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THE EVOLVING ROLE OF AN ACTIVE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: Sumerbank Ordu – Soybean Factory

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Research Article

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Abstract

This study examines the spatial and historical transformation of the Sümerbank Ordu–Soybean Factory, constructed according to Republican-era planning principles and still in operation. The study aims to demonstrate that the factory is not only a physical structure but also a spatial reflection of the ideological, economic, and social relations that shape urban memory. Within this framework, the study employs a historical-geographical approach, utilizing mapping techniques, archival documents, and on-site observations. The site was analysed across four distinct periods from its foundation to the present, focusing on land use, building density, and environmental transformation processes. The findings reveal that the factory played a decisive role in the eastward development of the city of Ordu and gradually transformed from a peripheral fringe at the coast into an inner fringe zone, gaining strong symbolic significance in urban memory. Contemporary pressures of urbanization increasingly evaluate this unique production site in terms of real estate value, threatening both physical continuity and social cohesion. The study advocates for the preservation of the factory as a living industrial heritage, proposing cultural adaptive reuse, documentation, education, and innovation-driven functions as part of a strategic planning framework for sustainable transformation. In conclusion, the Sümerbank Ordu–Soybean Factory case study demonstrates how strategically preserved and adaptively reused industrial heritage can be integrated into urban identity and the socio-spatial structure of a city.

Keywords: Living industrial heritage, spatial memory, morphological analysis, adaptive reuse

AKTİF BİR ENDÜSTRİ YERLEŞKESİNİN DÖNÜŞEN ROLÜ ÜZERİNE: Sümerbank Ordu – Soya Fabrikası

Özet

Bu çalışmada Cumhuriyet dönemi planlama anlayışıyla inşa edilen ve hâlen faal olan Sümerbank Ordu–Soya Fabrikası'nın mekânsal ve tarihsel dönüşümü incelenmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, fabrikanın sadece fiziksel bir yapı değil, aynı zamanda kentsel hafızayı şekillendiren ideolojik, ekonomik ve sosyal ilişkilerin mekânsal bir yansıması olduğunu ortaya koymaktır. Bu çerçevede, araştırma tarihsel-coğrafi yaklaşım ile haritalama teknikleri, arşiv belgeleri ve yerinde gözlem yöntemleri temel alınarak yürütülmüştür. Fabrikanın bulunduğu alan, kuruluşundan günümüze kadar dört farklı dönemde ele alınarak arazi kullanımı, yapı yoğunluğu ve çevresel dönüşüm süreçleri analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, fabrikanın Ordu kentinin doğu yönlü gelişiminde belirleyici bir rol üstlendiğini ve zamanla kıyıdaki dış çeperden iç çepere dönüşerek kentsel bellekte güçlü bir simgesel anlam kazandığını göstermektedir. Günümüzde artan yapılaşma baskısı, bu özgün üretim alanını rant değeri üzerinden değerlendirmekte ve hem fiziksel sürekliliği hem de sosyal bütünlüğü tehdit yaratmaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları, fabrikanın yaşayan bir endüstri mirası olarak korunmasını destekleyen ve kültürel yeniden işlevlendirme, belgeleme, eğitim ve inovasyon temelli yeni kullanımlar önererek sürdürülebilir dönüşüm için stratejik bir planlama çerçevesi sunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Sümerbank Ordu–Soya Fabrikası'nın kentsel mirasın bir parçası olarak değerlendirilmesi ve geleceğe taşınması, mekânsal kimliğin korunması açısından örnek teşkil etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşayan endüstri mirası, mekânsal bellek, morfolojik analiz, yeniden işlevlendirme

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, the implementation of neoliberal policies and the commodification of urban land have led to profound transformations in the physical, social, economic, and cultural fabric of cities, giving rise to a new urban paradigm (Harvey, 1989; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Theodore, Peck & Brenner, 2012). With the rise of economic reforms and globalization, urban space has increasingly become a tool for economic development, prompting a new wave of urban planning and architectural practices (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Şengül, 2009). Consequently, the redefinition of public spaces with historical and cultural significance as economically advantageous zones for large-scale urban projects has led to the loss of their public character and social and cultural memory (Zukin, 1995; Logan & Molotch, 2007; Smith, 2021).

Since the 1980s, the implementation of neoliberal policies in Türkiye and the commodification of urban land have profoundly transformed the physical, social, economic, and cultural fabric of cities, giving rise to a new urban paradigm. Through standardized development projects, urban space has increasingly been treated as a commodity, producing homogeneous forms isolated from the economic, cultural, and social accumulation processes of the city. This situation manifests as a critical urban crisis, wherein public spaces with historical and cultural significance have been redefined as economically advantageous zones for large-scale projects, leading to the erosion of social and cultural memory. In response to this crisis, it is essential to understand cities through the lens of their material histories and to develop planning strategies that align with their unique local identities (Lefebvre, 1991; Healey, 1997). The preservation of urban identity elements and their integration into future spatial planning are acknowledged as central to contemporary spatial development strategies. The preservation of urban identity elements and their integration into future spatial planning are acknowledged as central to contemporary spatial development strategies. (Saner, 2012; Severcan, 2012).

Through the implementation of these practices, urban space has increasingly been commodified. Homogeneous forms, detached from the economic, cultural, and social accumulation processes of the city, have proliferated through standardized development models. This condition has culminated in a profound crisis of urban identity. Addressing this crisis requires interpreting the city through its material and historical layers and promoting planning interventions that are sensitive to the specific character of place. Within this context, the sustainability of spatial elements that embody local identity and the structuring of future urban form with this recognition in mind have become central to contemporary urbanism.

Industrial areas, particularly, stand out as spatial forms that profoundly reflect urban identity. Beyond serving as sites of production, these complexes once provided a model for contemporary life, fostering communal consciousness and shaping patterns of daily life in the cities where they were established (Adams, 2010; Özden, 2008; Özgönül, 2007). Their integrated technical infrastructure, architectural characteristics, and economic functions have made them essential components of Türkiye's architectural and industrial culture (Aydın, 2011; Köksal, 2012; Tanyeli, 1998). While their tangible legacy resides in their buildings, spatial arrangements, and engineering systems, they also possess intangible value-through memories, collective practices, and social interactions that continue to resonate with former workers and communities (Ahunbay, 2017).

