A STUDY ON URBAN POLITICAL DISCOURSES: ENTREPRENEURIAL
URBANISM AND OPPOSITION IN THE CASE OF BASMANE ÇUKURU IN
İZMİR

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON URBAN POLITICAL DISCOURSES: ENTREPRENEURIAL URBANISM AND OPPOSITION IN THE CASE OF BASMANE ÇUKURU IN İZMİR

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Local authorities, real estate developers, investors, professional chambers, non-governmental organizations and the general public. These are the leading 'urban actors' who play specific roles in the (re)production of today's urban environments. Especially in the processes that involve contradictory urban development initiatives, the conflicting discourses of the actors and their effects on the course of the events become apparent. In the current urban atmosphere where the adopted urban policies aimed at inward investment, growth and capital accumulation; local authorities' attempts of legitimization provoke new urban oppositions. In order to provide an insight into the roles that influential actors play in urban management and opposition during controversial urban processes, this thesis focuses on an unsolved urban problem for decades: "Basmane Pit" in İzmir. This piece of land, located in the city center, was privatized in the past and subject to several architectural competitions, lawsuits and plan revisions; it has once again settled on the city's agenda with the acquisition by a major construction firm. Despite the firm's efforts to obtain public consent and the local government's support for the project, the professional chambers and non-governmental organizations opposed to it, arguing that it is neither compatible with its immediate environment nor with the city planning principles and

bylaws. The present thesis argues that the new high-rise project proposed for Basmane Pit exemplify the use of architectural images in the branding strategies shaped by the demands of competitive global market, which points to the changing social and economic priorities. The aim of the thesis is to analyze the particularities of the entrepreneurial urban development policies and their implication in the consolidation of an urban opposition. In this study, an analysis of the discourses was done to critically evaluate the multilayered processes that this urban case has been through over the years. This thesis also brings an exploration of the ways in which the media influence urban processes as a platform both for the promotion/legitimization and opposition/organization. As a result of the case study, a discussion was raised on whether the urban controversies could be viewed as opportunities for democracy in the urban public realm.

Keywords: Urban politics, Urban opposition, Entrepreneurial urbanism, City branding, Discursive practices, Media representations, Architectural images

ÖZ

KENTSEL POLİTİK SÖYLEMLER ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA: BASMANE ÇUKURU, İZMİR ÖRNEĞİNDE GİRİŞİMCİ ŞEHİRCİLİK VE MUHALEFET

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Yerel otoriteler, gayrimenkul geliştiriciler, yatırımcılar, meslek odaları, sivil toplum kuruluşları ve halk günümüz kentsel ortamlarının (yeniden) üretiminde belirli roller oynayan baş "kentsel aktörler" dir. Özellikle tartışmalı kentsel gelişim inisiyatiflerini içeren süreçlerde, aktörlerin çatışan söylemleri ve olayların seyri üzerine olan etkileri belirgin hale gelmektedir. İçe yatırım, büyüme ve sermaye birikimine yönelik kentsel politikaların benimsendiği mevcut ortamda, yerel yetkililerin meşrulaştırma girişimleri kentteki sosyal ve politik dinamikleri yeniden düzenlemekte ve kalkınma girişimlerine karşı yeni kentsel mücadeleleri ortaya çıkartmaktadır. Bu tez, nüfuz sahibi aktörlerin çelişkili kentsel süreçlerde kentsel yönetim ve muhalefette oynadıkları rollere bir bakış açısı kazandırmak üzere, onlarca yıldır çözülmemiş bir kentsel sorun alanı olan Basmane Çukuru üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Geçmişte özelleştirilen ve çeşitli mimari yarışma, plan revizyonu ve davalara konu olan bu tartışmalı alan, büyük bir inşaat firmasının devreye girmesiyle bir kez daha kentin gündemine oturmuştur. Ancak, firmanın kamu onayı alma çabalarına ve yerel yönetimin projeye desteğine rağmen, meslek odaları ve sivil toplum örgütleri, projenin mevcut çevre ve planlama ilkeleri ve yasaları ile uyumlu olmadığını savunarak bir kentsel mücadele başlatmıştır. Tez, Basmane Çukuru için önerilen yeni yüksek bina

projesine yönelik mimari imgelerin, rekabetçi küresel pazarın talepleri tarafından şekillendirilen kentsel gelişime yönelik markalaştırma stratejilerinin ve dolayısıyla değişen sosyal ve ekonomik öncelikleri ortaya koyan bir örnek olarak incelemektedir. Tezin amacı, Basmane Çukuru örneği üzerinden girişimci kent politikalarının özelliklerini ve kentsel muhalefet üzerindeki etkilerini irdelemektir. Bu çalışmada, seçilen alanın yıllar içinde geçirdiği çok katmanlı süreçleri ve çeşitli aktörler tarafından gerçekleştirilen eylemleri eleştirel olarak değerlendirmek üzere, söylem analizi yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Tez ayrıca, medyanın hem tanıtım/meşrulaştırma hem de muhalefet/örgütlenme ortamı olarak kentsel süreçleri nasıl etkilediğini araştırmıştır. Örnek olay incelemesi sonucunda, kentsel çatışmaların ve çelişkili süreçlerin kentsel alanda demokrasiye yönelik fırsatlar olarak görülüp görülemeyeceği konusunda bir tartışma yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kentsel politika, Kentsel muhalefet, Girişimci şehircilik, Şehir markalaşması, Söylemsel pratikler, Medya temsilleri, Mimari imgeler

