

Conservation and Creativity: How to introduce innovative approaches to the preservation of Istanbul's cultural heritage?

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Keynote address

Pierre LACONTE

President Foundation for the Urban Environment,
Vice-Chairman of the European Environment Agency Scientific Committee, Council
Member of Europa Nostra.

- An early example of creativity: architecture made to resist earthquakes and lasted for 1500 years, as illustrated by the ICOMOS classic Ersin Arioglu paper.



- Built for Christians, it has been integrated in the Islamic city and was the model for the mosques by the Great Mimar Sinan.



- Mosque after mosque, Sinan improved the model till near perfection in the Edirne mosque.

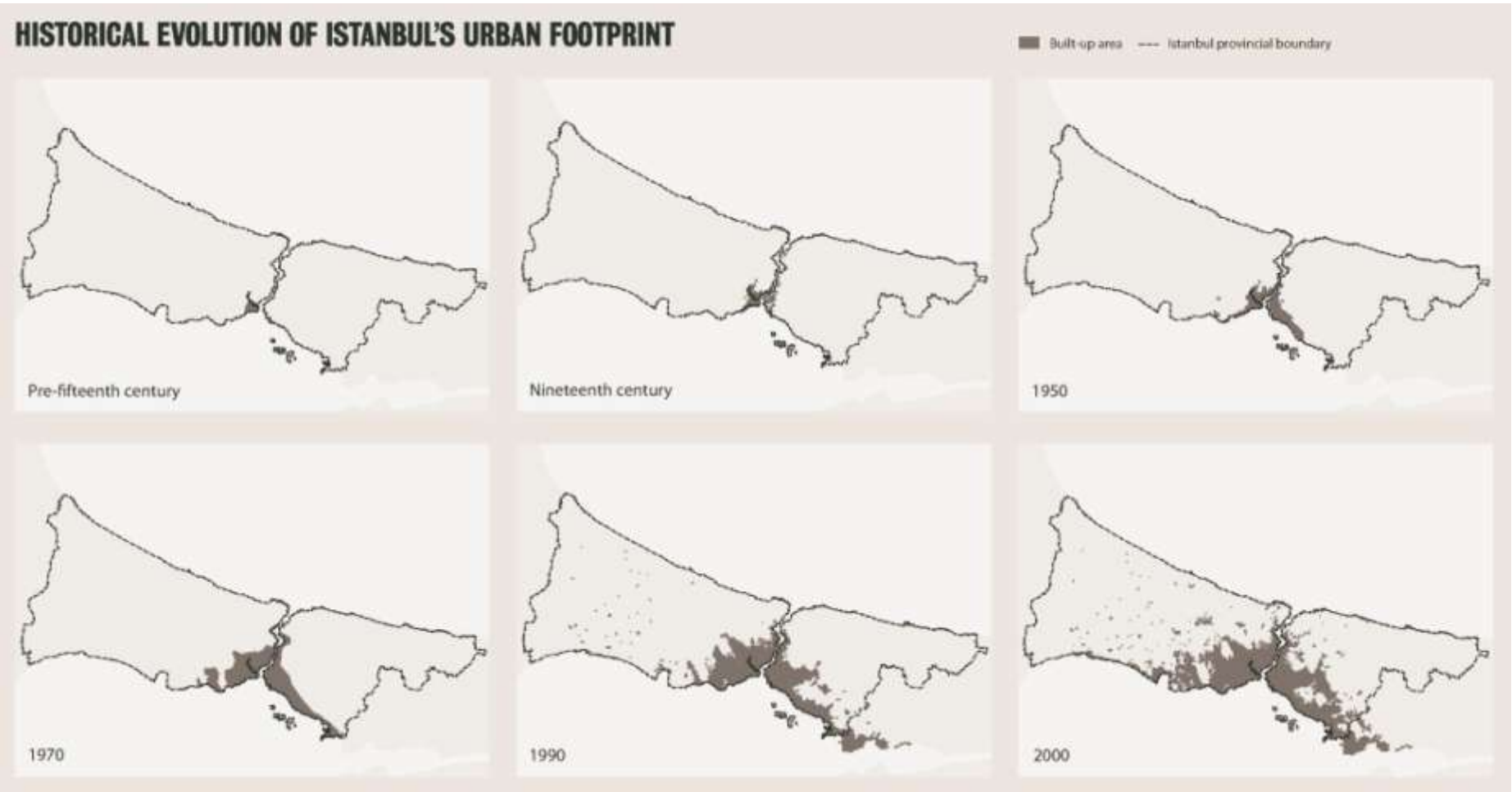


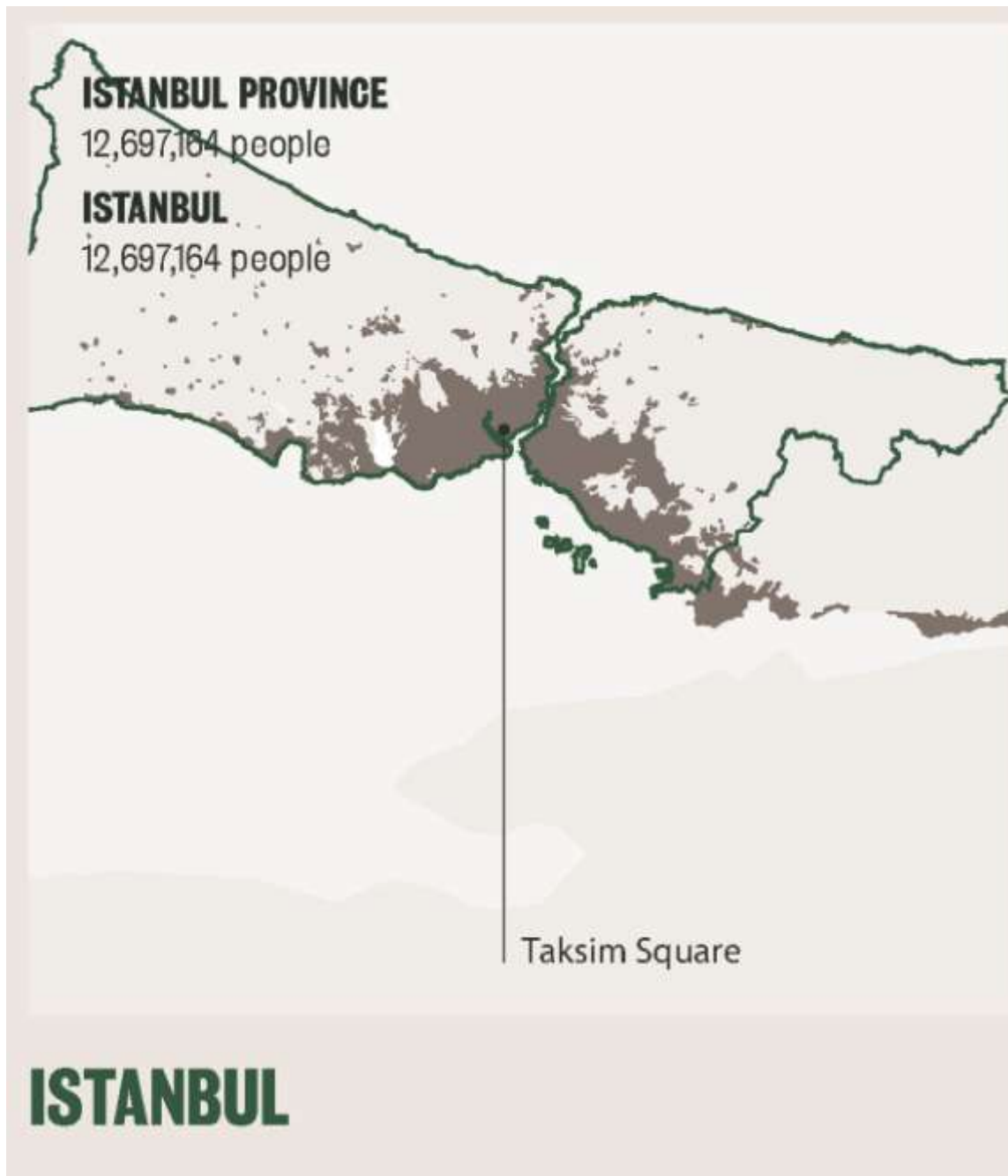
ISTANBUL CITY OF INTERSECTIONS



- The 2009 “Urban Age” study and conference (www.urban-age.net) told the fascinating development story of 20th century Istanbul. The key of it is the rapid influx of rural population to vacant land and illegal self-construction (“gececondus”) gradually improved, then legalised.

- Istanbul's urban footprint grew accordingly.





