffusion and their impact on the local scene is one of the keys in understanding the constitution of local urban planning practices. There is relatively little research<sup>3</sup> that has been done despite the relative importance of the question<sup>4</sup> and three main issues are addressed according to Ward(1999): mechanisms of diffusion, its impact on the local urban scheme and the way these ideas and practices are modified by the local context. Ward adds that diffusion processes reveal themselves to be complex matrixes, that these studies have revealed no universal answers and that the experience of diffusion produces different results in different countries. The principal agents of this matrix seem to be people: what they tell, what they write, what they hear, what they see or what they read attest to the organisation and impact of circulation<sup>5</sup> (Ward, 1999 & Saunier, 2005).

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<sup>3</sup> The question of diffusion seems to be of some interest to those working on political science, economy, international relations and law. (Wade Jacoby, *Imitation and Politics: Redesigning Modern Germany*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2000. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, Cambridge (Mass.), The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. Dominique Barjot (ed.), *Catching up with America. Productivity Missions and the Diffusion of American Economic and Technological Influence after the second world war*, Paris, Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2002. Dorothy V.Jones, *Toward a just world: the critical years in the search for international justice*, Chicago, University of Chicago press, 2002.) The role of inter-governmental organisations (IGO) like the World Bank, the European Union, OECD, UNDP and UNESCO and non-governmental organisations (NGO) like Greenpeace, *Architectes sans frontières* and *Habitat* concerning the transfer of good practice seems to elicit interest among researchers.( Jonh Boli and George M.Thomas (ed.) *Constructing World culture: international Nongovernmental Organisations since 1875*, Stanford, Stanford university press, 1999., Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The role of International Organisations in the making of the Contemporary World*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002. Giuliana Gemelli and Roy Mc Leod (ed). *American Foundations in Europe: Grant giving policies, cultural diplomacy and transatlantic relations, 1920-1980*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2003.)

<sup>4</sup> We exclude from this evaluation those studies that concentrate on planning activity in one context for the practice of others, those studies that are concerned with the work of international bodies concerned with planning matters (European restructuring funds and their effects on local contexts, the impact of World Bank “best practices” approach on local institutions, etc.) and those studies that treat urban planning as an integral part of wider economic globalisation.(The global city and the competitive city, etc.)

<sup>5</sup> Journeys seem to be at the heart of these forms of exchange and are of special interest to those who work on diffusion. They are defined as experiences where the person in question is transformed: visiting an exposition, participating in a congress or a research visit, doing some of your studies or working abroad transform those who experience it and make of them missionaries of their experience.

The process starts when a key person meets a new idea, a practice or a model through different media<sup>6</sup>, persons or visits. This contact may be completely accidental or the result of a power relation between the parties concerned, resulting in two dominant tendencies, that of imposition or borrowing. Ward(1999) explains that imposition entails a process of transference where these ideas and practices stay unaltered by local considerations<sup>7</sup>. Borrowing implies that it is the importing body who decides on its prerogatives and it shows a “marked deference in the economic, geopolitical, or cultural spheres to the countries whose ideas and practices they (are) borrowing”(Ward 1999). The differences between these two mechanisms are at the origin of concepts that replace the word “diffusion” within the existing literature: Saunier(2004) speaks of “circulations” while Nasr and Volait (2003) speak of “importation and exportation” and Ward(1999) of “transfer” or “exchange”. Diffusion procedures seem in reality to be more complex than the description given above: “many countries have simultaneously experienced more than one episode of diffusion, often overlapping and involving multiple sources. The relationship with these sources may be different and one type of diffusion can often evolve seamlessly into another” (Saunier, 2005). The complexity of these movements and flows can never be summarized by concepts like borrowing or imposing, emission/reception, depart/arrival or offer/demand. The movements and flows that constitute the circulation of ideas and models are indeed complex to pinpoint and may issue from a multitude of nations and geographies. Moreover, these ideas and models may be met with indifference, resistance and/or acceptance: this will result in their being rejected, imitated, transferred, translated, adapted and/or appropriated in relation with local dynamics. Ward(1999) explains that “the actual mechanism of diffusion varies but often involves direct reliance on planning expertise from the exporting country and mimicry of its planning practice. They will in all these cases have a certain “impact” on the national/local context. This will vary according to the socio-political and economic context of the country/city, the key personalities of the diffusion process, the modalities of diffusion, the facility with which they are put into practice and their maintenance (Saunier 2005).