To my parents, Vildan and Selçuk Çalıkoğlu

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

AWTC	Aegean World Trade Center
CBD	Central Business District
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESHOT	Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Bus Management
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
IMPB	Izmir Metropolitan Planning Bureau
IKBNIP	Izmir Urban Region Master Development Plan
IYKMNIP	Izmir New City Center Master Development Plan
IZFAS	Izmir Fair Organization
JDP	Justice and Democracy Party
MMI	Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir
MP	Motherland Party
MSA	Municipal Service Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
REIT	Real Estate Investment Trust
RPP	Republican People's Party
SDIF	Savings Deposit Insurance Fund
SPA	Special Project Area
TCDD	Turkish State Railways
TT	Tourism-Trade
TPP	True Path Party
UCTEA	Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Today entrepreneurial practices, such as site-specific urban development projects, are being promoted as 'requirements' of the global era. Projects are often supported with city branding strategies that resort to the visual attractiveness of architectural images. When the eye-catching images of the planned projects, supportive comments made by local authorities and ostentatious advertisements prepared by the developers are disseminated through media; the approval of a segment of the public –who do not have comprehensive knowledge about ethical and social concerns of planning and architecture– is obtained. This type of urban ventures may be prosperous when planned in a region suitable for development within a city where the planning policies are comprehensive and systematic. However, that is not the case when they are as an incremental intervention in the center of a city where the development plans and regulations are being reorganized to the benefit of certain actors. If the civil society is well organized, the emergence of an urban debate around the conflicts of interest is inevitable. To determine the course of events in such controversial cases; the way the local authority manages the situation is as important as the discourses of the investors and opponents who advocate their own perspectives or interests. In this context, both architectural images and the conflicting discourses of different actors can be examined as they are reflected in the media. As a research subject, this thesis proposes a comprehensive exploration on an unsolved case that exemplifies an urban controversy at Basmane in Izmir, Turkey.

1.1. A Controversial Project Proposal at Basmane in Izmir

Towards the end of 2016, people living in Izmir started to share series of posts via their social media accounts, regarding the new project proposals for the urban plot

adjacent to Kültürpark in Izmir. The piece of land known as the "Basmane Pit" (Basmane Çukuru) today, which has remained idle for more than eighteen years despite its central location in the city (Figure 1.1.) and its relation to Kültürpark (Figure 1.2.), was acquired by Folkart Construction firm. The firm initiated a public poll via a website for the selection of the project to be built, amongst the three high-rise mixed-use project proposals. This particular plot, which had been the object of an unsolved controversy, was on the agenda of the media more than ever before. All newspapers shared the new project proposals and announced that the public would choose the winning proposal by an online poll.

Figure 1.1. Location of The Basmane Pit in Izmir.

Source: Produced by the author using the visuals taken from Google Maps.

Figure 1.2. Basmane Pit's proximity to surrounding landmarks.

Source: Produced by the author using the visuals taken from Google Maps.

During the online poll, some locals shared their favorite project proposal through their social media accounts, while others objected to all the three proposals which brought forward high-rise towers with heights that were not previously built in Izmir. The process that followed the announcement of the proposals was controversial in many respects. On the one hand, professional chambers and non–governmental organizations made statements against the project and organized protests; on the other hand, the chairman of the construction company and the local government gave interviews to support the project while discrediting the people opposing to the project.

The plot, which has gone through many different urban processes and has already been criticized by everyone because it is an urban plot that has been transformed into a pond in the city center, came to the agenda of the city once again; this time with its acquisition by Folkart Construction and the launching of their project of erecting towers on this plot. In this thesis, the reason behind the selection of the case of

Basmane Pit is the following: The proposed projects, exemplify the use of branding strategies for urban redevelopment formed by the demands of competitive global market and accordingly changing social and economic concerns. The firm's proposals for the large-scale profit-oriented urban development project, exhibit a newer vision for the urban development through the commodification of the urban texture. In the context of Izmir, this project was promoted by the local government and the developer firm by utilizing entrepreneurial urbanism and city branding discourses to build impressive buildings that attract investment, provide employment, create a new prestigious image and offer a privileged lifestyle to potential residents.

The initial motivation to pursue this study was related to the way in which the contractor firm Folkart Construction has promoted their new project as the "new icon" and "the symbol" of Izmir. If the aim of the firm is to build a structure that will be the symbol of Izmir, it is of great importance to indicate; who will decide the project to be built on this plot that partially belong to the public sector, how the project is functionalized, how it is presented to the public, how much it represents the local identity and image of Izmir, what values the project would add to its environment, and which qualities the project offers to the public. Based on this view, the motivation behind the study was; to critically evaluate the whole process in response to the claim of the firm to build the "new symbol of the city."

1.2. The Statement of the Research Problem

Today, the growth and capital accumulation oriented urban policies are redefining the social and political dynamics in the city in a way that triggers new urban debates around the development initiatives. These entrepreneurial implementations such as site-specific urban development projects of local governments, are being justified as the 'necessities' of the global era where the inter-urban competition for the inward investment became the first priority. The most articulated argument of the project initiators is that, the private sector has the power to decide where to build their projects, therefore the local authorities should be compliant with the demands of the

investors, if not the latter can take their investments to another locality. To this end, local authorities tend to make special agreements with private actors, which often contradict with the public interest. In certain localities where the awareness of the civil society is high, a strong reaction to public-private partnership initiatives that overlook the public needs can be observed. Thus, as a research subject, the projects planned in such legitimation processes could be approached as the media of discursively constructed urban conflicts, allowing a further investigation on the dynamics between current urban politics and opposition.

The urban development projects that are introduced as being 'investor-friendly,' or to create an entirely new image, are often called as 'prestige projects.' However, such projects mostly prioritize the living standards of a segment of the society, while the needs of a larger segment are ignored. As Manuel Castells indicated on his preliminary study on the theory of urban social movements[1], people eventually react to the material forms of economic-based impositions, marginalization and political pressures. The urban conflict that is caused by the introduction of prestige projects within the existing urban context can be examined through the dualities between the discourses of supportive or opposing actors involved in the process.

