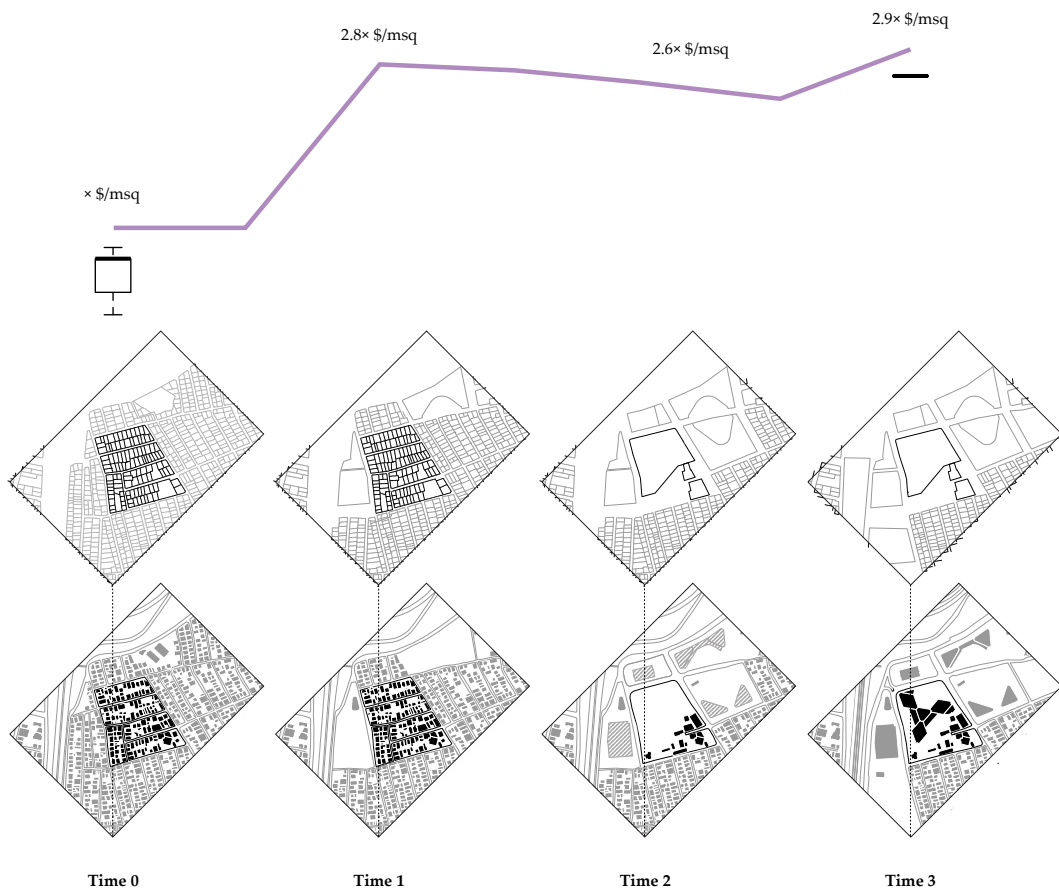


# Decoding Gentrification.

## An operative study through the microcosms of Istanbul



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This research is about gentrification as a phenomenon and how it unfolds in a specific context, the city of Istanbul. Today, many places around the world can be diagnosed under gentrification discourse, however, Istanbul appears as a rich laboratory since heterogeneity in the types of gentrification that are recognized from international literature can be observed in unique geography. Both well-known, conventional types described by Euro-American studies and emerging sharp-edged ones described from the context of the Global South can be traced in this territory. On the other hand, it is a specific context where economic and political circumstances are unstable, thus, market forces are causing evident sharp and controversial transformations. As a consequence, in Istanbul, certain areas previously characterized by low-class residential and commercial building stocks, with high rent potential are today turning into accumulation points of new consumption patterns occupied predominantly by medium/large national and international investors. Such occurring represents the latest forms of gentrification that dominate the current global discourse.

In this context, the research wants to, on the one hand, discover the gentrification phenomenon embedded in Istanbul, in its place-specificity, on the other, use the Istanbulian territory to search for regularities that lie in the contemporary forms of gentrification described in the global literature. As Istanbul is the macro laboratory; Karakoy, Bomonti, Fikirtepe neighborhoods are the microcosms of this research. They are emblematic samples respectively from the historical, informal, and post-industrial legacies of the territory. At first glance, it is clear that they have been undergoing dissimilar processes of gentrification with different paces and forms. Still, they represent three shades of a unitary story that has to do with strong externalities and local spillover effects that are being materialized in non-linear time frames.

Concerning the analysis, the research introduces the instrumentality of urban morphology aiming likewise for a methodological contribution within the gentrification studies by giving spatial understanding to the economic theory rent gap that is present in the production-side explanations of the literature. Accordingly, plot and building patterns are used together with land values as an empirical reading of the closing rent gap. The closing gap gives birth to different emerging morphologies in relation to the existing urban structure as well as it is enabled at the beginning depending on specific location and property patterns. The analysis is performed through diachronic comparative mapping, for a decennial period, based on municipal maps, field surveys, and cadastral land prices at the neighborhood scale, intended as an organism, to explore the type of transmutation within the selected samples. In this way, the overall aim is to investigate the link between economical processes that start gentrification and the resulting morphologies by revealing diachronically the logical sequences and carry-over effects, and finally, to define diagnostic features through an autonomous, original, and personal way of reading the phenomenon.