## **THE EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM IN ISTANBUL: THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES**

The urban planning practice has been put in place to solve the problems of the industrial and the postindustrial city. Its importation to Turkish cities where the problems are the fruit of a different nature takes place within the framework of a national reform, that of “westernisation”, that has been undertaken first by the Ottoman Empire and then by the Turkish republic. There are no detailed studies of the influence that this importation has on the planning system in Istanbul. There are nevertheless numerous studies concerning the history of urban planning in Turkey and in Istanbul. The studies of Yerasimos (2004), Tekeli (1994) and other authors on Istanbul reconstitute the development of the Istanbul metropolitan area and the evolution of the urban planning system. These studies allow to pinpoint the different instances of “contact” of the local urban scene with international experts, ideas and experiences and show how the urban planning scene<sup>8</sup> has

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<sup>6</sup> Here we talk about a range of documents from scientific studies to professional journals, websites of local governments to films, all media that serve to transmit ideas, experiences, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Japanese planning of Korean cities in the 1930s, Nazi planning of Polish provinces in the 1940s and the work of French urban planners in French colonies at the same time are examples of imposed planning.

<sup>8</sup> Not only the contact concerning planning issues, but also the diffusion of economic, political and legal models, their effects on the national and local contexts and on the urban planning scene has to be taken into account to have a better understanding of the evolution of urban planning. For example, the liberalisation of the economy and the decentralisation of government powers, two processes which are the consequences of the interventions of the IMF during the 1980s have had important impacts on the urban planning practice. We will nevertheless define the limits of the study to the urban planning sphere.

continuously been occupied by these influences in one way or another<sup>9</sup> and how these contacts have influenced the urban planning system and practice and the urban development. This mise-en-parallel allows us to develop our first hypothesis on the relation between these contacts and their impact on the constitution of the local scene. We will study this process in three consecutive sections organised in chronological order. The first will address the birth and development of urban planning practice before the 1950s and the urbanisation of the population. The second will study the period between the 1950s and 1980s where there is a real public will to constitute a planned approach to urban development. The third will study the period after the 1980s where project led processes take over plan led development.

- **Urban Planning as a Modernisation Project: Foreign Professionals in The Urban Scene (1780-1950)**

During this period, most of these urban planning activities that take place in Turkish cities are undertaken to better urban services and to embellish cities. The population is mostly rural, there is little industrial development and the cities do not grow. These activities aim to “modernize” the traditional city and are part of the westernisation project of first the Ottoman Empire and than the Turkish republic. It is the European city, with its large straight boulevards squares, high buildings and municipal services that is the dominant model used to do this. In Istanbul, the first interventions at urban scale take place in 1854 to reconstruct zones destroyed by fires. The first attempts to prepare overall plans for the city dates from 1908. The first building regulation act is passed in 1848, others follow in 1863, 1882 and 1933. They are mostly realised by foreign engineers, architects and urban planners<sup>10</sup>. The solicitation of foreign experts may be due to two reasons. The first seems to be the fascination of public authorities with European cities: who better to choose than those who have already shown what they are capable of doing? The second reason must surely be the lack of local “experts” who have knowledge, training or experience on the subject. These activities slow down with the WWI and until the urban planning act of 1933. This act orders the elaboration of master plans for all existing municipalities. This measure results in the creation of a competitive and prolific market for foreign experts and opens the way to local architects. 49 master plans are prepared by foreign and Turkish “experts” between 1933 and 1945, and 170 master plans between 1946 and 1950<sup>11</sup>. In Istanbul, it is once more foreign experts who are invited to direct the planning studies. Alfred Agache, Jacques-Henri Lambert, Henri Prost, Hermann Ehlgötz and Martin Wagner are consulted and Prost is charged with the elaboration of the master plan for Istanbul in 1936. These foreign experts leave Turkey during the WWII: in 1950, Prost is the only foreign urban planner who practices in Turkey and who continues with his planning work in Istanbul.

Of the 219 master plans prepared between 1933 and 1950, only that of Ankara, where important resources have been put in place, has been implemented. There are several reasons for this. In Istanbul, Prost is incapable of carrying through with the interventions foreseen because neither the city nor the central government has the funds to realise the necessary expropriations. The master plans prepared for smaller cities with no electricity or paved roads depict the development of garden cities, big squares and main axes that connect prestigious public buildings. Most of these plans have been prepared without visiting the site and do not take into account neither the financial and

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<sup>9</sup> To do this, we will use the work of Tekeli, Sokmen, Yerasimos, etc. and interviews conducted with Seher Sezer and Murat Diren, two urban planners of the Istanbul Greater Municipality who have taken part in the elaboration of different master plans of the city since the 1970s.