Therefore, the main research problem of this study is to analyze the characteristics of entrepreneurial urban politics and the formation of an opposition in the case of Basmane development projects in Izmir. The case exemplifies the dualities between deepening entrepreneurial ways of government and growing discontent of the public. Yet, the case of Basmane Pit has its characteristics, in terms of; the unique history of the urban plot along with the processes it has been through, the way in which the investor firm presented and promoted the project proposals, the firm's declaration of the project as the new symbol of Izmir and the differing ways of mobilization of the

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[1] Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots, a Cross–cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. London: Edward Arnold, 1983.

civil society in Izmir. In this thesis study, the effect of the opposition on the creation of an active public realm is particularly examined through the analysis of oppositional discourses.

To establish the scope of the selected case study research, initial assumptions and research questions were formulated. The research premises and questions were deduced by reviewing the process related to Basmane projects, based on the theoretical background of urban politics and movements in Turkey as well as in the world. The framework of this study is based on three initial assumptions as follows:

Assumption 1: Prestige projects are being promoted by influential actors who utilize discourses to gain public consent and legitimize the project and the overall urban process.

Assumption 2: In such controversial processes, the media become an instrument for both the opposition and legitimacy.

Assumption 3: When the controversy is brought to the court, it could effectively resist to the legitimization along with an urban struggle led through public manifestations. These initial assumptions that form the basis for the research, will be evaluated throughout the study. Based on these assumptions, three research questions are formulated as follows:

Question 1: How has the particular urban plot transformed into its current pit form, which processes it has been through over the decades and in what kind of context the new project was introduced?

Question 2: Who were the supporting and opposing actors in the process and which notions were used to reinforce their discourses; what kind of issues and opportunities were defined and who were the targeted audiences?

Question 3: What are the particular roles of local authorities, investors, professional chambers, general public, non-governmental organizations, and professionals such as architects and urban planners in the urban development processes?

Based on the formulated premises and research questions, this study aims to:

o Examine the case that has been defined as a long-standing urban problem through the conflicting discourses of the actors involved.

o Critically evaluate the current urban practices adopted in Turkey through the case of Izmir Basmane development project proposals.

o Analyze the particular relationship between the introduction of prestige projects and the formation of the urban opposition.

o Explore the platforms in which the civil society is mobilized through in the age of technology.

These initial assumptions, research questions and aims constituted the base in the selection of the theoretical framework of the study, as well as to determine the methodology.

1.3. The Method of the Study

This thesis is an analysis of the neoliberal urban development projects of the entrepreneurial city and the current interactions between political, spatial and social transformation of localities on the one hand, and urban oppositions on the other. To develop a detailed study, the notions of neoliberalism, neoliberal urban politics, entrepreneurial urbanism, entrepreneurial urban governance, marketing, city branding, city image, prestige projects, urban mobilization/opposition, neoliberal urban movements, and media practices will be referred to. The theoretical approaches

on these notions by the prominent scholars, David Harvey, Neil Brenner, Tom Hall, Tuna Taşan-Kök, Susan Fainstein, Saskia Sassen, Manuel Castells and Margit Mayer will be introduced.

This study aims to examine the particular ways in which the notions of "entrepreneurial urbanism" and "discourse" operates in the formation and legitimization of urban development and their relation to urban movements. Inarguably, Margit Mayer is one of the most prominent figures analyzing the entrepreneurial ways of governing, along with the social and political changes, led to new conflicts in cities, resulting in the differentiation in urban mobilizations. Mayer, following the theories of Manuel Castells and Henri Lefebvre on urban movements, explores the new types of urban struggle that the current neoliberal practices provoked. Regarding the new ways of resisting, and the new types of urban mobilizations Mayer identifies three dimensions: entrepreneurial urban development projects, the increasing political control of the governments and growing social discontent and polarization.[2] This approach is selected as one of the methodologies to be adopted by this study because all these three aspects defined in Mayer's studies were also observed in the Basmane Pit case study.

Based on Mayer's observations and analyses, this study adopts a methodology that emphasizes the relations between the urban opposition and entrepreneurial practices to identify the dualities between urban development and conflict. This thesis also proposes a detailed examination of the particular roles and actions of the actors involved. To develop a point of view on the present urban opposition in Izmir, the aspects to be examined regarding the urban struggle are given below:

o Which segments of the society constitute the opposing actor groups or organizations (in terms of age range, occupation, social position etc.)

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[2] Margit Mayer, "Social movements in European cities: Transitions from the 1970s to the 1990s," in *Cities in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Arnaldo Bagnasco and Patrick Le Galès, 147-8. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.)

o The specific roles of the opposing actors in the urban mobilization

o What they are against and whom they target?

o In which ways and through which platforms are the opposing actors organized?

o Which strategies and methods they have used to oppose?

o Media representations of the protests

o The general attitude of the actors who support the project towards the opposing actors (their wordings and acts against the opponents.)

Since this study will be analyzing the dialectics between the urban politics and opposition, an analysis on the actors' discourses will be provided. For this specific study, Norman Fairclough's preliminary approach on the Critical Discourse Analysis, Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA) was chosen. In this approach, Fairclough emphasizes the social conflict itself by searching the discourses to find the expressions of conflict as well as the dominance, resistance and differences. DRA is a transdisciplinary research method, it is "bringing disciplines and theories together to address research issues, it sees 'dialogue' between them as a source for the theoretical and methodological development of each of them."[3]

Throughout the process covering the Basmane Pit urban problem, the actors involved have produced discourses from a variety of disciplines such as; political, environmental, social, economic, media, juridical and public discourses. To analyze these discourses, an adaptation of Fairclough's DRA will be used in this study. In this methodology, Fairclough defines four preliminary stages:

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[3] Norman Fairclough, "A dialectical–relational approach to critical discourse analysis in social research," in *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, (2nd Edition London: Routledge, 2013), 231.