During the 1930s, as part of the national development plans of the Republic, the state established large-scale industrial facilities across many Anatolian cities. These factories not only generated production and employment but also provided comprehensive urban models for living, complete with housing, social services, and physical infrastructure (Tanyeli, 1998; Köksal, 2012). Over time, many of these facilities became centrally located due to urban sprawl. As their land values increased, they were often demolished, perceived as underutilized spaces, or subjected to redevelopment approaches driven by economic concerns. These approaches often neglected historical significance and overlooked strategies like adaptive reuse (Cengizkan, 2006; Saner, 2012).

Regeneration programs have been implemented in certain cases to revitalize abandoned industrial fields by redefining their functions to meet the requirements of a contemporary urban population. (Köksal & Ahunbay, 2006; Özden, 2016). However, the question remains: how can active industrial complexes transforming be reintegrated into the city without compromising their original essence? This challenge becomes particularly pertinent when these sites have played a role in shaping urban growth patterns and embody the spirit of their era. For instance, in Türkiye's state-led industrialization during the early Republican period, industrial complexes like the Sümerbank factories were established as integrated production and living environments that influenced urban form and collective life. Over time, these sites, once located at the urban periphery, have become integrated into the expanding city, facing increasing pressure from neoliberal redevelopment dynamics.

This study examines the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory not only as a physical entity but also as a spatial manifestation of intersecting ideological, economic, and social forces. Its transformation over time cannot be comprehended solely through its built environment but must be contextualized within the political and historical circumstances that have influenced its production and reproduction. Consequently, this section delineates the conceptual and analytical framework that underpins the study. It draws upon theories of spatial production, the restructuring of urban space under neoliberalism, and the evolving status of industrial heritage. These perspectives enable us to interpret the Sümerbank factory not as an isolated entity but as a dynamic spatial formation embedded within broader urban and socio-economic transformations.

1.1. The Production of Space: Meanings and Depth

Space transcends its physical manifestation, encompassing a fusion of social relations, production processes, ideologies, and historical trajectories. As "Lefebvre" posits, the production of space is catalyzed by three interwoven categories: spatial practices (perceived space), representations of space (conceived space), and spaces of representation (lived space). Spatial practices encompass the tangible reality of daily life, encompassing buildings, structures, workplaces, private and recreational areas, and the network of pathways that connect them. These are directly linked to planning practices and reflect both the production and reproduction of the built environment.

Representations of space, on the other hand, are abstract and hegemonic in nature. They are meticulously planned, drawn, and conceptualized through scientific, technical, and ideological instruments such as maps, plans, legal regulations, and official design frameworks that articulate the dominant ideologies and the spatial logic of the prevailing economic system. They embody dominant ideologies and the spatial logic of the prevailing economic system. In contrast, spaces of representation are user-centric and reside within the realm of the lived. They emerge through imagery, symbols, memory, and direct lived experiences. Examples include the perceived identity of a neighborhood, the significance attributed to a public square, or the collective memory embedded within a specific structure. These spaces are shaped by imagination, myth, art, and everyday experiences. While they are connected to social groups and individual spatial experiences, they often stand in contrast to the dominant representations imposed by institutional powers.

Building upon Lefebvre's spatial theory, Edward Soja introduces the concept of Thirdspace; a hybrid realm that transcends both physical and conceived dimensions, encompassing both lived and imagined realities. Thirdspace, which includes heritage sites and memory spaces, facilitates an understanding of space not only in terms of form and function but also through its embedded power structures and social relations (Soja, 1996). From a political-economic perspective, David Harvey, posits that space serves as a conduit for the reproduction of specific relations of production and class structures. According to Harvey (1973, 2001), space is not solely influenced by production but also functions as an active agent in capital accumulation. These theoretical frameworks mirror and reproduce socio-economic structures, encompassing class hierarchies, ownership relations, and ideological orientations. Across these frameworks, space is understood not as a passive or static entity but rather as a dynamic consequence of historical, ideological, and economic processes. Consequently, space manifests as a tangible manifestation of hegemony and social order; a symbolic landscape that is both shaped by and shaping the quotidian practices and dominant paradigms of its era.

1.2. Neoliberal Restructuring: Reconfiguring Urban Space

Since the 1980s, the global adoption of neoliberal policies has led to a transformation of urban spaces, driven by market-oriented dynamics. This shift has replaced the primary focus on public welfare and services with an approach that prioritizes the interests of capital actors. Within this new framework, urban areas with substantial profit potential, particularly former industrial sites and public spaces, have been reclassified as underutilized areas and targeted for redevelopment. This process has resulted in the privatization of public assets and the transformation of production-oriented spaces into service and real estate-driven functions, reshaping urban form (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Brenner & Theodore, 2005; Weber, 2002). The financialization of space has emerged as a significant force in urban planning (Aalbers, 2012), guiding the transformation of urban landscapes based on market logic. Türkiye has also been influenced by neoliberal policies since the 1980s. Structural adjustments in governance, economic policy, and planning frameworks have facilitated the commodification of space and the persistence of capital accumulation (Özalp & Erkut, 2016). Notably, the restructuring of planning at the local government level has enabled urban form

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and infrastructure to be reshaped in response to market demands. Consequently, urban coastal zones, city centers, and transportation corridors-particularly those situated on publicly owned land-have become susceptible to redevelopment pressures. Industrial areas, once safeguarded under public ownership and designated for production, have increasingly been rezoned for residential, tourism, or commercial use. Market-driven adaptive reuse projects have proliferated (Keyder, 2005; Lovering & Türkmen, 2011; Öz & Eder, 2012; Keleş et al., 2022), reinforcing the predominance of speculative development in urban transformation.