<sup>10</sup> Kauffer, Melling, Moltke, Storari and Bouvard are called upon to prepare maps, local plans and projects for Istanbul between 1780 and 1914.

<sup>11</sup> The creation of the Bank of Provinces in 1945 facilitates the finance and realisation of master plans for Turkish cities.

technical constraints of local governments or the realities of these local contexts. They eventually become obsolete after the rapid urbanisation process of the 1950s. Akcay(1950) and Tekeli(2005) explain that these plans have no impact whatsoever on the urban development, but the studies conducted under the supervision of foreign experts have contributed to the constitution of a professional milieu with its tools and conceptual background. These tools have proved to be insufficient however when faced with the new dynamics and problems of rapid urbanisation from 1950 on. These foreign experts have also contributed to the creation of a debate platform during the 1930's: Agache, Danger, Jansen, Wagner, Lambert, Egli, Kessler and Reuter publish in professional journals on urban planning in general and on professional practices in Turkey in particular<sup>12</sup>. They are the ones who make the first criticisms concerning Prost's work in Istanbul and Jansen's work in Ankara<sup>13</sup>. The presence of Reuter who founds the first chair of urbanism in 1938 in the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara<sup>14</sup>, Oelsner who founds the chair of urbanism in the Faculty of architecture of the School of Civil Engineering in Istanbul<sup>15</sup> and Holzmeister who teaches at the school of Civil engineering in Istanbul contributes to the constitution of this platform and to the formation of architects in urbanism.

- **Confronting Rapid Urbanisation: Collaborating with Foreign Experts (1950 – 1980)**

The period starting with the 1950's is marked by the rapid growth of cities and the construction of illegal housing settlements and shanty towns. The population of Istanbul increases from 1.166.477 in 1950 to 1.882.092 in 1960, 3.019.032 in 1970 and 4.741.890 in 1980. Public authorities and urban planners are caught unprepared by this situation and do not have the means to control it. Yerasimos (2004) explains that this new context puts an end to the first planned era and opens the second where the United States replaces Europe as the reference of "westernisation". This is due to the cold war and the repositioning of the United States who decides to support a number of peripheral countries governed by pro-American elites who adopt liberalism as the new economic model. Turkey is one of these countries<sup>16</sup>. These new collaborations result in a shift of power in Turkey and the United States becomes the new reference for public authorities. The central government collaborates with American experts to find a solution to the urbanisation phenomena of the 1950s. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Egli, Abrams, Wagner and Rudwin are some of the experts who prepare reports on the problems caused by rapid urbanisation and their probable solutions. OECD insists during this time on the importance of economic and spatial planning and tries to convince the central government to adopt the necessary policies.

Yerasimos(2004) explains that these contacts contribute to the evolution of existing and new institutions, of the educational framework and the profession. In 1951, Abrams, who reports to the United Nations on Turkey's squatter housing problems, recommends the establishment of a joint

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<sup>12</sup> These writings appear in several professional journals, in *Mimar* that is first published in 1931 and *Belediyeler* (Municipalities) that starts being published in 1935. These journals publish at the same time articles like "Ville Contemporaine" of Le Corbusier, information on international urban planning competitions like Stuttgart and Stockholm, the translation of the building act of Mazagan in Maroc along with urban planning practices in Turkey, the new plan of Ankara, etc.

<sup>13</sup> These two planners are criticized for belonging to the "old school": the measures taken by Prost to preserve the historic centre of the city are considered outdated and not sufficiently modern. Wagner questions the validity of Prost's propositions for Istanbul, a city where the economic context does not allow financing the operations foreseen by the plan. He proposes instead to adopt measures to control the land market to avoid speculation.

<sup>14</sup> Reuter's book on municipality administrations is translated into Turkish in 1940.

<sup>15</sup> Olsner is appointed as principal consultant of the direction of urban planning in the Ministry of Public Works in 1940.

<sup>16</sup> Turkey receives 100 million dollars in 1947 and 137 million dollars between 1948 and 1951 as a part of the Marshall Plan. It then joins NATO in 1952. It also signs the Ankara Agreement with the European Community in 1963.