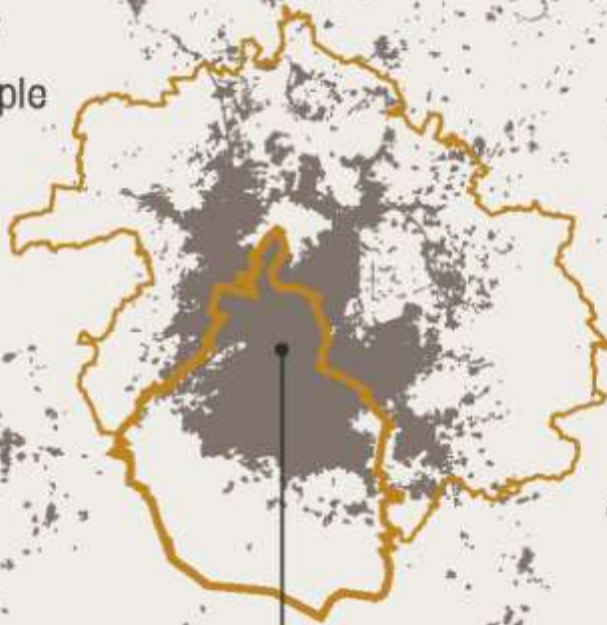
- Today urbanisation has reached both sides of Bosphorus, threatening its natural and water reserves (www.urban-age.net).

MEXICO CITY METROPOLITAN AREA

19,239,910 people

MEXICO CITY

8,815,319 people



Zócalo

MEXICO CITY

- By contrast to Istanbul greater Municipality the Mexican Federal District covers only part of the metropolis. The water reserves are in the State of Mexico and are the stake of political battles (www.urban-age.net).

- Istanbul has traditionally been a city on water.



- Water transport has insured mobility, complemented by tramways and one of the earliest world underground rail (tunnel).



- The growth of the automobile and resulting urban sprawl has triggered two automobile bridges linking the European and Asian sides of the Bosphorus.



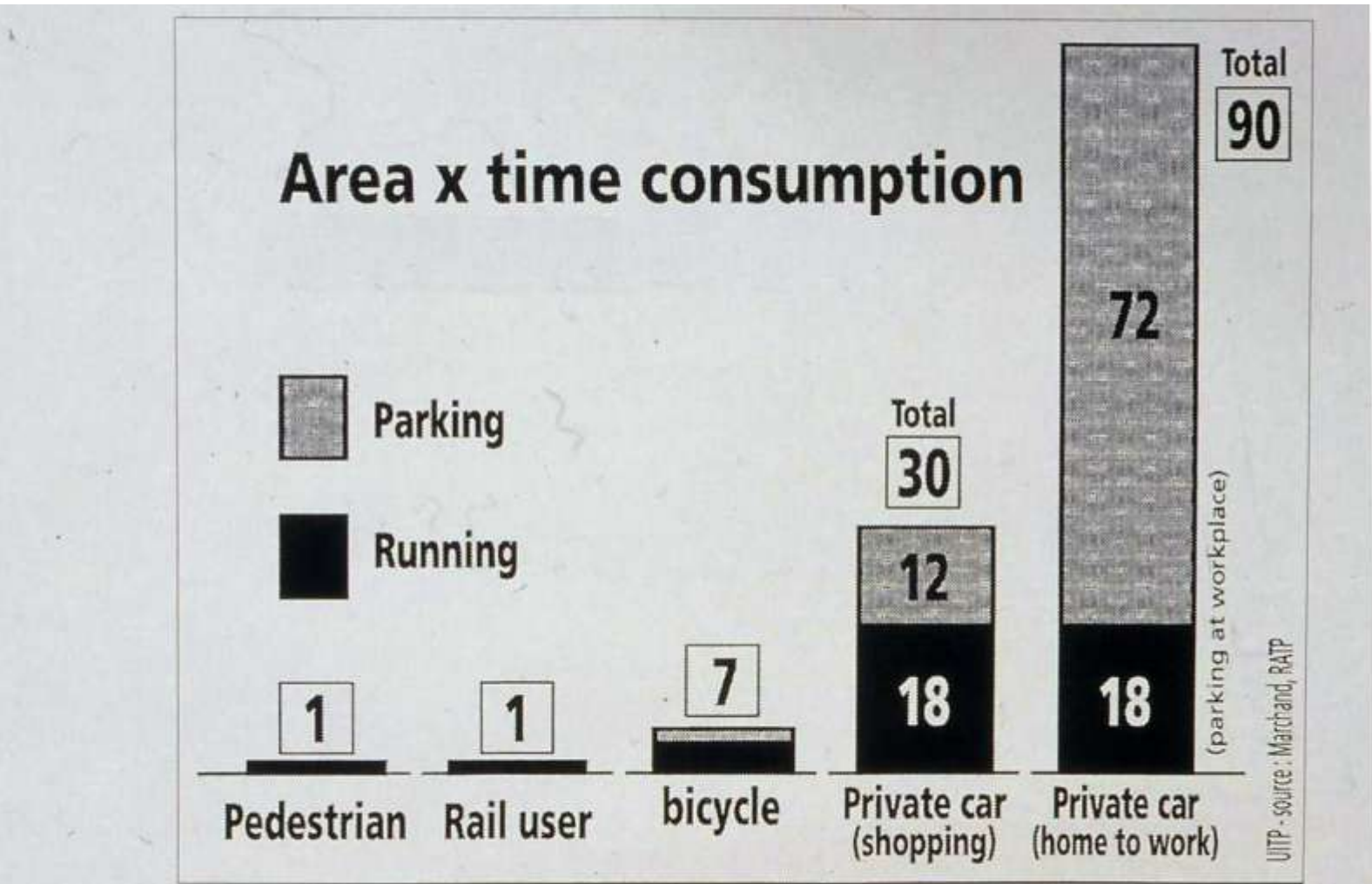
- This however changed the dense urban land use pattern towards dispersed settlements.



