

UPSCALE RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS IN UMURBEY İZMİR: POPULAR DISCOURSES AND RELATION WITH THE PLACE

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on Umurbey district located close to the central city and the port of Izmir. The industrial, architectural and cultural heritage dating back to the beginning of 19th century; the social value of the place including daily life activities, use of the streets as common spaces and distinguished examples of civil architecture; the inhabitants with strong social memory, the craftsmen, mechanics and artists living in Umurbey have made the neighborhood significant in the city of Izmir. At Umurbey, the Master Plan of 2003, along with subsequent revisions and capital investments in the region paved the way for urban transformation and gentrification, primarily (the former) by defining the new main functions for the district as “tourism, trade, and culture” and (the latter) by shifting these main functions from this triad to residential means. In the last five years, three upscale residential projects developed in and on the edge of Umurbey. Whereas these three projects are currently under construction, the advertorial images and texts of the two projects are visible. This paper, using grounded theory as the main methodology to analyze the advertorial texts and images produced with populist commercial concerns, unveils new spatial and social dynamics in the area. Questioning the spatial bases of the “proposed imaginary life” in the new housing concepts, the study attempts to reveal the conflicts as well as contradictions of the popular discourses and socio-spatial value of Umurbey related to the municipal strategies for the city of Izmir. The article briefly draws upon urbanization literature closely linked to capital investments as its theoretical foundation. It discusses the themes identified through analysis and collectively evaluates these partial discussions in the conclusion, utilizing the concept of “habitus”. This study may contribute to the contextual re-reading of urban dynamics including popular upscale residential projects and their relation to political and socio-cultural issues in the former industrial and port neighborhoods in Izmir, in Türkiye, and in general.

Keywords: Umurbey, Urban Transformation, Upscale Residential Projects, Popular Discourses, Discourse Analysis.

Type: Research Paper

(*The article is derived from the on-going thesis conducted by the first author under the supervision of the second author at the Ph.D. Program in Architecture at Izmir Institute of Technology.)

Received: January 2024 • **Final Acceptance:** April 2024

Cite: Tezer, Ç. & Akpınar, İ. (2023). Upscale Residential Projects in Umurbey Izmir: Popular Discourses and Relation with the Place, *İşik JADA: İşik University Journal of Art, Design and Architecture*, 1(2), 23-39.

İZMİR UMURBEY'DE ÇOK KATLI KONUT PROJELERİ: POPÜLER SÖYLEMLER VE YER İLE İLİŞKİLENME

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, İzmir'de şehir merkezine ve limana yakın bir konumda bulunan Umurbey Mahallesi'ne odaklanmaktadır. 19. yüzyılın başlarına kadar uzanan endüstriyel, mimari ve kültürel mirası; günlük yaşam pratikleri, ortak alan olarak kullanılan sokakları ve sivil mimari örnekleri içeren yerin sosyal değeri; kentin sosyal hafızasını taşıyan sakinleri ve sonradan yerleşen zanaatkarlar, tamirciler ve sanatçılar Umurbey'i özgün ve önemli kılan özelliklerdendir. Umurbey'i de içine alan bölgede geliştirilen 2003 Nazım İmar Planı bölgenin yeni işlevlerini "turizm, ticaret ve kültür" olarak tanımlayarak kentsel dönüşüm ve soylulaştırmanın önünü açarken, plan revizyonları ve yatırımlar ise bu ana işlevleri konut ağırlıklı kullanımlara kaydırmaktadır. Son beş yılda, Umurbey'de ve sınırlarında inşa edilen üç adet çok katlı konut projesi bulunmaktadır. Şu anda inşa halinde olan üç projeden birinin reklam görselleri ve metinleri erişilebilir durumdadır. Bu makalede, popülist ticari kaygılarla üretilen reklam metinlerini ve görsellerini analiz etmek için temel yöntem olarak gömülü teori kullanılmaktadır. Araştırma, yeni konut projeleriyle önerilen yaşamın mekânsal temellerini sorgulamakta, Umurbey'de ortaya çıkan popüler söylemler ile mekânın sosyo-mekânsal değeri arasındaki çatışmaları ve çelişkileri İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi stratejileri ışığında ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Sermaye yatırımlarıyla yakından ilişkili olan kentleşme literatürünü altlık olarak kullanan makalede, analiz yoluyla elde edilen temalar tartışılmış ve bu kısmi tartışmalar sonuç bölümünde "habitus" kavramı kullanılarak bir arada değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışma, İzmir'de, Türkiye'de ve dünyada; eski endüstri ve liman mahallelerinde mekânsal dönüşümlerle ortaya çıkan çok katlı popüler konut projeleri ile bunların politik, sosyal ve kültürel bağlamlarını içeren kentsel yeniden okumalara bir katkı sağlayabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Umurbey, Kentsel Dönüşüm, Çok Katlı Konut Projeleri, Popüler Söylemler, Söylem Analizi.

