
Master Thesis.

“Between the city and sea: urban waterfront regeneration”. Student: Milan Sijakovic Tutor: Eduard Bru.
Abstract

This paper analyses actual and future urban waterfront regeneration projects in Barcelona and Istanbul. Each case city, with its waterfront projects is assessed along the series of quality criteria which help to interpret the way in which these cities through these development projects try to re-install the water culture of the city and how this achievement helps improving the quality of urban life. This paper is organised in three parts. First part of the paper deals with Barcelona polygon, examining four large waterfront projects, second with Istanbul, analysing five urban revitalization projects on the Istanbul shore and the third addressing the issue of waterfront homogenization and standardization.

Objectives

The paper, with the ultimate aim in mind as drawing some recommendations for Istanbul, examines and compares projects that regenerated the waterfronts in Barcelona and Istanbul. The objective of this thesis is to examine whether the western model can, or should be applied in the case of Istanbul and what are the consequences of applying the same models regardless of the geographical conditions and cultural background.

Keywords

Waterfront, urban regeneration projects, quality of urban life, public use, Barcelona, Istanbul, homogenization, standardization.
Index:

1.0. Introduction

2.0. The role of the Waterfront

2.1 Barcelona Waterfront revitalization projects
   2.1.1. Moll de la Fusta
   2.1.2. Vila Olimpica
   2.1.3. Poble Nou – intersection of Ensance and Waterfront
   2.1.4. The Besòs-Forum project

2.2. Waterfront Revitalization Attempts in Istanbul
   2.2.1. Galata Port Project
   2.2.2. Kadıköy Square Haydarpaşa-Harem Urban Design Competition
   2.2.3. Haliç - Golden Horn
      2.2.3.1. Revitalization of Haliç’s (Golden Horn) Waterfront
      2.2.3.2. Haliç City Park : PAB Architecture
      2.2.3.3. Research site in Sütlüce

3.0. Global influence and standardization

4.0. Bibliography
1.0. Introduction

In the contemporary city, the success of the quality of life embodied in public spaces is increasingly accepted as a guarantee factor for an overall success. As such, cities have realized the importance of the role of water for a better quality of life in the city. Many cities around the world are creating ambitious waterfront projects, trying to solve their problems related to water and combining this with improved public spaces. This paper examines and compares projects that regenerated the waterfronts in Barcelona and Istanbul.

Istanbul, already possessing the privileged conditions for a strong character as a water city, should enhance this particularity for improving the quality of urban life. Waterfronts in the spotlight are regarded to be suitable places to adapt alterations for an expected healing in the quality of life. Precedent projects in cities applying waterfront projects for an enhancement in their quality of urban life might be opening new prospects for Istanbul for a similar achievement. Furthermore, chosen projects concerning waterfront regeneration in Istanbul are examined, so that key questions can be answered: which are the Istanbul’s role models, should the western model be applied, and whether the Istanbul waterfront is under the influence of globalization.
2.0. The role of the Waterfront

“The city is a mirror of the complexity of modern life. The result is a city environment where
instability is the only constant. The result of half a century of urban space-making have left us with a
diffuse urban structure; a city pieced together from heterogeneous elements hat when combined create
a homogenous aesthetic. This amorphous city appears abstract, disordered, confused and illogical.
This abstraction act to diffuse meaningful relationships for those that live in a city and inevitably
leads us to feeling of loss and a yearning for a better place, for an idealized urban environment.”

It is within these present difficulties that a space has opened up in the city which allows expressions
of hope for urban vitality. The urban waterfront provides us with this space. On the waterfront we see
glimpses of new city making paradigms, partial visions for what our cities might be. If the city has
come to be regarded as a reflection of society and its problems, it itself is a problem of unprecedented
complexity. By focusing on the urban waterfront, we are able to isolate and view in focus specific
responses to the problems of disorder and confusion mentioned previously.

Nan Ellin, exploring the idea of postmodern urbanism, notes that among anthropologists, cultural
theorists, and urban planners there has been developed a fascination with notions of edge, a response
“to the dissolution of traditional limits and lines of demarcation due to rapid urbanization and
globalization”. “Among architects and planners, a great deal of attention is being paid to spaces
considered interstitial, “terrains vagues”, “no man’s land”, or “ghost wards”.

Ellin states that this is apparent “in the concern for designing along national borders and between
ecologically-differentiated areas such as along waterfronts...The notion that the talents and energies of
architects and urban planners should contribute to mending seams, not tearing them asunder, to
healing the world, not to salting its wounds, has grown much more widespread in acceptance.”

It is in the spaces provided by the urban waterfronts that planners and designers wrestle with the
appropriateness of their intentions for the present, and for the future. The urban waterfront provide
possibilities to create pieces of city, to paraphrase Peter Davey, that enrich life, offer decency and
hope as well as functionality, and can give some notion of the urban ways of living celebrated by
Baudelaire and Benjamin, Oscar Wilde and Otto Wagner. In these possibilities, we remember that
urban development is not just for profit, or personal aggrandizement, but for the benefit of humanity
and the planet as well. It is on the urban waterfront that these visions of the city are finding form.