Stage 1: Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspects.
Stage 2: Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong.
Stage 3: Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong.
Stage 4: Identify possible ways past the obstacles.[4]

The first three stages will be approached in the theoretical, contextual and case study chapters of the thesis. The present stage will be evaluated in the conclusion chapter. Fairclough further elaborates the four stages into steps, which focus on the textual analysis. He underlines the importance of the semiotic analysis in the critical evaluation of contradictory processes that involve interdisciplinary discourses,

> From a dialectical–relational perspective, economic forces and socio–political institutions *are* in part semiotic, and analysis has to be in part semiotic analysis. The fact that people have cognitive capacities which make them in principle capable of seeing through manipulative intentions and even doing their own political critique (which CDA, far from discounting, presupposes) does not mean that they are generally capable in practice of seeing through the complex dialectical relations between semiotic and non–semiotic elements which constitute the social, political and economic conditions of their lives.[5]

Therefore, to accurately evaluate the processes involving discourses that would affect the public and the public interests such as urban politics, a textual analysis should be carried out, along with the contextual and ideological analyses. Based on Fairclough's argument, a textual analysis is conducted on the discourses of the both sides of the urban problem. For this textual analysis, an adaptation of Fairclough's methodology is developed. In this adaptation, to understand the conflict and explore the representations of this conflict in the supportive and oppositional discourses, the questions below are asked:

o Who are the supportive and opposing actors, how do they relate to this process–directly/indirectly and how are these actors represented through textual sources?

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[4] Norman Fairclough, "A dialectical–relational approach to critical discourse analysis in social research," to appear in: *Methods in Critical Discourse Analysis*, edited by Michael Meyer and Ruth Wodak, (2nd edition Sage 2008), 7.
[5] Ibid., 25.

- o Which discursive strategies have these actors been using?
- o Which notions and concepts were introduced in and/or utilized to strengthen the discourses?
- o What are the existing issues and development opportunities defined in the discourses?
- o What kind of wording and vocabulary are used?
- o What is the preferred writing style in the textual sources (formal/informal, technical etc.)?
- o What are the semiotic aspects regarding the manipulation/legitimation?
- o Who are the targeted audiences?
- o Through which platforms/mechanisms were the discourses disseminated?

The textual sources for the discourse analysis were selected mostly from the media texts. Through the dissemination of the media texts, media organizations are able to dominate, manipulate, legitimize, reinforce or degrade certain discourses. In media practices, through slight alterations the meaning of a discourse can be shifted. Especially analysis on the specific changes in the textual structure of an article headline may uncover how the discourses are supported by the mechanisms that produce and disseminate texts leads to public legitimacy or opposition.

Fairclough argues that the analysis of media texts is an important part within the research on processes of social, cultural and political change.[6] According to Fairclough an analysis performed on the language of media texts can illustrate three sets of questions about media output:

1. How is the world (events, relationships, etc.) represented?

2. What identities are set up for those involved in the program or story (reporters, audiences, 'third parties' referred to or interviewed)?

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[6] Norman Fairclough, "Discourse representation in media discourse", *Sociolinguistics* 17, (1988): 125–139.

3. What relationships are set up between those involved (e.g. reporter-audience, expert-audience or politician-audience relationships)?[7]

In order to examine these specific media representations that Fairclough has defined and to analyze the process involving the Basmane Pit urban problem as it is reflected on the media, the sources below were selected:

- News articles and interviews regarding the Basmane Pit gathered from 18 different online newspaper websites[8]
- Comment sections of these news articles
- Articles covering the Basmane Pit posted in 4 different architectural portals[9]
- Public statements made by the Professional Chambers affiliated to Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (UCTEA)
- Public statements made by the non-governmental organizations
- Slogans and banners used in the urban protests
- The deciphered texts from the TV interviews conducted with the influential actors involved in the process
- Texts in the construction firm's online public poll website
- Announcements and comments regarding the Basmane Pit, posted in the social media group pages of certain civil society platforms[10]
- Comments/messages in the discussion topics dedicated to Basmane Pit in three different online forum websites[11]

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[7] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, (London: Arnold, 1995), 5.

[8] Those newspapers are: *Beyaz Gazete, Ege Postası, Sabah, Hürriyet, Milliyet, Star, Habertürk, Posta, Evrensel, Yeni Asır, Haberler.com, Egede SonSöz, Gazetem İzmir, ben.tv, oda.tv, soL,* and *İz Gazete*. All the news articles in the open archives of these newspapers regarding the Basmane Pit from past to present were reviewed.

[9] Those portals are: *Arkitera, Politeknik, Yapı.com.tr* and *Mimdap*.

[10] Those group pages are: Kültürpark Platformu Facebook Group Page, and Kültürpark'a Dokunma Facebook Group Page.