Tür: Araştırma Makalesi

(*Makale, İzmir Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü Mimarlık Doktora Programı'nda ilk yazarın ikinci yazar danışmanlığında halen devam eden tez çalışmasına dayanarak hazırlanmıştır.)

Gönderim Tarihi: Ocak 2024 • **Kabul Tarihi:** Nisan 2024

Alıntılama: Tezer, Ç. & Akpınar, İ. (2023). Upscale Residential Projects in Umurbey İzmir: Popular Discourses and Relation with the Place, *Işık JADA: Işık Üniversitesi Sanat, Tasarım ve Mimarlık Dergisi*, 1(2), 23-39.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the Umurbey, the first industrial region in Izmir, located near the city center Alsancak. This region is significant not only with its industrial, architectural, and social heritage dating back to the mid of 19th century but also with the lively current spatial life as a neighborhood with its multiple inhabitants and users. Umurbey is currently facing urban issues like urban transformation and gentrification, as has been witnessed in some other port cities like London and New York, in particular.

The paper reveals the analysis of the advertorial text of one of the upscale projects in Umurbey. Questioning the spatial bases of the proposed life in the new housing concepts and the near-future everyday life practices vis-à-vis the municipal strategies, this study attempts to uncover the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the popular discourses of new projects as well as the socio-spatial value of Umurbey. This study may contribute to the contextual re-reading of urban dynamics including popular upscale residential projects and their relation to political and socio-cultural issues in the former industrial and port neighborhoods in Izmir, in Türkiye, and in general.

Since the 1950s, world cities have started to witness the tangible effects of financial investors, mostly in partnership with governments (1), in shaping the urban development of big cities (Harvey, 1989; Keyder et al. 1994; Marcuse et al., 2000; Yırtıcı, 2005). In Türkiye, urban transformation has begun to be supported by policies formulated in the early 2000s (Kuyucu et al., 2010). In these years, a large number of regional-scale transformation projects emerged first in İstanbul (2), and later in other metropolitan cities. Since 2010, following the shift in political strategies regarding urbanization, transformation as well as change of the building scale from human to gigantic one has increased and spread across the country. Today, large-scale residential and mixed-use structure complexes also emerged prominently in all cities, serving as primary spatial formations of urban transformation.

The urban transformation in several forms not only changes the physical urban texture but also the social pattern of the regions and cities. In many instances of regional transformations, street patterns and street life vanish, as exemplified by the Sulukule urban transformation project in Istanbul. Communities are often compelled to leave their neighborhoods not only due to the demolition of buildings but also because of the emergence of new functions, users, and investments in their neighborhoods (3). In summary, the physical and social impacts of urbanization need to be addressed at various scales, taking into account that the effects of urbanization activities spread throughout the city, because of the organic texture of cities shaped by social relations.

In this context, this paper aims to provide a concise overview of various urban dynamics in Umurbey, analyze advertorial texts from an upscale residential project in the area with their positioning in the municipal strategy, and initiate a discussion on the themes derived from this analysis in the context of Umurbey's urbanization patterns. Ultimately, these discussions converge around the concept of "habitus" as proposed by Bourdieu (1996).

2. UMURBEY DISTRICT IN İZMİR

Umurbey region is located close to the central city and the port of İzmir. To the west, the region is bounded by the Alsancak Railroad Compound and the initial section of the İzmir-Aydın railway line. Moving northwards, the boundary is formed by the main road connecting the city center with the primary spine road and the İzmir Port. The Meles River defines the eastern limit, while to the south, the region is bordered by one of İzmir's oldest neighborhoods, known as "Ege". The railway serves as a distinct dividing line between the city center called "Alsancak", and the surrounding region (Figure 1).

Umurbey held a strategic position in history as the final destination for products from the fertile agricultural hinterland of the city. It served as an industrial region, as defined in the master plan of İzmir by René Danger and Henri Prost in 1924 (Bilsel, 1996), in connection to the port. The industrial, architectural, and cultural heritage of Umurbey dates back to the mid of the 19th century (Poulimenos, 2019; Gökçen et al., 2022; Karadağ et al., 2020). The social value of the place is evident in daily life activities, the use of streets as common spaces, and distinguished examples of civil architecture.



Figure 1. Location and important buildings of Umurbey. Google Earth satellite photo, 12.10.2022.

Since the last century, the region has experienced significant changes in terms of the social profile of inhabitants (Figure 2): First, majority of the Greek community left the district following the exchange of population (*mübadele*) between Greece and Türkiye based on the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty. After almost a century, the second radical change was in 2003, when Sümerbank, one of the biggest textile factories, was shut down by the central authority so most of the industrial facilities were either deactivated or carried to outer parts of the city. The direct result is that the workers and their families started to leave the region. Third, the small-scale industry including mechanics and craftsmen started to carry their ateliers to Umurbey in the mid of 1990's, due to the increasing pressure on the small-scale urban industry to move to outer parts of the city. Fourth, several artists who moved their workshops to the district started to implement their works on the streets of the region, their existence in the district became visible and paved the way for an influx of artists into the neighborhood.