Waterfronts of course have historically been the staging points for the import and export of goods.
Location next to the water was a competitive advantage to many industrial operations. The edge
between city and water, between the production site and its transport basing point, was the most
intense zone of use in the nineteenth-century city.

---

2 Ellin, N. Postmodern Urbanism, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999
3 Schwarzer, M. Ghostwards: the flight of capital from history, Thresholds, 1998
4 Ellin, N. Postmodern Urbanism, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999
Use on the urban waterfront was often exclusively port or manufacturing related. The wealth of cities was based on their ability to facilitate the need of industrial capital to access waterfront resources. However, the creation of this wealth brought with it environmental degradation and toxicity, which today characterize these residual urban spaces.

Our information-saturated, service-oriented economic systems no longer rely on the industrial and manufacturing operations of the past. Technological changes have redefined the relationship of transport and industry. The concurrent advancements of road, rail and water transport, combine with the requirements of containerization, have shifted the basing points for global water transport away from previously historic waterfronts. With this passing, the relationship between water and the generators of economic wealth has changed. Typically, these areas exist as spaces of urban redundancy, as left over spaces in the city. The use and the environmental condition of these spaces are of major concern to many cities in their revitalization efforts.

“The high profile of their locations means that waterfront projects are magnified intersections of a number of urban forces. Simply, the economic and political stakes (and hence the design stakes) are higher on the urban waterfront. Indeed, through changes in technology and economics and the shifting of industrial occupancies, the waterfront has become a tremendous opportunity to create environments that reflect contemporary ideas of the city, society and culture.”

---

2.1. Barcelona Waterfront revitalization projects

Barcelona is a prominent and famous example of the success of the quality of life embodied in public spaces, using its high-quality waterfront urban spaces as a part of an improvement policy. The city’s experience made it a pioneer in using big events for promoting both the city and its quarters. “These events resulted in big redevelopment projects; the projects of Port Vell, Port Olimpic and Forum 2004, all those events acting as motors for the redevelopment of the area by an attractive coastline, high-end housing and a change from industrial production to knowledge economy. The city has set in motion a process of urban renewal, fulfilling the city’s aspiration of opening itself up towards the sea.”  

As such, cities have realized the importance of the role of water for a better quality of life in the city. Through water, they aim to enhance or emphasize their identity and quality of urban life. Ubiquitously, many cities around the world are creating ambitious waterfront projects, trying to solve their problems related to water (flood protection, water storage, re-use of old port areas, etc.) and combining this with improved public spaces. These projects form the showcases for their cities and are perceived as strong instruments for the competition with their rivals.

---

Between the city and sea: urban waterfront regeneration

“Historically, like many capitals, Barcelona expanded inland, never taking advantage of its waterfront potential. The port began expanded westwards and the construction of the railway along the coast in the nineteenth century attracted industry, cutting the city off from the water. Its spatial and functional transformation, made possible by various strategies, has been spectacular. An observer comparing the city today from the 1970s might think that there was an excellent master plan or development agency behind an integrated change. Yet it was a sequence of interventions that made this possible.” 7 These interventions have all become linked together as part of the ambitious overall vision of recovering the city’s access to the sea. It is through a series of projects and interventions on different scales and within different contents that this is becoming a reality.

2.1.1. Moll de la Fusta

The sequence began with the recovery of the first port space of the Moll de la Fusta when, in 1983, Manuel de Sola-Morales created pedestrian access to the old timber wharf and gave the space a two level section, confining through and underground car-parking to the lower level, and allowing pedestrian access from the historic city to the port. This was a pilot project that addressed a fundamental issue in the rehabilitation of the built city: the combination of traffic control and the enhancement of prime public space. The clarity and the success of the project led to the introduction of a new approach to long-distance traffic in the form of Barcelona’s Ronda ring roads that run the length and breadth of suburban Barcelona and enabled the large-scale reorganization of the port. The change introduced by the project served to focus on the ambitious restructuring of the waterfront from La Barceloneta to the river Besos, on the basis of four systems of infrastructural intervention:

- Changing the layout of the railway line inland from the coast by means of a false tunnel.
- Reorganizing the city’s drainage system, which until then had emptied its sewage into the Mediterranean via the Bogatell, and creating an interceptor and a treatment plant beside the river Besos.
- Drawing up a coastal strategy to create five kilometres of urban beaches, protected by perpendicular breakwaters that adopt the modular system of Cerda’s grid.
- Providing new access for private mobility and public transport. The former comprised the integrated mixed model used in the Moll de la Fusta. The latter promoted the competition of streets and avenues in this sector, such as the Diagonal and Avinguda Icaria.

