

From Gated-Community to Gated-Neighbourhood: The Case of a Housing Estate Bank in Mavişehir, Izmir

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Received 2023-10-11; Revised 2024-05-06; Accepted 2024-05-13

ABSTRACT

Gated-communities have appeared as a housing strategy within the capitalist system. This study employs Lefebvre's understanding of spatial production to conceptualize gated-communities as abstract spaces and explore their effects on the built environment, which extends in scale from the individual home to the neighbourhood. The opted methodology for the study is a literature review and critical interpretation of theoretical studies on this field by focusing on the Mavişehir neighbourhood in Izmir. This neighbourhood, with multi-story buildings and villas, attracts senior and upper-middle-income residents seeking security and prestige. The area offers shopping malls, sports centres, schools, and open spaces in addition to gated communities. Investigating the impact on the surroundings of the first resident construction, Mavişehir Emlak Bank Residences, the study explores how the neighbourhood has been transformed into a commodity, fostering a gated-neighbourhood concept that inherently defines the specific patterns of social relations in the city.

Keywords: abstract space, production of space, gated-community, neighbourhood, housing

INTRODUCTION

Cities are constantly evolving, reflecting societal changes and responding to the dynamic needs of their citizens. In this context, the rise of gated communities has emerged as a notable residential development within the evolving landscape of capitalism. Through the valorization of urban space with neoliberal policies, these controlled living spaces, often characterized by restricted access and exclusive amenities, challenge conventional notions of community and commodification of its lifestyle. This study adopts Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith (1991) abstract space conceptualization to unveil the intricate spatial dynamics shaped by capitalist structures as privatized urbanization unfolds. This exploration prompts inquiries into the influence of controlled living spaces on the urban fabric, emphasizing the imperative need for a nuanced understanding of evolving relationships between capitalism, urbanization, and societal structures.

Within the ambit of this study, a critical problem is delineated: the transformative influence of gated communities on nature and the surrounding built environment, transforming it into a commodified entity. Focused on the Housing Estate Bank in Mavişehir, İzmir, this research delves into how gated communities, viewed as abstract spaces (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991), reshape near urban environments as gated neighborhoods, propelled by intentional institutional changes. Mavişehir serves as a sample area that illustrates the transition from social housing production to commercial housing production.

How does the evolution of gated communities as commercial housing production, initiated from the social housing production understanding of Housing Estate banks at the individual scale (micro), extend its influence to encompass neighborhood boundaries on macro scale, employing abstract space as a tool? To what extent does this transformation from a gated community to a gated-neighbourhood, as exemplified by the Housing Estate Bank in Mavişehir, shape the development of the urban environment?

The methodology for this study entails conducting a literature review, and critically interpreting theoretical studies within this field,

with a specific focus on the case study of the Mavişehir neighborhood in İzmir. Consequently, this research elucidates the process of transitioning from mass housing to gated communities, and from community to neighborhood, within the Türkiye context, using Mavişehir Housing Estate Bank as the illustrative example.

Despite an extensive body of literature on gated communities, there exists a notable gap in understanding the nuanced transition from mass housing to gated communities and gated neighborhoods, particularly within the Türkiye context. The intersection of neoliberal policies, abstract space conceptualization, and the intentional change of institutions like the Housing Estate Bank remains underexplored, necessitating focused research to express this specific trajectory in urban development. This study seeks to address this literature gap by examining the transformative process in Mavişehir, İzmir to elucidate the evolution of gated communities in a changing urban landscape influenced by sociopolitical dynamics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Production of Space: Gated-Communities

Contextual Framework: Growth of Gated-Communities

In the contemporary discourse on urban housing studies shaped by neoliberal policies, gated communities have emerged as a prominent form of residential development. Defined by secured perimeters, controlled access points, and exclusive amenities, they offer a controlled living environment, prioritizing privacy, safety, and exclusivity. Gated communities eliminate spontaneous everyday life experiences in already-designed environments, embodying various layers such as physical boundaries (Blakely & Snyder, 1997), fortification (Salah & Ayad, 2018), uniformity (Alvarez-Rivadulla, 2007), social segregation (Atkinson et al, 2005; Atkinson & Blandy, 2005; Furlog & Torres, 2000; Roitman, 2005), security (Low, 2001; Sanchez et al., 2005), status, and lifestyle (Sanchez et al.,

2005). Several definitions highlight different concepts to conceptualize gated-communities, which are typically characterized as enclosed zones in urban environments, secured by physical barriers, regulating access to maintain security (Baycan-Levent & Gülümser, 2005; Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002; Low, 2003).

The concept of gated communities introduces a division between inside and outside, creating physical, social, and economic segregation among different socio-economic groups (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Caldeira, 2000; Low, 2008). This physical separation challenges the ideals of openness, heterogeneity, accessibility, and equality in the urban environment (Caldeira, 2000). Homogeneity within gated communities is achieved through high land prices and maintenance fees, catering to the middle and upper classes. This spatial organization brings homogeneous social groups closer, encouraging circulation and interaction within common areas (Roitman, 2010). However, the resulting isolation from the broader urban context raises questions about the impact of gated communities, transitioning urban spaces from homes to commodities at both the individual and neighborhood scales.

Gated-communities have experienced a significant surge in popularity in the Global South since the early 2000s, in contrast to their relatively uncommon prevalence in the Global North (Qureshi, 2023). While it might be tempting to make broad generalizations about their development in the Global South, acknowledging the inherent diversity across different countries and regions is crucial. Various factors drive formation of these gated communities from one context to another, reflecting distinct geographical characteristics. The literature attributes “living choice in gated communities” (Blakely & Snyder, 1997) in the Global South to diverse reasons: increased violence and crime in Brazil, Egypt and Pakistan (Bint-e-Waheed & Nadeem, 2020; Caldeira, 2000; Touman, 2002), security concerns in South Africa and Nigeria (Jurgens & Gnad, 2002; Makinde, 2020), growth of the upper-middle class in Indonesia (Leisch, 2002), social and cultural transformations in China (Miao, 2003), urban and cultural politics in Türkiye (Genis, 2007), and lifestyle in Pakistan and Africa (Bandauko et al., 2022; Nazeer & Yousuf, 2021). Conversely, in the Global North,

gated-communities primarily emerge to uphold a desire for prestige linked to summer houses and affluent living (Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004).