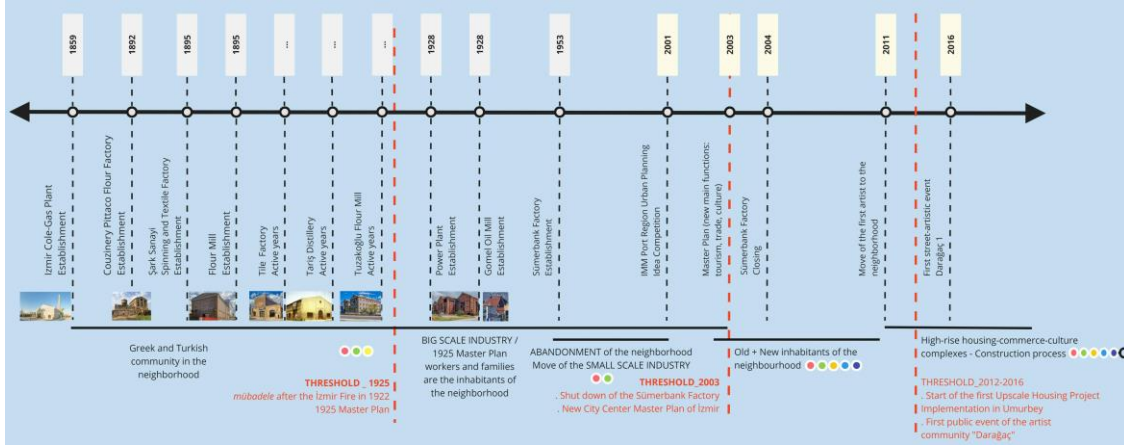


Figure 2. Social changes in Umurbey within the last debate, prepared by the writers.

Following these changes, the district's diverse social fabric has become part of the spatial structure. Long-time residents, who embody the collective memory of past generations, coexist with craftsmen, mechanics, artists, and shop owners. In this context, some local artists have established their workshops in the area, and formed an artists' collective called "Darağaç" (Güleç et al., 2022). Collaborating with diverse residents of the district (Pasin, et al., 2020), they have collectively contributed to the formation of the multi-layered character of Umurbey, which makes it unique within the city of İzmir.

In terms of urban planning by the municipality, the district was part of the "New City Center of İzmir" as released in 1989 in the 1/25000 scale Revision Master Plan of the city. It was later planned within the 1/5000 scale Master Plan in 2003. – The conceptual framework and main strategies were developed in the light of the views gained from the 2001 urban planning and architectural idea competition called "International Urban Design Idea Competition for the Port District of İzmir". Despite the planning decisions within the master plan introducing new functions for Umurbey, these spatial projections faced nearly fifteen years of delay due to the unpredictability associated with small-scale registered buildings and ownership problems (Çıkış, 2009). These issues have been standing in the way of planning and implementing new building complexes that the new masterplan was bringing with the new plan ratios. These ratios force the construction of vertical buildings and the formation of large open areas between high-rise structures, necessitating more capital expenditures in the area. Despite objections from the judiciary, several plan revisions and notes have been issued to flex the construction limits set by regional plans, particularly in terms of defined functions and ratios. Consequently, three high-rise housing, commercial, and cultural complexes are currently under development in Umurbey.

In this framework, Umurbey is currently facing urban issues like urban transformation and gentrification. In this regard, the inhabitants are under the threat of displacement according to a classic scenario of gentrification including minor investors, (housing) developers, displacement, and resistance (Islam, 2009). As scholars point out, artists play a significant part in gentrification since they become new residents in previously residential areas (Glass, 1963). Other studies highlight the connection between gentrification and the processes that lead to policy and decision-making. Accordingly, gentrification can also be

introduced as a "public policy" (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005) or directed by government agencies and carried out by private real estate developers (Davidson and Lees, 2005). The 2003 Master Plan at Umurbey, along with subsequent revisions resulting from capital investments in the area, laid the groundwork for gentrification. Especially, the former defined the district's new primary functions as tourism, trade, and culture, while the latter changed these to residential uses.

In the last five years, three upscale residential projects were developed in and on the edge of Umurbey. Whereas these three projects are currently under construction, the advertorial images and texts of two of them were released. These advertisements include descriptions of the foreseen lifestyle in the mixed-use projects and give clues about the new users of the region.

