Pathways of entrepreneurial urban governance

Spatial dynamics and community politics in Istanbul's regeneration

Kurt Özman, E.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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1. Reading the shift from planning to spatial governance in an entrepreneurial context

1.1 Motivation (context and relevance): Why this dissertation matters

Imagine a city where the grip of authoritarian interventions seems unyielding, where power flows top-down, and where citizen voices appear muted. Yet, beneath the surface, a surprising story unfolds—one of resilience, creativity, and grassroots transformation where power, adaptation, and agency collide to reshape the urban landscape in unexpected ways.

This PhD thesis examines how the central government in Turkey has adopted an authoritarian approach to entrepreneurial urban governance through large-scale and exclusive mega urban regeneration projects. The main argument of the research is that authoritarian entrepreneurial governance paradoxically creates conditions that enable local networks—composed of residents, civil society organizations, and even local governments—to establish innovative initiatives capable of reshaping urban governance. These local actors leverage tools and frameworks designed by the state—such as policies, legal mechanisms, or planning processes—to challenge the system itself. In one case, they re-politicize—reintroducing political debate and power struggles into—the depoliticized frameworks characteristic of entrepreneurial governance. Through re-politicizing local networks and policy networks, these actors carve out channels for negotiations and push for inclusion in decision-making processes, going beyond conventional urban movements. In another case, they shape community politics based on their market-driven imperatives. That is to say, urban residents display varieties of entrepreneurial citizenship, which manifest differently within local contexts. The study posits that local actors navigate this governance landscape by institutionalizing their self-organization or adopting post-populist adaptations, imitating the entrepreneurial practices of both the state and property developers, thereby creating new pathways of participation and influence within spatial planning. This dissertation highlights how entrepreneurial governance,

even under authoritarian contexts, emerges as a platform for negotiated and participatory urban governance, illustrating the unanticipated agency by entrepreneurial citizenship to such settings.

The figure (Figure 1) illustrates the decentralized spatial governance sphere that was departed from traditional urban planning to a more dynamic, network-oriented approach involving diverse actors of governmental institutions, private sector players, NGOs, academics, professional organizations, and civil society, especially within entrepreneurial contexts. This shift acknowledges the complexity and fragmentation of contemporary urban policymaking.

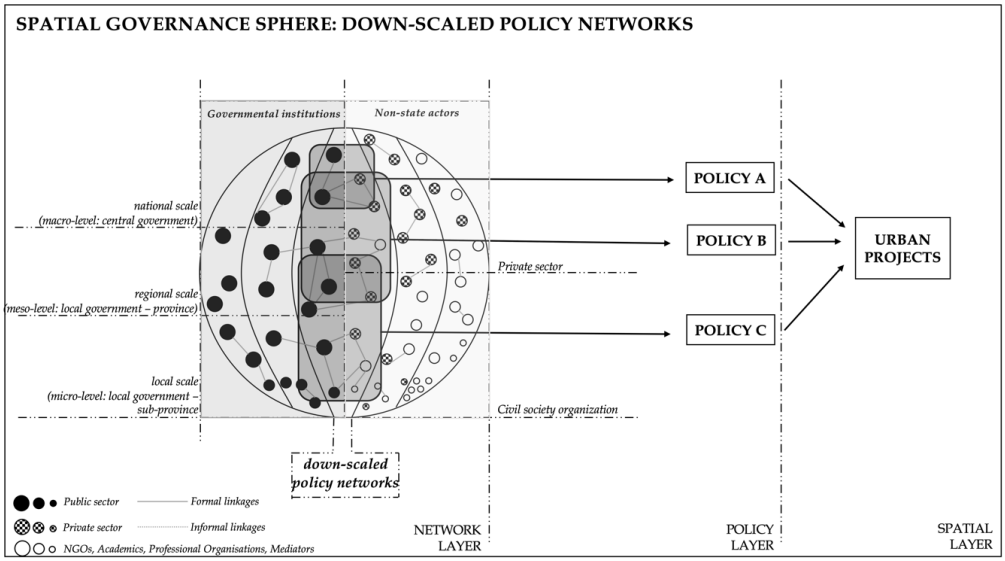

Figure 1. Mapping governance: The dynamics of down-scaled policy networks in shaping urban projects and spatial governance (prepared by the author).

In this context, I employ the policy networks approach, as outlined by Rhodes (2008), to analyze these governance transformations. Policy networks refer to the interconnected configurations of governmental and non-governmental actors who collectively influence policymaking. These actors form relationships—both formal and informal—across various scales (national, regional, and local), as depicted in the figure.

Formal linkages: Represent the structured relationships, such as legal frameworks, contracts, and formal agreements that bind actors, particularly between public institutions and the private sector.

Informal linkages: Depict the more fluid and flexible connections, often driven by personal relationships, shared interests, or advocacy efforts, involving civil society organizations, mediators, and professional associations.

The concept of down-scaled policy networks (highlighted in the center of the figure) focuses on the localized interactions within these networks, emphasizing how actors at the micro (local government or community) level engage with those at the meso (regional government) and macro (national government) levels. These localized interactions align with Swyngedouw's (2005) notion of governance at the local level as down-scaling, where authority and decision-making processes shift to lower tiers of governance. These interactions influence urban projects (Policy A, Policy B, and Policy C), reflecting how governance strategies cascade through and shape the urban spatial layer.