1.3. Memory and Disruption: Industrial Heritage under Neoliberalism

As urban spaces are increasingly commodified, areas with significant historical, cultural, and social value are reframed as profit opportunities under the logic of market redevelopment. This process poses a threat not only to physical structures but also to the continuity of urban memory. Heritage-rich neighborhoods and architectural landmarks are often disconnected from their historical contexts, resulting in the erosion of spatial identity and collective memory. Certain spaces, referred to as "sites of memory" by Pierre Nora (1989), serve as material anchors of the past, serving as the spaces through which society remembers itself. In Türkiye, industrial buildings and complexes, with their structural forms and mechanical systems, function as tangible evidence of the country's socio-economic and spatial history (Cengizkan, 2006). They are imbued with memories of labor, local identity, and production.

Industrial areas have emerged as key targets of neoliberal redevelopment, largely due to their central location and large plot size. Preserving their symbolic and architectural qualities has proven challenging, particularly when formal heritage designation is lacking. Without adequate protection, these spaces face demolition or transformation, often under the guise of "revitalization," leading to disruptions in memory and the fragmentation of spatial continuity (Logan & Reeves, 2009). In this fast-paced and profit-driven transformation process, maintaining the sustainability of industrial heritage is essential-not only for conservation but also for comprehending urban identity and memory. These sites provide critical spatial and symbolic resources that can support more socially embedded and historically aware planning practices.

1.4. State-Led Production of Space: The Sümerbank Model

Following the establishment of the Republic, Türkiye's national development strategy prioritized increasing domestic production and reducing foreign dependence through state-led industrialization (Eroğlu, 2007). This vision manifested in the form of planned factories across Anatolia, which integrated housing, social amenities, and recreational functions alongside production. These facilities served as pivotal instruments of spatial and social modernization (Asiliskender & Özsoy, 2010). Established in 1933, Sümerbank, the inaugural state economic enterprise, constructed numerous factories producing textiles, chemicals, ceramics, and food products (Polatoğlu, 2021). These industrial complexes, as Asiliskender (2006) underscores, embodied modern identity. With worker housing, cinemas, sports facilities, and cultural venues, they constituted planned urban sub-centers shaped by the ideological and authoritarian role of the state (Asiliskender, 2012). Across cities such as Adana, Istanbul, Kayseri, Malatya, Zonguldak, and Ordu, Sümerbank factories played a pivotal role in shaping the morphological development of urban space. Today, the extent to which these sites have been preserved, transformed, or lost varies significantly. Nevertheless, they continue to pose critical questions regarding the continuity of urban memory and spatial identity.

The Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory, still operational yet subject to increasing pressures for transformation, presents a compelling case for exploring the spatial and social evolution of these planned industrial spaces. This study aims to analyze the evolving role of the factory by tracing its morphological transformation and examining how it has shaped and been shaped by urban development, memory, and identity (Demirkan, 2022). Consequently, the research focuses on the following inquiries:

- How did the Sümerbank Ordu Soybean Factory establish its spatial relationship with the city upon its establishment?
- How has the surrounding built environment (land use and density) changed over time?
- What is the site's current location, role in the city, symbolic significance, and potential for heritage preservation?

These conceptual perspectives provide the foundation for analyzing the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory as a case where production space, urban growth, and memory intersect. The subsequent section outlines the methodological approach employed to trace the morphological transformation of the site and its shifting role within the city of Ordu. Through historical-geographical analysis, spatial mapping, and archival interpretation, the study seeks to elucidate how the factory has undergone evolution within changing urban dynamics and how its preservation may contribute to a more context-sensitive vision of industrial heritage planning.

2. METHODOLOGY

Building upon the conceptual framework outlined in the previous section, this study employs a historical-geographical approach to analyze the spatial transformation of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory and its impact on the city's development. The analysis is situated within the broader dynamics of Ordu's social, economic, and physical development.

Urban transformation often occurs through critical spatial ruptures-moments of change that alter the direction and structure of the urban fabric. Identifying such rupture points and interpreting their effects within a cause–effect framework is crucial to understanding spatial evolution (Madanipour, 1996; Barke, 2018). In this context, the study draws upon the historical-geographical approach developed by M.R.G. Conzen (1960), which offers a valuable lens for interpreting how the physical form and land-use patterns of a place evolve over time. Rather than focusing solely on present-day configurations, Conzen's framework emphasizes the layered, historical construction of space-linking physical transformation with the underlying social practices that shape it (Baker, 2003). Accordingly, this study conducts a morphogenetic analysis based on key spatial components such as parcel structure, block organization, road networks, and building density (Gu, 2010).

Specifically, the analysis of the Sümerbank site examines changes in land use and surrounding built/natural environments from the time of its foundation to the present. In line with Whitehand (2001), the study adopts a comparative, temporal strategy that allows for the joint reading of spatial continuity and transformation. To assess the factory's spatial impact on the city, the study identifies four periods: First period: 1990; Second period: 1990–2004; Third period: 2004 -2014 and Fourth period: 2014- 2024. These periods are based on changes reflected in planning documents and major physical changes in the factory's surrounding urban development. The site's position within the city is interpreted through Conzen's (1960) concept of "fringe-belt zones," which is defined as the transitional areas shaped by the accumulation of land uses originally located at the urban periphery. At its inception, the Sümerbank site was situated at the city's outer fringe. However, as urban pressures intensified, it became increasingly integrated into the built-up area, transforming into an inner fringe zone. This perspective facilitates a diachronic analysis of how the factory's spatial relationship with the city has undergone a shift.

2.1. Data Sources and Analytical Process

The study employs a dataset comprising various sources, including aerial photographs from 1990, 2004, 2014, and 2024; urban development plans; base maps; factory layout plans; municipal reports; archival documents; and field observations. These materials collectively provide both diachronic and synchronic insights into the spatial transformation of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory and its surrounding urban environment.