school of architecture and planning. Middle East Technical University (METU) with a faculty of architecture is founded in 1956 with the help of the University of Pennsylvania and funding from the United Nations. Lloyd Rudwin, professor of urban planning at MIT proposes the constitution of planning schools in Turkey after two official visits realised under the patronage of OECE (the organism that preceded OECD) in 1959 and 1960<sup>17</sup>. The School of Architecture is expanded with the introduction of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in planning in 1961 at METU: the first degrees of master of urban planning are awarded in 1963<sup>18</sup>. The foundation of union of chambers of architects and engineers in 1954 and the chamber of urban planners in 1968 has enabled the planning profession to establish its identity. Changes in the legal and institutional framework have reinforced this identity as much as the importance of urban planning as a discipline. A new law of urban planning with modernised tools replaces that of 1933 in 1956. The Ministry of construction and urbanisation is founded in 1958 and the National Planning Organisation in 1961. The 1960s are also marked by a series of cooperation policies which insist on sending local professionals to developed countries for education: a great number of Turkish architects and urban planners are sent to European countries and the United States during the 1960s and 1970s to study urban planning: these people have occupied important positions in government institutions and the planning schools once back in Turkey<sup>19</sup>.

These events that attest to the institutionalisation of urban planning and the development of the professional milieu take place during a time when anarchy reigns in the urban scene. They are results of the actions undertaken by the central government to resolve the growing problems of urbanisation in collaboration with those international organisations that enforce, finance and/or participate to these actions. These efforts have nevertheless not resulted in the constitution of a stable system during this time. This is mostly due to the fact that public authorities are caught unprepared to an urban growth that proves to be very volatile and demands immediate solutions to the growing pressures concerning housing and transport. The planning bodies are not equipped with the necessary competences to take action in this crisis situation and are slowed down by their research for scientific excellence. Public authorities succumb rather quickly to public pressures and opt for a politic of “*laissez-faire*”. This choice destabilises the planning bodies and slow them further down.

In Istanbul, the plan of Prost is declared obsolete by a special committee composed of Turkish urban planners in 1950. The plan is criticized for addressing the issue of embellishment rather than the rising problems of housing and transport: the methodology is judged to be not sufficiently scientific and the propositions outdated. Yerasimos(2004) argues that this report is the first sign of Turkish professionals taking over the urban scene in Turkey<sup>20</sup>. The “consultants committee” made up of Turkish professors of the School of Fine arts and Istanbul Technical University replaces Prost and takes over the planning activities the same year. It is during this time that the prime minister Menderes undertakes a series of operations, some inspired by the propositions of Prost, to

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<sup>17</sup> The creation between 1950 and 1970 of diverse modern research and teaching institutions in public health, medicine, education, agriculture, family planning, natural sciences and management was possible through the financing of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. (Rose in Giuliana Gemelli and Roy McLeod (ed). American Foundations in Europe: Grant giving policies, cultural diplomacy and transatlantic relations, 1920-1980, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2003.)

<sup>18</sup> Five other schools of urban planning are created between 1979 and 1984, and four others between 1994 and 1999.

<sup>19</sup> A privilege that was reserved for the elite until the 1980s, it has become more of a strategy to train the teaching body of Turkish universities since then. This policy has acquired a new context with Turkish universities' integrating with European student exchange programmes.

<sup>20</sup> Turkish architects begin contesting the hiring of foreign urban planners to plan Turkish cities during the 1930s: this tendency can partially be explained by mounting nationalistic sentiments. Several articles written by Burhan Arif Ongun criticize the work of these foreign experts.

modernise Istanbul<sup>21</sup>. These operations realised with no plan or detailed programme are defined in a piecemeal fashion using existing opportunities. They undermine, according to numerous authors, the planning profession as well as the work undertaken by the “consultants committee” and are denounced as such by the media as well as the professional community. Menderes tries to appease the public opinion by inviting another foreign professional, Hans Högg, to prepare plans that reflect their rationality of his operations. It is thus that urban planning and urban planners have been mobilised for the first time by a public figure to rationalize and legitimate an *ad hoc* intervention after its realisation to our knowledge<sup>22</sup>. This approach where a public leader takes in hand the development of the city and elaborates projects without consulting the responsible services becomes commonplace in the following years despite the numerous criticisms. These criticisms surrounding the operations of Menderes lead the public authorities to undertake work for a new plan for Istanbul. An Italian urban planner, Luigi Piccinato, is invited to Istanbul to direct the planning activities in 1958 by the central government and presents his master plan to the Ministry in 1960<sup>23</sup>. He is also charged with the preparation of the master plan of Bursa, while Bodmer, another foreign professional is named to direct the direction of planning in Izmir. Yerasimos(2004) explains that this return on the scene of foreign experts is mostly due to the need for a second generation of plans which seem to transcend the capacities of Turkish professionals of the time. He adds that international aid organisations had to have their say on these appointments. Piccinato is the last of foreign urban planners who direct urban planning activities in Istanbul, and the presence of foreign experts continues at a different scale after this moment on.