In entrepreneurial governance, policymaking often becomes depoliticized, meaning that decisions are presented as purely technical, neutral, or inevitable outcomes rather than matters open to debate or contestation. Jessop's (2014) concept of re-politicization challenges this notion, advocating for the reintegration of excluded or marginalized actors—such as residents, civil society organizations, and grassroots movements—into political processes. These actors, who have been systematically excluded from urban policy processes, are often marginalized to a depoliticized capacity, deprived of their ability to influence decision-making. However, these excluded actors can leverage re-politicized policy networks to carve out new roles for themselves. Through grassroots initiatives, negotiation, and collaboration, they challenge depoliticized governance frameworks and assert agency. Ultimately, the figure underscores the layered nature of spatial governance—network, policy, and spatial layers—highlighting how policy networks act as critical platforms for negotiation and transformation.

In contrast to the concept of down-scaled policy networks, the figure 2 on up-scaled policy networks illustrates the concentration of governance strategies and decision-making processes at higher levels, particularly in

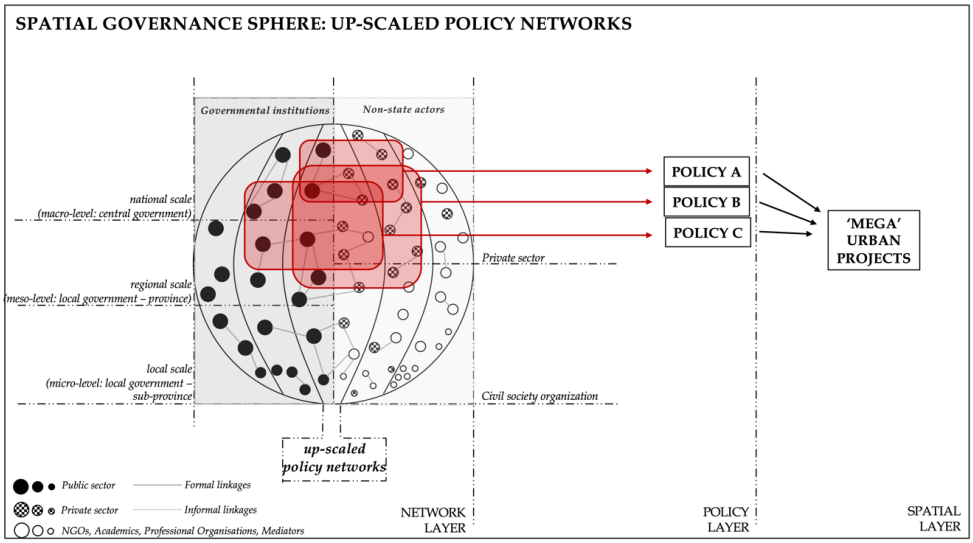

Figure 2. Centralizing influence: The dynamics of up-scaled policy networks in driving mega urban projects and shaping spatial governance (prepared by the author).

the context of mega urban projects. These projects demand coordination among actors operating predominantly at the macro (national) and meso (regional) levels, such as central governments, private sector entities, and national-scale policy actors, reflecting a top-down governance approach. Unlike the decentralized interactions seen in down-scaled networks, up-scaled networks are characterized by a centralization of power, where influence is consolidated among actors at higher governance levels. This centralization aligns closely with entrepreneurial urbanism, which prioritizes large-scale urban transformations aimed at economic growth and global competitiveness.

The figure 2 also highlights the dominant role of the central government and private sector in shaping policies that directly influence mega-projects. Formal linkages between governmental institutions and private actors underscore the strategic alliances that are instrumental in delivering such large-scale projects. However, this emphasis on centralized decision-making and private-sector dominance often comes at the expense of local actors, such as communities and grassroots organizations, who are sidelined in these up-scaled networks. The governance processes here shift from participatory frameworks to profit-driven agendas, deepening the depoliticization of urban policymaking.

Policies (A, B, and C) within up-scaled networks function as centralized frameworks that align with overarching state priorities. These policies are designed to facilitate the implementation of mega-projects, marginalizing bottom-up perspectives and further solidifying the top-down nature of these networks. The spatial layer, represented by mega urban projects, emerges as the outcome of these up-scaled policy networks. These projects representative of state-driven entrepreneurialism, where centralized power prioritizes large-scale urban transformation with high profit return.

This scaling-up process functions where power dynamics increasingly favor centralized and elite actors (Swyngedouw, 2005). At the same time, as these abstractions underscore, bringing local and marginalized voices into the governance process requires the re-politicization of both local networks and sidelined, depoliticized policy networks. While down-scaled policy networks highlight opportunities for grassroots actors to assert agency in governance, up-scaled policy networks demonstrate the challenges of fostering inclusivity in contexts dominated by centralized power and profit-driven agendas. Together, these dynamics reveal the complexity of spatial governance, particularly in entrepreneurial contexts where both inclusion and exclusion are deeply embedded in administrative structures.

Research shows that the entrepreneurial governance context enables those citizens who can organize themselves to have an impact on the process of policymaking through re-adjusting and strengthening their position in policy networks. These reorganized policy networks may provide a basis for innovative channels of inclusion in spatial governance, regardless of the limitations presented by top-down governance. Within this context, and while urban protests, social movements, and other forms of counter responses are pushed down by several political mechanisms of the authoritarian state, citizen-initiated networks still have some impact on spatial organization due to the entrepreneurial context of urban governance. Although entrepreneurial governance creates new exclusion processes and self-responsibilization for urban citizens, it also enables the organization of policy networks to perform the wishes of citizens in this governance context. Even though it may seem limited, the new planning instruments that are created and used in these policy network formations are very important for the re-politicization of urban citizens in urban governance. In this respect, the core research question I pose in my dissertation is:

- How do entrepreneurial governance frameworks, particularly in authoritarian contexts, mediate state-driven urban transformation strategies and local responses in turn, and what do these interactions reveal about the contradictions and transformative potential of urban governance?