“Today, this vast infrastructural program may appear to have more coherence that the individual projects actually had in themselves. A careful observer will probably find many inconsistencies, but the programme obeyed a general common logic that prioritized access to the sea and sought a clear dividing line between space that could be privatized and spaces that should be public or communal. This overall vision, in which the Olympic theme of the area neat to the Ciutadella Park represented a major contribution, was carried out at different times and rates, and comprised a whole series of urban projects of varying scopes and initiatives.” 8

2.1.2. Vila Olímpica

The Vila Olímpica, developed on either side of the extended Avinguda Charles I, was the keystone of this new construction. With a surface area of over 20 ha and a programme for 1200 dwellings with services, it became the spearhead of the waterfront. A marina and two flagship buildings completed the intervention. With regard to urbanism, Martorell, Bohigas and Mackey’s project played with the general urban morphology of the Eixample, introducing a maxi-block system that combines buildings of various scopes (Martorell, Bohigas and Mackey, 1992). The Vila Olímpica was developed by VOSA, a public-owned, privately run company, and the dwellings went on the market before the Olympic took place, although they were not occupied until the Games were over. The dwellings were of standard size and were purchased mainly by middle-class and professional buyers who received tax benefits because the apartments had been built for the Olympics. Two smaller Olympic villages were constructed in Poblenou and Vall’d Hebron which, though privately developed, accepted the municipal strategy according to which new developments should comprise at least one-third affordable housing. The Vila Olímpica introduced high quality urban space and its beaches became an attraction for the whole metropolitan region.
2.1.3. Poble Nou – intersection of Ensanche and Waterfront

“When Barcelona was given the opportunity to host the 1992 Olympics, the city continued a tradition that began with the World’s Fairs of 1888 and 1929: namely, the use of large events as a motor to power a desired spatial transformation. In this case, the goal was to speed up the transformation of the coastal zone of Poble Nou by building the Olympic Village there. Authorities hoped that locating the village on this site would result in a definitive breach in the aforementioned mental cut-off point represented by the citadel.”

The City Council promoted a query to seven teams of architects, the results of which should have allowed discussion of an important tool to find the most appropriate management for the new seafront. The works have been elaborated within the teams of professionals (Rafael Cáceres, Lluís Cantallops, Emili Donato, Carles Ferrater, Josep Mortorell, Joan Pascual, Enric Serra) concerning waterfronts, extensions, residential occupation.

However, de Sola-Moreles 1971 proposal for developing a new urban planning structure for the coastal zone was to be modified considerably. The design of Poble Nou saw Oriol Bohigas in a major role once more, since ‘his’ firm, MBM, was commissioned to design the plan. The urban planning design for the Olympic Village had to provide 2,500 apartments, 60,000 square meters of office space, and 185,000 square meters of facilities. In addition to a complex relocation operation to remove existing industry from the site, the project consisted of four distinct tasks:

- **Main infrastructure**: incorporation of the remainder of the Francia Station rail line and of the new beltway, the Cinturon, running along the coast.
- **Seafront**: realization of a new public seafront, as a continuation of the earlier development of the harbour front.
- **Ensanche**: continuation of the structural principle of the Ensanche.
- **Housing typology**: creation of space for new building typologies of the same calibre as those previously considered feasible only on the urban periphery and in suburban milieus.

Methods used to develop these four points are visible in the four layers of which the design is composed. The first, or infrastructural, layer consists of the rail line and the Cinturon, both of which lie, for the most part, in a tunnel. The second, or the waterfront, layer accommodates a series of parks, a beach boulevard, and two tall towers precisely on the axis of the Passeig de Charles I. In the third layer, the pattern of the Ensanche is transformed into a number of superblocks that incorporate the fourth layer, a series of new ‘free’ building typologies: low-rise housing, small towers, and a ‘crescent’.

The combination of these various layers was an attempt to anchor the project fully into the urban context.

---

Poble Nou: four-layered plan analysis. Bottom to top: a. urban and landscape-related context of the design; b. Large-scale structural elements; c. ‘superblocks’; d. suburban infilling.
Block interiors and relationship with the waterfront
Structure of open spaces

Public space internalized with controlled access
C. Ferrater

Interconnection of open spaces and structuring streets
R. Caceres

J. Martorell

E. Serra

Organizatio through division of irregular, broken spaces
L. Cantallops

E. Donato
Between the city and sea: urban waterfront regeneration

Originally the first two tasks, infrastructure and seafront, were closely interwoven. The 150-to-200 meter wide zone between the wall of facades formed by the superblocks and the beach was to feature tripartite spatial articulation: The Cinturion was designed as a parkway, and a ‘transparent screen’ formed by a row of six high-rise towers was meant to create a contrast to the beach boulevard, the Passeig Maritim.

This series of towers would provide the seafront with a new shape, geared to the scale of the metropolis as a whole. This scheme represented a definite break with goals envisioned by the Ribera Plan of the 1960s. Instead of an autonomous enclave, separated from the city by an infrastructural cluster, the new seafront-together with the parkway and the contiguous part of the Ensanche-would be designed as a single urban planning composition.

Both towers and parkway, however, were eliminated from the plan. The towers were unacceptable to the Spanish Ministry of Public Works, which found the seacoast too unstable to support buildings within 200 meters of the water’s edge. The construction of two towers was permitted only behind the yacht marina, which also functioned as an extra means of protecting the coast.