3. THE UPSCALE RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS IN UMURBEY

Three new upscale residential projects are under construction on the edges and in the Umurbey. Two of them are close to being completed and one of them is in its excavation process. The first two projects are identifiable by their names, designs, and promotional materials. Furthermore, the majority of property owners in the housing complexes are evident. The upcoming sections analyze the advertorial text of one of these two housing complexes to investigate the proposed lifestyle for the project's near-future users. Before the analysis, a depiction takes place to reveal the main features of the project to present various dynamics of the spatial production of this specific project. Because of the strong similarities in the advertorial discourses of Allsancak and Evora projects, the study focuses its analysis on Evora, the first conceived project in Umurbey.

The Izmir-Aydın railway forms the western boundary of the project site, while Alsancak Stadium marks the project's northern border. To the south, the Ege Neighborhood, located near the Umurbey district, serves as another defining boundary. Examining the district's satellite imagery (Figure 3 and 4), the building site became visible in 2012. The satellite images before that year show the Tariş (4) manufacturing occupying the areas designated for the Allsancak and Evora projects.



Figure 3. Satellite photo of Umurbey region from August 2010, showing the "Evora" and "Allsancak", before the construction processes started, Google Earth.

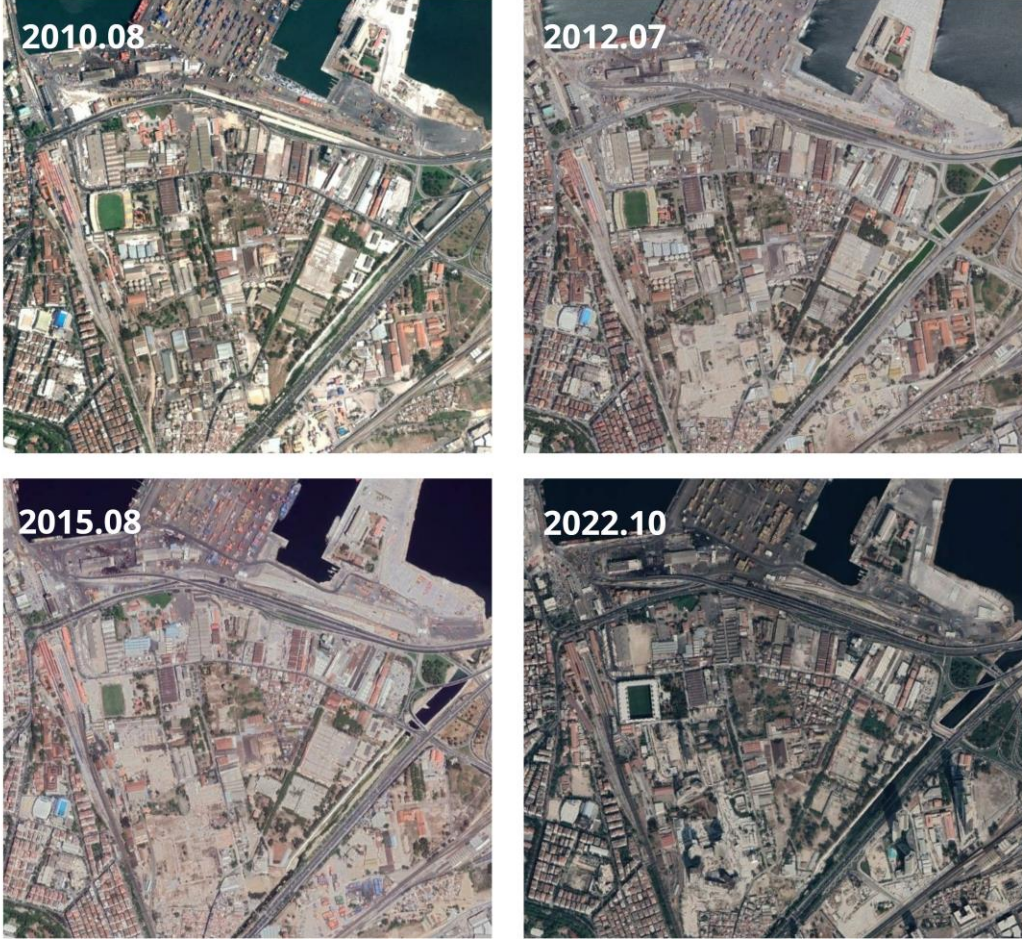


Figure 4. Satellite photos of Umurbey region from August 2010 and November 2022, Google Earth.