Sub-Questions:
- What are the defining characteristics and determinants of entrepreneurial governance, and how do its inherent contradictions shape spatial and policy dynamics across diverse socio-political contexts?
- How do legal and institutional transformations shape entrepreneurial governance in Istanbul's urban regeneration, particularly in left-behind areas, and what pathbreaking trajectories emerge from these shifts?
- How does self-organization challenge state-led urban redevelopment strategies, and what does this reveal about the role of grassroots agency in navigating state entrepreneurialism?
- How do speculative practices and fragmented governance reflect shifts in community politics and disparities between market-driven imperatives and spatial justice, and what alternative pathways do residents adopt to navigate these complexities?

The following section elaborates on major transformations this research covers. Moreover, research methods, key contributions and structure of the thesis are also provided within this chapter.

1.2 A framework setting for meaning-making

I base this research on three major shifts in planning, governing and policymaking, and their causal relations:
1. Transformation from managerial to the entrepreneurial state,
2. Transformation from planning to spatial governance,
3. Transformation from top-down to re-politicized policy networks.

These three transformations—from planning to spatial governance, from managerial to entrepreneurial state, and from top-down to re-politicized policy networks—are pivotal to understanding the shifting dynamics

of urban governance in entrepreneurial contexts. Each transformation highlights a key aspect of how governance evolves under state-driven entrepreneurial systems, particularly in urban regeneration. The shift from planning to spatial governance provides the conceptual foundation for analyzing the multi-scalar, actor-driven dynamics of policymaking and spatial interventions. The shift from managerial to entrepreneurial state forms the backdrop for understanding how governance frameworks prioritize market-oriented, profit-driven imperatives, as explored in subsequent chapters. Finally, the shift from top-down to re-politicized policy networks frames the analysis of grassroots agency and self-organization particularly in the case of Derbent, as detailed in later empirical chapters. Together, these transformations provide a comprehensive lens to examine the contradictions, challenges, and transformative potentials of urban governance.

The theoretical framework, outlined in Table 1, organizes the main concepts and theories that form the foundation of the research into three interconnected dimensions of transformation:

1. *From managerial context to the entrepreneurial role of the state*: This dimension examines the shift from a managerial state to one that actively drives urban development through entrepreneurial strategies. Key contributions include analyses of the state's evolving role as a regulator of capital circulation in neoliberal contexts (Jessop, 2015), the adoption of market-driven approaches in planning and governance (Taşan-Kok, 2010), and the coexistence of planning centrality and market instruments in state entrepreneurialism (Wu, 2018). Additionally, works exploring large-scale urban projects and state-private partnerships (Borja & Castells, 1997; Ren, 2018), shifts in governance processes across Europe (Stead & Kovács, 2016), and institutional changes enabling entrepreneurial governance (Pierre, 1999) highlight the global implications of this transformation.

2. *From planning to spatial governance:* This dimension explores the evolution from traditional planning to spatial governance. Key contributions emphasize the shift in planning approaches and the move toward more adaptive governance frameworks (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006; Allmendinger, 2016), the impact of neoliberalism on urban development and governance structures (Wacquant, 2012), and the integration of strategic planning in metropolitan and urban transformation

Table 1. Conceptual and analytical setting of the research (prepared by the author).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK		
TRANSFORMATION FROM MANAGERIAL CONTEXT TO THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE OF STATE	**TRANSFORMATION FROM PLANNING TO SPATIAL GOVERNANCE**	**TRANSFORMATION FROM TOP-DOWN TO REPOLITICIZED POLICY NETWORKS**
The shifted role of the state as a regulator of circulation of capital in neoliberal development process (Jessop, 2015) Entrepreneurial Governance and Planning (Taşan-Kok, 2010; Taşan-Kok et al., 2019) Models of Urban Governance: Institutional Dimension of Urban Politics (Pierre, 1999) Planning centrality, market instruments: Governing Chinese urban transformation under state entrepreneurialism (Wu, 2018) Governing the Informal: Housing Policies Over Informal Settlements (Ren, 2018) Shifts in governance and government across Europe (Stead & Kovács, 2016)	Planning: A shift from regulatory planning towards spatial governance (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006; Allmendinger, 2016; Özogul & Taşan-Kok, 2018; Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018; Berisha et al., 2021) Neoliberalization of urban development: Three steps to a historical anthropology of actually existing neoliberalism (Wacquant, 2012) Unpacking spatial planning as the governance of place: (Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018) Urban Transformation Projects -Periodical and Legal Context (Özalp & Erkut, 2016) Strategic Plans and Metropolitan Projects (Borja & Castells, 1997)	Understanding networks for contemporary governance (Blanco et al., 2011) Policy Networks and Policy Change (Coleman, 2015) Issue Networks: Iron Triangles, Subgovernments, Policy Communities, Policy Networks (Thatcher & Braunstein, 2015) Network governance for competitiveness (Eraydın et al., 2008) Relational economic geography; power actors; socio-spatial relations (Yeung, 2005) Urban political networks (Le Galès, 2001) Institutionalization of politics in policy networks (Selg et al., 2023)
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK		
Deliberative Planning Theory (Yiftachel, 2006; Forester, 2013) Communicative Turn in Planning (Healey, 1992, 1996; Yiftachel and Huxley, 2000) Collaborative Planning (Healey, 2003, 1999)	Government, Governance and Institutions (March and Olsen, 1989; Rhodes, 1997; Pierre, 1999)	Understanding governance: Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability (Rhodes, 1997; Pierre, 1999)

projects (Borja & Castells, 1997; Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018). In the Turkish context, Özalp and Erkut (2016) highlight the role of legal and institutional frameworks within urban regeneration practices.