Subsequently, the Catalan traffic department declared that the capacity of the Cinturon was to be increased to at least 120 000 vehicles a day (instead of the original prognosis of 80 000). This amount of traffic was considered too high to be combined with pedestrian traffic and was sure to produce an excess level of noise pollution that would affect adjacent housing. “Owing to a lack of functions, only part of the hastily designed tunnel was realised completely below ground level, and as a result, an approximately 2 meter high dike stands between the Olympic Village and the sea, depriving the village of a view of the Mediterranean. A single broad area eventually replaced the planned multiarticulated zone. This robbed the Cinturon of much of its charm as a pleasant coastal road, and the dike continues to form a barrier between the Olympic Village and the beach.”

Form-volume relationship - facade and the profile of the city

Experiments from the Ensanche which focus on the design of housing blocks are relevant to efforts by MBM to build on these experiments by applying a ‘modern interpretation’ of Cerda’s grid to the design for Poble Nou. Bohigas also gave a great deal of thought to the creation of new spatial typologies capable of combining traditional and modern forms of use. In his case, however, the primary focus was always on building typology and, to a lesser degree, the typology of new kinds of infrastructure.

"The theme of a combination of ‘traditional’ urban and ‘modern’ suburban typologies has permeated the work of MBM for over twenty years. In a discussion on the controversy between the ‘classic’ city and modern urban planning in a 1973 article in L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui, Bohigas proposed the development of a new urban morphology, which was to be the symbiosis of qualities found in both classic and modern cities. The basic elements of this new morphology were described as ‘ilots Presque fermes et rues Presque corridors’ – nearly closed building locks and nearly urban streets - which were to give planners a chance to enrich urban morphology with a great diversity of housing types, thus allowing for many different kinds of dwellings and lifestyles within the city." 11

By uniting block founded in the Ensanche, three superblocks were created: elements meant to produce a combination of perimeter blocks and free land division, as well as a combination of urban avenues and spatial types of a more suburban nature. At first glance, the variety of housing types and urban milieus seems to be a continuation of nineteenth-century experiments with avenues carried out according to the Ensanche. Larger building blocks set the stage for the realization of diverse types of suburban land division within the sizable inner area formed by these superblocks.

"In a ‘mental’ sense the same kind of distinction is present in the Olympic Village: a distinction between the atmosphere of city streets lined by superblocks and that of the inner areas, which suggests a largely social domain that offers a high degree of individuality, security, and intimacy in the immediate proximity of the dwelling.” 12 The difference between the city streets and inner area is heightened by developing an unambiguous image of buildings lining city streets - not only in terms of building volume but also with respect to the architectonic execution of exterior walls, and by creating inner areas that accommodate a great variety of building typologies and architectural diversity.

2.1.4. The Besòs-Forum project

With a global investment of about 3,200 million euro, the Forum is the physical outcome of a political, cultural and real estate strategy that took advantage of a big event organized to rehabilitate a large coastal strip. The intervention that extends over more than 200 hectares in the area where the Diagonal meets the sea, between Vila Olimpica and the mouth of the Besòs, has produced a suburban area with original traits, characterized by big metropolitan infrastructures (purification plant, thermal power plant) reformed to become compatible with the new fusion of residential, commercial and recreational activities.

Designed since the mid-1980’s as an “area of new centrality”, the waterfront around the mouth of the river Besòs was a deprived fringe of Barcelona. When the Diagonal avenue reached the sea at last – 140 years after Cerda’s had planned it connecting with Barcelona’s Orbital motorway built for the 1992 Olympics, it put the area on the map. The Universal Forum of Cultures 2004 was pretext to a large-scale environmental upgrading and redevelopment project focusing on business and leisure. This mega-project is widely debated in Barcelona with critics about it becoming a socially exclusive area.

This project set six basic objectives for the Besòs area:

- recovery of the shoreline (parks, facilities, marina, bathing areas, and coastal ecosystems);
- incorporation of existing installations (sewage treatment plant, waste incinerator, and power plant) in the scheme;
- creation of an interface between the sea and city (square and esplanade);
- creation of a new central urban area (Convention Centre, hotels, university, offices);
- development of new residential areas and renovation of existing ones;
- restoration of land and marine environments (new energy saving criteria, restoration of the river and marine biotopes, etc.).

The site prior to development in 1997: ring road, sewage treatment plant, and conventional power plant. The white outlines show the development areas reclaimed from the sea.

The site prior to development looking along the Diagonal: an area on the fringe of the city.

The virtual model of the project, in 2000.
New urban layout of the shoreline

The new town planning scheme included the following features: Barcelona Marine Zoo, Sant Adrià Marina, Shoreline parks and bathing areas, a new urban central area, Barcelona International Convention, Centre and setting, Forum Building and Square, Large esplanade (linking the central area with the shoreline), new residential areas and facilities, Llull-Taulat/Universitat, La Mina.