Between 2014 and 2020, the project faced several legal proceedings as its specified objectives did not align with the master plan. The ownership of the approximately 140,000 m² project area belongs to Tariş, which includes the Allsancak and Evora project areas. A commercial center, offices, hotels, and residential apartments were all part of the entire project created by Özak GYO [Real Estate Investment Trust-REIT] for the Evora project. However, the plan revision note that had allowed the project to be implemented was canceled as a result of a lawsuit brought by the Chambers of Urban Planners and Architects. Emlak Konut GYO started project implementation in the ensuing months by signing a protocol agreement with Tariş Cooperatives. The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Council and EPP (Real Estate Planning Project Management Inc.) accepted the amended plan in October 2017, which allowed for the use of one-third of the area for residential purposes. This cleared the way for the project to be carried out (Yeni Asır news, 2017). Following this procedure, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation (7) approved the zoning plan revisions at the 1/1000 and 1/5000 scales, which had to be completed in coordination with the Konak and Metropolitan Municipalities. Emlak GYO arranged a profit-sharing auction to sell the land in return for development rights. In an attempt to revoke the plans that the Ministry of Environment and

Urbanisation had approved, the Chamber of Urban Planners and the Chamber of Architects filed a second lawsuit (Ege'de Son Söz news, 2019).

The process unfolded through a series of lawsuits; in other words, it entailed a repetitive cycle of plan modifications and cancellation requests. On July 23, 2019, Izmir Cultural Heritage Preservation Board No. 1 decided against the objections to the most recent revision plan, which was displayed during the latter part of June and the first part of July 2019. The decision was made with reference number 9444. "Implementation was carried out following the Board's decision. In this manner, on August 8, 2019, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation approved the portions of the 1/5000 and 1/1000 scale drawings that were finalized. An appeal has been filed over this ruling, which is still pending. The plans that are currently in place have been approved and implemented following this difficult procedure (related news: Yeni Asır, 2017; Ege'de Son Söz, 2019).

Inspired by the literature of gentrification, this study discusses this large-scale development as part of the on-going municipal strategies of the 'making Izmir a desirable city to live' in the following section.

4. MOTTOS REVISITED

The qualitative methodology of the study borrows its approach from the grounded theory. Instead of beginning with theoretical presumptions, the approach within the embedded theory avoid foreseeing the analytical framework by taking into account how the evolving theory is "embedded" within the data (Bryman, 2001). As a result, the gathering and examination of collected data is prior within this methodology. The embedded theory approach is widely regarded as effective for investigating and uncovering research issues. In this methodological framework, the analysis of the advertorial material starts by identifying nodes within the texts. These nodes are then coded, selecting specific parts to highlight as interconnection points between different sections. Finally, the main themes of the analysis emerge through the cross-reading and categorization of the codes. The analysis of Evora project's advertorial texts including nodes, codes, and categories/themes are visible in Figure 5, following Belkis Kümbetoğlu's study technique (2005).