3. *From top-down to re-politicized policy networks:* This dimension explores the shift from hierarchical networks to re-politicized forms of policy networks. Key contributions highlight the role of policy networks in fostering collaboration and inclusivity (Coleman, 2015; Blanco et al., 2011), relational dynamics in socio-spatial governance (Yeung, 2005), and

competitiveness in the Turkish context (Eraydın et al., 2008). Foundational works on governance reflexivity (Rhodes, 1997; Pierre, 1999) and issue networks (Thatcher & Braunstein, 2015) enrich this discussion. While Le Galès (2001) illustrates urban political networks influence through a French case, Selg et al. (2023) examine the institutionalization of politics in policy networks.

The theoretical framework builds on deliberative and collaborative planning theories to provide a lens for analyzing these transformations. Key contributions include Yiftachel's (2006) deliberative planning theory, Healey's (1992, 1996) communicative turn, and Foresters (2013) perspectives on inclusive and participatory planning. These approaches are complemented by theories on governance and institutions (March & Olsen, 1989; Rhodes, 1997), which highlight the mechanisms of policy networks and their role in fostering reflexivity, accountability, and collective decision-making within governance frameworks.

This structured framework integrates conceptual and theoretical insights to analyze the interconnected transformations in planning, governance, and policy networks, forming the foundation for this study's exploration of entrepreneurial governance and spatial change. Reflecting on the transformation of neoliberal political-economic ideology, neoliberalism produces a version of itself that creates planning systems increasingly driven by market forces (Peck, Theodore & Brenner, 2009; Taşan-Kok, 2012). In this new version, the role of the state in urban development is changing. While early neoliberalism discussions focused on the dominant role of the market and the diminishing role of the state, recent works argue that neoliberalism has given the state a stronger position to control market activity (Davies, 2014; Jessop, 2015; Thompson & Coghlan, 2015; Mosciaro & Pereira, 2019; Olajide & Lawanson, 2021; Liu & Yau, 2020; Gülhan, 2021).

In their work, Olajide and Lawanson (2021, p. 1765) question "*the conventional understanding and often oversimplified notion of the hollowing-out of the state in the neoliberal development trajectory*" and examine their case study of Lagos, Nigeria. Following Harvey's (2007) concept of creative destruction, they demonstrate how the state of Lagos becomes "*an agent of urban neoliberalism*," creating an urban paradox through the disconnect between the state's objectives for growth, its core

principles, and the consequences for the urban poor. Similarly, Gülhan (2021) discusses the neoliberal context through the lens of the state's strong role in the market economy, termed neo-dirigisme, and analyzes the state-corporate alliance in real estate development in Istanbul.

Other studies, such as Thompson and Coghlan (2015), explore state intervention in urban development by examining policy agendas promoted by neoliberal approaches, while Mosciaro and Pereira (2019) analyze policymakers urban redevelopment project implementations. Collectively, these studies highlight the increasingly interventionist and entrepreneurial role of the state in urban development.

Global capitalism and neoliberal ideology have produced major transformations and shifts in planning and its governance. Spatial planning represents a move from regulatory planning towards spatial governance (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009; Allmendinger, 2016; Özogul & Taşan-Kok, 2018; Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018; Berisha et al., 2021). In other words, planning has transitioned from functioning merely as an institutional tool to increasingly acting as spatial governance itself. This shift is crucial to understand as it connects to the entrepreneurial governance context and its multi-actor strategies, which form the focus of this paper.

Considering the transformation from top-down to re-politicized policy networks, a thorough analysis of the diverse actors connected through these networks to co-produce urban policy—so-called policy networks—becomes increasingly crucial. Additionally, the complex arrangements and relationships involving networks, institutional structures, goals, and priorities play a significant role in entrepreneurial governance systems (Swyngedouw, 2005). Rhodes (1997) defines policy networks as institutional connections between government and non-government actors organized around common interests in public policies. According to Blanco et al. (2011, p. 297), "*networks are central to both the practice and understanding of contemporary governance*."

In a neoliberal setting, with the shifted role of the state and the redefined representation of planning, the positions of policymaking actors are also redefined. This brings policy networks back into the discussion as they provide an inclusive general framework, offer an alternative to the

conventional way of analyzing policy processes in describing governance systems, serve as a functional tool to examine relationships between actors, and act as an analytical model for designing a comprehensive governance framework (Börzel, 1997; Rhodes, 2008; Osman, 2018; Blanco et al., 2011).

1.2.1 Transformation from managerial context to an entrepreneurial state

Urban governance discourse and related models have evolved and diversified across different contexts. The debates on the planning-governance nexus, which have continued since the 1990s, remain crucial to discuss in a relational context to contribute to the conceptualization of the ongoing unpacking of this concept (Schmitt & Danielzyk, 2018; Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018).

Within the framework of neoliberalization and in light of previous non-innovative and non-adaptable processes, such as those observed in the US (Bingham, 1978), entrepreneurial governance approaches have gained prominence (Harvey, 1989; Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2014; Beswick & Penny, 2018; Phelps & Miao, 2020; Wu, 2020; Bruns-Berentelg et al., 2022). To develop a more thorough understanding of entrepreneurial governance, it is essential to trace its roots to Schumpeterian theory on entrepreneurship, which emphasizes innovative resource combinations for processes. Harvey (1989) examined this new combination or innovative type of transformation through the city and argued that urban governance shifted from managerialism to entrepreneurialism under the influence of a globalized economy. While conceptualizing this shift in urban governance, Harvey highlighted three broad assertions: local boosterism; the speculative nature of public-private partnerships—a partnership that involves the risks of winning and losing, is uncertain, and therefore entrepreneurial; and, finally, the political economy of place rather than of territory, where uncertainty can lead to projects having smaller or greater effects.