The new layout involves in-depth urban renewal to make the shoreline accessible, consisting of land reclamation and the building of public facilities. The project provided continuity along the shoreline area and linked it up to the rest of the northern coast. To achieve this, the technical installations in the area had to be modernised: - the power plant (which now uses a more efficient and less polluting combined electricity generation cycle), and burial of the high voltage power lines (pylons running alongside the River Besòs). These changes were agreed with the power company; - the incinerator plant was modernised and a waste separation and methane gas extraction plant was built (Eco Park); the sewage plant was completely modernised to incorporate biological treatment systems. The plant was covered over, creating a public area on top and linking the city and sea in an esplanade built over the Coastal Ring Road.
2.2. Waterfront Revitalization Attempts in Istanbul

In Turkey, most of the industrial centres are located near water’s edge. Therefore Turkey has a great potential in terms of waterfront revitalization. But, Turkish port cities experience different evolution period than the other world cities. Most ports are still in an active use in city centres. Port cities in Turkey did not experience an abandonment period that causes problems for cities. In this context, it can be stated that waterfront revitalization is a newly emerging trend in Turkey.

Istanbul, being an important port city in the history, is an impressive case that experience revitalization process. “Istanbul is not just a waterfront city; it is a city on water. Water had been always dominant in Istanbul’s life by being a defence element, a way for trade, a means of transportation, a source for industrial activities and a recreational element. As ports were acting as important interaction points, they became essential elements of urban structure in the city. So, waterfront revitalization is an important issue for the development of Istanbul. Revitalization of Haliç’s waterfront in 1980’s is the first large scale implemented project.” 13 Besides Haliç, in recent years, some projects were also developed for the port areas of Istanbul; such as “Kadiköy Square Haydarpaşa-Harem Urban Design Competition” in 2001, and “Galata Port” Project.

2.2.1. Galata Port Project

Throughout the history, Galata had been always a significant settlement in the history of Istanbul. It was the economic centre of the city where commercial and port activities took place. Like the other port cities, various ethnic and religious groups were settled in Galata. So, Galata Port project area, covering a land of 100,000 m² from Karaköy to Tophane including Karaköy Port and Salı Pazarı, is an important historical quarter of the city.

In the mid of 20th century, Karaköy Port is one of the most active port of Istanbul. But in 1980s, being situated at the city centre, the port zone became unsuitable for the increasing traffic of vessels and trucks. Therefore, the port was closed to vessels in 1986 and to trucks in 1988 and began to serve only as a passenger port. But, because of its configuration, the port did not operate properly for such a use. Therefore, TMO (Turkish Maritime Organization) decided to develop a project, named ‘Galata Port’, for this area. They intended to construct a contemporary passenger port similar to the models that were developed in western countries with many tourist-oriented activities - hotel, aquarium, commercial centre, leisure and cultural facilities. Like the many other waterfront regeneration and revitalization projects, the main aim of the project is stated as creating an international culture and tourism centre that will bring an economical and commercial vitality to Istanbul and also that will develop Istanbul’s image in the national and international level. General Director of TMO declared that after the implementation of this project a new tourism industry will develop in Istanbul and it is expected that 12 million tourists in a year, coming by passenger ships, will visit “Galata Port”.

“Contrary to this, Galata Port Project is highly discussed and criticized by different groups. There are many controversies and objections by mass media, city dwellers and non-governmental organizations for the content and scope of the project. The project is criticized as destroying the historical characteristic of the site, creating a barrier between the city and sea and preventing the public access to the waterfront.”

---

Existing condition of Galata Port

Plan of Galata Port with all the typical uses; hotel, aquarium, offices, cultural and commercial centres.
2.2.2. Kadıköy Square Haydarpaşa-Harem Urban Design Competition

Today, Haydarpaşa port is isolated from the city life with its warehouses and back-up land for storage facilities. Port zone is a valuable urban land as being located in the centre of Istanbul. With the “Kadıköy Square, Haydarpaşa-Harem Urban Design Competition”, replacement of the Haydarpaşa port came on the agenda. Although, the port has a high working capacity, the shift of the port to outer city zone is projected for the future.

But this is not the only reason of the development of a competition for this district of the city. In last three decades, the city of Istanbul was faced with a functional and physical deterioration of urban spaces due to the pressure of migration and rapid urbanization. This brought the necessity of the redevelopment and revitalization of some urban lands in the city centre. The project site, where Harem Bus Terminal, Haydarpaşa Port, Haydarpaşa Customhouse, Haydarpaşa Train Station - intersection of three transportation modes- exist, becomes one of these urban lands. Therefore, in 2001, the Greater Municipality of Istanbul organized a competition project for the site. The main objective of this competition is to redevelop the project site as an urban space for the metropolis of Istanbul. Some purposes of this project were declared in the competition brief as following:

• To evaluate all existing plans and decisions proposed for the site,
• To develop the physical and functional conditions of the site in order to integrate it with its surrounding,
• To analyze waterfront projects that were developed from Kartal to Moda and from Uskudar to Harem to facilitate their connection with the project site,
• To redefine the identity of Kadıköy Square that is one of the most important centres of the city,
• To propose a new transportation scheme for the site,
• To encourage fine arts.
By the words of Bas Butuner based on these intentions, it can be stated that the context of the competition is far from being a waterfront revitalization project. The project site is exactly a waterfront land; but nothing was mentioned about this unique feature of the site in the competition brief. The site was expressed like any other urban land of the city rather than as a waterfront. Concisely, the major identity of the site was ignored in the competition brief. Although the project is not implemented yet, by analyzing the completion brief and the project that was selected for the first prize, it can be stated that a similar waterfront model –including aquarium, passenger terminal, recreational areas, commercial and cultural centres- to the other word cities was proposed to the project site.

Exiting condition of the project site with a working port.

Image proposed by the project that was selected for the first prize
2.2.3. Haliç - Golden Horn

Haliç (Golden Horn) has been a unique place for Istanbul throughout the centuries. Once being a natural canal between historical peninsula and Pera district in the Ottoman times, Haliç currently lies in the middle of the city centre of Istanbul. It’s surrounded with touristic attractions -Eminönü, Sultanahmet, Süleymaniye Mosque-, the buzzing cultural focus of the city –Beyoğlu, İstiklal Street, Galata-, a conservative neighbourhood -Eyüp-, and once a squatter town on the hills of industrial sites now a newly developing commercial district -Kağıthane. Haliç also hosts three university campuses, three large shipyards in service for military and city-line ferries.
As one of the most colourful places in Istanbul, the district has created its own social medium and inspired many artists or visitors with its beautiful landscape in the Ottoman times. However, with the 19th century Haliç has transformed into an industrial zone that caused the pollution of the river and destruction of the environment. Followed by the wrong policies that ignore the social and environmental concerns, in the 1980s the area became one of the most polluted districts of Istanbul. After the 80s, the municipalities have tried to reverse this process to reduce the pollution by deindustrialization of the area, but could not help to cause Haliç to become an empty urban corridor in the very heart of the city.

The change of the Golden Horn coastline
Parallel to the deindustrialization process, the coastline of Haliç was redrawn by large land-fill areas in the 1980s which are currently used as vast green spaces without infrastructural facilities, a holistic landscape design or a programmatic planning.
2.2.3.1. Revitalization of Haliç’s (Golden Horn) Waterfront

By the beginning of 1980s, industrial facilities began to move from Haliç’s waterfront. In 1981, a commission was founded for this process. But, after 1984 this organization was ignored. During this period, all warehouses, factories and also some old neighbourhoods, in an area of 50-100m widths from the shoreline, were destroyed and transformed to an empty green area that weakened the relation between sea and the city. Haliç’s waterfront revitalization is the most considerable process in Istanbul as being the first example. “But, results of the process were disappointing. In this context, the project can be criticized from several points. First, the project site was homogenized without considering the specific conditions of different zones. Same model were implemented to the whole area. The waterfront turned into a passive green linear edge. Second, after the implementation of the project, Haliç’s waterfront did not become an attractive urban centre as mentioned at the beginning of the process. Although undesirable effects of industrial facilities were removed from Haliç’s edge, due to the lack of other urban facilities, the waterfront did not turn to an urban area that were highly used by citizens. It did not integrated with the existing urban fabric. Concisely, the project neither reflects the unique features of a waterfront land nor responds to society’s needs.” 15

Parkway on Haliç’s waterfront. Haliç’s waterfront was homogenized by applying the same green area model to the whole area.
Comparing to the coastline of entire Istanbul, Haliç waterfront, with wide land-fill areas, is a great potential to generate public spaces. Yet, it should be also noted that currently there are three degrees of (public, semi-public and private) usage in Haliç coasts.

Three degrees of usage in Istanbul coastline.
Three degrees of usage in Haliç coasts.
Between the city and sea: urban waterfront regeneration

- Wide coastal area
- Free access for public
- Opportunity for public programmes

- Narrow/wide coastal area
- Restricted access for public
- Opportunity for public/semi-public programmes

- Occupied coastal area
- No access for public
- Private programmes

- Parks with no facilities
- Parks with facilities
- Unplanned green areas

- Transportation nodes
- Access buy fee
- Narrow walkway next to the highway

- Shipyard
- Sültüce congress center
- Army base

- Public coastline
- Semi-public coastline
- Private coastline
2.2.3.2. Haliç City Park : PAB Architecture

By the words of the PUB Architecture representatives, keeping in mind the large open spaces and the projections of the local governments, Haliç can be formulated as a coherently planned and managed city park that will both serve locals as well as general public of the city centre. Haliç can be perceived as a central city park, due to its location, potential of water use, and large green areas. They stated that while comparing Haliç with other parks from Istanbul and around the world, one realizes that the abandoned/unplanned green areas bear a great potential. Moreover, the water surface should also be counted in as a potential to be used for various purposes. When the water surface is also included, the area exceeds Central Park of New York.
In their research PUB Architects propose that what Central Park is to New York, Haliç can be to Istanbul.
Singular, detached cultural buildings with limited influence areas are incapable of activating the coastline due to undefined open spaces in between and lack of diversity in functional scheme.