The data analysis process included content analysis, spatial mapping, and comparative analysis of visual and planning documents. Gregory and Healey's (2007) document spatialization methodology was employed to spatialize archival materials. This process involved digitizing and layering historical maps, identifying land-use alterations, and categorizing density and functional transformations. The study defines the physical transformation and the revolving role of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory within the urban fabric.

3. FINDINGS

The methodology presented in the preceding section established a spatial and temporal framework for analyzing the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory within the broader urban dynamics of Ordu. The findings section, which incorporates morphological analysis and archival records, presents the factory's evolving role from multiple perspectives. The analysis is structured around three interrelated axes: the factory's impact on urban development,

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the city's spatial influence on the factory, and the internal spatial characteristics of the industrial site. Employing a period-based comparative approach and spatial mapping, the transformation of land use, building density, and symbolic significance is examined. The findings endeavor to demonstrate how Sümerbank's physical and functional evolution mirrors the city's socio-spatial restructuring and how it continues to influence local memory and urban identity.

3.1. The Sümerbank Ordu Soybean Factory within the Spatial Transformation Dynamics of Ordu

Situated along the Black Sea coast, the contemporary city of Ordu was established on land that remained predominantly marshy and forested until the late 18th century. Economically, it is a relatively young city whose development has historically centered around agricultural production, particularly hazelnuts, maize, and soybeans (Çebi, 1973). Urbanization patterns have been greatly influenced by the city's economic structure, production relations, and geographical boundaries in the urban context. Transformations in these pivotal determinants have not only influenced the spatial fabric of the city but also catalyzed substantial social and demographic shifts, each representing pivotal moments in Ordu's urban evolution (Figure 1).

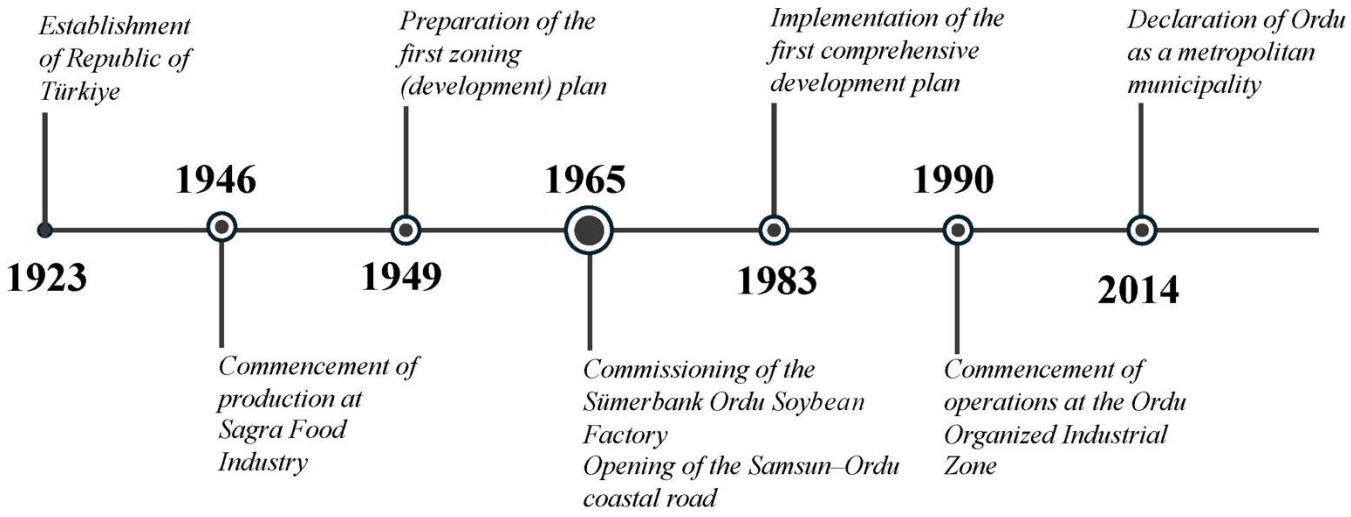

Figure 1. Summary of significant historical events in Ordu's urban growth (Prepared by authors, 2024)

Several milestones have significantly influenced spatial and industrial development of Ordu. The city's first industrial facility was established in 1946, followed by the preparation of its first comprehensive master plan in 1949 to guide spatial growth. In 1965, the Sümerbank Ordu–Soybean Factory was constructed as a state-led initiative to support local socio-economic development. A detailed development plan was implemented in 1983, opening peripheral agricultural land for urban expansion. The city's first organized industrial zone was initiated in 1990, marking a key step toward industrialization. Finally, in 2014, Ordu underwent an administrative transition to metropolitan municipality status. Collectively, these events encapsulate critical dynamics that have shaped the city's morphological and institutional trajectory. The Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory emerges as a prominent spatial and economic focal point among these changes (Demirkan, 2022). Located to the east of the city center, the factory was established in 1965 on land reclaimed from marshes in 1945 (Çebi, 1973). Covering an area of approximately 10 hectares, the site is bounded by the Black Sea to the north, hazelnut orchards (now residential zones) to the south, and the Melet River to the east (Figure 2). A portion of the land was state-owned, while the majority was donated by Sırrı Tercan, a prominent local landowner, who envisioned the factory as a catalyst for urban and regional development.

Figure 2. Location of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory within the urban context (URL-1)

The factory was designed to capitalize on the agricultural potential of the Black Sea region and contribute to national production objectives by processing oilseeds, particularly soybeans, for the manufacture of vegetable oils. Its operations were supported by contemporary industrial technologies and reflected the state's broader initiatives to modernize production practices.

3.2. Defining the Role of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory in the Neoliberal Era

Until the 1950s, urban development in Ordu was largely confined to the western side of the Bülbül River. The area where the factory is located today only began to be incorporated into the urban fabric after the construction of the Ordu–Samsun highway and the site selection of the Sümerbank Factory. This expansion was influenced by several factors: the flat topography of the area, shifts in urban dynamics, and the commodification of space after the 1980s (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Spatial transformation of Ordu across periods and the changing position of the Sümerbank Factory (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Planning and Urbanism (ca. 1950, 1965, ca. 1980); aerial images 2004 (URL-2), 2017 (URL-3) and 2024 (URL-5).