The transformation in urban governance from a managerial to an entrepreneurial context has promoted and facilitated the implementation of urban projects as entrepreneurial activities. However, entrepreneurial governance has, in many cases, deepened the effects of neoliberal processes on urban development. One significant reason for this profound and

complex effect concerns the role of the state in the process and its influence within an entrepreneurial governance context. While conventional discussions on neoliberalism often highlight the diminishing role of the state due to globalization, recent studies reveal a shift in the state's role (Davies, 2014; Jessop, 2015; Thompson & Coghlan, 2015; Mosciaro & Pereira, 2019; Olajide & Lawanson, 2021; Liu & Yau, 2020; Gülhan, 2021). Namely, the state remains one of the most powerful and influential actors.

Jessop's comprehensive work, *The State* (2015), provides a profound basis for understanding and approaching the state. Jessop elaborates on the shifted role of the state, emphasizing its regulatory and influential role in capitalist circulation, which contrasts with early neoliberal theories. He also contributes to contemporary discussions on defining and approaching the state through his reflections on the "*polymorphic nature of the state*." Jessop (2015) argues that the states display different forms depending on changing principles of societal organization or on specific challenges and conjunctures – *if not on both*. This perspective aids in understanding why entrepreneurial governance evolves into state entrepreneurialism and how an entrepreneurial state is shaped by and influences trajectories and geography, varying by time and place.

To unpack the meaning of urban entrepreneurialism, Phelps and Miao (2020) explored the concept through different varieties, considering types of entrepreneurships (new urban managerialism or urban diplomacy), the scale of entrepreneurship (urban intrapreneurialism), and its speculative nature, as Harvey did (urban speculation). This classification is significant because "*these varieties depict various possible state maneuvers*" (Wu, 2020).

Wu (2020) interprets the work of Phelps and Miao, evaluating state entrepreneurialism as a distinct type beyond the varieties of urban entrepreneurialism in the Chinese context, while drawing attention to the centrality of planning in China (Wu, 2018). He emphasizes the transformation of the state into an entrepreneurial market actor, referred to as state entrepreneurship, and describes it as "*the state acts through the market*." His work also highlights the transformation of actors and tools, such as quasi-government agencies and state-owned enterprises, and asserts that these tools expose the political nature of state entrepreneurship (Wu, 2020). To summarize, the state (specifically the local state in China)

behaves like a market actor and engages in entrepreneurial activities, but since "*the state is persistent, the market is pervasive*," the state faces challenges in adapting despite the existence of state entrepreneurial agencies, which often leads to project failures. Ultimately, "*urban entrepreneurialism mutates into financialized entrepreneurialism*" as the state continues to act through the market (Beswick & Penny, 2018; Wu, 2020).

In Wu's (2018) comprehensive analysis of the Chinese case, he emphasizes the integration of seemingly contradictory tendencies—such as planning centrality and market instruments—within Chinas political-economic structures. He explains how the institutional configurations in China distinguish it from a typical neoliberal growth machine. Wu (2018) also highlights how these contradictions provide urban residents and migrants with opportunities to assert their agency, create their own spaces, and generate informalities during the process of urban transformation, a phenomenon also observed in Turkey (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2014).

In Liu and Yau's (2020) work on Chinas institutionalized neoliberal context, the state-market-society nexus continues to reproduce itself within four fundamental connections. The authors emphasize the relationship between "*the reflexive effects between neo-liberalization and Chinese urban entrepreneurialism*" within these self-manifesting processes.

In fact, all these studies show, as emphasized in Liu and Yau's (2020) work, that there is a strong relationship between neoliberal processes and state-oriented (local-state in the case of China) entrepreneurial urban policies that are continuously reproduced. This relationship has deepened the effects of neoliberal processes on urban development. The case of the HEMC (the Higher Education Mega Center) in Liu and Yau's (2020) study indicates that this process generates and causes an aggressive and insatiable (impossible to satisfy) production of urban space. Bruns-Berentelg et al.'s (2022) comparative work on entrepreneurial governance and urban redevelopment projects shows that even similar purposes of urban restructuring may have different impacts on the urban environment. For example, a similar project caused urban growth in the case of Copenhagen, while in Hamburg, it influenced the quality of urban space.

To conclude, entrepreneurial urban policy has become a common tool of high-level governance, particularly in countries where the state's

role and neoliberal agenda have shifted urban entrepreneurialism into state entrepreneurialism. This top-down and hierarchical governing agenda, known as state entrepreneurialism, has exacerbated the impacts of neoliberal processes on urban change. Intensive state-level governance beyond urban entrepreneurialism has over-boosted private sector inclusion at the expense of public involvement. Elsewhere, urban interventions have turned into private sector-driven applications that disregard and even exclude the public. As such, state entrepreneurialism has often left little to no room for local networks to flourish. However, in Turkey, although state entrepreneurialism is driven by increasingly authoritarian policies, local networks can still find or create room to be involved in urban policy processes.

1.2.2 Transformation from planning to spatial governance

Globalization and, accordingly, the neoliberal transformation of the economy and related policies have shaped many thoughts and conceptualizations since 1980. At that time, conceptualizations of urban change and transformation were grounded in neo-liberalization, focusing on sectoral shifts and their spatial reflections, among other aspects. However, during the 1990s and after 2000—defined as the post-neoliberal era—a search for new ways of thinking became necessary as contemporary issues demanded fresh explanations. According to Eraydın (2020), there is a crisis of conceptualization in the urban and regional planning literature. Lovering (1999) attributes the problem to practice-driven theorization and conceptualization efforts. These efforts follow existing implementations, leading to practice-oriented, scale-limited, and non-holistic approaches to understanding planning processes (Eraydın, 2020). This approach provides a narrow perspective for tracing the agenda of market-driven institutions, disregards off-agenda issues, and leads to significant problems in the institutionalization of planning.