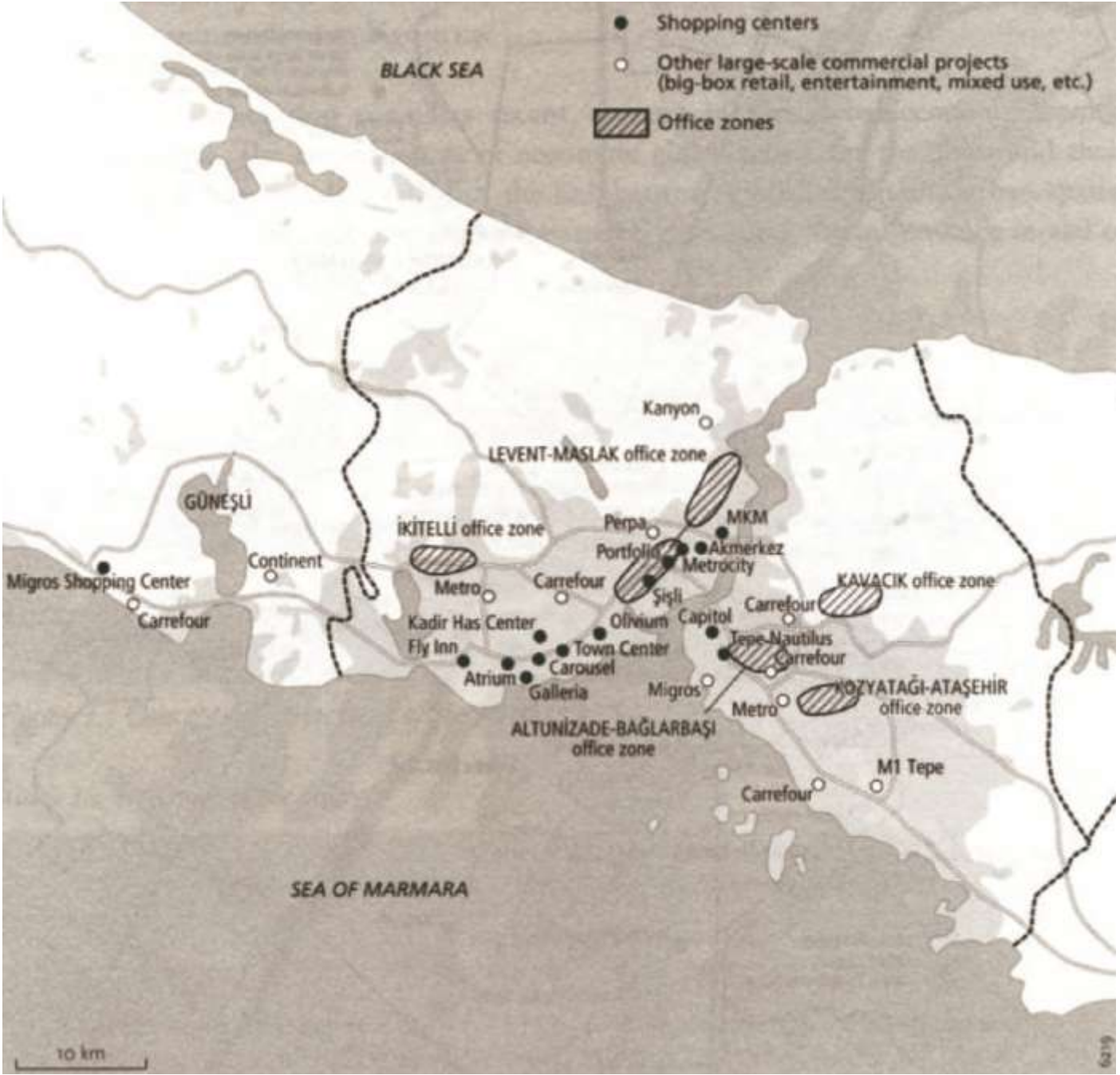
- These settlements are mostly, if not exclusively, accessible by automobile.