[11] Those online forums are: 1) *WowTurkey*, "İzmir Dünya Ticaret Merkezi." The topic has been active between 2003-2019 and over 500 comments have been made by the users. URL (1)
2) *SkyscraperCity*, "Folkart İkon (Basmane Çukuru)." The topic has been active between 2006-2019 and over 700 comments have been made by the users. URL (2)
3) *Projeİzmir*, "Basmane Dünya Ticaret Merkezi." The topic has been active between 2012-2019 and over 80 comments have been made by the users. URL (3)

In addition to media texts, discourse analysis is done on the printed materials that are given below:

- o Folkart Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center Project Promotion File
- o Environmental Impact Assessment Reports dated November 15, 2016, prepared by Izmir Branches of Professional Chambers affiliated to UCTEA
- o Expert Report in the Izmir 5th Administrative Court decree no. 2017/1261
- o Expert Report in the Izmir 3rd Administrative Court decree no. 2017/1601
- o Izmir City Marketing Strategic Plan, IZKA.
- o 1/25000 Scaled Izmir Urban Master Plan Revision Explanatory Note (2009)

In the case study chapter, in the part where discursive practices are examined, the findings of the discourse analysis are presented in detail and illustrated in tables. The findings demonstrate the opposing and supporting discourses, the actors involved and their target groups, and the mechanisms that spread these discourses. Through the findings of the discourse analysis, how the whole process is perceived by the two sides of the ongoing urban problem and how they have presented their perceptions to their target audiences are observed. In addition, the findings also illustrate the ways in which influential actors and mechanisms produced and reinforced various definitions and perceptions by adopting specific wordings, and using certain words, phrases, sentences and grammatical structures.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters. In the introductory chapter, the framework of the study is presented. Firstly, the selected case study and the statement of the research problem are defined, then the research questions, initial assumptions, motivations and aims are defined. In the last part of this chapter the adopted research methodologies are introduced. Margit Mayer's approach on the examination of contemporary urban

mobilizations under the effects of neoliberal urban practices, Norman Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach on the critical discourse analysis, and how these approaches are adapted to the thesis were explained.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the study is developed. Based on Mayer's approach, this chapter aims to critically evaluate how the neoliberalism permeates into urban politics today, in which ways it affects the city and how it triggers urban opposition. Deriving from David Harvey's conception, Chapter 2 illustrates how neoliberalism –as a regime and ideology– has been adopted by the local governments and operates in cities as entrepreneurial urban policies. Based on Harvey's arguments, real estate development oriented "prestige projects" are reviewed as the preferred capital accumulation devices, and the strategic use of city branding discourses in the formation of such projects are evaluated. Fragmentation in the urban fabric was portrayed as an outcome of entrepreneurial urban practices, and is discussed as one of the triggering factors of the urban oppositions. Starting from Castells' and Lefebvre's theories on the urban movements, the new forms of oppositions will be addressed. Lastly, the discursive strategies applied through the media are explored to review the mass media as the platform of legitimacy and protest.

Chapter 3 describes the contextual and historical background of the selected case study. As a preliminary examination of the case study on Basmane projects, this chapter aims to illustrate the formation of the urban fabric of the city center as a result of the adopted urban politics and planning decisions over the years. The entrance of the neoliberal urban practices into the city agenda and its current implications on the city are discussed. Basmane district's characteristics, its historical value and the specific location of the plot concerned in the city center are indicated. For further examination, the processes this particular urban plot in Basmane has been through over the decades are presented.

The case study chapter, Chapter 4, delivers the critical analysis of the new process that has started by the announcement of the new project proposal for the Basmane plot.

The discussions and examinations in this chapter are formulated based on the theories introduced in Chapter 2 and within the scope of the urban atmosphere of Izmir that is described in Chapter 3. The whole process was critically evaluated; from the declaration of the proposed project as the new "icon", to online public poll; from the visual representations of the three proposals, to project promotion file of the selected proposal. For further analysis, the Environmental Impact Assessment Reports on the project, prepared by the professional chambers affiliated to UCTEA are evaluated under the headings given by the experts. Protests against the project and the following legal process will be examined through the legal expert reports and court decisions. After all the discourses produced by the actors involved in the process –environmental, political, legal etc.– are presented to the reader, a detailed discourse analysis is conducted. The findings of this discourse analysis formulated in line with the methods described in the methodology section of the thesis are discussed. Lastly, in evaluation part of the case study chapter the overall process and discourse analysis findings are reviewed through the relationship between legitimacy-legal action, and urban development-public interest.

In the conclusion chapter, the findings of the case study are reconsidered in the light of the aforementioned theories on urban politics and opposition. How the inclusion of legal processes in urban oppositions disrupts the power dynamics in the city is discussed. Notes on the possible solutions to the ongoing urban problem are given. Lastly, the contribution of the perspectives, approaches and methodologies adopted throughout the thesis on the study of urban conflicts will be evaluated.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical approaches, paradigms and concepts referred to in this part of the thesis will constitute the theoretical framework for the evaluation of the adopted urban practices and the conflict of interest they provoked in the city. In order to analyze the political construction process of the prestige project planned in the city center in Izmir; David Harvey's notion of urban entrepreneurialism, how it emerged, which notions are associated with it, the ways in which it operates in cities in the present day, and its visible impacts on the urban fabric will be introduced. In line with Harvey's theoretical framework, prestige projects will be reviewed as one of the most powerful capital accumulation devices of the urban entrepreneurialism, and the question how the city branding, as a notion and discourse, is being used for supporting the implementation of the urban development projects will be addressed. Further, how today's understanding of city branding correlates with the urban identity and city image notions will be questioned. The concept of gentrification, which is argued to be one of the outcomes of the ongoing (re)development processes in the city, and the resulted urban opposition, will be evaluated through different urban actor profiles. The occurred polarization between the actors in the city will be studied through dialectics between development and conflict. Finally, the examination of the theories on media practices and discursive strategies will provide an insight for the discussion of how the media became the medium for both legitimacy and protest. All of these notions will construct the base for the further analysis of the case study.

2.1. Entrepreneurial City and the New Urban Politics

Max Weber views the city as a political medium that allows the analysis of the production of power structures.[12] In cities, a certain contention is in permanent play; between the privileged and underprivileged, the order and irregularity, the government and the citizens. The city can never be defined as a fixed entity, instead, it has always been a field of tension, a controversial order. Furthermore, although cities are generally seen as three-dimensional formations of spaces, they consist primarily of temporary processes. Throughout the history, there were many different displays of power, strategies, typologies and conflicts of interest. Today, the emergence of a globalized World economy has led to the complex re-organization of economic, social and political fields.

In the present urban atmosphere, neoliberal urban politics operates as a notion that on one hand shapes the city and on the other hand affects the dynamics in the city, triggers conflicts and changes the balance of power. Liberalism, as a school of thought and a political doctrine, defends the liberation of individuals to all extent and invites the governments to create a balance between competition, demand and supply to benefit the majority of population instead of controlling prices and/or wages. Before the World War II, liberalism was the commonly adopted economic policy in the West, and after the war the dominant capital accumulation regime became the US-led Fordism which further triggered the mass production and mass consumption-growth oriented policies. After the 1970 oil crisis, the ruling governmental system and its primary accumulation regimes suffered a breakdown that resulted in the urgent mobilization of various policies aimed at widening the free market economy, competition and commodification over the entire world. These movements towards "open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from the state interference and the actions of social collectivities,"[13] represent the main objectives of the neoliberal

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[12] Max Weber, *The City*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1966)
[13] Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner, "Neoliberal Urbanism: Models, Moments, Mutations," *SAIS Review* 29, no. 1 (2009): 50, doi:10.1353/sais.0.0028.

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ideology. After the 1980 economic crisis, the ongoing spread of neoliberal agendas to capital markets was accelerated, and by the mid-1980s, neoliberalism had become the dominant political form in the world.

Instead of articulating neoliberalism as an updated version of the embedded liberalism after the crises, David Harvey conceptualizes it as a historical regime and new ideological form of capitalism. He defines neoliberalism as a theory of political economic operations that "proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade."[14]

The main idea of neoliberalism, "individual freedoms are guaranteed by freedom of the market and of trade,"[15] was coupled with the principle of individual freedom. However; Harvey indicates that, especially after mid-1980s, the practice of neoliberalism became much more pragmatic rather than being ideologically driven.[16] The underlying reason of these pragmatic applications was the fact that neoliberalization was a project put forward for the "restoration of class power" from the very beginning.[17] Harvey points out that following the 1970 crisis, accelerating inflation and unemployment rates have brought labor and urban social movements together, and the fact that a socialist alternative of capital accumulation seemed possible has triggered the upper classes to protect their superior positions.[18] The benefits of capital accumulation revived by neoliberalism are highly one-sided especially under the pressure of compulsory privatization. The party that gained from

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[14] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2.
[15] Ibid, 7.
[16] Ibid, 9.
[17] Ibid, 16.
[18] Ibid.

this has been the state and executive elite along with foreign investors. In this case, social inequality has been accentuated as one of the indispensable elements of the neoliberalization project.[19]

Legitimization of this project in the public eye and receiving the consent of the society was another important step that is ensured by spreading the ideological influences through diverse channels such as media, institutions and corporations, as well as professional associations and educational environments. On this matter, Harvey underlines; "An open project around the restoration of economic power to a small elite group would probably not gain much popular support"[20], in contrast, a systematical effort to increase individual freedoms can appeal to large audiences and therefore, can successfully conceal the purpose of restoring class power.

Since neoliberalism promotes the free movement of goods, services, capital, and money across national boundaries, it is often correlated with the process of globalization. The notion of globalization itself has been facilitated by various technological and political developments. However, the economic aspect of neoliberalization is directly related with the globalization of the financial markets,[21] which presents a competitive global environment of economy where cities started to compete with one another for receiving international investment.[22] As Saskia Sassen stated; accelerated process of globalization, as well as the increased concentration in economic control, led major cities to play "a key role in the management and control of such a global network."[23] In parallel, Hall and Hubbard articulates that the internationalization of economy, the escalation of the mobility of production and investment, and the international companies' increasing presence in the global market

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid, 40.
[21] Pierre Bourdieu, "Neo-Liberalism, the Utopia (Becoming a Reality) of Unlimited Exploitation,"
in *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*. (New York: The New Press, 1999), 97.
[22] Kevin R. Cox, "Globalisation, Competition and the Politics of Local Economic
Development." *Urban Studies* 32, no. 2 (1995): 214. doi:10.1080/00420989550013059.
[23] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 324.

created a tension in all levels of urban hierarchy. As Tom Hall and Phil Hubbard point out, this has resulted in the "urban governors and representatives feeling obliged to adopt suitable policies to attract capital investment given their perception of an increasingly competitive global economy."[24] As a result, participating in the competition has become a new objective of metropolitan governance, which has led to "entrepreneurial" governance forms in urban land and real estate markets.

The rapid globalization of the economic activity has increased the competitive pressure and guided many cities to pursue policies to achieve competitive advantage and set their place in the urban hierarchy.[25] This ongoing competition among cities has led the local governments to prioritize the local economic development. At the same time, investment made on the construction sector has become the most important advantage of cities that want to be competitive to boost their economy and to reform the economic control mechanisms. With the implementation of neoliberal policies on the urban scale, cities had a complete transformation. City centers have begun to fill up with offices, shopping centers, secured building complexes, and started to be familiar with costly transportation infrastructure and coastal development. In this way, Keskinok articulates, the production of gated spaces that consume public space and harm the public interest, becomes widespread in the city centers.[26] In these arrangements, the concepts of planning and design, urbanism and architecture are mobilized. Keating argues that, such initiatives led cities to obtain new roles of economic development without proper knowledge and understanding which in turn, resulted in their being influenced by the latest trends and starting to imitate each other.[27]

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[24] Tom Hall and Phil Hubbard, "The Entrepreneurial City and the New Urban Politics," *The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation*, (Chichester: J. Wiley, 1998), 6.
[25] Nick Oatley, "Cities, Economic Competition and Urban Policy." In *Cities, Economic Competition and Urban Policy*, edited by Nick Oatley, (London: P.C.P., 1998), 5.
[26] Çağatay Keskinok, "Siyasi İktidar, Kentsel Rantlar ve "Çılgın Projeler," *Dosya* 28, (2012):109.
[27] Michael Keating, *Comparative Urban Politics: Power and the City in the United States, Canada, Britain and France*, (Hants, En: Edward Elgar, 1991), 197-198.