There is a consensus that contemporary urban problems, challenges, and opportunities demand a holistic, more participatory, flexible, and strategic approach to urban and regional planning that focuses on processes rather than the final product of spatial development (Healey, 1997, 2006, 2007; Albrechts, 2004, 2013; Rivolin & Faludi, 2005; Newman, 2008; Taşan-Kok, 2010; Eraydın, 2011, 2020; Balducci et al., 2011; Tekeli, 2012; Gedikli, 2012; Nadin & Stead, 2014; Erkut & Sezgin, 2014; Oliveira et al., 2018; Taşan-Kok et al., 2019).

Analyzing the path to contemporary urban planning through the roots of planning theory provides an understanding of how planning has transformed from the past to the present. In this new formation, it is essential to bring to the surface the prominent components in an effort to untangle contemporary issues, enabling the development of new insights and conceptualizations.

The history of planning can be traced back as far as urbanization itself (Edwards & Imrie, 2015). However, planning as a discipline and profession only became official in the 19th century in response to the effects of the Industrial Revolution on cities and the population. Toward the beginning of the 20th century, practices related to urban sanitation (for example, the City Beautiful Movement) evolved into practices that addressed social issues, such as Howard's Garden City concept, which sought to "*marry town and country*." Despite the urban form-oriented applications, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, Hall (2014) interprets the context of planning as an alternative vision for society, rather than just an alternative urban form. Hall (2014) explains that planning originally emerged as an anarchist approach of creating democratic societies from below the grassroots level against both market forces and bureaucratic control. In other words, planning has gradually been shaped by social, economic, and political transformations over time.

Starting in the mid-20th century, the planning context adopted a holistic approach with transformative influences, including World War II, various economic crises, and positivism. The planning approach of this period was considered part of the modernization project (Healey, 1997). According to Sandercock (1998) and Allmendinger (2017), modernist planning is founded on two key assumptions: first, the state has progressive and reformist tendencies and operates independently from the economy. Second, planning serves the public interest. With this comprehensive approach, planning functioned as a tool for social welfare and its redistribution, serving a regulatory role against the free market. However, comprehensive planning has been criticized for ignoring individuals, human life, and social sensitivity due to its broad perspective. At this point, advocacy planning (Davidoff, 1965), which emphasizes effective urban policy for all groups in society, emerged.

The different approaches that emerge with the transformation of holistic planning can be categorized into two classifications. The first focuses on taking a systematic view of planning (Chadwick, 1971) and urban networks (Dupuy, 2008). While a systematic approach sees planning as a general conceptual system, independent of but corresponding to the real-world system (Chadwick, 1971), network urbanism (Dupuy, 2008) refers to both concrete systems, such as railways, and actor-oriented networks. As an outcome of the systematic and network-based view of planning, the need for a critical examination of planning through relations and relationality has emerged.

The second classification regarding the transformation of the holistic approach centers on incremental planning (Lindblom, 1959) and strategic planning. It is particularly critical to delve deeper into strategic planning, which has emerged from the need for more dynamic approaches and urban entrepreneurialism. Albrechts and Balducci (2013) examine the characteristics of strategic spatial planning in their work. One of the main features they emphasize is the relational nature of strategic planning (SP), which focuses on multiple stakeholders and participation. Other features they address include the institutional implications of SP, especially within unstable governance contexts. Although strategic spatial planning has been criticized, particularly for not considering the uses and users of land-use plans (Mäntysalo et al., 2015), it has created significant values that guide further processes.

Communicative planning (Innes, 2007) and collaborative planning provide critical contributions to the emergence and development of governance discourse in planning, emphasizing participation in planning processes. These approaches are rooted in Communicative Rationality (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998), the Communicative Turn in Planning (Healey, 1996), and Deliberative Planning Theory contexts (Yiftachel, 2006; Forester, 2013). However, Fainstein (2005) criticizes communicative planning for its naive method and normative view. Additionally, Innes and Booher (2015) refer to network power in collaborative planning, highlighting the difficulty of changing power relations through negotiation.

The whole process regarding the transformation of planning clearly indicates that the debate in planning theories has evolved from a focus on urban form to the search for an inclusive process of spatial planning. Moreover, the "*spatialization of economic policy and the economization of spatial policy have started to influence one another*" (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). The various effects of the post-neoliberal era and the corresponding entrepreneurial policy agenda on this two-sided interactive relationship are indisputable. While the entrepreneurial environment encourages acting in line with opportunities and corresponding economic value, neoliberal thinking deepens its impact on urban areas by transforming processes and reducing them to specific tools, prioritizing profit above all else. Planning itself now represents a shift from regulatory planning toward spatial governance (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006; Allmendinger, 2016; Özogul & Taşan-Kok, 2018; Schmitt & Wiechmann, 2018; Berisha et al., 2021).

To conclude, the main argument here is that planning is being used as an institutional tool for spatial intervention while disregarding its principle of pursuing the public interest. Addressing this transformation demonstrates how comprehensive processes have been reshaped as particular institutional instruments within an entrepreneurial context and helps to identify solutions to leverage entrepreneurialism to innovate processes more inclusively.

1.2.3 Transformation from top-down to re-politicized policy networks

In the most general sense, policy networks emerged to model the relationships between the state and interest groups in policy processes (Thatcher, 1998). Although it is quite difficult to provide a fully agreed definition, Rhodes (2008) offers a definition that includes partially agreed focal points. According to Rhodes (2008, p. 426), "*Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation. These actors are interdependent and policy emerges from the interactions between them*" (Figure 1). In addition to this definition, the concept of policy network has been discussed in the literature through the following typologies: issue networks (Heclo, 1978; Thatcher, 1998); policy communities (Richardson and Jordan, 1979);

iron triangles (Ripley and Franklin, 1981); and policy subsystems or subgovernments (Freeman and Stevens, 1987).