The planning studies undertaken by Piccinato are found lacking by the municipality and the plan is overruled on the grounds that the data used does not correspond to the reality and the analyses realised are limited<sup>24</sup>. This decision is the first of a series of decisions that find lacking and overrule plans prepared during the next twenty years in Istanbul<sup>25</sup>. This is partially due, according to Yerasimos(2004), to the fact that urban speculation becomes one of the motors of capital accumulation and the regulation of urban land in Istanbul becomes impossible during the 1960s. The Istanbul metropolitan bureau cannot keep up with the rapid growth of the city and finds it very difficult to monitor the evolution and to keep its database up to date: the plans prepared in 1973 and 1978 are outdated by the time they are produced and necessitate revisions.(Cakilcioglu, 2004) The local government abandons all types of control and planned action when faced with the increasing demands on urban land: this makes occupation and illegal construction a daily practice in Istanbul. All planning practice becomes illusory and the different projects and counter-projects of planning at this period nourish and orient the speculation instead of controlling it. Furthermore, decisions regarding public investments like the first Bosphorus Bridge are taken without consulting with the planning body nor is its opinion taken into account. The question is reduced to its engineering basics without taking into account the effects of such an intervention on the macro form of the city.<sup>26</sup> The work of the bureau is also made difficult by the interventions of the Ministry of

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<sup>21</sup> These operations launched at a period when the country was in deficit aim to show the power of the central government.

<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that the predecessors of Högg have not been influenced by the will of public authorities concerning certain issues of urban development.

<sup>23</sup> The Ministry of construction and urbanisation creates the same year the bureau of regional planning of Marmara with the contribution of the United Nations, the OECD and the European Centre of Production.

<sup>24</sup> His propositions concerning the city will have lasting effects among the urban planners in later years even if the plan is not approved.

<sup>25</sup> The Istanbul metropolitan bureau of planning that is founded in 1966 realises a series of detailed analyses and prepares a series of propositions during the next 14 years. The studies of the bureau are found lacking time and again for different reasons

<sup>26</sup> We should add that the plan that is prepared by Piccinato foresees the linear development of the city which will be reinforced by a bridge that will cross the Bosphorus.



construction, which has close relations with capital owners and intervenes in their favour. Its status as a consulting bureau reduces its power to cope with these interventions (Sezer, 2006). The regulation of urban development is reduced to the preparation and approval of local plans during this period: these plans are often prepared by private offices upon the demand of developers. They are approved by the Municipality of Istanbul and are almost immediately put into action. They create in time a patchwork of decisions that are not always coherent with one another.

- **The Dissolution of the Planning System and the Emergence of Project Led Urban Development: from the 1980s Onwards**

The central government announces a new liberal economic program that foresees the integration of the national economy in the global economy in 1980, in line with the propositions of IMF and WB.<sup>27</sup> This development turns the attention of the government to big cities and particularly to Istanbul in the following years. The prime minister Özal and the mayor of Istanbul, Dalan, announce their project to make Istanbul a world city at the beginning of the 1980s and Dalan starts working on a series of large-scale operations. Keyder and Oncu(1993) explain that Istanbul becomes the showcase of the neo-liberal politics of the time. This new political context and the government's priorities do not seem to tolerate the interventions and the resistances of the Metropolitan Planning bureau and results in the adoption of a "semi-planning"<sup>28</sup> situation. The Metropolitan Planning bureau becomes highly politicised during the 1970s and constitutes the centre of resistance against certain government decisions like the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bosphorus Bridges. The decision of the central government to define "tourism zones" where actual planning decisions are overruled and investors are accorded new construction rights is also met with strong resistance. The Metropolitan Planning bureau is dissolved, as a result, in 1984 in accordance with the ongoing re-structuring of the local and the central government. The local government is endowed with planning powers and a new bureau is created within the metropolitan municipality to take up planning activities<sup>29</sup>. Those key personalities who organize the resistance are eliminated during this time which leaves wide open the way new controversial projects.

The reorganisation of the planning bureau within the metropolitan municipality reveals itself indeed as more than an institutional issue. Dalan finds that no important operations have been realised during the last few years to satisfy the needs of the city. Judging the previous planning work lacking in force he decides to operate alone. This decision results in the definition of a new role for the new planning bureau who is asked to stop its planning work and who starts preparing local plans and plan revisions that regularise the operations of Dalan and make way for private investors. Diren(2006) explains that Dalan is very much inspired by Thatcher who dissolves the Greater London Council in 1986 and relaxes the planning regulations to stimulate private investments. Dalan proposes radical solutions to solve Istanbul's problems. The divergent objectives of the central and the local governments, the augmentation of the income of local governments and the weakening of the urban planning system allow Dalan to realise several large scale operations. He

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<sup>27</sup> This program is embraced by all the following governments, including the military government between 1980 and 1983. Some of the strategies are defined as privatisation, economic liberalisation, liberalisation of import/export activities and the promotion of international investment. The decentralisation of the central government takes place at this time.