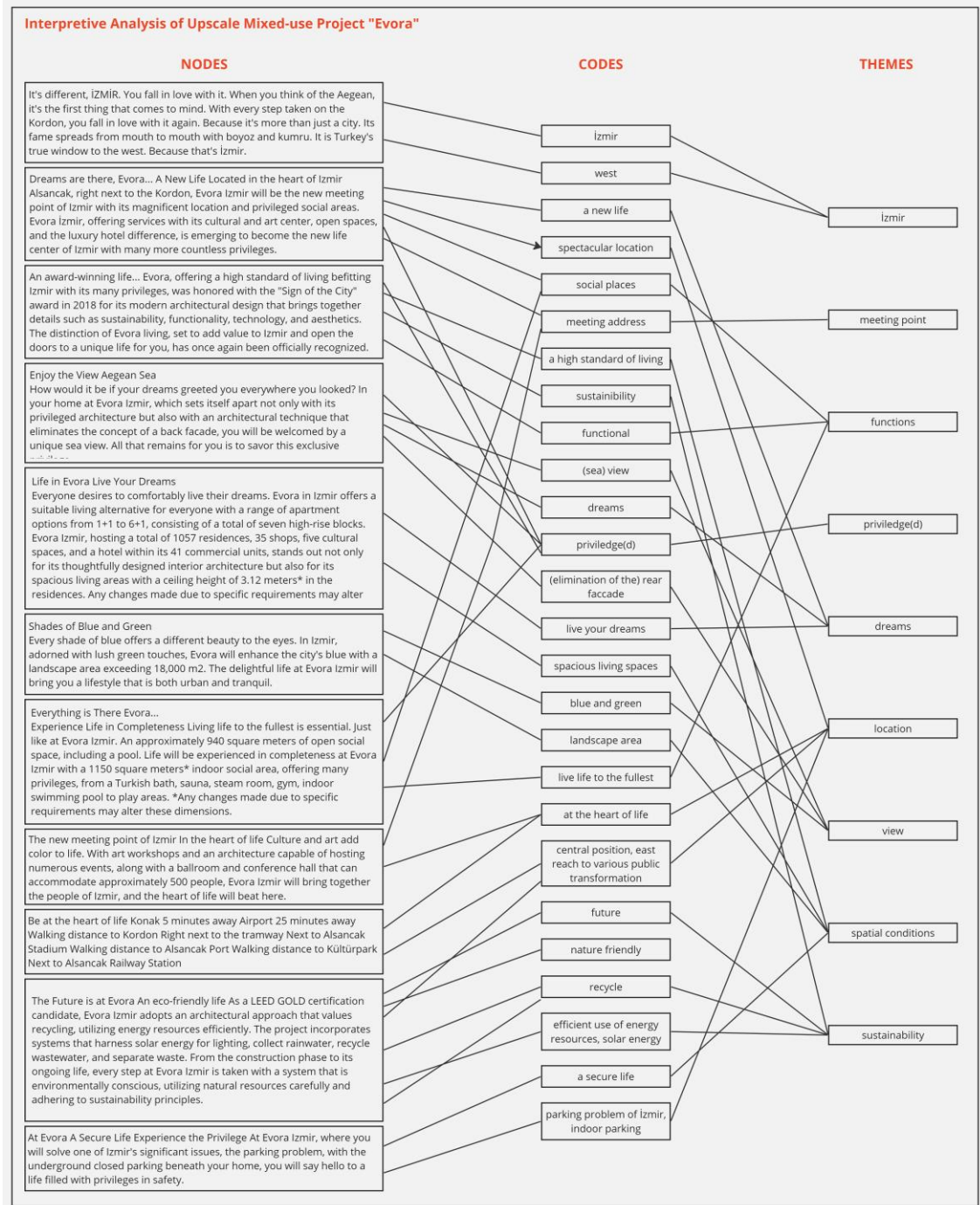


Figure 5. Satellite The analysis of Evora project's advertorial texts including nodes, codes, and categories/themes.

Through this methodological steps, the analysis reveals the interconnections, common references, contradictions, and conflicts among different parts of the text (nodes). The analysis process, culminating

in the identification of themes, guides discussions aimed at uncovering embedded meanings within the texts and their implications for political, economic, and social dynamics.

This multi-phased methodology is used to analyze the advertorial texts and images produced with populist commercial concerns, to unveil the “investigation of social changes” (Fairclough, 1992) and to create a “link between knowledge and social processes” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

4.1. A Discourse at the City Scale

The analysis and discussions developed around the themes identified during the analysis process. Specifically, the advertorial texts of Evora reveal eight main themes as focal points: Izmir, new, location, culture, meeting point, view, dreams, and privilege(d). These themes, highlighted repeatedly throughout the texts, emerge as integral components of the advertisements. The analysis aims to uncover various dimensions of these popular advertorial texts, painting a picture of the near-future utilization of the Umurbey district, which is transforming, spurred by the new upscale residential projects. The opening statement of the Evora project's advertorial text unveils images and ambitions for the area (see. Figure 6).

"It's different, İZMİR. You fall in love with it. When you think of the Aegean, it's the first thing that comes to mind. With every step taken on the Kordon, you fall in love with it again. Because it's more than just a city. Its fame spreads from mouth to mouth with *boyoz* (5) and *kumru* (6). It is Türkiye's true window to the west. Because that's Izmir."

The emphasis on the city persists throughout the entire text, promoting life in Izmir rather than focusing on a specific residential project. Consequently, it appears that the target audience for this place is envisioned to be individuals from other cities.



Figure 6. One of the advertorial visuals of Evora, from the official website of the project.

The broader analysis unveils the strong similarity between the strategy of these advertorial texts' aiming the attention of individuals from other cities and the management strategy of the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality between the years 2015 and 2019, during Aziz Kocaoğlu Mayorship. The strategy of the Izmir Municipality was developed with a focus on turning Izmir into an attraction center again. One of the key

objectives during this period was to make the city a 'desirable place to live', especially for those migrating from other major cities, Istanbul, in particular. To achieve this goal of attracting people towards the desirable Izmir, the motto of "Izmir: A City to Experience, A City to Live in" ["Izmir: Yaşayan Şehir, Yaşanacak Şehir"] was not only used in Izmir but also featured on billboards in other major cities, Istanbul being prominent among them. This motto produced by the Municipality was parallel with another "local development strategy" (Tekeli, 2018, s. 3) of the Municipality called the "Izmir Model". This model indicates strengthening the Mediterranean identity within the city, and aims to open the ways of turning Izmir into a design city.

In this strategic framework, the "democratic municipal governance model" (Tekeli, 2018, s. 13) was developed throughout an almost two-year process including discussions and workshops with academics, planners, designers, and social scientists from various cities; reaching big-scale design projects shaped within a participatory approach. The aim to highlight Izmir as a Mediterranean city was first announced by the previous mayor Ahmet Piriştina. A significant part of the discourse directed the development of the Izmir New City Center Master Plan, which was released in 2003, had been developed upon this aim. The new city center of Izmir, planned in this context, includes the rear port region, namely Umurbey District. The extensive area within the plan boundaries, outside the rear port region, has seen the construction of upscale mixed-use and predominantly residential projects, starting from Bayraklı and extending to Umurbey in the rear port region in almost twenty years. Central to the discussions about the Izmir New City Center Master Plan was the question of the necessary investors for plan implementation and whether Izmir could serve as an attraction for these investors. On the other side, Evora is the first project started to be implemented in 2020 after a series of lawsuits concluded with master plan revisions opening the way to increase the housing function within the project. The discourse, employing the city as both a symbol and a marketing strategy, suggests that investors are required not only as implementers but also as property owners of the upscale projects.