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To better understand the evolving role of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory within the framework of urban dynamics, four distinct morphological periods were analyzed. In each, land use within a 115-hectare area surrounding the factory were examined (Figure 4) and building density and various housing typologies are examined. These spatial analyses were supported by archival studies to further explore urban memory and identity. The findings are presented under three thematic subheadings: The factory's influence on urban pattern, The influence of urban development on the factory, spatial analysis of the industrial complex itself.

Figure 4. Aerial Images of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory Study Area (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Planning and Urbanism, 1980), aerial images of 2004 (URL-2), 2014 (URL-4), 2024 (URL-5).

3.2.1. Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory on Urban Pattern

The commencement of production at the Sümerbank Ordu–Soybean Factory in 1965 initiated a substantial transformation of the surrounding area, which had previously been characterized by hazelnut orchards and rural land uses. Until 1990, the zone was visually defined by its rural appearance. By 1995, however, it was formally incorporated into the urban fabric as the "Durugöl" neighborhood (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, 2025). Before 1990, this zone retained a distinctly rural appearance. However, by 1995, it had been formally integrated into the city as the "Durugöl" neighborhood (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, 2025). Following the planning and activation of the factory, land use in the area shifted from rural to urban functions. Large land-use demands in the vicinity, such as indoor and outdoor sports facilities and a provincial public services campus (formerly Village Services), began to cluster near the factory. This shift, along with the emergence of residential development, reflects the first major transformation phase in the area's morphological history. While this first morphological period saw significant land-use change, the second period was characterized by continuity. During this phase, the uses introduced in the first period largely persisted without substantial change. In contrast, the third period saw a second wave of major spatial transformation.

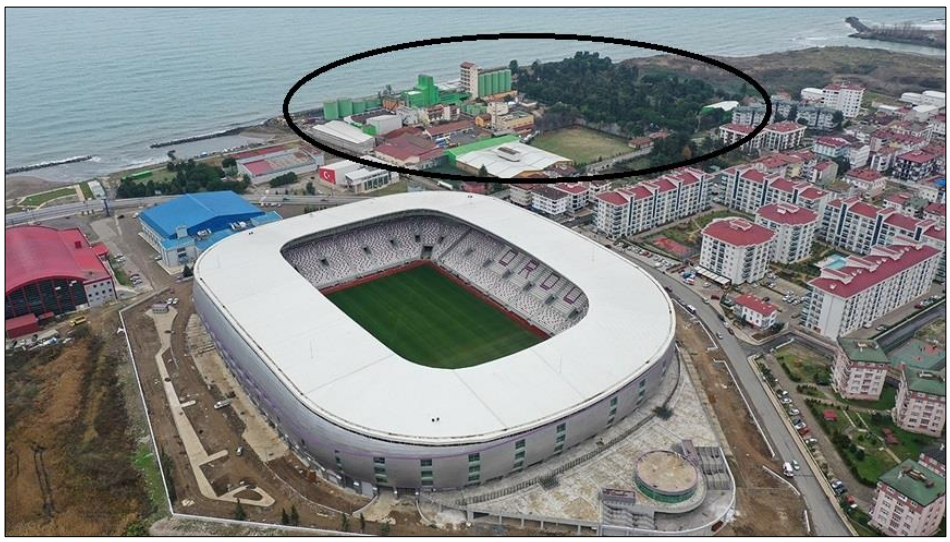

Figure 5. Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory and the stadium (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Planning and Urbanism, 2022)

By 2014, the land adjacent to the factory underwent a transformative process, repurposing it for various new uses. A wastewater treatment plant was constructed, and the city's new stadium was built on the previously used sports complex (Figure 5). Subsequently, portions of this area were transformed into parkland and residential developments. The transformation continued with the introduction of new educational facilities and small-scale green spaces to cater to the surrounding residential community (Figure 6).

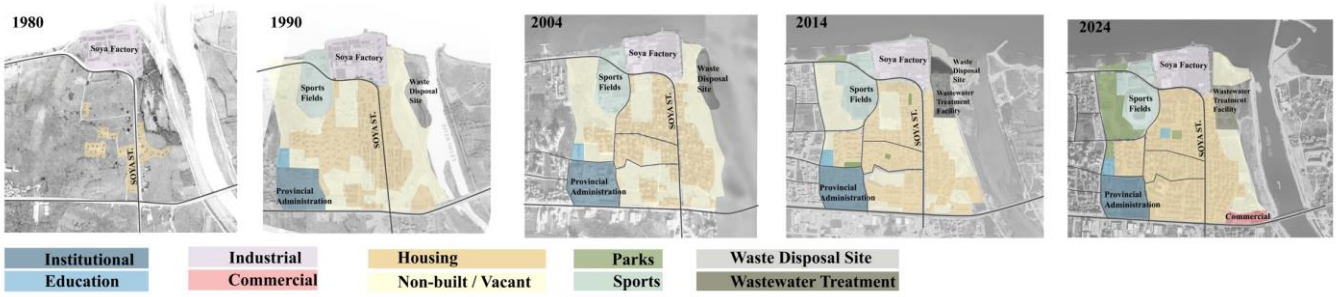

Figure 6. Comparison of land use changes across different periods (1980 and 1990 aerial images Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Planning and Urbanism (1980 & 1990). Base aerial images 2004 (URL-2); 2014 (URL-3); 2024 (URL-5), land use interpretations and visualizations were prepared by Authors, 2025)

Prior to 1990, the vicinity of the factory was predominantly occupied by single-story residential dwellings (Figure 6). An analysis of building characteristics indicates that by the 1990s, the site had transformed into mid-rise residential complexes, characterized by ground space index (GSI) ranging from 0.10 to 0.30 (Figure 7).