- However the land consumption by a dispersed automobile pattern has to include both the roads and parking spaces, totalling up to 100 times the land consumption of a pedestrian and public transport oriented city.

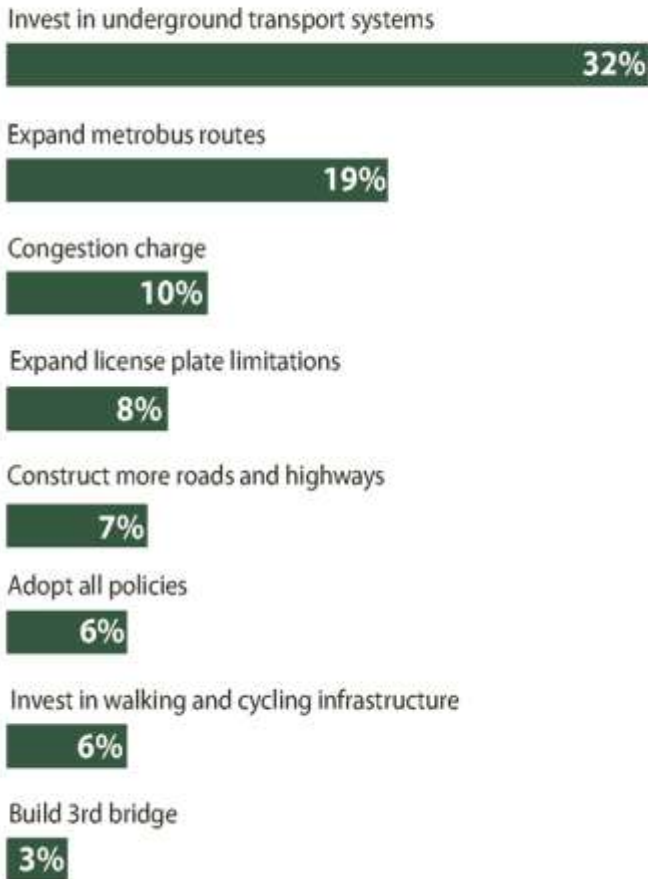


- Today the central functions are dispersed among growth poles allowed by the bridges and the availability of lands on both ends.
- This has brought a deep imbalance between the road and property related sectors and the sectors related to natural and cultural resources.