What is intriguing is that the large-scale development's mottos and the municipal ones do match. They offer a similar urban vision and imaginary for the citizens and owners – as part of the ongoing economic policies. The large-scale architectural projects and their implementations are nothing but a direct reflection of the local strategy in Izmir. A brief analysis combined with archival research on urban historiography and a contextual reading unveils local dynamics and contradictions.

4.2. Relation with the Place: "Location", "Culture", "Meeting Point"

The advertorial texts of the project are centered around the representative identity of Izmir, with no explicit mention of the specific region called Umurbey, where the project is situated. On the other hand, one can encounter in several parts of the text some references to the location of the project:

"Located in the heart of Izmir Alsancak, right next to the Kordon, Evora Izmir will be the new meeting point of Izmir with its magnificent location and privileged social areas."

"Be at the heart of life / Konak 5 minutes away / Airport 25 minutes away / Walking distance to Kordon / Right next to the tramway / Next to Alsancak Stadium / Walking distance to Alsancak Port / Walking distance to Kültürpark / Next to Alsancak Railway Station"

As inferred from the texts, the new residential project defines its geographical location by taking into account its proximity to the city center and distances to other notable landmarks in the city. While this narrative effectively conveys the geographical position of the project, there is a noticeable absence of information regarding the unique characteristics of Umurbey as the region of the project. The region in which the project is located has a very significant characteristic shaped by historical heritage, community life, and small-scale industrial production within the urban environment. These features indicate a rich cultural peculiarity.

Furthermore, Umurbey is currently witnessing a significant artistic production characterized by a community-based process that has gained popularity in recent years. While some thinkers argue that in the advanced capitalist world, popular discourses can instrumentalize various elements, including creations produced from a critical perspective, such as art, memory, and culture (see Adorno, 1998, 2006; Harvey, 2003, 2005), it could be expected that a popular advertorial text would incorporate some of the distinctive features of the district. However, in reality, the name of the region where the project is located, namely "Umurbey", is not mentioned.

The word "culture" is used in several parts of the text as follows (see. Figure 7):

"Evora Izmir, offering services with its cultural and art center, open spaces, and the luxury hotel difference, is emerging to become the new life center of Izmir with many more countless privileges."

"Culture and Arts / Dining / Shopping"

"The new meeting point of Izmir / In the heart of life Culture and art add color to life. With art workshops and an architecture capable of hosting numerous events, along with a ballroom and conference hall that can accommodate approximately 500 people, Evora Izmir will bring together the people of Izmir, and the heart of life will beat here."



Figure 7. One of the advertorial visuals of Evora, from the official website of the project.

The Project uses the concept of “culture” as an element introduced by the project to the location. In this context, it is evident that the term “culture” is used in a restricted sense, specifically in connection with “art”. Therefore, it is mentioned alongside other words indicating functions such as “dining”, “shopping”, or related spaces like “ballroom” and “conference hall”.

Within these advertorial texts, one of the words presented alongside "culture" is the "meeting point". In the project, functions accompanying living spaces such as art, shopping, and entertainment are presented as meeting points. Thus, when describing the "location" of the project, the aim is to contribute to and establish a relationship with the city center, including entertainment venues such as "Alsancak" and "Kordon," which are referenced and located very close by.

4.3. “View”, “Dreams” and “Privilege(d)”

Another word within the advertorial text related to the place is “view”. This word, mostly associated with the “sea view”, constitutes one of the key points reiterated throughout the discourse. It is reinforced by visuals in the advertisements, as seen in Figure 8.

“Enjoy the View / Aegean Sea / How would it be if your dreams greeted you everywhere you looked? In your home at Evora Izmir, which sets itself apart not only with its privileged architecture but also with an architectural technique that eliminates the concept of a back facade, you will be welcomed by a unique sea view. All that remains for you is to savor this exclusive privilege.”



Figure 8. One of the advertorial visuals of Evora, from the official website of the project.

One of the primary architectural advantages of high-rise projects is the panoramic view they offer, showcasing cities and landscapes from elevated perspectives. This project similarly capitalizes on its views and terraces, making them integral focal points in the advertorial discourse. In this paper, the significance of these aspects within the discourse is explored in the context of their relationship with the surrounding environment.