The notion of 'unavoidable economic competition' in the world market has resulted in homogenization of spaces as cities have desired the same elements: congress and culture centers one year, shopping malls and waterfronts the next. This change led to different ways of managing cities and the adoption of new urban politics. Harvey attributes this new entrepreneurial way of governing and the adoption of similar neoliberal urban policies by various urban governments –despite the fact that they differ in terms of their political agendas and means of operation– to; financial incompatibility, unemployment, appeal of privatization and market rationality.[28] Penpecioğlu considers this new management approach from several aspects, arguing that the cities are not being managed in line with long-term strategies, planned development scenarios, demand and need estimations for different segments of society; but with supply-oriented urban policies for the reproduction of capital and rent-oriented urban development projects that are the product of these policies.[29] There is no absolute or precise form of the entrepreneurial governance. Yet, it is possible to observe similar tendencies and set of goals adopted by many city administrators through their discourses and implemented policies. The main goals of the entrepreneurial policies can be enumerated as being "inherently growth-oriented: creating jobs, expanding the local tax base, fostering small firm growth and (crucially) attracting new forms of investment,"[30] as Hall and Hubbard state. The latter objective of incorporating new business forms was by far the most rewarding one for the local authorities. The main concern of the entrepreneurial local authorities or politicians was to create favorable conditions for capital accumulation within the city boundaries.

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[28] David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 5, doi:10.1080/04353684.1989.11879583.

[29] Mehmet Penpecioğlu, "Kapitalist kentleşme dinamiklerinin Türkiye'deki son 10 yılı: Yapılı çevre üretimi, devlet ve büyük ölçekli kentsel projeler," *Birikim* 270, (2011): 62.

[30] Hall and Hubbard, *The Entrepreneurial,* 5.

Due to the popularity of its discourse, the dominant answer to urban problems has become the entrepreneurial governance, which seems attractive especially to cities at the edge of deindustrialization and economic decline.[31]

Harvey defines the new mode of entrepreneurial urbanism as a redevelopment process, which is parallel to his conception of uneven development of neoliberalism throughout the world[32], meaning the entrepreneurial acts and strategies of different urban governments may differ. Mcguirk, in her essay that aims to explore contemporary meanings of neoliberalism as a paradigm of governance and question where the metropolitan planning stands in the context of globalized urbanization, indicates that the neoliberalism project is in fact neither unified nor coherent. Instead, it is a set of complex and multi-layered strategies that build a hybrid model of governance.[33] Nonetheless, the common practice of the entrepreneurial urban governance is managing the city in a "businesslike manner"[34] through taking site-specific decisions and/or making risky investments for the local monetary gain purposes.

To determine whether a city is in pursuit of entrepreneurial urbanism, Harvey proposes three interrelated aspects. The first aspect is whether the "public-private partnership" is established, implying the formation of a coalition between the set of actors who support the entrepreneurial activities. Second aspect is related with the efficiency of these coalitions; whether they operate uniformly, is there a unity between actors' discourses that are "speculative as opposed to rationally planned and coordinated

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[31] Bob Jessop, "The Entrepreneurial City: Re-imaging localities, redesigning economic governance, or restructuring capital?" in *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*, edited by Nick Jewson and Susanne MacGregor, (London: Routledge, 2018), 30.
[32] Harvey, *Neoliberalism*, 9.
[33] Pauline Mcguirk, "Neoliberalist Planning? Re-thinking and Re-casting Sydney's Metropolitan Planning," *Geographical Research* 43, no. 1 (2005): 59-60. doi:10.1111/j.1745-5871.2005.00297.x.
[34] Hall and Hubbard, *The Entrepreneurial,* 2.

development."[35] Lastly, the third aspect refers to the ways local authority choose to promote its place-specific development projects designed for the improvement of the overall city image or a certain part of the city.

In parallel with David Harvey, Bob Jessop conceptualizes the entrepreneurial city as a medium constructed through the "intersection of diverse economic, political, and socio-cultural narratives which seek to give meaning to current problems by construing them in terms of past failures and future possibilities."[36] In other words, acceptance of the entrepreneurial urban policies' outcomes by large masses is ensured through discourses of local authorities or politicians. In this regard, Mcguirk defines the entrepreneurial governance as a process that requires "state orchestration, practical acts of discursive production, and active mobilization by a range of actors pursuing strategic spatial interests within actual material and political– institutional settings."[37] Urban development projects of the entrepreneurial city, then, are reduced to a collective production of specific investors, politicians and city administrators who propagate a particular discourse regarding the characteristics of the projects overlooking the different views or possibilities raised by others. Harvey indicates that these types of place-specific projects usually have the potential of being the main focus of the city agenda as well as the public eye, resulting in neglecting much broader problems in the city and summarizes his conception of urban entrepreneurialism as follows:

> The new urban entrepreneurialism typically rests, then, on a public-private partnership focusing on investment and economic development with the speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory as its immediate (though by no means exclusive) political and economic goal.[38]

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[35] Harvey, "From Managerialism," 7.
[36] Bob Jessop, "The Entrepreneurial," 30.
[37] Pauline Mcguirk, "The Political Construction of the City-Region: Notes from Sydney," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31, no. 1 (2007): 180. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2007.00712.x.
[38] Ibid., 8.