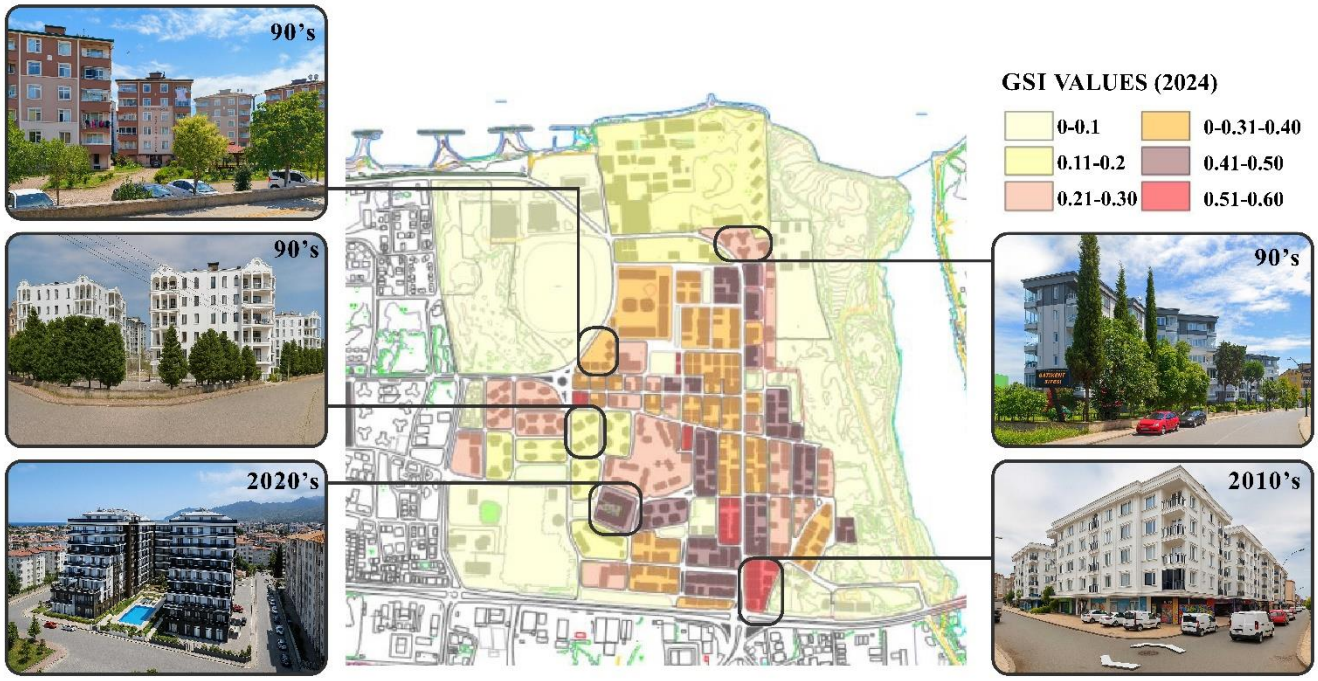

Figure 7. Comparison of Ground Space Index (GSI) values and sample housing areas in the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory vicinity (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Planning and Urbanism (2004), GSI values and housing area visualizations were prepared by the authors, 2025)

Throughout the 1990s, the area continued with low-density development, without a substantial increase in building intensity. However, by 2014, there was a marked surge in development intensity: nearly all vacant parcels were occupied, GSI values exceeded 0.50, and the area transformed into a high-density residential zone, attracting prestigious gated communities and mid-rise apartment clusters (Figure 7).

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3.2.2. The Influence of Urban Development on the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory

Following the 2010s, Ordu has experienced substantial expansion primarily along an east-west axis parallel to its coastline, shaped by the region's topography. In recent years, as observed in numerous cities along the Black Sea coast, urban development has also extended southward due to an increase in construction activity. The historical core of the city, designated as a protected urban site, continues to serve as the central hub around which this spatial growth unfolds. Based on the data collected for this study, the initial phases (pre-1990, 1990, and 2014) indicate that the city's fringe belts were predominantly characterized by industrial facilities, organized industrial zones, sports complexes, university campuses, urban green spaces, recreational zones, coastal land reclamation areas, health and education campuses, and municipal service areas. During these periods, the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory was situated on the outskirts of the city's built-up area, thereby functioning as a peripheral industrial anchor (Figure 8).