Cultural buildings along the Golden Horn coastline
To structure Haliç as a coherent city park, the main actors from cultural industries, as well as local governments and NGO’s representing neighbourhoods should be brought together.
In order to activate Haliç as one big park, it’s important to connect two opposite coasts, with either pedestrian bridges or sea transportation. There are only a few bridges where pedestrians can walk uninterruptedly to the other side, and sea transportation is very rare, approximately only twelve times a day.
In their research PAB Architects developed a number of interaction zones between the unarticulated greenery and local urban fabric, which would make the connection between the sea and city much stronger.

An interaction zone should be established to:

- create a pedestrian flow from the neighbourhood to the park and visa-versa
- revitalizing the park and enhance park use for local people-provide open space to local neighbourhood
- diversify functional layout in the waterfront which will attract more people and serve as a more coherent city park
The number of these interaction zones with local urban fabric can be increased to enable a stronger continuity along Haliç.
2 ways to attain continuity of public flow and facilities

1. vertical to Haliç, by penetration of green and different functions
2. parallel to Haliç, by transpassing blocking volumes

3 ways to overcome the block effect of new investment projects

1. by raising the block and ensuring a pedestrian passage
2. by dividing the massive volume into smaller units by regulating site rules
3. by a regulation to reduce the floor areas on upper floors
Today, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality is working on new projects and investments for Haliç and defines the area as the “Valley of Culture and Arts”. However, since the projects are far beyond the planning process, the valuable urban land in the city centre with a distinguishing natural characteristic is becoming a “rag bag” with singular, detached volumes and in between undefined open spaces.
1. İstanbul Commerce University
2. Kadir Has University (including Rezzan Has Museum)
3. Library of Women Works
4. Shipyards
5. Koç Industrial Museum
6. Design Library (Old Hat Factory)
7. Nezih Eldem City Museum
8. Feshane
9. Sütülçe Congress Center
10. Piyer Loti
11. Mevlevihane (whirling dervish hall)
12. Dolphinarium
13. Miniatürk
14. Santral İstanbul (İstanbul Bilgi University, Energy Museum, Art Museum)
15. Sadabad Park
16. Open air Archeology Park
17. Kağıthane Culture Center
Simultaneously, on the Northern side of Haliç, the main business district at Levent-Maslak axis has started expanding towards Kağıthane, in need of second rate office spaces. The abandoned industrial sites in Kağıthane have been transforming into offices besides ongoing new real-estate investment projects like two different shopping malls, various housing projects, etc.
Commercial

1. Levent Business District
2. Seyrantepe Galatasaray Stadium
3. Sur Shopping Center
4. Tefken Holding
5. Enyapi Shopping Center
6. Polisan Office + Residence Project
7. AG Offices
8. Office Blocks
9. Hilton Hotel
10. Musiad (chamber of businessmen)
11. Arçelik Headquarters
12. Flat Office
2.2.3.3 Research site in Sütlüce

These two different forces from two ends of Haliç are colliding into each other at the northern end of the valley. Keeping in mind the new transportation axes like the newly-built tunnel from Kağıthane to Taksim, as a third force, the region marked on the accompanying image will be one of the first areas that will absorb or reflect these pressures. Keeping in mind these forces, PAB has chosen to work closer on this region with a waterfront from Bilgi University Campus to Sütlüce Congress Center and the hinterland composed of three different neighbourhoods Sütlüce, Örnektepe and Mehmet Akif Ersoy.
The project site is at the northeast of Haliç. The site is defined by some natural and artificial boundaries like Kağıthane Brook on the northern side, E5 highway on the southern side, E5-TEM connection highway on the eastern and Haliç on the western sides. The site is easily accessible from central neighbourhoods due to its proximity to highways. One of the two exits of Kağıthane-Piyalepaşa tunnel is also in the site, which in the future will mean a growing traffic pressure on the coastal road. The region will be more critical in terms of transportation in the future since there is a proposal to make a transfer hub in Kağıthane that will also include two new intersecting metro lines.
Between the city and sea: urban waterfront regeneration

Topography of the project site

Urban pattern

Road systems
The project site has already been transforming under the pressure of commercial functions reaching the site from Kağıthane direction. There are two different projects which include offices and shops. Besides, as an international brand Hilton will be launching a new 4-star hotel in the project site. Just these three projects are adequate enough to show that other projects will be on the agenda in the near future – which will clearly force the site to change both in terms of land use (housing to commercial use) and socio-economical level (lower class to upper class). This may cause a disruption clearly to be seen in the section. While the upper class accommodates the waterfront, the lower class will be swept to the rear which means reaching coastline will be getting more difficult for them than before.