<sup>28</sup> Tekeli considers this situation in Turkey as a semi-planning situation in a study that he published in 1994.

<sup>29</sup> The new legal framework concerning the reorganisation of the government leaves a lot to be desired on a number of issues including the urban planning issue: the partitioning of responsibilities between the central and the local government is not clear and the resulting ambiguities creates a "vacuum" and allows the public authorities a certain liberty in their politics concerning plan making and enforcing. Istanbul is governed and decisions are taken without a plan between 1980-1994 and 1999-2006 and the master plan prepared in 1995 is overruled based on this ambiguity.

collaborates at the same time with capital owners to promote private investments, and these with the backing of the Prime Minister. These interventions are very much influenced by the Western city model as it is understood by Dalan: his urban strategies and the decisions concerning public and private operations of the time are the results a selective borrowing process from the “west”. The Haliç project which involves the decentralization of small industry from the historic city, the demolition of remaining buildings and the subsequent creation of vast green spaces is inspired, according to Öç et Tiesdell (1994), by large scale waterfront development projects like Baltimore’s Harbour Quay and London’s Docklands. Shopping centres built on the model of “The Galleria” of Houston<sup>30</sup>, high rise office buildings built on the model of their American counterparts<sup>31</sup>, luxury hotels which are musts for the comfort of foreign investors<sup>32</sup>, and new housing complexes that are built after the model of “gated communities”<sup>33</sup> proliferate under the guiding hand of Dalan and Prime Minister Özal during the 1980s. The realisation of these projects that have very important impacts on the city without a clearly defined plan/program and the disregard of the urban planning profession anger NGOs, researchers/academicians and urban planning professionals. The decentralisation of thousands of industrial workshops with no regard for the owners nor the workers<sup>34</sup>, the demolition of 368 buildings including those of historical importance and the delocalisation of around 1.000 families for the opening of Tarlabasi Boulevard (Bartu, 1999) along with rumours concerning bribes and corruption add to the discontent of urban planners and of the population. Dalan names those who criticize his work “enemies of Istanbul” and affirms that these operations are “to make Istanbul beautiful, contemporary and civilized” (Dalan, 1986). The chamber of architects contests these operations and brings suit against them: it wins the suit, but not before most of these operations are concluded.

The master plan studies are taken up once more by the planning body with the election of a new mayor, Sözen, in 1989. Sözen, who is left-wing, fights along with the chamber of architects against the lingering effects of Dalan’s mandate: numerous ongoing projects are suspended, certain construction rights are decreased and the new master plan is completed during this time. The plan is approved in 1994 to be overruled by the newly elected right wing government the same year on

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<sup>30</sup> The first shopping centre of Istanbul, Galleria is built by Bayraktar, one of the capital owners in the entourage of Ozal, in partnership with a public bank in 1988: it is Ozal who wants to build a shopping centre like « The Galleria » in Houston in Istanbul and he urges Bayraktar to participate in the project. Other shopping centres follow this development: Akmerkez, Capitol and CarrefourSa are opened in 1993, Carousel in 1995, Profilo in 1998, etc.(Ozdemir, 1999) This tendency continues in the 2000s with the creation of around 20 new shopping centres in Istanbul.

<sup>31</sup> The first high rise office buildings are of this same period. Dalan who wants to develop the new international centre of Istanbul in Dolapdere is confronted with the reluctance of capital owners who have already chosen one of the main transport arteries, Buyukdere for their new headquarters. He seems to be more interested by the creation of a modern centre more than its exact location in the city. He allows this development and provides the necessary plan revisions and building permissions on one condition. He asks the capital owners in question to go to the United States to visit the city centre with its high rise buildings. He asks them to replicate these buildings and demands to be the one to decide on the architectural project.

<sup>32</sup> The first *hotel de luxe*, Ciragan Kempinsky is constructed near the Ciragan palace with the help of Ozal : Swisshotel sets up in the gardens of Dolmabahce palace, Conrad Hotel sets up in the gardens of Yildiz Palace and the Princess Hotel in Maslak. These investments benefit from the law of promotion of tourism and occupy some of the most prestigious sites of the city. 37 zones are defined to be tourism zones in Istanbul by the central government with the agreement of the local government between 1982 and 1989. A large number of national and international investors have profited from this law to construct a series of hotels and office buildings in highly sensitive zones.