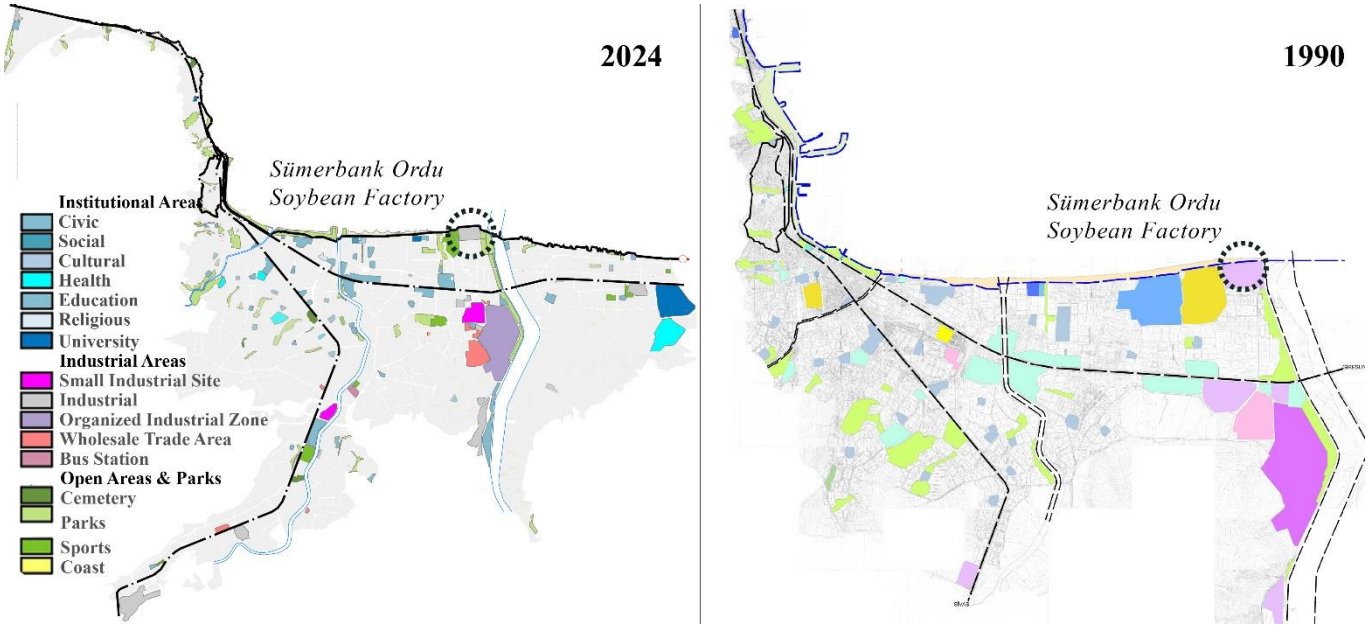

Figure 8. Fringe-belt formations of Ordu in relation to urban expansion (prepared by authors, 2025)

Following the year 2014, the city embarked on an expansionary phase, gradually integrating its former peripheries into the urban fabric. Consequently, the Sümerbank Factory, once distinctly situated on the city's outskirts, found itself increasingly incorporated into the urban landscape. This transformation was not attributable to any alteration in the factory's physical location, but rather to the spatial shift of the urban core itself. The intensified construction activity surrounding the site resulted in the factory being enveloped by the city's boundaries. Consequently, the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory transitioned from being a component of the outer fringe to being situated within the intermediate fringe zone (Figure 8).

3.2.3. Spatial Analysis of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory

Construction of the Sümerbank Ordu Soybean Factory started in 1962, with operations commencing in 1965. In line with the contemporary industrial policies of the time, the complex encompassed not only production facilities but also an integrated urban system that incorporated social amenities, residential housing, recreational areas, and green spaces (Demirkan, 2022). Factory plans designated the western section for industrial production units, the central area for a pine grove (green zone), and the eastern section for residential housing. Social facilities were strategically positioned at the northern and southern edges of the site, providing panoramic views of the Black Sea and optimizing accessibility (Figures 9-10).

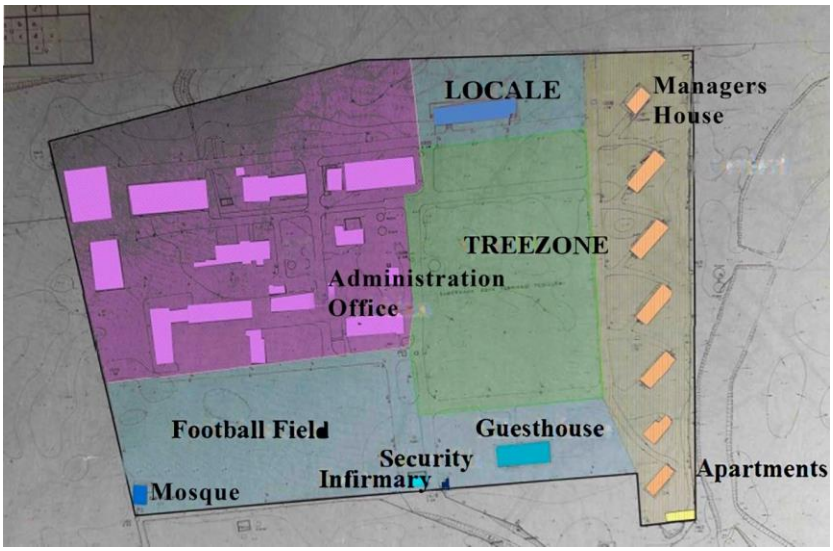

Figure 9. Spatial layout of the Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory (prepared by the authors over the basemap of 1964, author's archive)

The industrial area encompassed silos, wells, and warehouses, while the expansive green area in the center was meticulously planned for recreational purposes (Figure 10). The residential component comprised three distinct typologies: a two-story director's residence, five single-story ground-level houses, and a five-story apartment-style dormitory. Social amenities situated near the primary entrance to the south included a mosque, a staffed infirmary, a security, and a one-story guesthouse. Additionally, a full-sized football field occupied the southern region, and a one-story social club was positioned to the north, affording its occupants scenic views of the sea (Figure 9).

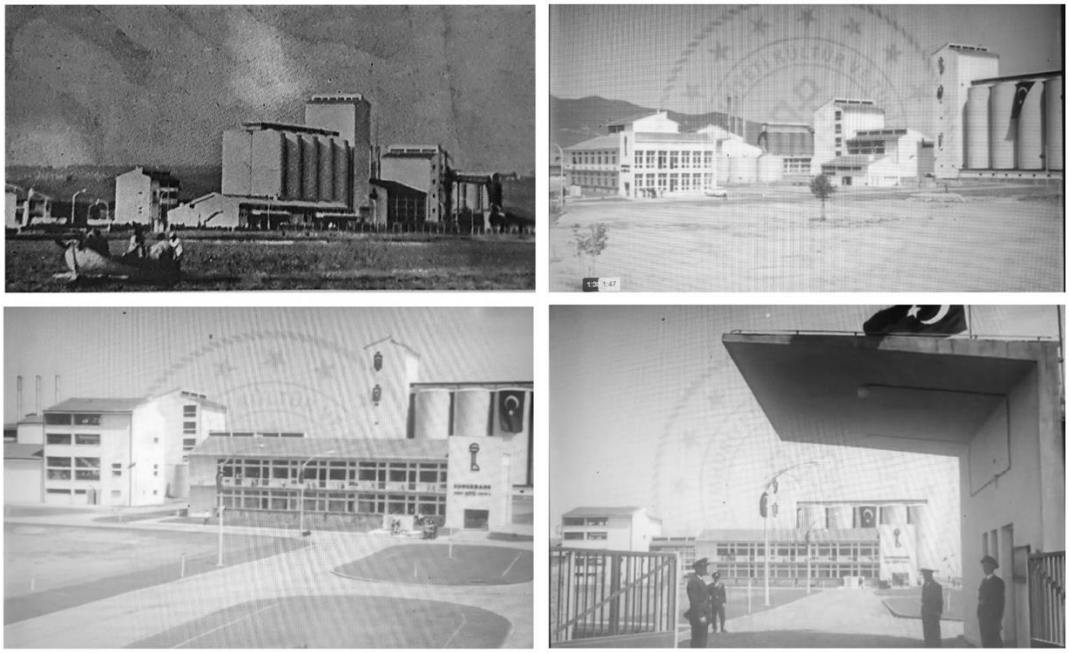

Figure 10. Buildings of the initial Sümerbank Ordu - Soybean Factory (Ordu Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Planning and Urbanism, n.d.)