Metropolises in Türkiye have witnessed significant rural-to-urban migration due to rapid industrial expansion, resulting in heightened demand for housing among the incoming working class. This has led to increased numbers of informal settlements and changing apartment patterns (Genis, 2007). The housing landscape underwent a substantial transformation in the late 1980s, driven by a collaboration between the middle and upper classes, governmental actors, and major developers. This shift introduced decentralization, providing upper and middle-class groups with diverse housing options. Apartment buildings now dominate, having replaced single-family structures with master-planned communities (Sayar & Süer, 2006), contributing to a more divided and complex city layout where middle-class projects segregate abandoned working-class housing complexes from the city center. This shift reflects changing social classes and a trend toward a more fragmented urban layout that encompasses various production types, such as individual, state-supported, private sector-supported, and cooperative-supported housing (Temiz, 2009). Accordingly, neoliberal housing policies have led to a reduction in public housing initiatives and social housing programs. This reduction has created space for capitalist housing production to play a more dominant role in meeting the housing needs of the population, often resulting in the development of gated communities, luxury housing, and exclusive projects catering to higher-income groups.

In Türkiye, mass housing, a model initiated with public support to address housing deficits, involves Türkiye Housing Estate Bank, the Mass Housing Administration, cooperatives, and private companies (Alkışer & Yürekli, 2004). The evolution of housing initiatives in Türkiye began in the 1950s during a period of rapid industrialization. It gained momentum through mass housing production in the 1980s, and ultimately transitioned toward the development of gated communities in the 2000s (Sayar & Süer, 2006).

Gated- Communities as Abstract Spaces

The elucidation of Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith's (1991) concept of abstract space is imperative in this research, as it delves into analysis of the transformation from a gated-community to a gated-neighborhood. Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, elucidated the shift from absolute space—characterized in pre-capitalist societies by religious and political attributes—to abstract space, coinciding with the advent of capitalist production relations. The economic system, predicated on private ownership and profit-driven operation, prompts the conceptualization of space as the production of space. Production, in the narrow sense, involves crafting commodities through repetitive labor gestures, distinguishing them from work (*oeuvre*) (Stanek, 2011), which neglects the immaterial aspect of production. In the broader sense, production encompasses material and immaterial facets, entailing means, objectives, instruments, goods, and needs. Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith (1991) invokes the broader concept production, positing that “(social) space is a (social) product,” and the narrower concept when asserting that “social space per se is at once work and product” (Stanek, 2011).

Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith (1991) contends that capitalism and neoliberalism give rise to the production of abstract space within the realm of commodities, guided by the dynamics of money and the political state. Consequently, this engenders production and reproduction of space, facilitating capitalist processes of production, distribution, and consumption. In this context, space is transformed into a commodity—one that can be produced, distributed, and consumed—thereby physically reflecting capitalist ideology and political order.

Considering Lefebvre's conceptualization of production space, gated-communities transmute the tangible and literal meaning of a house—associated with needs for shelter and emotional attachment—into a commodity that is both produced and consumed. The gated-community, marked by physical enclosures and controlled access, becomes segregated and abstracted from the surrounding urban fabric. As these spatial productions detach from their environmental context, they contribute to a deficit

of community within neighborhoods by hindering communication (Zhao & Zhang, 2018).

Consequently, space gradually purifies from the social relations of individuals through abstraction, leading to the isolation of the community from the everyday life of the rest of the city and its diversities. A critical juncture in this discourse is the shift of personal experiences to the pre-coded environment dictated by decision-makers. From this perspective, the gated-community metamorphoses into a commodity produced by the realms of urban development and real estate, compromising the efficacy of spatial resettlement practices, as they are confined within the boundaries set by decision-makers, rendering them inadequate (Rogers & Wilmsen, 2019).

In the creation of gated communities, the capitalist endeavors to construct abstract spaces are made evident through homogeneity, fragmentation, and hierarchical structures (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991). With the emergence of the gated community concept, neighborhoods formed by the differentiation of individual houses give way to housing communities with a homogeneous distribution. Individuals experience everyday life within the gated community, accepting opportunities offered by the community such as sports facilities, children's play areas, etc. Even at this stage, living conditions specific to a household are valid within the gated community, which is defined by physical boundaries, initiating a shift in scale. The initial stage of this transition can also be explained by the government's shift from a managerial to an entrepreneurial position, wherein the state includes society (Crot, 2006).

The internal homogenization within gated communities leads to outward fragmentation and hierarchy. Initially, the enclosed area is separated from the surrounding environment, initiating fragmentation. This area is then evaluated hierarchically, and seen as superior, consequently increasing the exchange value within the community, reflecting capitalist production (Butler, 2012; Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991). This impacts the concept of home, indicating changes. Prior to the introduction of neoliberal policies, the places people defined as 'home' had specific geographical features, e.g., certain neighborhoods or the seaside. However, following the 1980s, this concept was progressively defined by different criteria, such

as the society to which one belonged or who one's neighbor was. In other words, codes such as the location of the house were prominent in addition to economic factors, social conditions, and geographical conditions such as proximity to the center.

The changes executed in response to neoliberal policies in Türkiye within the framework of abstraction of the living environment also demonstrate the framework's effects in the urban transformation process. It is characterized by different models: the transformation of identified risky buildings, the creation of reserved building areas for future construction, and revitalization to meet modern living standards (Kesikli & Durak, 2023). However, the commodification of housing driven by neoliberalism has significantly impacted production and market dynamics (Güven, 2022). The neoliberal influence on state intervention in housing production has prompted radical structural reforms in urban governance, with a notable emphasis on market-driven policies. The implementation of urban transformation projects in Türkiye has been a hallmark of the neoliberal approach to housing, influencing local communities and altering the urban landscape. Unfortunately, the social implications of these policies include issues such as social polarization, gentrification, and the displacement of the urban poor, highlighting the complex interplay between branded housing projects, state involvement in urban development, and the broader implementation of transformative initiatives with lasting consequences for housing and urban development in Türkiye (Kesikli & Durak, 2023; Serin et al., 2020).