It can be asserted that the emphasis on the view in the advertorial text of a housing project suggests a distant connection when the discourse lacks specific details about the place itself. In this section, the discourse is shaped by highlighting the terraces with a sea view, portrayed as spaces associated with “dreams” and “exclusive privilege”. These aspects, while contributing to the user's perception, serve to disconnect the use of the place from its actual location and community.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS: NEW QUESTIONS

One of the features that make the Umurbey neighborhood special and valuable is its culture, which has been shaped over the years through life, history, experience, and collaborative production. What constitutes the space is the multiple physical and social layers that encompass the production of the space in various dimensions (see. Lefebvre, 1991). A new housing project may not generate a discourse about its historical background. However, for a housing project designed for habitation, especially in a place like Umurbey, with considerable significance in the city's collective memory and social structure, simply labeling its connection with the location as a mere “position” implies a discourse and approach intentionally avoiding engagement with its sense of place.

The project in Umurbey is contracted with a significant portion of its future users through planned and constructed narratives, designs, and agreements. In light of this, one can discuss a physical space and its foreseen use. However, spaces, particularly urban spaces such as common areas, undergo repeated social reproduction. Similarities, differences, and shared preferences shape urban life in social spaces. The manifestation of this social space in everyday practices is what Pierre Bourdieu termed as “habitus,” emerging as a “socially constructed system of predispositions” (1990). Habitus appears in individuals' unreflective, instinctive daily actions and shapes the space both physically and socially. Moreover, “while habitus is a realistic conceptual link to what is possible, it is always constructed through and by power” (Swartz, 1997).

As stated in the advertisement texts' analyses of the project, the target inhabitants of this residential complex are individuals who migrated from other cities to Izmir. In addition, given the strictly defined and secured physical boundaries of the complex and its weak connection to Umurbey in discourse, one question arises: To what extent can the social urban fabric developed in this complex be linked to Umurbey? The social dimension is pivotal in endowing an urban space with its distinctive characteristics, mostly setting it apart from other locations. According to Bourdieu, habitus is shaped through common and differentiated values, memories, and preferences, and has a two-sided relation with the physical space. When the physical and social relation of a housing complex is minimized with its place, how would the urban space gain its characteristics? Would this urban space bear similarities to any other similarly designed and constructed housing complex in another place in the world? As Bourdieu mentions while explaining his thoughts about “habitus”, individuals and collectives united by a shared awareness and a governing discourse always carry the capacity to generate a new discourse (Çeğin, 2015). Moreover and beyond all of this, Bourdieu emphasizes that the social meaning in a space is produced and re-produced. The social meaning and relations produced by humans are in constant change (Bourdieu, 1996; Rotman et al. 1997; Golabi et al. 2020). The discourse that shapes, markets, and designs the space constitutes a

significant part of its character. But space is not only produced in its conceived or perceived dimensions, yet the lived dimension it constitutes balance to this triad (see. Lefebvre, 1991).

A brief analysis on the advertising discourses of a housing complex is valuable for revisiting the theoretical studies on urban gentrification as well as place, desire, habitus notions. The study is not denying that there is a strong connection and similarity with the former gentrification projects in the North-American and European countries. But, the study also unveils that despite the similarities with the European and American examples, these projects have gained new, local meanings in the context of Izmir and Türkiye. A modest analysis paves way to the broader understanding of the local dynamics and contradictions. A rhetorical analysis combined with the contextual one depicts that political, economic, and social relations have been shaping and re-shaping spaces - in urban areas undergoing spatial transformation influenced by various factors, in particular. Umurbey, Izmir exemplify this.

ENDNOTES

- (1) For more information about the state-led urbanization and its development process in Türkiye: Kuyucu, Tuna, and Ünsal, Özlem. "Urban Transformation" as State-led Property Transfer: An Analysis of Two Cases of Urban Renewal in Istanbul." *Urban Studies* 47(7), (2010): 1479–1499.
- (2) Examples to the regional-scale transformation projects are Ayazma-Tepeüstü, Zeytinburnu, Başbüyük, Tozkoparan, Tarlabası, Fener-Balat, Süleymaniye, Ayvansaray and Sulukule.
- (3) The discussions under the concept of "gentrification" treats the displacement of community in neighborhoods. Some of the main readings about gentrification: Keyder, 1999, Cameron, 2003; Smith, 2002; İslam 2008.
- (4) *Tariş* is the biggest cooperative union working on agricultural sales of fig, grape, cotton, and oilseeds.
- (5) *Boyo*z is one of the characteristic foods of Izmir. It is a pastry that has been adopted into Anatolian, especially Izmir cuisine, by the Sephardic Jews (Yentürk, 2006).
- (6) *Izmir Kumru* was registered to the geographical indications' list of Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism: "Izmir Kumru Bread is prepared by putting Izmir Tulum Cheese, tomato and pepper or sausage when served cold, salami and kashar cheese cooked with charcoal and tomato when served hot. (...) Kumru, which has been produced in Izmir for almost 150 years and consumed almost every day by the people of Izmir" (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism official website).
- (7) The name of the ministry was changed to "Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change" in 2021.

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