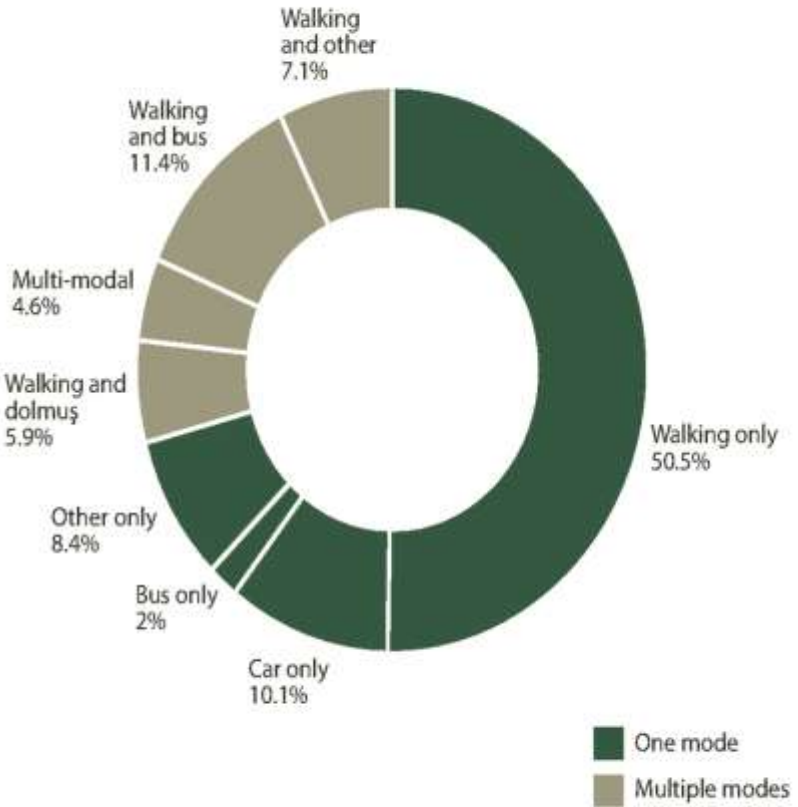


- However opinion surveys consistently indicate a strong preference of the population for public transport (more than 50% versus 7% for more roads).

The public view on solving the transport problems



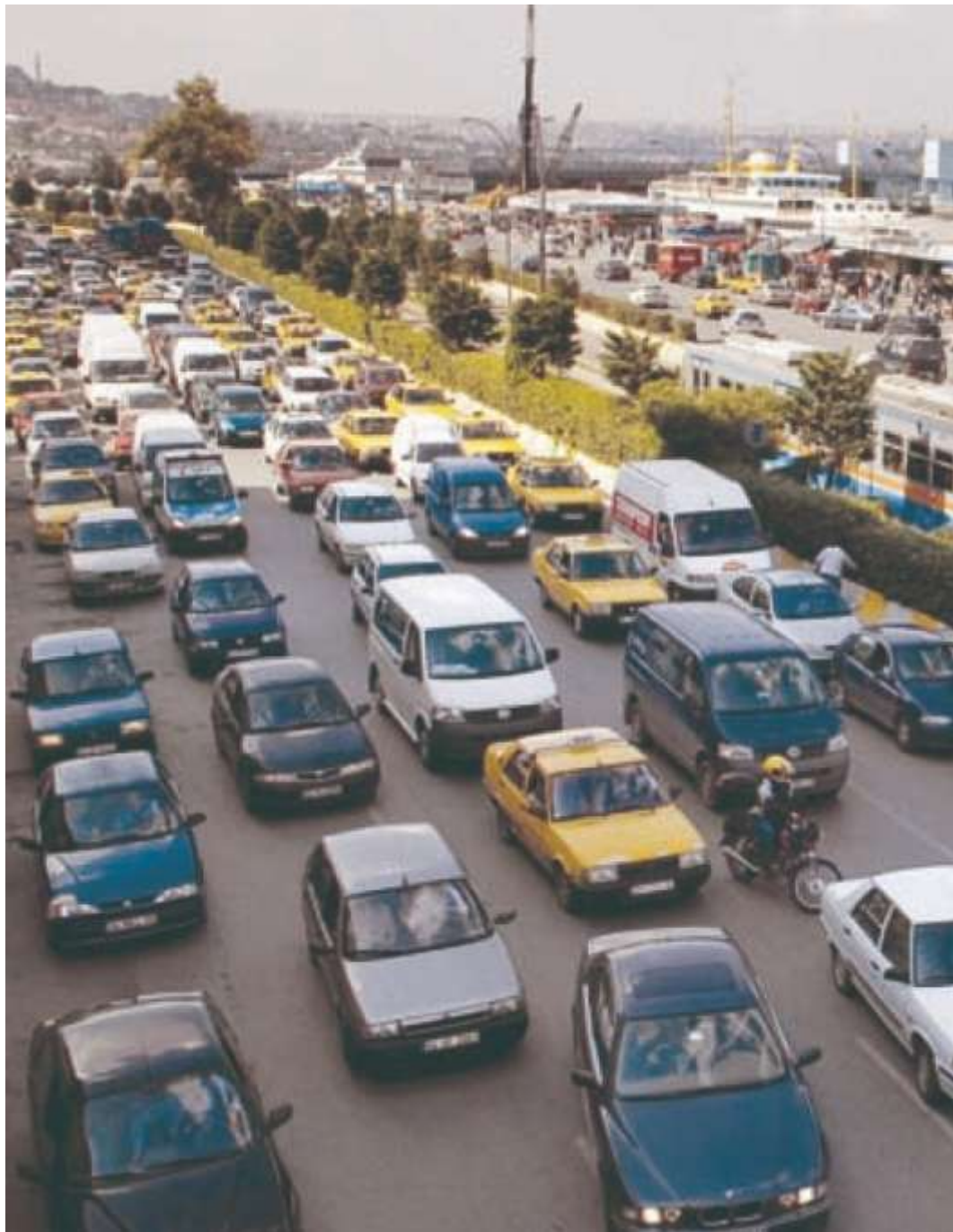
Means of travel



- This was fully understood by the Municipality at the time where it discovered that some 100 metro-cars had been bought and were stored, awaiting for a metro still to be constructed.
- A creative decision was to transform these cars in trams, and build a new track crossing the whole peninsula. Tickets are sold on the turnstile platforms outside for maximum commercial speed.



- Later on the successful tramway was modernised and extended towards Beyoglu and the passenger ships embankments, and linked to a newly built funicular towards Taksim Square.



- Today a continuous network links the key areas of the peninsula with the key areas of Beyoglu (see in red the Tünel, in green the historic tram and the new funicular to Taksim and in blue the tramway track coming the peninsula - shown on previous slide).



- In Beyoglu the historic tram linking the Tünel to Taksim Square was carefully restored.



- It became a main attraction to the reanimated Istiqlal reserved for pedestrians and trams.



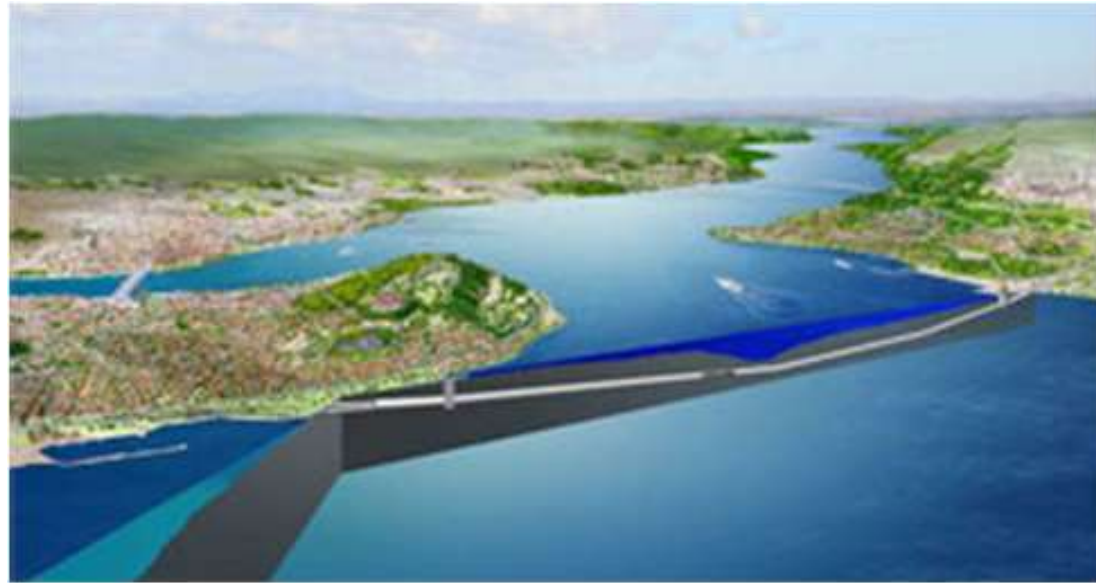
- Public transport in general was strongly encouraged through a most creative intermodal electronic ticket (“AKBIL”). The public transport system is complemented by the ingenious “DOLMUS” collective taxis.



- However pressures pile up to build a third and even more bridges, further threatening water and natural resources.
- Could an innovative approach not consist instead in rebuilding the first bridge on two levels, one being reserved for public transport? Tracks could allow a new a tramway line with positive network effect with the existing public transport network.