Beyond an investigation of the types of policy networks, key approaches have been developed in the literature to describe networks within specific contexts using different research methodologies. In his work, Rhodes (2008) classifies the related literature with respect to its usage as description, theory, and prescription. While Rhodes (2008) reviews the literature by identifying different uses of networks, Börzel (1997) and Blanco (2011) approach policy networks through two broad frameworks rather than related classifications. According to Börzel (1997), there are two schools of policy networks in the field of public policy: the interest intermediation school and the governance school. The main point where these two schools differ is in how they conceptualize the relationships within policy networks. While the interest intermediation school treats policy networks as a general concept encompassing all types of relationships between public and private actors, the governance school defines policy networks more narrowly as a specific form of public-private interaction based on non-hierarchical coordination (Börzel, 1997). The interest intermediation school also employs the network approach as a tool to examine the relationships between actors.

There has also been a transformation in how networks are approached. While some works have treated policy networks as a metaphor, particularly in the study of EU governance (Bressand and Nicolaidis, 1990; Wallace, 1990; Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991; Metcalfe, 1992; Börzel, 1997), Rhodes (2008, p. 432) argues that networks are "*..a live issue for reforming public sector management*." The transformation of policy networks has shifted from a metaphorical understanding to a more literal and practical one.

It's important to research and understand how to manage networks since their capabilities limit government's ability to act (Rhodes, 2008), especially in countries where the state dominates other actors. In this sense, the concept of a policy network may provide a broad understanding of spatial governance due to its policy-driven and network-oriented nature. One of the core questions this research pursues is how the concept of a policy network, with its rich and diversified notions, may help to investigate the

relationship between governmental actors and other stakeholders. What insights or reflections can policy networks provide for an inclusive spatial governance framework, and how?

This conceptual introduction to the term provides clues about how policy networks can act as an interface to understand and analyze mega urban projects as public policy implementations. In this PhD research, it is also expected that a deep understanding of network behavior will emerge by harnessing the theoretical literature on policy networks. Accordingly, this conceptual insight will help to explore whether networks act through power dependence (Rhodes, 2008) or make their decisions based on rational choice (Kenis and Schneider, 1991; Scharpf, 1997; Marsh and Smith, 2000).

1. 3 A multi-method research design

This dissertation employs a multi-method research design to investigate two large-scale urban regeneration projects in Istanbul, namely the Sarıyer Derbent Urban Transformation Project and the Fikirtepe Urban Transformation Project. As detailed in the following chapters, these case studies were selected through an analytical framework and institutional analysis. The chosen projects, which are representative of significant shifts in urban governance, were selected based on their location, time period, legislative and institutional frameworks, and transformative impacts, particularly before and after 2010—a period marked by pathbreaking trajectories in Turkey's urban policy landscape. The selected projects also reflect contentious and transformative urban practices, generating resistance, contestation, and negotiation within diverse stakeholder interactions.

Data collection methods combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a robust and comprehensive analytical framework, capable of analyzing multi-layered socio-spatial and socio-political dynamics. As summarized below, these methods include bibliometric analysis, policy analysis, institutional mapping, discourse analysis, field observations, and interviews:

Bibliometric and textual analysis: Employing *VOSviewer*—a software tool for visualizing quantitative data—enabled the mapping of key themes and governance indicators within the literature. I mapped and analyzed bibliometric relationships across key governance-related keywords using this tool. It also helped me visualize co-occurrence patterns and emerging clusters in the entrepreneurial urban governance literature.

Policy and document analysis: I conducted an extensive policy and document analysis to understand the regulatory, institutional, and policy shifts shaping urban governance practices and transformations. This included a systematic examination of legal texts, municipal decrees, and planning reports, complemented by critical discourse analysis of policy narratives and institutional mapping. The discourse analysis emphasized the language and power dynamics embedded in policy frameworks. Key documents included:

- The Disaster Law No. 6306: Governing risky areas and urban transformation processes, with specific implications for Fikirtepe and Derbent.
- Municipal decrees, implementation plans, and planning regulations: From the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) and district municipalities.
- Reports from community organizations and think tanks: Notably, the Center for Spatial Justice's publications, for example the report on Urban Transformation and Well-Being in Istanbul (İstanbul'da Kentsel Dönüşüm ve İyilik Hâli), which provided critical assessments of urban transformation projects.
- Media content: Including documentaries like Saf by Ali Vatansever and public discourse captured through local platforms and publications.

This mixed approach assisted me in not only contextualizing policy transformations but also tracing their contestation and resistance by stakeholders.

Interviews and focus groups*:* A total of 62 participants contributed to the research: 46 semi-structured interviews and 3 focus group discussions involving 16 participants. Participants were carefully selected to represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including urban residents and property owners, central government representatives, developers, municipal officials,

policymakers, stakeholders from community organizations, and urban planners. Initially, a snowball sampling technique was employed to reach relevant interviewees, followed by careful consideration of the relevance of potential subsequent participants.

The interviews were guided by a semi-structured framework to facilitate in-depth exploration while allowing flexibility to adapt to each participant's expertise. To capture collective narratives and observe group synergy and relational dynamics, focus groups complemented the interviews. Systematic field research spanned from February 2021 to January 2025.