In conclusion, gated communities serve as tangible embodiments of spaces transformed to align with specific economic and social demands. This contribution adds complexity to the dynamics of contemporary urbanization, generating exclusive, controlled, and marketable living environments. The urban space created within gated-communities is not solely confined to being gated; it is also navigated. The proposed spatial organization within urban spaces guides residents and their lifestyles in particular directions. Gated-communities, conceptualized as abstract spaces, establish a direct relationship with the representation of spaces, referencing the capitalist system through their symbolic meaning. The representation of abstract space is crafted,

conceptualized, and abstracted by hegemony, produced through the inclusion of ideology, power, and knowledge.

From Gated Community to Gated Neighborhood

The gated community establishes physical and social boundaries, extending the scale from the individual house to the community and neighborhood, prompting inquiries into the scale of gated communities in urban studies. Although the terms "gated-community" and "gated-neighborhood" are often used interchangeably in the literature, this study emphasizes their subtle distinction. Specifically, the gated-community describes an enclosed residential development characterized by physical barriers, controlled access points, and shared amenities, while the gated-neighborhood refers to the extension and integration with the urban fabric of the gated-community. Additionally, despite the gated community concept deviating from the neighborhood's essence due to reduced environmental interaction (Zhao & Zhang, 2018), it can be suggested that its internal reflection, pursuit of status, and efforts to extend its space outward resemble the traits of a gated neighborhood. With the emergence of the gated community concept, neighborhoods formed by the differentiation of individual houses give way to housing communities with a homogeneous distribution.

The design understanding of standardization becoming visible just after the homogenization causes the spreading of Lefebvrian abstract space towards its near environment. Parallel to this, it is clear that a gated-community has a sprawling character throughout its neighborhood, signifying physical expansion and social influence beyond its physical borders. In other words, its presence in the urban fabric has spatial and social impacts of neoliberal politics on the surrounding neighborhood. The characteristics and features of the gated community exist not only within its gates but affect the wider neighborhood. For instance, a gated-community may bring economic changes, such as increased property values and the development of commercial areas to cater to residents' needs. This may lead to improvement

of infrastructures and services such as upgraded roads, utility services, and public facilities.

The designation of certain forms and concepts on the neighborhood scale brings privatized urbanization (Álvarez-Rivadulla, 2007). As Crot (2006) stated during the process of territorial restructuring, the effect on urban planning of political and economic decisions taking place within certain borders becomes evident. Regarding the uniformity of standardization, in a design where the place of each piece is clear, the points where the city changes become more evident. However, while the borders are sharper in the gated-community, on the neighborhood scale, with respect to the extension of its effect, borders become invisible.

All in all, gated communities and their sprawl as gated neighborhoods have emerged as homogeneous designs, and the density of standard apartment blocks or shanty towns that still exist around them reveals residential polarization in the wider environment (Furlong & Torres, 2000 as cited in Crot, 2006). In the gated communities that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of neoliberal policies, polarization continued with blurred borders, but sharp distinctions have begun to emerge today. Design codes are gradually being developed, and instead of short-term gated communities, those that can spread in the long run are starting to take place. In these instances, the border is supported by physical formations such as highways, parks, and geographical factors. Overall, the notion that a gated community has a broad character through its neighborhood suggests that its influence extends beyond the physical limits of its walls, affecting the economic, social, cultural, and infrastructure aspects of the wider area in which it is situated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Housing Estate Bank

With the advent of industrialization in the 1950s, the housing problem arising from rapid population growth was acknowledged to be a social issue, prompting solutions supported by legal frameworks such as build-sell, cooperative housing, and mass housing. The surge in mass

housing production during the 1970s is attributed to this recognition. In Türkiye, mass housing production, a model supported by public entities like the Türkiye Housing Estate Bank, Mass Housing Administration, cooperatives, and private companies, has been a significant undertaking (Alkışer & Yürekli, 2004).

The Türkiye Housing Estate Bank has undergone three notable instances of title alteration concerning its affairs, occurring in 1926, 1946, and 1998, respectively. Initially established in 1926 as the Housing Estate and Orphans' Bank, the institution aimed to address societal and spatial issues, providing credit in exchange for immovable property, handling exchange matters, and addressing the issue of orphans. In 1946, in response to housing issues stemming from rapid urbanization and industrialization, it changed its name to Türkiye Housing Estate Credit Bank to engage in housing production and sales, offer affordable housing loans, develop construction technology and equipment, and support cooperatives (Güvenç & Işık, 1999). The bank facilitated loans of up to 75% of the house cost with a 5% interest rate for those facing housing problems, leading to the construction of neighborhoods for 20,000 people primarily catering to low and middle-income groups (Koç, 1981).

Following the mass housing law enactment in 1981, the Türkiye Housing Estate Bank shifted its focus, in 1984, from social housing construction to commercial housing; its name was changed to Türkiye Housing Estate Bank in 1988. Subsequently, housing credits became predominantly accessible to upper-income groups, making Housing Estate Bank housing units the most expensive in their respective areas and contributing to rising housing prices. Post-1998, the bank ceased its housing construction activities due to the government's withdrawal from domestic and international housing endeavors. It continued solely in the commercial banking sector, concentrating on providing individual housing loans. The decision to close the Housing Estate Bank in 2001 was reversed in 2019 when it resumed operations as the Türkiye Housing Estate Participation Bank (Güvenç & Işık, 1999; Koç, 1981; Sayar & Süer, 2006).

Legal (Law No. 2985 on Mass Housing) and institutional (Mass Housing Administration) regulations, financing (Mass Housing Fund and

bank loans), and housing demand organizations (including cooperatives, the development of urban cooperatives, and private entrepreneurs) have played significant roles in the proliferation of mass housing production in İzmir (Koç, 1981).

Location of Mavişehir Neighborhood

Mavişehir neighborhood, situated in Karşıyaka township north of İzmir Bay, is bordered by Atakent to the east, Gediz Plain to the west, İzmir–Manisa–Ankara railway triage area to the north and northwest, and İzmir Gulf to the south (Figure 1).