The images how the clear division between the lower and upper class housing disposition, upper class having the direct contact to the waterfront and lower class being cut off from the shore line
Reaching to Haliç and coastline is a major issue to be discussed in the project. It’s difficult to reach because of various reasons like slopped topography, forecoming class differentiation, and physical obstacles. These physical obstacles can be classified into three types:

1. a building with a massive volume on the coastline,
2. a building with a massive volume on the land side of the coastal road,
3. the coastal road itself since it transforms into an impassable barrier with viaducts and junctions

These three kinds of obstacles which prevent the locals from reaching the coastline are seen in various forms along the entire Haliç coast. In the project area the first obstacle is represented by Sütlüce Congress Center, the second obstacle by AG Plaza, one of the new investment projects in the area, and the third obstacle as the coastal road along Kağthane River.
1. A building with a massive volume on the coastline: Sütlüce Congress Center

Sütlüce Congress Center is an obstacle that prevents pedestrians to reach Haliç both visually and physically. The distance they need to walk to reach a public space at the coast gets 2.5 times longer.
2. A building with a massive volume on the land side of the coastal road: AG Plaza

The massive volumes and the slopped topography compress the housing settlement from two sides, leaving no place to expand. The massive blocks and therefore uninterrupted large sites along the road, limit pedestrian access to coastline and increase the walking distance.
3. The coastal road itself since it transforms into a barrier with viaducts and junctions

Concerning the project site, besides the challenge of surpassing these junctions, the pedestrians also come across the steep topography which brings a physical fatigue, as well.
PAB’s proposal for the redevelopment of the area

Step 1:
In Turkey public space is created in built environments, rather than in vast open land. Therefore, to activate the park and liberate the neighbourhood, new functions should be introduced in the form of a new development.

Step 2:
The tendency of new office blocks, which would act as a barrier on the coastline, should be regulated and re-formed for public good in the park area to liberate the access of neighbourhood to water and activate the park.

Step 3:
Deforming urban grid through some basic principles
descending building heights to allow maximum view

public access through all ground floors

car park below ground to pedestrianize ground level

Deforming a regular urban grid

Generating public space in between built environments
Between the city and sea: urban waterfront regeneration
3.0. Global influence and standardization

Today, under the dominance of global economy and changing dynamics of urban life, distinctive characteristics of waterfronts and cities are ignored in many revitalization projects. “New towns in towns are rising on the sites of decaying piers. Upscale shopping is replacing abandoned warehouses. Parks are greening the old concrete shorelines and ferries…are using waterways that were once the realm of cruise ships.”16 This scene exists almost in every contemporary urban waterfront that is situated in different world cities. There are many similarities between waterfront projects developed in Baltimore and Europe or in an Asian city. In this context, waterfront revitalization can be criticized as being standardized.

“Since there is a competition between cities to attract more people and capital, cities began to copy models that have successfully implemented in other world cities in order to warranty their success. Therefore several models of a waterfront revitalization program were determined from the projects that were successfully completed and many small and medium size cities adapted these models. In recent years, Turkish port cities have also tendencies to implement such projects for their waterfronts.”

Two main attempts can be determined for the waterfront development in Turkey. First one is short-term projects that were planned by the construction of a highway and green areas parallel to the water on a land gained by landfills. Revitalization of Haliç’s waterfront is the most remarkable example of this approach. Many coastal towns in Turkey experienced a similar process to Haliç. Second attempt is long-term revitalization projects. In early 2000’s, authorities realized the advantages of waterfront revitalization and began to develop large-scale and long-term waterfront projects for several port zones of Turkish cities. In this context, two significant projects were developed for the city of Istanbul; “Kadıköy Square Haydarpaşa-Harem Urban Design Competition” and “Galata Port”.

Even though these projects are not implemented yet, it can be argued that they have similar contexts with other worldwide processes in terms of their intentions. Aquariums, commercial centres, cultural facilities and various tourist activities were proposed in the scope of those projects. As, both project sites are the most remarkable urban lands of the city, revitalization of those lands is very important for the development of Istanbul’s image in the global level. Although these two projects offer great opportunities for the city of Istanbul, integration of those global models and local conditions and requirements of Istanbul generate challenges. By the words of Bas Butuner, concisely, like the many other urban waterfronts, Istanbul’s waterfronts are under the dominance of homogenization and standardization.

Waterfronts, the unique places where land and water meet, are a finite resource embodying the special history and character of each community. Urban waterfronts, like the cities they help define, are dynamic places. The last three decades have witnessed profound changes along abandoned or underused waterfronts. The trend is accelerating in cities around the globe. It applies to canals, lakes and rivers as well as coasts.

“With this growing popularity comes a tendency by some to look for the quick solution, to adopt a formula that may have worked somewhere else. In the 1980’s it was the "festival marketplace" fad. In the 1990’s, it is the "urban entertainment district" and/or stadiums. In a time of pervading sameness and homogenization worldwide this is particularly dismaying because waterfronts above all factors give each community a chance to express its individuality and help distinguish it from others.”

18 Waterfront Manifesto, developed by The Waterfront Centre, New Jersey, USA, July 10, 1999.
4.0. Bibliography:


