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Suburban development and networks of mobility : sites in Izmir, Turkey

Suburban Development and Networks of Mobility: *Sites*[1] in Izmir, Turkey

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Abstract

In this paper we examine the tensions between the city and the town with a focus on the processes through which new forms of suburbia are produced near Izmir, the third largest city in Turkey. Through a historical analysis, we illustrate how rapid urbanisation, networks of transportation, and lifestyle choices have encouraged the movement of urban elites from the city to the countryside, leading to a rapid rise in high-end gated communities called sites near Urla, a small town on the Izmir-Cesme expressway.

New Suburbia

Suburbia in popular discourse is understood as a low-density residential district outside the territories of the main city. Literature on suburbia has been abundant since the boom in North American suburban developments during the post-war period. Such work has examined various socio-political and politico-economic aspects of suburban development including socio-spatial segregation and its impacts on urbanisation. Wright's (2001) and Hayden's (2004) insightful work on the American suburb identifies various factors such as taxation benefits, zoning laws, transportation networks, changes in construction techniques, as well as the restructuring of families and lifestyle changes as contributors to the explosion of suburban development. Much of this literature has also focussed on the gendering of suburbia and the city as women's and men's spaces respectively (Rothblatt and Sprague 1979; Weisman 1992; Hayden 2004). Hayden particularly examines the gendered effects of suburban development through its split between 'home' and 'work' and the impacts this had on reinforcing ideologies of race and class. Such literature however, has a strong 'western' bias, particularly North American, but also increasingly European. Yet with the global flow of ideas, of consumer goods and of people, similar developments are increasingly visible in 'non-western' countries such as India, China, and Turkey. They occur under very different socio-political and economic contexts and produce very different social and physical realities. Yet there has been reluctance among scholars to study them since there is a notion that suburban developments are essentially 'imports' from the west.

Suburbs have been around since the fourteenth century but their unprecedented expansion in western (and non-western) cities is more common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. King (2004, p98) suggests that this is due to a 'capitalist conceptualisation of property, free markets in land, developments in transportation, the growth in the size of cities' but also the use of space as a system of social and economic stratification. Suburbia is now associated with the image of a detached house with a garden, packaged with the lifestyle that it offers to its residents. The architectural experience within a suburb is that of monotonous repetition- of plot sizes, street patterns, and house designs.

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The demographic structure of the suburbs is understood as one of middle-class nuclear families with children, who are essentially daily commuters to the city. Yet this image of the suburb owes more to the American and European experience and less to that of other 'non-western' cities. In cities such as Beijing, Delhi, and Izmir, the residential form of the buildings and the international context in which they are shaped constructs suburbia as another form of globalisation (King 2004). The suburban experience is very different in each context, with both the form and the residents shaped by an intersection between global and local forces. Indeed, Duncan and Duncan's (2004) recent work on the American suburb also illustrates that unlike earlier studies where suburban developments were studied as the antithesis of the city, contemporary suburbia have to be understood through their tenuous connections with the city, its regions, and the wider global scale.

The contemporary suburb is a physical manifestation of modernity which Taylor (1999) calls 'consumer modernity' that has replaced 'classic' modernity. Since the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, modernity has been the cornerstone of class identification. The incorporation of western lifestyles was part of the republican reforms which were represented through the 'villafication' (King 2004) of the modern home in 1930s Turkey. These villas, built in the 'cubic style' and 'celebrated for their closeness to nature, sunlight, and healthy living' (Bozdogan, 2001, 225) led to their rapid spread and popularity among the middle classes. This was accompanied by an increasing infiltration of consumerism among higher social classes. The upper middle class in Turkey used their own practices and consumer objects to 'classify and differentiate' (Bourdieu 1984) themselves as citizens of a modern nation through such aesthetic devices.

A luxury house in the countryside is 'a positional good, a mark of distinction' (Ayata, 2002, p60) and a signifier of class mobility. In Istanbul, the move to suburbs, especially to detached villas in a garden, was a class signifier, where residents left the cultural and physical dirt of the metropolitan areas for a healthier, more 'civil' environment (Oncu, 1997). In Ankara, such developments gained momentum in the 1990s and was led by middle-class ideologies (Ayata, 2002). In Izmir the move to suburbia has occurred since the 1950s but their recent popularity amongst upper middle-class, middle-aged couples, has been facilitated by the construction of the Izmir-Cesme expressway. These examples suggest that 'particular histories and cultures construct particular spaces' (King 2004, 107). Yet while suburban developments in Ankara and Istanbul have only recently become the focus of research (Ayata, 2002; Oncu, 1997), there is relatively less focus on Izmir, the third largest city in Turkey. The *sites* or high-end suburban gated developments incorporating luxury houses with gardens in Izmir are visible markers of what it means to be upper middle-class in Turkey. They are constructed through particular urban histories, planning legislations, transport networks, and lifestyle choices among specific social groups. Their rise in recent years however, has largely been undocumented.

This paper is an analysis of the processes through which *sites* have mushroomed around Izmir, particularly near the small town of Urla. During the summer of 2005, we conducted a research on three *sites* along the Izmir-Cesme expressway, near the town of Urla. Our objective was to unravel the processes through which the *sites* have become a popular choice for upper class Izmir residents. We searched in Urla and Izmir libraries for archival material, conducted interviews of *site* residents, as well as architects, realtors, developers and residents of Urla town to understand the connections between the *sites*, Izmir, Urla, and the wider region. The first part of this paper is based on the archival material and gives a historical outline of Izmir and Urla and the socio-political and economic circumstances that have shaped their transport networks and residential developments. It examines the social,

political, and physical tensions that have always existed between the big city and the small town and the socio-spatial factors that influence the urban elites of Izmir to 'escape' to the countryside around Urla. The second part of this paper is based on our interviews in and observations of the sites and gives a detailed analysis of the rise and rise of *sites* around Urla.

Urban development in Izmir

Figure 1: Map of Izmir and surroundings.
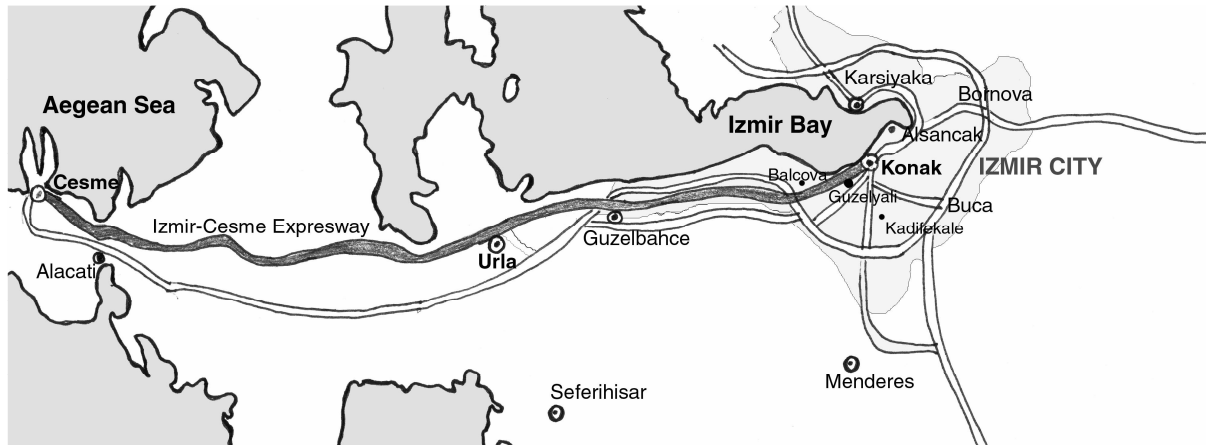
Surrounding the Bay of Izmir on the Aegean Sea is located the third largest city in Turkey, Izmir (Ancient Smyrna). It is an old, cosmopolitan port-town, which attracted the attention of many civilisations ever since its foundation. Its oldest remains date back to 3000 BC. It was re-founded by Alexander in 333BC on the Pagos Mountain (contemporary Kadifekale). Since Hellenic times, the Roman and Byzantine Empires had ruled the area, until the 11th century capture of the town by Caka Bey of the Seljuks. This first 'Turkish' contact was short-lived and soon after Byzantines re-captured the city. During the 13th century, while still under Byzantine rule, Izmir became a Venetian and Genoese colony. Izmir came under Turkish rule in the 14th century and became an Ottoman Province in the 15th century. During the Ottoman rule, the city continued its multi-ethnic, multi religious demography with districts to the south east of the Bay, contemporary Kadifekale, Konak, and Alsancak, forming its main components.

During the 16th century, Izmir was a major trade centre, the final station of Anatolian caravan routes. Following the late 16th century Ottoman victories in the Mediterranean (the Capture of Cyprus, and Rhodes), Izmir's importance as a port city increased and by the 17th century the city became an important Eastern Mediterranean port-city with French, British, Venetian, and Dutch consulates. Towards the end of the 18th century, the city expanded to surrounding villages. Among these Buca and Bornova (see Urban development in Izmir

Figure **1**), accommodated summer houses for the Levantine families, while Karsiyaka (ancient Cordelia) began to develop as residential districts.

During Hellenic times therefore, the boundaries of Izmir which was founded to the north-east of the bay slowly spread up the slopes towards Kadifekale. Izmir remained confined within Kadifekale, Konak, and Alsancak till the 18th century, when new developments emerged inlands and across from the bay.

Transport Networks

The 19th century brought socio-economic changes to Izmir. Firstly, the 1838 Ottoman-British Trade Pact, led to a boom in foreign trade, which resulted in the opening of 11 consulates in Izmir. Secondly, a new port was opened on Pasaport. This, along with a railway system that was introduced in the city, connected the south eastern regions with nearby towns such as Urla to the city centre. This encouraged an expansion of residential districts towards the southeast and south of the bay (contemporary Goztepe).

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, led to the occupation of Izmir by the Greek army in 1919, which lasted for three years. Following the Greek occupation, many Turkish families moved to the centre of Anatolia, which had escaped the occupation of Allied forces. At the end of the war, nearly 150,000 Greek residents also left the city (Arkon, 1989, 11). After the foundation of Turkish Republic in October 1923, nearly 400,000 Turks from the Balkans and Aegean Islands moved into Anatolia and a majority settled in the Izmir region (especially in Buca and Bornova and nearby towns like Urla) (Arkon, 1989, 11; Karadag, 2000, 55). Most of the immigrants were placed in the empty houses of the emigrating Greek families. Moreover, new villages were formed to house those who could not be accommodated in existing buildings.

In the early Republican period therefore, Izmir became part of government's attempts to create morphological counterparts of a young, 'modern' nation through architecture and urban planning. Although the construction projects in Izmir were not as extensive as those undertaken in Ankara around the same time, the 'new', 'modern' Izmir designed by René Dangér in 1925 had wide streets, urban plazas, and city parks (Guner, 2005, 4; Karadag, 2000, 51). In 1930, the city municipality borders were extended to include Karsiyaka, Bayrakli, and Turan on the north and northeast of the bay. Alsancak (near Pasaport) was still the commercial and recreational centre of the city with high-rise apartment buildings for well-to-do families.

Single family houses v/s Urban apartments

Since the 1930s, the single-family house in a garden had represented healthy living and hygiene, and its modernist, cubist, lines had become the insignia of its contemporaneity. The 'urban apartment building', notwithstanding its cubist design vocabulary, sometimes faced opposition when compared to the single-family dwelling in a garden, especially due to its perceived inability to provide a 'healthy' environment.

Despite public opinion against it, apartment buildings took over the Izmir and the Turkish urban scene within 30 years. The apartment buildings that began in the 1930s and continued till 1960s were commonly referred to as 'rental houses' (*kira evleri*) and were owned by a single person with the units rented out for revenue (Bozdogan, 2001). In Izmir, their height was limited to four storeys. In 1950s, Alsancak, Goztepe, Guzelyali, and Karsiyaka (especially on the coastline) had residences for high-income groups, whereas old districts in Karsiyaka and Hatay housed the middle-income groups. It was around this time that an apartment with a view to the Izmir bay became a desirable location. Therefore it is not surprising that locations alongside the bay such as Alsancak, Karsiyaka, and Goztepe housed the 'elite of the city,' while a majority of the low-income groups were located in Konak and its environs on the hills. This was a common phenomenon in many coastal towns and cities where 'finer distinctions of financial worth and symbolic hierarchy' (Oncu, 1997, p65) were defined by proximity to the sea. The spatial separation and the nature of the differences between the sea-view apartments of the urban elite and the peripheral 'disorder' of the

gecekondus (squatter settlements) became, as in Istanbul, 'emblematic of the cultural divide between a peasant way of life and 'genuine' urbanism, between white-collar occupations and manual work' (Oncu, 1997, p65).

In 1965 however, the Legislation on Flat Ownership3 (Kat Mulkiyeti Kanunu) had a significant impact on the social and cultural geography of Izmir. This legislation allowed the tenure of the apartment dwellings to change from single-owner, four-storey rental houses into high-rise apartment blocks with individual unit ownership. This led to demolition of the four storey apartment blocks and rapid construction of 11-12 storey blocks in their place along the Izmir bay. While this meant that a larger number of people were able to live near the sea, it also meant an increase in population in the city along with its related problems of traffic congestion and pollution. Moreover the taller apartment blocks cut off the breeze from the Aegean to the inner-city areas, which changed the skyline and the micro climate of Izmir irrevocably. As we shall see later, it were these concerns that created the perfect conditions for the urban elite to leave the city in search of 'cleaner' environments.

The rapid urbanization during the 1960s was reinforced through the 1972 master plan of Izmir. In this, industrial development in the city was designated on the North-South axis, whereas residential development was proposed on the East-West axis. Especially, Narlidere-Seferihisar-Urla axis (located to the south of the bay from east to west) developed as the main location for second residence vacation homes. By 1980s, Cesme, at the tip of this axis became the main tourist attraction with five star hotels, pensiones for foreign tourists, and summer houses for local tourists. Within twenty years, both southern and northern coastlines of the Izmir peninsula were crowded with summer homes.

However, during the 1980s, the urban policies in Izmir continued to reflect struggles to remove the *gecekondus* from the city. As one of such strategies, the Mass Housing Legislature[4] was passed in 1984. The aim was to provide affordable houses for low and middle-income groups that triggered large-scale housing projects on former government lands on the outskirts of Izmir. But these, like many others, were primarily for middle-income groups. Although, the legislation did not reach its targeted population, it nevertheless enlivened a relatively stagnant construction industry. Private groups and companies benefiting from the same legislature purchased and developed government land for new residences or *sites* for middle and upper-middle class residents. These were of two types; both emerged on the outer fringes of metropolitan areas: the first one, *site* as they were called did exist since the 1970s, as a group of apartment blocks, generally gated, each with their own administration responsible for the maintenance of its amenities, like gardens, parking lots, and sports facilities. The second type was composed of detached villas, located further away from the city, on the countryside, and is a more recent version which has emerged since the 1990s. Although they later gained the '*site*' denomination in general usage, they were referred to as 'country homes' with Turkish-English composite names such as Kemer-Country. The rise of the new *sites* as 'detached villas' in the 1990s that marked the defaming of the apartment blocks that had dominated the urban scene since 1960s, is associated with the construction of the Izmir-Cesme Expressway.

Izmir-Cesme Expressway

During the late 1980s, the news of an Expressway to connect Izmir to Cesme, led to land speculation along the proposed route (Velibeyoglu, 2004, 82). This was to replace the old highway that linked the small towns and villages in the Izmir province with a high speed expressway that would connect Izmir to Cesme. This was strategic not just because of the

obvious advantages it provided to the residents of Izmir who owned summer cottages in Cesme but was also intended to develop tourism along the Izmir peninsula with the towns that the Expressway connected.

As mentioned before, discussions of environmental unsuitability of the Izmir's location were abundant, which led to discourses of the 'unhealthy' city. The frequency of earthquakes and the associated increase in construction costs combined with the risks of living in high-rise apartments in an earthquake zone meant that many residents were keen to move out of Izmir into the countryside. When the expressway was built, it became faster and easier to travel to and from the countryside to Izmir. It were those groups who could afford to live outside the city, and those who could afford the commuting expenses (car and petrol prices) that considered moving out into the wider region that the expressway opened up for them. They then had to find a suitable location where they could thrive in their quest for 'healthy lifestyles'.

The construction of the expressway started in 1990, and in July 1992, the Izmir-Urla phase of the highway was completed. While speculation was rife in the region, the land speculators in Urla ranged from large construction firms based in Ankara to local architects based in Izmir who bought off agricultural land from the farmers in Urla[5]. While this was occurring all along the speculated route of the Expressway, the town of Urla held a particular attraction for residential development. It is the region around Urla where most of the *sites* flourished.

Urla as the 'healthy town'

The town of Urla is located 38 kilometres west of Izmir. Urla, like many settlements in the Aegean region has a very rich history. Its earliest remains date back to the Neolithic period and are sometimes referred to as Prehistoric Clazomenae. Clazomenae was an important centre for olive oil, wine, and garum (a type of sauce) production, and these products were sent to Black Sea, Italy, and Egypt. During the 15th century, Urla was an agricultural centre, referred to as Bazar-i Urla (The bazaar of Urla). Following the increased importance of Cesme as a port city, Urla gained importance as commercial centre. It is during the 16th century that the Greek population in Urla increased dramatically, following the migration of Greek population from nearby Aegean islands of Chios. The Greeks brought their expertise on vineries, and soon Urla became an important centre for grape and raisin production. Around this time Urla also had the densest olive groves in the region, with a high olive oil and soap production.

Following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and the exchange of Greek and Turkish population between the two nations, many immigrants were accommodated in the vacant Greek houses in Urla[6]. The new residents of Urla did not continue with grape production, but instead started tobacco production, an activity they were already engaged in while living in the Balkans. Hence, until the end of 1980s, when the news concerning the construction of Izmir-Cesme Expressway became public, Urla was a small agricultural town. Tourism, which is an important industry in the peninsula, had not affected Urla, except for the development of the summer houses along the coastline nearby.

The opening of Izmir-Cesme Expressway brought major changes to Urla. There was an increase in the daily tourist activities (arriving in the morning and leaving at night). Since the route of the Expressway had damaged the already established greenhouses in the Balcova district, these activities moved mainly to Urla, increasing the number of small scale 'clean' industrial establishments along the highway. But the most significant change around Urla,

was the boom in *sites* built on agricultural land designated for olive and grape production.

The choice of Urla, not Cesme, for the development of these new communities was three fold: Firstly, Urla was closer to Izmir, making the commute to the city that much easier. Secondly, Cesme was already built up with summer houses, creating a similar, crowded, urban environment especially during the summer months. Thirdly, many potential clients for these communities already owned summer residences in Cesme, and Urla was halfway between the Izmir and this coastal resort. In addition, Urla was the first region in Turkey to develop a Local Agenda 21[7], in compliance with the agreements at the 1992 Rio Summit to promote sustainable development. Urla was thus perceived as the 'cleaner and healthier' option among many urban elites in Izmir who wanted to leave the 'polluted' city and escape to the countryside. Urla thus became the focus and the site of frenzied building activity during the late 90s which has continued unabated since then. It is in Urla that a majority of the *sites* in the Izmir Peninsula are now located.

What made the construction on these agricultural and forest lands near the Expressway possible was the denomination of a 'special yield zone' in the revised plans of Urla. These zones were in four categories, allowing built-up area of up to 7% in these areas. Later, 'partial plans'[8] (Velibeyoglu, 2000) were prepared by the Urla Municipality. The advice of up to five governmental institutions was asked for each partial plan and the building permit was given right after the implementation approval of the partial plan by the municipality (Velibeyoglu, 2004). The aim of these plans was to respond to growth pressures from the Izmir-Cesme Expressway, by preserving agricultural land while providing space for low-density development (Velibeyoglu, 2004). However, the plans did not reach their aim due to the problems in its implementation[9]. In the special yield zones developed by partial plan therefore, instead of low-density farm-houses on agricultural lands, high-end gated communities developed for the urban elite of Izmir.

The *Sites*

The *sites* along the Izmir-Cesme expressway are gated, luxury, single-family detached houses scattered around Urla. The characteristic features of the Urla sites are social and spatial separation. On one hand, they are physically removed from both the city (Izmir) with which the residents still maintain economic, leisure, and social connections, and the town (Urla) whose agricultural land they have appropriated for expansion. This separation has been made possible by the route of the expressway, which along with the older Izmir-Cesme route has isolated Urla from its neighbouring agricultural land where the sites have developed. On the other hand, the houses within the *sites* are separated from each other through site planning. The luxury single-family houses are placed along the contours of the land to maximise views of the Aegean Sea and minimise views of other developments. While in the Izmir apartments, views were maximised by vertically stacking up apartments, in the Urla sites, views are maximised through visual and physical separation of one house from the other. This two-fold separation therefore, is not just restricted to material landscapes but extends to intangible landscapes (through the framing of views).

In his work on new forms of Chinese and Indian suburbanization, King (2004) discusses how not just spaces but even discourses reflect this separation. Ayata (2002) suggests that the '*site* population as a community of select and civilized people' is defined by what they exclude- 'city life and its vulgar mix of the lower classes, the new rich and the Islamists' (p.30). Moreover in Izmir, the opening up of the NATO base for Allied Land Forces Southeastern Europe in 1952, following the Turkish membership to NATO has meant an increasing

migration of American and European military personnel and their families into this city each year. The NATO officials and their families bring with them not just consumer goods from other parts of the world, but also expectations of lifestyle. The architecture of the *sites* with their detached luxury houses with gardens set in gated communities with swimming pools, gyms, and views of the surrounding landscape are situated at specific intersections of these global flows and networks of people, ideas, and goods. Their 'familiar' rather than unusual designs leads to the reinforcement and representation of 'the global myth of the ideal home as the embodiment of a middle-class way of life' (Oncu, 1997, p61).

Figure 2: Photograph of one *site* house.

The *site* is a complex representation of a desire for change. Here, the cultural capital brought in with the urban 'pioneers' from Izmir are solidified through particular architectural interventions, beginning with the site planning to the interior design of these gated developments. The site planning reflects typical suburban housing development, which are based on subdividing a large area into small plots of individually owned houses with gardens. There are variations to this where in another *site* each house has a swimming pool. The *sites* themselves are gated and have 24-hour security. They also have common leisure facilities such as swimming pool, club house and so on. The houses themselves are built on large sized plots (between 250 to 1000 sqm). In the high-end sites, they incorporate formal and informal living and dining areas, kitchen, and more than two bedrooms, all with dressing and ensuite facilities. Some houses also have personal gyms and swimming pools. But the defining feature of all the houses are their framed views of the landscape, with the most exclusive houses enjoying expansive views of the Aegean Sea and the Izmir peninsula. It is mostly from the living, dining, and bedrooms (in that order of priority) that such views are accessed, either through large glazed windows, or patios, or wide verandas. This dynamic relationship of the interior of these houses with the surrounding landscape relies on the strategic positioning of the *sites* on the slopes of the hills around Urla. The houses provide the framework through which 'nature' can be appreciated; their arrangement on hill, their plans, and even their interior design reflect their role as the porous boundary between the inside and the outside, between the urban life and country setting.

Figure 3: Framed views of the landscape.

Urla town provides a 'reference point' for the architecture of these sites; local materials are the building blocks for the houses, and architects of the sites make references to the colours, window surrounds, quoins, pediments, and other specific architectural elements found in the traditional houses in Urla. While these houses have fallen into disrepair in Urla, they are 'preserved' through their postmodern counterparts in the *site* houses. The cultural politics of such architectural aesthetics is significant because it translates into cultural capital for those who occupy these multi-million dollar houses. Countryside landscape and ancient tradition are both internalised through the architecture of these houses which gives its residents collective social capital that they reinforce through the territorial privileges of a gated community. Access into these developments is highly restricted through gated security posts, 24-hour surveillance, and high walls. But this social capital is also reinforced through material objects such as the lavishness of interior decorations, in the number and make of cars, and in the variety of consumer goods. Moreover, Urla is not just a physical reference but also a social reference through its re-definition as a resource for domestic maids for the *site* houses. Increasingly, Urla has also become the supplier of 'fresh' agricultural produce to the *sites*. Izmir, in the paradox of its physical distance and temporal proximity, is no longer the site of everyday life but re-negotiated solely as the site of economic consumption. Residents from the *sites* drive to Izmir for work, to meet friends, and for consumer-oriented shopping[10]. Urla and its surrounding landscape have now become the context of their daily domestic experiences. Such changes to domestic and economic consumption patterns are therefore specific to the differences between Urla as an 'unrefined' province against Izmir as the 'cultured' metropolis.

The sites should then be understood through their relationships with both the city of Izmir and with the town of Urla. While one is the big city that lacks 'quality of life' yet still holds its attraction for those who leave, the other is the small town that lacks the conveniences of the big city but presents a pristine landscape to be enjoyed solely through visual consumption. Most significantly, the previous experiences of a 'variable place of residence' (urban apartment in Izmir and summer home in Cesme) have now been 'fixed' through a relocation into the *site*, because this allows residents to access both the city and the coast at any time. The *sites* then are built on the basis of a common desire, a common belief, and common

values of developing an aesthetic medium through which to represent a romantic return to the countryside without ever totally leaving the city. Living in these *sites* means occupying a space in between these two contrasting and sometimes contradictory lifestyle choices of the big city and the small town. The separation from the city is never complete and total integration with the town is never desired.

The production of the *site* illustrates the tenuous relationships between the city, its regions, their landscapes, and the transportation network that connects these spaces. This destabilises the notion of city as a bounded object and suggests a concept of cities as 'sites of extension' (Amin and Thrift, 2002). This extension can be physical through the creation of transport corridors but can also be metaphorical in the way that access to social and cultural capital relies on architectural realities. The sites allow its residents to access different spaces (work, leisure, food, entertainment) for different needs, at different times and in different locations (Izmir, Urla, *site*, Cesme). The presence of the Izmir-Cesme expressway has made them mobile and created possibilities of connecting these 'spatially stretched' economic and social relations that no longer occur in the same place. The rise of sites in the Izmir province has to be understood in the background of an idea of mobility- of ideas, of lifestyles, and of commodities. Mobility that disperses communities across physical space but still connects them through a set of values, beliefs, practices, and experiences, described as 'distanciated modes of belonging' (Amin and Thrift, 2002).

Final Reflections

This paper has developed a historical analysis of Izmir's relationship with its regions, specifically the town of Urla, through an examination of the socio-cultural politics of urban development during historic and contemporary periods. This paper ends with a discussion of the *sites*, high-end gated residential developments that have mushroomed around Urla since the construction of the Izmir-Cesme Expressway. The *sites* are characterised by socio-spatial separation both from the City, the town, and from each other. The houses in the *sites* are defined by the views that they frame of the surrounding landscape and the luxury of the spaces that the residents enjoy. The location, design, and occupation of the *sites* provide the framework through which 'nature' can be appreciated and distinguishes its residents from both the 'uncultured' town of Urla and the 'polluted' city of Izmir.

This paper reveals that patterns and habits of movement between a city and its regions are based on accumulated choices and necessities, such as preferred routes, preferred exchanges, and preferred economies (be they social, cultural, or economic). Movements between Izmir and its regions are connected by networks and flows of commodities, cultures, and lifestyles. The historical analysis of Izmir and Urla shows that such networks have existed since the earliest settlements but the unprecedented growth of *sites* in recent years reveals how these provide opportunities for reinforcing the ideologies of a given social class through its spatial practices and using landscapes as material and symbolic signifiers of this class position. The rise of *sites* therefore reflect not just the effect of cultural supply, the density of cultural capital, and opportunities of cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984), but also the effects of 'unequal spatial distribution' (Harvey 1989) of capital and their owners.

Acknowledgements

2005. Our heartfelt gratitude also goes to the officers at Urla Town Hall for making archival material available, as well as the *site* residents for answering our questions.

Notes

[1] The Turkish word *site* is pronounced as the French word *cité*. *Site* has been italicised throughout this paper to avoid confusion with the English word site.

[3] Legislation on Flat Ownership (1965) made it possible to own portions of a building. This "allowed freehold tenure in independent parts of buildings, describing the obligations of the shareholders in the management of buildings" (Balamir, and Payner, 2001).

[4] For more information on the Mass Housing Law and the Mass Housing Fund created to provide state subsidy to housing projects please refer Suher (2004).

[5] This information is based on our interviews with residents of Urla

[6] The rebuilding activity in Urla started in 1923 and was supported by a government institution called *Imar ve Iskan Vekaleti,* which was formed to resolve the settlement problems of the immigrants from the Balkans (Ari, 1995, 62).

[7] Agenda 21 is a program supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility-Small Scale Projects Program (GEF-SGF) (Urla Development Foundation of Urla Municipality, 1996).

[8] Refers to the plans prepared for the areas outside the existing plan boundaries.

[9] Velibeyoglu states two major problems regarding the implementation of the partial plans: First one is the regarding permissions given to buildings that do not comply with the density regulations. The second one is a gap in regulating building activity, which did not limit number of houses per parcel.

[10] This information is based on our interviews with residents.

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