1.4 Outline of the book: Dissertation roadmap

The dissertation is structured around the main argument and the theoretical gaps identified in relation to it (Figure 3). These gaps include: (1) the assumption in the literature that the concepts of entrepreneurial governance and state entrepreneurialism function similarly across contexts, (2) a lack of analysis of the pathbreaking trajectories (critical junctures) of urban transformation in different geographies under state-driven entrepreneurialism, (3) insufficient exploration of how local policy networks operate within entrepreneurial state frameworks, and (4) the question of why governance processes differ even within the same national or metropolitan context despite following similar trajectories of change.

To address these gaps, the dissertation is organized into four interrelated papers, each contributing to a specific dimension of the broader argument. The first paper offers a systematic literature review of entrepreneurial governance, critically examining its conceptual foundations and variations. The second paper focuses on Istanbul, unraveling the transformation patterns associated with state entrepreneurialism by exploring critical junctures and pathbreaking trajectories. The third paper examines the self-governance capacity of local actors in the Derbent neighborhood, demonstrating how local organization has created room for inclusion within an authoritarian governance context. The fourth paper explores the case of Fikirtepe, analyzing how the transformation of state actions into more market-driven strategies and the community's mimicking adaptations reshape the urban governance landscape.

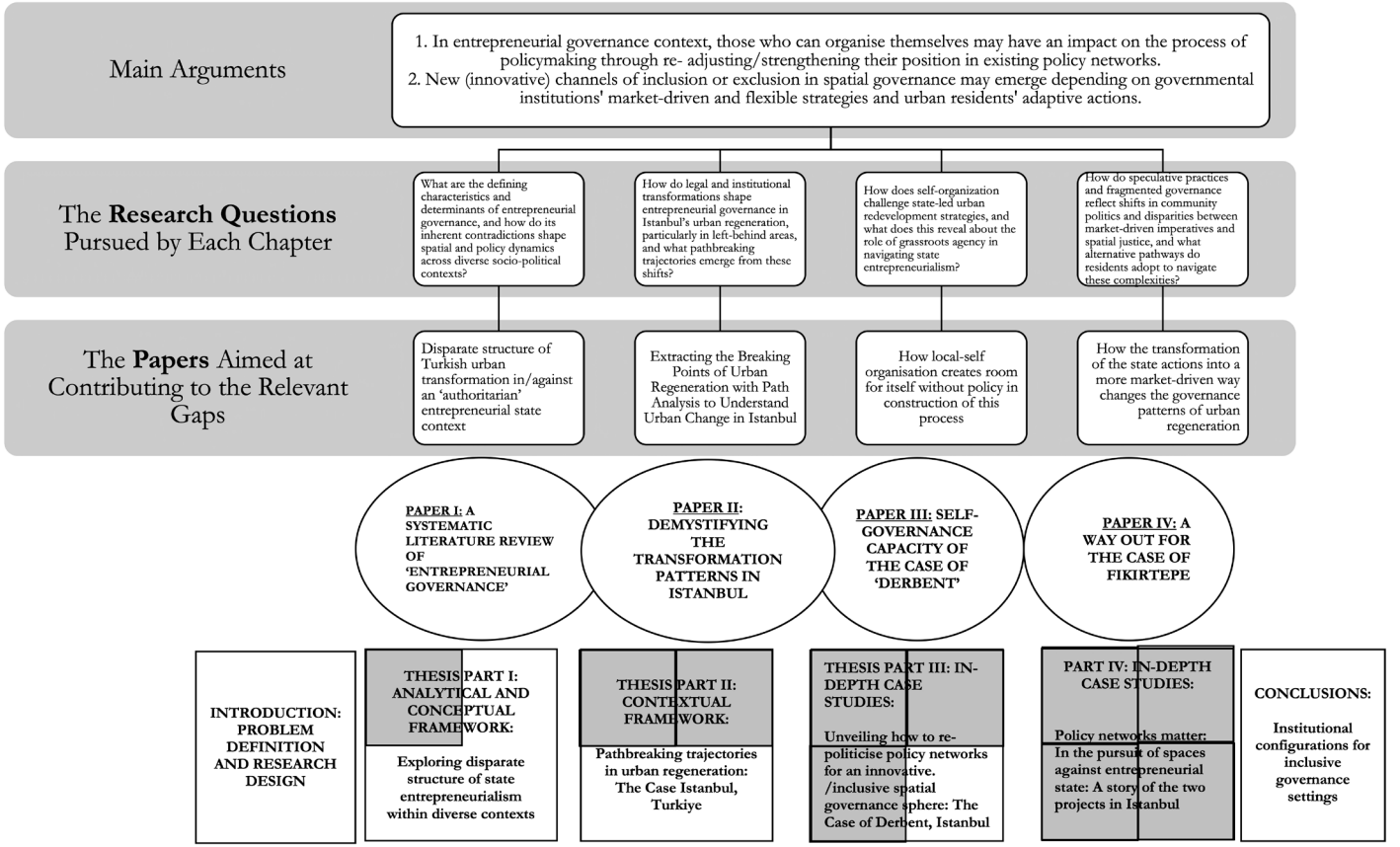

Figure 3. The structure of the dissertation (prepared by the author).

These papers are embedded within the dissertation's broader structure: Part I introduces the problem definition and research design, providing a framework for conceptual and analytical inquiries. Part II outlines the disparate structures of entrepreneurial governance across contexts, situating the study within broader theoretical debates. Part III examines the contingent events and critical moments in Turkey's urban development trajectory, particularly through large-scale urban transformation projects in Istanbul. Parts IV and V delve into in-depth case studies of Derbent and Fikirtepe, showcasing the different pathways these projects follow depending on governmental institutions' flexible strategies and urban residents' adaptive actions. Finally, Part V concludes with a discussion of institutional configurations for inclusive governance settings. This structure ensures that each theoretical gap is systematically addressed while contributing to the overarching argument of the dissertation.

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