<sup>33</sup> It is once again Özal who is at the heart of the first gated community, Bahcesehir at the outskirts of the city. He advises Süzer who is the land owner to form a partnership with a public bank to develop a luxury housing community. This first project opens the way to numerous other developments that resulted in suburban sprawl.

<sup>34</sup> 622 big factories and 5.000 to 10 .000 small businesses are removed from Haliç during the decentralisation. This is believed to affect 400.000 to 500.000 workers, therefore around 2.000.000 people with the families. (. (Öç & Tiesdell, 1994)

grounds of unlawful distribution of gain. The plan is revised and approved in 1995 by the new government to stay in effect until being overruled by the Council of State in 1999. The Council decides that the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul is not endowed with the rights of elaborating a master plan and the master plan of 1995 is thus annulled. The constraints regarding the delays not being clearly defined, the ministry of urbanisation and construction does not take up planning studies of Istanbul until the enactment of a new law concerning metropolitan cities<sup>35</sup>. This law names the Ministry of environment as the public entity responsible for master plans and grant two years for their preparation. The master plan of 2006 that is prepared under the guidance of the ministry by the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul between 2004 and 2006 is once again overruled in 2007 by the Council of State in response to the contestations of 25 professional chambers, including the chamber of architects and the chamber of urban planners. This is because the central and the local governments have not followed the procedures determined by the legal framework and have delegated plan making to a private bureau of urban planning through semi-legal procedures. The continuous annulations of master plans bring us to question the good will of public authorities concerning the urban planning practice, especially from 1980 onwards. This is partially due to the failure of the government to accommodate the growth of the city and the failure of the planning bureau to put in place an action plan that responds to the urgencies of the time that seem to have resulted in the evolution of certain city making practices. Peace-meal decisions taken in time seem to be more effective than lengthy planning processes at adapting to the changing dynamics of urban development. This approach seems to respond to this volatile context, allows the actors to seize opportunities as they come and is reactive: this is why it suits both the public authorities and the private sector.

The operations of Dalan is the concretisation of these practices and open a new era in the urban planning system in Istanbul, that of “project led urban development”, an approach that is adopted by all the subsequent local governments. The planning practice shifts from master plans to urban-scale projects, a development in line with the international dynamics of urban planning from the 1980s onwards. The project-making processes of public and private actors reveal however important differences in their organisation and their outcomes.

Capital owners start investing in large scale real estate development projects in the 1980s with the support of Özal and Dalan: the first projects of hotels, office buildings and luxury housing are followed by more ambitious ones as the benefits of such undertakings are revealed to be important and whet the appetite of national and international groups. Furthermore, the accumulation of such projects obliges the stakeholders to be more and more innovative to cope with the rising number of similar projects and to keep their part in the real estate market. The ever increasing flow of information and voyages to foreign countries allow these actors to keep up with developments concerning such developments in the world. These private investors do not hesitate to work with international and local consulting firms specialised in engineering, construction, architecture, urban planning and real estate: some of these consulting firms have opened offices in Istanbul in view of the importance of the real estate activity<sup>36</sup>. These projects are done outside of the confines of the urban planning system as are the public interventions which are mostly small-scaled interventions, the only exception concerning transportation networks. Their term of office being short and their means limited, local governments following Dalan develop projects that are far from being strategic

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<sup>35</sup> This law replaces the first law number 3030 of metropolitan cities that has been approved in 1984, a first step in the decentralisation of the central government.

<sup>36</sup> ARUP(1990), Colliers-Resco(1998), Steward International(2004), etc.

elements in a planning process<sup>37</sup> These projects are scattered in the city and do not have an important impact on the urban environment when compared with western examples and with the real estate development projects undertaken by the private sector in Istanbul during the 1990s and 2000s. Recent developments undertaken under the heading of “urban renewal” seem to be more ambitious and point to significant changes concerning the scale and the impact of public interventions that remain superficial until now.