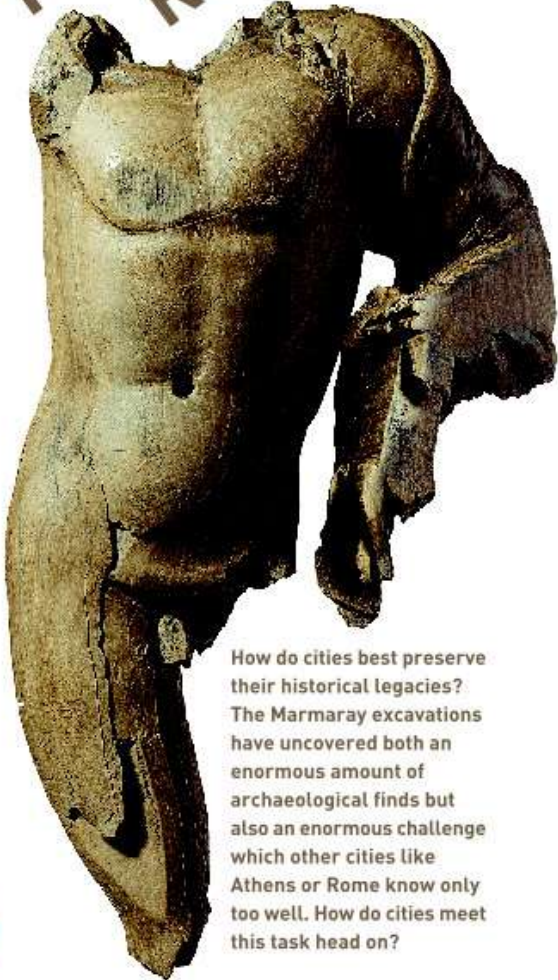
- The Historic Peninsula Motorway Project – to be subsidised through a state guaranty of minimum income – has been strongly criticised by UNESCO. A similar scheme (Muse) was refused in Paris because of its traffic generation effect. In case it would go ahead it could at least be linked to an action plan for pedestrian streets and reduction of traffic and parking space and tree planting. The action plan would include a yearly progress report according to monitoring indicators.
- This action plan would go together with a municipal protection plan of the Walls and Justinian Palace, to be finalised with the help of International Institutions such as Europa Nostra, could be officially adopted by the Municipality.



Historic Peninsula Motorway Project



- The historic artefacts to be unearthed could be carefully studied with the help of Academic Institutions as was done for the artefacts found in the Metro-Marmaray excavations and presently exhibited internationally (“Underground Revolution”, Brussels Istanbul Centre 2010).



Permanent Revolution
Speaker: **Alessandra Ricci**
(Byzantine Archeologist)

How do cities best preserve their historical legacies? The Marmaray excavations have uncovered both an enormous amount of archaeological finds but also an enormous challenge which other cities like Athens or Rome know only too well. How do cities meet this task head on?

istanbul
centre in
brussels

● Conference Hall

- Another point of contention is the threat of cruise-ships on the historic part of Beyoğlu. The ships presently coming up are more than 300 m long and have nearly 2.000 cabins.
- Their impact on the Karaköy area has been analysed by an ISOCARP young planners workshop (led by Prof. Zeynep Enlil, Yıldız University). Proposals were made for other locations.



- Neglect of the wooden houses heritage has also been criticised.
- New tools for helping finance costly wooden house neighbourhoods restoration are available through EU regional funds in favour of sustainable materials and energy saving rehabilitations to be established in line the EU TOLEDO declaration 2010

<http://www.eu2010.es/en/documentos/noticias/noticias/jun22toledo.html>).



- An example of creative and careful heritage restoration is provided by the Santral power plant, now a cultural Centre and museum. The entire machinery is kept intact (by contrast with the London New Tate gallery built on the site of a former power plant which was entirely emptied).
- Restoration of residential renewal areas should be respectful of the rights of existing inhabitants.



- The UNESCO report and the perspective of having Istanbul world heritage put in the list of Heritage at Risk (at the 2011 Bahrein Heritage Committee Meeting) could be seen as a welcome incentive towards municipal creativity, as it would provide the obligation of a yearly monitoring.
- The international heritage community is ready to support innovative approaches by the State and Municipal Authorities to preserve Istanbul's cultural heritage, in line with a long tradition of ingenuity and creativity.