On site observations indicate that several physical changes have occurred since the factory became operational. These include the expansion of production units, the conversion of the guesthouse and infirmary to new functions, and the abandonment of the apartments and worker houses. Furthermore, certain single-story houses and their adjacent gardens have been repurposed for agricultural research and development, particularly for hazelnut cultivation. Despite these changes, several original elements, including the mosque, football field, treezone (pine

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grove), administrative offices, and certain production buildings that continue to function. This suggests a degree of continuity and preservation of the complex's original identity, as evidenced in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Current conditions of the architectural structures at the Sümerbank Ordu- Soybean Factory (author's archive, 2025)

4. CONCLUSION

The study systematically examined the structural and functional transformations of this actively functioning Republican-era industrial complex through the lens of urban morphology and culturally significant urban heritage. As a site embedded in collective memory but historically overlooked in the city's planning process, the factory provides a unique opportunity to interpret space through formal, historical, and social dimensions. Supported by morphological analyses and archival studies, the research contributes to the documentation of the site using a methodologically grounded approach based on fieldwork and spatial inquiry.

The architectural design of the factory complex reflects the principles of modernism, prioritizing structural efficiency and functional clarity. Buildings were constructed using reinforced concrete systems, featuring wide-span interiors and modular layouts to support streamlined production. However, the significance of these spaces extends beyond their physical and operational attributes. Facilities such as the guesthouse, social club, football field, and pine grove functioned as everyday social environments, contributing to a sense of community and embedding the site within the collective memory of the city

A morphological analysis revealed a contrariness between historical continuity and spatial disruption. The factory is situated approximately 4 kilometers from the city center along the Melet River, historically a key axis for industrial development in northeastern Ordu. At the time of its construction, the surrounding area was largely undeveloped, and the factory's location was strategically chosen for its proximity to water resources and logistical accessibility. The Melet River influenced industrial settlement patterns, collecting sites along its north-south axis. Over time, as Ordu expanded, particularly eastward due to topographic constraints limiting westward growth, the city has now extended approximately 8 kilometers to the east, gradually incorporating peripheral areas. In the early phases (pre-1990, 1990, and 2014), the factory functioned as a peripheral industrial anchor on the city's outskirts. Following the eastward expansion, the factory has been progressively integrated into the urban fabric, transitioning into an intermediate (inner) fringe zone, exemplifying the dynamic relationship between industrial infrastructure and urban growth.

Today, the site's real estate value has begun to surpass its productive function, reflecting rising development pressures and increased ground space index (GSI). Surrounding land uses, including residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments illustrate the radical transformation of both spatial intensity and land use patterns. These changes pose a threat to the factory's functional role, architectural integrity, and social and cultural significance.

Conceived as a self-contained ecosystem encompassing housing, social spaces, a mosque, and a treezone, the complex risks symbolic erosion: the loss of its original purpose and lived meaning within the community.

Unlike many abandoned industrial sites, the Sümerbank Ordu–Soybean Factory continues to operate, preserving its physical integrity and enabling a living heritage approach that sustains industrial activity as a cultural asset. In this context, the study proposes a strategic planning framework grounded in sustainability and adaptive reuse. Rather than evaluating the complex solely through the lens of land value or building stock, it should be recognized as part of the city's urban heritage, a spatial archive of past urban experiences and collective identity, deserving protection as cultural infrastructure.

Planned in the mid-20th century as part of the Republic's state-led development strategy, the factory was envisioned not merely as a production site but as a comprehensive living environment including housing, social amenities, and landscaped areas. In this sense, it represents a conceived space (representation of space) produced by the rational planning logic of the state; a lived space (space of representation) shaped by everyday routines and social interactions; and a space of memory, reflecting economic function, class structure, symbolic value, and communal life.

The initial phase of the proposed strategy focuses on documentation and preservation. All architectural elements, spatial arrangements, production processes, and historical layers should be systematically documented to establish a scientific foundation for future interventions. Subsequently, the site can be reprogrammed through cultural reuse scenarios, such as transforming sections into industrial heritage museums or hosting multi-purpose cultural events, exhibitions, and creative industry workshops, reconnecting the site with contemporary urban life. A second strategy involves reassigning educational and innovation-oriented functions that align with the factory's industrial legacy. Incubator spaces, creative industry hubs, or innovation labs for young entrepreneurs could help sustain its productive spirit. Crucially, this transformation process should be guided by a governance model involving local communities, academic institutions, and public agencies to ensure that decisions are responsive to societal needs.

The primary objective is to enhance the city's economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Preservation and adaptive reuse strategies, such as maintaining the tree zone, adopting energy-efficient design principles, integrating passive cooling systems, implementing rainwater harvesting, and undertaking ecological landscape interventions, can mitigate environmental impact and enhance site resilience. By adopting this approach, the Sümerbank Ordu–Soybean Factory can be transformed into a sustainable, community-integrated heritage site. Its reactivation as a public space, without compromising historical and symbolic significance, offers a compelling model for harmonizing continuity with innovation. This case serves as a reference for preserving and reinterpreting Republican-era industrial settlements, ensuring that their cultural memory and spatial significance are revitalized through adaptive reuse rooted in collective identity.

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