The Gediz Delta, west of Mavişehir, holds the designation of an International Important Bird Area. İzmir's Gediz Delta, recognized as one of Turkey's largest coastal wetlands and a habitat for flamingos, has been proposed for UNESCO World Natural Heritage status by the Nature Association (Doğa Derneği, n.d.). Meeting

UNESCO World Natural Heritage Criteria, the area features unique natural beauty, important physiographic features, and significance in the development of land, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, and living communities, along with habitats containing endangered species. Additionally, 14,900 ha of the total area has been declared a Ramsar site (Aydoğan, 2005).

Named after the first housing complex built in the late 1990s, Mavişehir comprises a mix of housing complexes, including high-rise apartment blocks and villas (Koc, 1981). Tascı (1989) emphasizes its objective of providing modern living and working environments for affluent individuals. Substantial changes occurred over time, with new regulations in 2004 permitting construction on protected lands of the Gediz Delta, and the completion of a ring road accelerating development. Consequently, Mavişehir has become distinct from the rest of Karşıyaka due to the emergence of new residential communities (Orhun & Orhun, 2006).

Figure 1

The Location of Mavişehir Neighborhood in Karşıyaka, İzmir



Note. Adapted from *Map of Mavişehir* by Google Earth, 2023. Copyright 2023 by Google LLC.

Housing Estate Bank Residences in İzmir

The housing production dynamics observed in Türkiye are reflected in İzmir, given the city's significant population growth through migration for four decades beginning in the 1950s, and particularly in the 1980s (Aydoğan, 2005). The Housing Estate Bank in İzmir was introduced by the government as a way to address the housing shortage. In addition to mass housing projects in Gazimir, the bank's housing initiatives extended to Bostanlı, Ataşehir, and Mavişehir in Karşıyaka.

Following the reclamation of semi-swampy lands on the old Gediz Delta, the bank's housing applications began with Housing Estate Bostanlı Residences in 1969 (Özkaban, 2014). The Housing Estate Bank's housing initiatives continued with the Atakent mass housing project. However, what had initially served middle-income groups gradually shifted to cater to upper-income groups in subsequent years (Özkaban, 2014). Notably, Housing Estate Atakent (6th Stage, 1986-1989) and the Venezia Site (1988) mark the transition from social housing production to commercial housing production for different income groups.

According to the İzmir Metropolitan Master Plan, the Mavişehir neighborhood was designated construction of high-rise blocks. The boundaries, relative area sizes, and building blocks of the Mavişehir Project, the last project funded by the Bank, were outlined in the Master Plan. The Mavişehir Project aimed to create an urban area to address contemporary city life needs, encompassing residential, commercial, cultural, recreational, green sports areas, and service zones (Aydoğan, 2005). The project was executed in four stages: Mavişehir I (high-rises and villas), Mavişehir II (high-rises), Mavişehir III (villas), and Mavişehir IV.

During the construction of Mavişehir's first stage in the 1990s, the stream flowing between the blocks was covered with concrete in the name of rehabilitation. It was adorned with ponds, pools, fountains, and bridges to enhance the value of apartments for sale (Avcan, 2020). However, this has led to environmental hazards, as solid waste from heavy rainfall and plankton from sea tides negatively impact the area. In the winter of 2020, heavy rainfall caused flooding in Mavişehir, affecting many vehicles and prompting warnings from İzmir Metropolitan Municipality firefighters (Haberler, 2020) (Figure 2).

Figure 2

The Effect of Heavy Rain in Mavişehir Neighborhood



Note. The effect of heavy rain in Mavişehir Neighborhood in 2023. From *The Flood Disaster in İzmir was viewed from the air*, by Journal.ist, 2023 (<https://www.gzt.com/foto-galeri/jurnalist/izmirdeki-sel-felaketi-havadan-goruntulendi-2024688>). Copyright 2023 by Journal.ist.

Transition of Neighborhood: The Impact of Mavişehir Housing Estate Bank Residences

The study analyzes the transformation of Mavişehir region in İzmir into a gated neighborhood, starting from the construction of Mavişehir Housing Estate Bank Residentials. This endeavor seeks to reveal how the influence of gated communities extends to the neighborhood scale. After the establishment of the Housing Estate Bank Residentials in Mavişehir, several gated communities catering to middle- and upper-income classes were developed. Consequently, the study area has evolved into a neighborhood characterized by multiple gated communities, indicating an extension from the household to the neighborhood scale, fostering homogeneity among resident groups.

The initial development of Housing Estate Bank Residentials in Mavişehir has transformed the region, with subsequent luxury housing projects featuring high-rise blocks and villas (Figure 3). It has spurred economic, socio-cultural, recreational, and infrastructural developments in response to the desires and needs of new users. Beyond an increase in the number of residential units, the neighborhood has witnessed the integration of public and commercial amenities, including parks, sports facilities and shopping centers, and thematic spaces. Aulia and Suryani (2022) asserted that, in the case of Indonesia, the lifestyle and pattern of the activities demonstrated changes with the appearance of legally privatized public spaces in the context of the involvement of private developers in the housing sector. Consequently, the incorporation of luxury amenities such as retail and themed communal spaces within the confines of gated communities serves to delineate a more structured recreational milieu for residents. The interplay between residential enclaves and their proximate surroundings exerts a discernible influence on the overall valuation trajectory of the neighborhood over time (Tochaiwat & Pultawee, 2024).

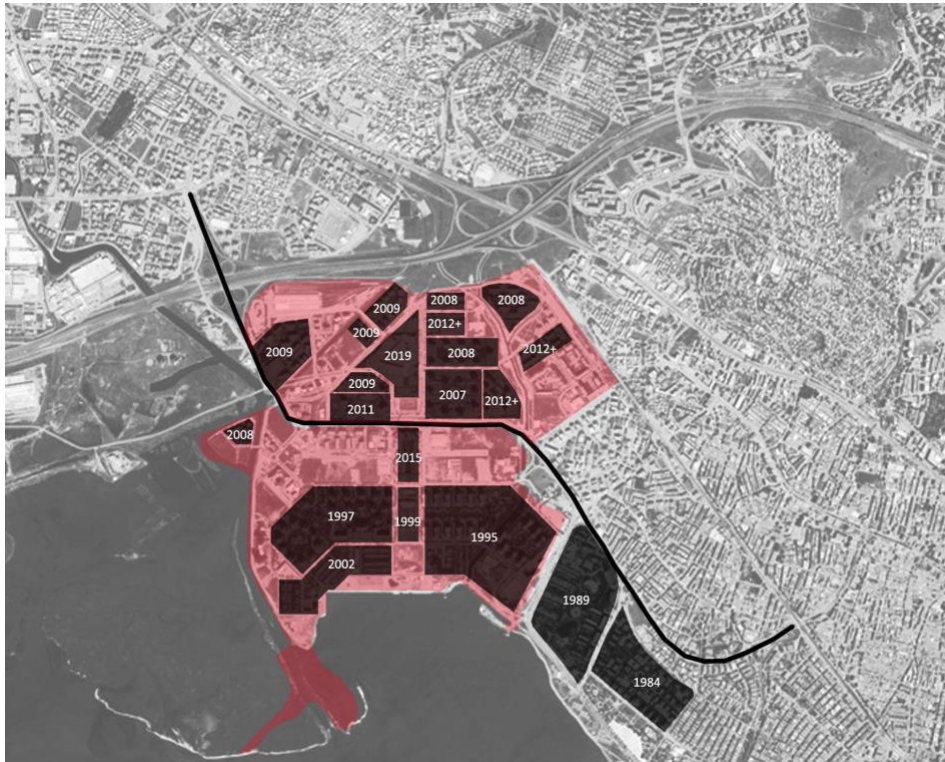
The examination of shopping malls in the study area is essential due to the clustering concept embodied in their spatial arrangement.

Specifically, Mavişehir Neighborhood hosts two malls, Egepark and Mavibahçe (established in 1999 and 2015, respectively), while Yalı Neighborhood accommodates Hilltown Karşıyaka, inaugurated in 2019. These malls play a crucial role in uniting fragmented gated communities, acting as neighborhood gathering places due to their open green spaces and commercial amenities. The adjacent positioning of these malls (Figure 4) results from logistical, economic, and consumer-oriented considerations. This layout fosters synergy, prompting cross-shopping where consumers visit multiple malls in a single trip. Furthermore, clustering enhances the appeal of the area for both residents and visitors, infusing vibrancy into the retail environment. The core rationale behind this arrangement is the optimization of resources, the creation of shopping hubs, expanded consumer choices, and an overall enhanced appeal for shoppers and tenants. Intuitively, the establishment of shopping malls in regions with convenient transportation and high socio-economic development potential often leads to their side-by-side construction. This is because the selection of location and accessibility significantly influences the success and sustainability of mall-related economic activities.

Opera İzmir, which serves as an opera house and performing arts center, is a noteworthy structure in the study area that is potentially linked to the identity fostered by the Housing Estate Bank in the neighborhood. The foundation of the building was laid in 2018; however, due to administrative complications, construction is not yet complete (İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, 2018). Upon completion, Opera İzmir will stand as Turkey's first opera house, acting as a cultural hub that brings together works from various art forms and artists worldwide, enhancing İzmir's visibility on both the national and international stages. Furthermore, in response to the typical urban fabric of the modern fringe, characterized by high-rise residential fabric of blocks that have severed connections with the coastline and the city both morphologically and programmatically, the Opera House seeks to re-establish the relationship between the city and the coast through a unified surface movement (Arkiv, n.d.). This perspective aligns with the promotion of the gated neighborhood concept within the vicinity of gated communities.

Figure 3

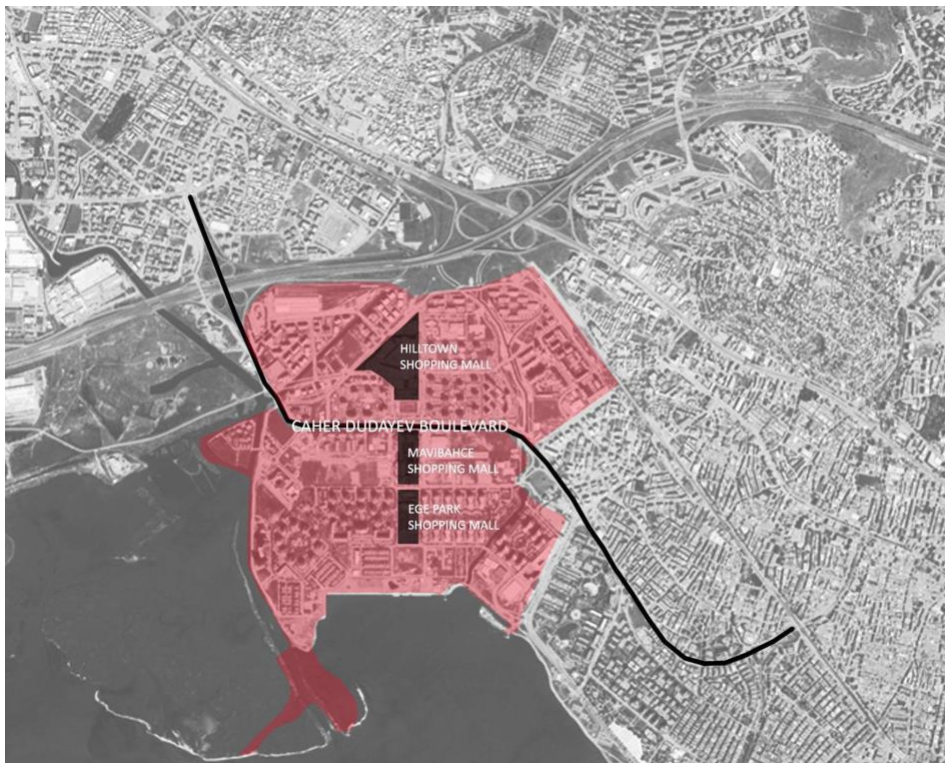
Construction Years of The Buildings in the Mavişehir Neighborhood and Surrounds



Note. Adapted from *Map of Mavişehir* by Google Earth, 2023. Copyright 2023 by Google LLC.

Figure 4

The Shopping Malls in the Study Area



Note. Adapted from *Map of Mavişehir* by Google Earth, 2023. Copyright 2023 by Google LLC.

Lastly, the suburban train line, known as IZBAN, plays a pivotal role in shaping the development of the Mavişehir Gated-Neighborhood. The railway, situated above ground in Mavişehir, physically divides the two sides of the adjacent neighborhood, rendering them inaccessible. As a crucial element connecting the city center and periphery, the IZBAN rail transportation system creates spatial separation at the neighborhood scale (Engin et al., 2021). The authors contend that the railway establishes "a visible, felt, and tangible border." Access between the two sides of the railway at Mavişehir station is facilitated by an overpass. It can be argued that the railway mimics the walls or fences of gated communities on the neighborhood scale, delineating the border of the gated-neighborhood to the north and northwest of the focus area.

All in all, following the establishment of Mavişehir Housing Estate Bank Residences, Mavişehir Neighborhood has evolved into a gated-neighborhood. This means that these residences have had a transformative effect by extending beyond their neighborhood; the concept of gated-community resonates at the neighborhood level. Then, to what extent does this development of the Mavişehir Neighborhood impact its immediate neighbors?

The Impact of Mavişehir Neighborhood on Its Surrounding Region

The transformation of the Mavişehir region into a gated-neighborhood illustrates the intersection of Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith (1991) concept of abstract space and urban development. The conceptualization of abstract space as a capitalist-driven production of space is pertinent to understanding the transformation of the Mavişehir neighborhood. Spaces once associated with shelter and emotional attachment have evolved into commodities. The rest of this section reflects on the production and reproduction of abstract space under the effect of capitalist neoliberal policies on the case area.

Mavişehir Neighborhood is linked to Yalı Neighborhood via Caher Dudayev Boulevard and to Atakent Neighborhood through Fazıl Say Street. Both the boulevard and the street are

multi-lane roads, with a tram line running along the boulevard. Despite their interaction being facilitated by vehicular roads, the neighborhoods have developed mutually. In this context, the influence of the gated-community, Mavişehir Housing Estate Bank Residences, extends beyond its neighborhood. The transformation in the Mavişehir neighborhood impacts the Yalı neighborhood, even transcending the physical barrier of Caher Dudayev Boulevard, which plays a separative role between these two areas (Figure 5). This urban transformation is mirrored in the Mavişehir Neighborhood. Although the boulevard acts as a physical and administrative divider, this separation is not felt in everyday life. In the developed region influenced by Mavişehir Neighborhood, gated-communities consist of multi-story blocks, office buildings, educational institutions, and a shopping mall. Many gated-communities in Yalı Neighborhood, incorporate the term 'Mavişehir' in their names, such as Albayrak Mavişehir Site, Park Yaşam Mavişehir Houses, Soyak Mavişehir Optimus, etc. This suggests an intention to establish a presence in the Mavişehir region. According to the site analysis, there appears to be a time gap in the urban transformation of the areas both north and south of Caher Dudayev Boulevard. While the development of the Mavişehir neighborhood commenced with the construction of Emlak Bank Residences in the 1990s, the area located north of Caher Dudayev Boulevard began its development around 2008. The time gap may be attributed to the Type Zoning Regulation of Planned Areas introduced in 2008, which shifted focus from the maximum height to the maximum number of floors. Consequently, existing structures were demolished, making way for higher buildings. Accordingly, tracing Lefebvre's concepts of homogeneity, fragmentation, and hierarchy, the settlement pattern in Mavişehir initially underwent heterogenization, but later evolved into homogenized gated communities. This transformation led to outward fragmentation, with the enclosed area assuming a hierarchical and superior status within the neighborhood.

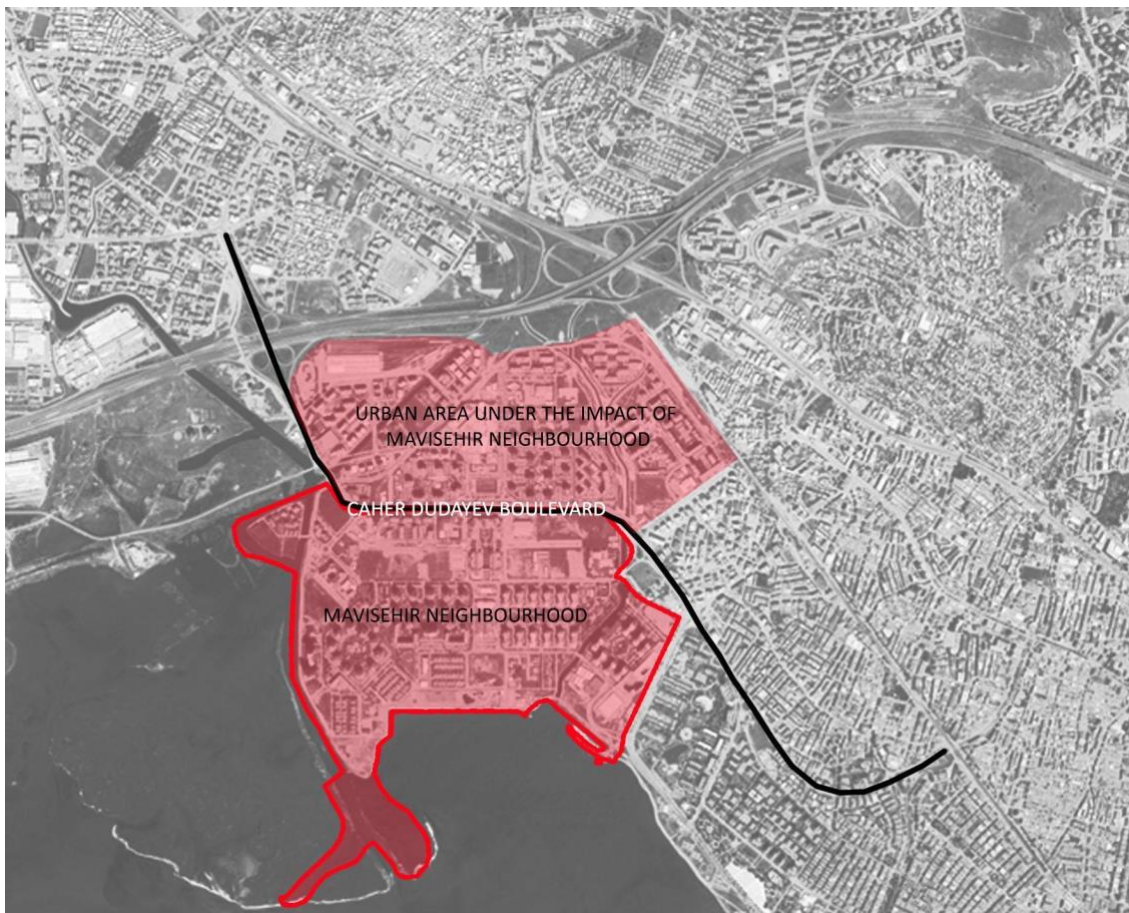
The urban area of the Yalı neighborhood, which developed under the influence of the Mavişehir neighborhood, is isolated from the rest of the neighborhood by Ahmet Kemal Baysak Boulevard (Figure 6). It is important to emphasize how the boulevard segregates the neighborhood

both physically and socially. This separation is also observable at eye level, with one side of the boulevard featuring luxury gated-communities for upper-income groups, while the other side has multi-story apartment blocks catering to middle-income groups. The urban transformation of Yalı Neighborhood began with the demolition of squatter houses. The displaced residents were

relocated to TOKİ residences in the Zübeyda Hanım Neighborhood (İdel, 2016). Following this relocation of some residents from the Yalı Neighborhood, the urban area underwent rapid development, and the previously swampy areas near the sea became one of the most popular settlements in Karşıyaka.

Figure 5

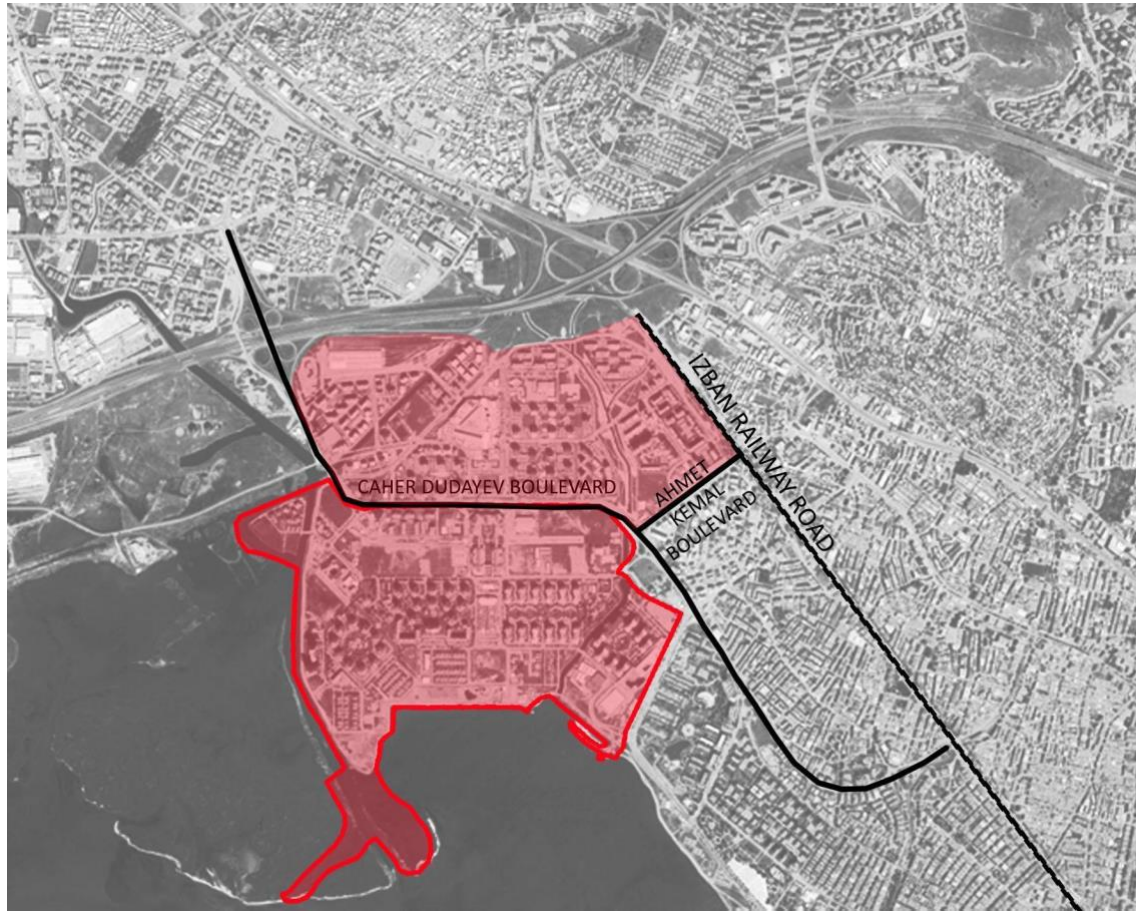
The Area in Yalı Neighborhood That is Under the Impact of the Mavişehir Neighborhood



Note. Adapted from *Map of Mavişehir* by Google Earth, 2023. Copyright 2023 by Google LLC.

Figure 6

The Area in Yalı Neighborhood That is not Under the Impact Of the Mavişehir Neighborhood



Note. Adapted from *Map of Mavişehir* by Google Earth, 2023. Copyright 2023 by Google LLC.

Displaced residents, compelled to leave their homes due to redevelopment projects, may encounter difficulties in securing affordable housing in Mavişehir or its vicinity, disrupting their established social connections and daily routines (Atay Kaya, 2021; Demirli et al., 2015). The rise in property values associated with urban transformation poses a particular challenge for low-income families, potentially forcing them out of Mavişehir and complicating their search for affordable housing alternatives. Local businesses, especially small enterprises, may struggle to cope with escalating rents or to adapt to evolving commercial landscapes, leading to negative consequences for local entrepreneurs (Atay Kaya, 2021). The cultural identity of Mavişehir risks erosion, with the transformation potentially resulting in the loss of historical or cultural elements, especially if traditional establishments are replaced by more commercialized options (Atay Kaya, 2021).

Additionally, social cohesion within the community may suffer, as the displacement of long-time residents and the influx of new residents with different backgrounds and lifestyles may disrupt established social networks (Altınörs Çırak & Yörür, 2006; Demirli et al., 2015). Urban planners and policymakers should prioritize inclusive development strategies, considering the well-being and interests of all Mavişehir residents and mitigation of potential negative consequences for these vulnerable groups. As Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith (1991) contends, failure to act would result in a purification of space from social relations, leading to the isolation of the community from the broader urban environment.

In the adjacent neighborhood of Atakent, the considerations regarding privacy and accessibility differ for Atakent Venedik Sitesi, Atakent Efes Evleri, and Atakent Bergama Evleri, which were constructed before the Mavişehir

Housing Estate Bank Residences. These gated-communities are surrounded by open green spaces as well as some restaurants and cafes. Additionally, the ground floors of Atakent Bergama Evleri comprise various commercial spaces, such as a hairdresser, beauty salon, grocery store, and a real estate agency. All these spaces, including the green areas between buildings, are open to everyone, including those from outside the gated-communities. On the map, the pedestrian paths between these places are labeled as Atakent Site Internal Roads. While accessible on foot, these paths are in proximity to vehicle traffic. The practice of "un-gating the gated community" (Zhao & Zou, 2017) increases the number of people around the gated-communities at various times of the day and night, enhancing the public nature of these spaces.

To sum up, the construction of Mavişehir Housing Estate Bank Residentials has not only transformed its immediate neighborhood, Mavişehir, but also the adjacent neighborhood, Yalı. This transformation is consistent with Lefebvre's concept of an abstract space in which the perception and characteristics of gated communities are transformed by capitalist ideologies. However, the perception of gated-community in Atakent Neighborhood differs from that in Mavişehir Neighborhood by allowing public entrance. Consequently, these semi-public spaces act as transition areas for the gated neighborhood. In terms of Yalı Neighborhood, the extension of the gated community understanding persists through the construction of fully-secured new gated-communities and residential development under gentrification with traditional apartment blocks. Demonstrating how capitalist transformations continue to shape and redefine spatial perceptions and practices in urban environments, the persistence of gated community principles in Yalı Neighborhood is in line with Lefebvorean ideology.

CONCLUSION

The conceptual ground of the Mavişehir region's transformation demonstrates the influence of neoliberal housing commodification on urban development trends in Türkiye. In the process,

structural reforms in urban space driven by free-market policies have impacted the communities with the consequences of Lefebvorean abstract space, such as the capitalist production of space, and social polarization. In this respect, gated communities can be evaluated as visible evidence of capitalism in contemporary urbanization.

The symbolic meaning conveyed by gated communities reflects representation of abstract space, created by hegemony through its inclusion of ideology, power and knowledge. In this regard, the neighborhood is not only physically gated but also navigated. The reflection of the spatial and social changes with the strategies of capitalism on housing development and production approaches have appeared as gated-communities in cities. The prevalence of gated-communities may be explained by the restructuring of the economy in the 1970s and 1980s in light of the rapid relocation of capitalism.

The focus shifts in the concept of production of space from the individual engagement to the abstract space, which transforms into a status concept imposed upon the community and is produced by hegemony within specified rules. This situation constitutes a development that disregards spontaneous production, leaning more towards artificial creation. Additionally, the emergence of the gated-community concept in the 1980s was initially confined to the gated physical space surrounding residentials and proposed open spaces. However, in today's conditions, it extends the defined boundaries towards the gated-neighborhood by eliminating spatial and social constraints. At this stage, the reduction in social and spatial differences has become unavoidable, aiming for a more homogeneous configuration. Within the scope of this study, it is valuable to emphasize the concept of abstract space and the reductionist approach applied in this context. Mavişehir region, as a case area, demonstrates the aim of this theory.

The impact of Housing Estate Bank practices in Mavişehir and Yalı Neighborhoods, particularly in the construction of luxury residences and villas, is that it has transformed the urban area from a social housing concept into commercial housing that symbolizes status. Despite the physical and administrative separation, the influence of the

bank's practices creates a seamless integration between the two neighborhoods in everyday life. Additional applications, such as side-by-side shopping malls, Halk Park, thematic parks, and Opera İzmir, contribute to the region's desirability, increasing its overall value.

In conclusion, the transformation process of the Mavişehir region from gated-communities to gated-neighborhood introduces the effect of spreading in the urban space under the ideas of capitalist ideologies and neoliberal policies. In further studies that delve deeper into this concept, analyzing the intricate development process of gated communities across diverse cultural and political landscapes is imperative. Beyond merely observing the differential production of space in abstract manners regarding housing estate transformations, it is essential to dissect how the integration of public and private endeavors influences the economic, social, and cultural interactions that unfold during this transformative process. Such an exploration holds the promise of unraveling the multifaceted pathways that shape the overarching narrative of gated communities. Ultimately, the agents and agencies, such as governmental decisions, commercial bodies, and individual institutions, that opt to produce abstract space could cause the change in physical forms of the space, privateness of social class, need for security, and framed social space. Moreover, within the Turkish context, a unique opportunity exists to delve into the transformation of residential landscapes developed under the title of the Housing Estate Bank, not only in İzmir but also across other cities. This inquiry promises to illuminate the expanding social and spatial boundaries with contextual properties while unraveling the nuanced interplay of local factors within the broader national framework.

DISCLOSURES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The initial version of this paper was produced under the scope of AR 548-Living Space: Exploring the Urban graduate course conducted at İzmir Institute of Technology. We sincerely thank the instructor of the course, Assoc. Dr. Tonguç Akiş for his support.

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