The planning system serves in this context as a legitimacy and/or regularisation tool and not as a strategic tool of guidance and/or regulation of urban development. This does not mean that it does not have any influence. Tekeli(1994) explains that "anyone wishing to build a building in the city is likely to meet with such pressure from planning agencies that they will have to devise ingenious methods to make their way through the system". Planning documents serve in this context as negotiations tools between private investors and public authorities and influence the decision making processes to a certain point. These negotiations seem rarely to take into account strategic questions regarding urban development and to be mostly concerned with short term strategies or personal gain. This use of local plans and plan revisions to legalize decisions concerning private and public investments is a distortion of the urban planning system and the profession. This is why the legitimacy of these interventions remains limited to that of this “highly modified” planning procedure put in place. These decisions are often faced with legal contestations carried out essentially by the chamber of architects and the chamber of urban planners since the 1980s. Their action constitutes a social regulation framework that blocks more or less effectively numerous public and private urban projects.

### **PRESENCE OF CONFLICTING PROCESSES: DIFFERENCES IN THE DIFFUSION PROCESSES AMONG DIFFERENT ACTORS**

Studying the evolution of the urban planning practice in Istanbul reveals the presence of two conflicting processes in progress. The first one supports the development of Turkish urban planning in accordance with internationally accepted planning paradigms. The second one resists urban planning and tries to undo it. We observe on one side a strong mobilisation among urban planners, bureaucrats and elites who advocate for a planned development for the city and for the constitution of an urban planning system with its institutions, tools, means and legal framework. This tendency is accompanied by a negation of all non-planned development. We observe at the same time political actors and capital owners who organise city making practices through peace-meal decisions according to their own programs. Urban planning is used in this context to legitimize these *ad hoc* decisions and is denaturalized.

Turkish urban planning practice has almost always evolved in constant presence of foreign contacts. These contacts with international ideas and experiences bring us to assume that they have a generalised strong impact on the local scene. A more detailed look reveals that these contacts are of different natures: some are influential at national scale while others have repercussions at local scale. There are periods of intense contact with very little influence, moments where it is personal contacts which take precedent over scientific studies, others where a personal visit changes the perception of one of the key actors. Neither the mechanisms of contact nor the mechanisms of diffusion, adaptation or application are linear and constant: they evolve and change nature in time. They influence in different ways and different measures different components that make up the

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<sup>37</sup> This does not mean that this “coherent whole” is fixed in time and does not evolve: the flexibility and adaptability of the urban planning approach, of the objectives, strategies and projects defined seem to be qualities that make the process more successful. Read Healey for more.

urban planning system. We believe that these differences in diffusion processes have resulted in the constitution of the two conflicting processes that we have described above. Urban planning has been part of the modernisation process since the very beginning and has been supported by elites and bureaucrats who have worked for its refinement in accordance with international paradigms. The schools of planning who are very much influenced by the same international paradigms have educated their student body to mould in with these elites and bureaucrats. Public authorities have been obliged by international organisations to adapt these paradigms which have taken place in the legal framework and the institutional organisation. These have resulted in the constitution of an urban planning system that does not correspond to the socio-economic realities of the society. (Tekeli, 1986)

Urban planners seem to be marginalised with the reality of city making practices in their discourse and their practice. Master plans continue to be elaborated in contradiction with the unplanned development that reigns.<sup>38</sup> Plan making procedures do not take into account decision making processes nor land property. This relative disjunction is fed and maintained by planning schools where the curriculum is rarely founded on local realities and international planning paradigms govern the programs. The comprehensive planning of the 1960s and 1970s is replaced by the current paradigms of urban management, urban design and ecological planning. Urban planners are taught on the latest techniques and models while their knowledge of the local context and their know-how remain limited as is often the case in other developing countries (Souami, 2004). The institutionalisation of an urban planning approach that does not correspond to the local realities results in the creation of a counter-current among the society that searches for ways of sidestepping and thus undoing the urban planning system. This current does not seem to be influenced by international ideas and experiences concerning urban planning. Not being part of the same elite or professional milieu, they have never been exposed to the same influences concerning planning paradigms. They seem however to be very much influenced by the concept of the Western city and it becomes the reference for a large number of public and private operations that go around the planning system and in doing so discredit it along with the master plans in effect.

The partial diffusion of international ideas and experiences constitutes one explanation among others to the presence of these conflicting processes that govern the urban scheme in Istanbul and the resulting failure of urban planning practices. It merits being explored as thus. We believe that such a study may bring us to consider differently the current project led urban development approach and the use of the planning system as a legitimacy tool. This practice that is being condemned for being other than what we expect may prove to be the local translation of the urban planning ideal.

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<sup>38</sup> How else can we explain the resistance of urban planners against the development of the new CBD of Istanbul and their refusal to take into consideration this development in the master plans while the CBD continues to take a new importance with every passing day? How can we explain also the refusal of urban planners to take into consideration the construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bosphorus bridge during the elaboration of the 2006 plan on the grounds that they are against this development?

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