The city administrations who adopt neoliberal principles and contemporary entrepreneurial forms as local politics tend to generate discourses that claim if a development is 'positive' for the market it is also 'positive' for the city, while prioritizing development and construction as means of profit, before the actual public interest. The trends of entrepreneurship, consumerism and growth-based development in the focal point of this complex urban governance system have been normalized by discursive practices, and the actors in the real estate market gained key roles in urban development. Kayın observes that there are many controversial practices that gain immunity as they are created under the influence of concepts such as "design", "governance" and "participation" in cities where neoliberal approaches of the global world are adopted.[39] These practices are often not adequately governed by the local government, and no ground can be established where new developments are associated with existing ones. Harvey underlines, from the viewpoint of the wealthy, the neoliberalization has been a prosperous process where either the elite restored their class power or new forms of capitalist accumulations were discovered.[40] However, since the moves made for investment are made through large scale projects, there is no guarantee that there will be an equally large capital acquisition. In a way, the inter-urban competition has its winners and losers in the process. In response to this, media practices defending the high-class interests choose to suggest that the cities are economically unsuccessful because they are not willing to compete, creating even more demand for neoliberal practices.[41] Nevertheless, it should be noted that; urban policies and practices, when they are thoroughly viewed, reveal that the neoliberal mindset and the daily political acts are not entirely coherent; and in fact, they are confusing and sometimes contradictory. Application of neoliberal principles in urban

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[39] Emel Kayın, "İzmir Kentinin 21. Yüzyıl Başındaki Dönüşümü ve Yeniden Dönüşümü," *Arkitera.* Dec. 14, 2016.
[40] Harvey, *Neoliberalism*, 156.
[41] Ibid.

development, rather than being a coherent hegemonic project; it is conceptualized as a chaotic, uneven transformation the consequences of which are not predictable and hybrid, and it is expected to continue in this way in the near future.[42]

Even though there are no guaranteed set of steps for success, when the entrepreneurial local practices from different parts of the world are examined, it is inferred that the local authorities –with the assistance of various actors– follow a pattern of strategies along with the discursive practices, for the purpose of emerging as winners in the complex process of neoliberal urbanism and inter-urban competition. In the next part, the implemented strategies and the ways in which these entrepreneurial projects are designed in order to attract wealth, power and prestige will be investigated.

2.2. City Branding through Prestige Projects

As regional competitiveness has become the new priority in local management, the generation of forms of entrepreneurial governance of the urban land and real estate markets has become the usual way to govern. As stated before, this entrepreneurial tendency redefines policy and planning tools in accordance with the demands of the global economy. As Mcguirk indicates, "The emergence of a neoliberalized, globalized world economy produced complex restructurings of spatiality, scaling and governance of economic, social and political spheres."[43] Especially central districts of metropolitan areas have been considered key areas of economic competitiveness, both within a national economy and within broader globalized accumulation cycles.[44] According to Hall, one of the most prominent strategies of entrepreneurial urbanism among local authorities has been the effort given to transformation, or improvement, of the 'city image.'[45]

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[42] Guy Baeten, "Normalising Neoliberal Planning: The Case of Malmö, Sweden," in *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning*, edited by Tuna Taşan-Kök and Guy Baeten, (1st ed. Netherlands: Springer, 2012), 25.
[43] Mcguirk, "Neoliberalist Planning," 60.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Tom Hall, "Selling the Entrepreneurial City" in *The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation*, edited by Tom Hall and Phil Hubbard, (Chichester: J. Wiley, 1998) 27.

The term 'imageability' of a city is introduced by the urban planner and theorist Kevin Lynch in his book titled *The Image of the City* published in 1960, suggesting that a common city image can be produced through the efficient usage of design elements, a visual representation can guide through daily life and maps out meaning.[46] Lynch analyzes the image through its three components: identity, structure and meaning. Identity represents the unique character of an object, while structure indicates its relations with other objects and meaning is basically the practical or emotional meaning of the observed object. [47] From Lynch's empirical study, it can be concluded that the ideal city image can be considered as the one that has a unique identity and historical meaning through its urban fabric and built form. In the current urban context where the neoliberal practices have infiltrated into cities' governance and the forces of inter-urban competition altered the perceived urban order and life, the understanding of the city image notion has also experienced a change.

Increasing orientation of entrepreneurial forms of governance to make agreements and regulations with the free market tend to reduce the role of specific cultures, values, ways of life together with the unique images of cities. The current trend of city government with the business-like management understanding to gain a place in the global urban competition also involves the promotion of the city as a specific product of the commercial enterprise. Borja and Castells argue that globalization demands for the provision of a competitive medium by metropolitan cities to promote their international image.[48] In a similar manner, Margit Mayer states that; today, cities compete for global investors, wealthy residents and tourist flows by creating a whole new set of policies that focus on their own promotion: 'branding' their images as creative cities, event cities, cultural cities with festivals, and mega-events to appeal to

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[46] Kevin Lynch, *Image of the City,* Cambridge: The Technology Press & Harvard University Press, 1960.

[47] Ibid., 8.

[48] Jordi Borja, and Manuel Castells, *Local and Global: The Management of Cities in the Information Age*, (London: Earthscan Publ., 1999): 321.

the desirable customers.[49] Today, the representations of a city's image are mainly used for 'city branding', which can be defined as the "application of place branding strategies within the spatial and informational configuration of the post-modern city", as Maria Paganoni points out.[50]

Branding is a notion that belongs to the business and marketing discourse. When it is applied to places, Ron Griffiths argues, it basically "implies that places can take the form of (or be regarded as the equivalent of) commodities; that they are traded in a market-place and bought by consumers; and that they can be designed with those consumers in mind."[51] In almost every city, it is necessary to have promotional brochures, posters and other cultural merchandise that reflect the preferred images of the region as an appealing, hospitable and lively global place where they can travel to, or live and work. Cities always have needed to differentiate themselves from others in terms of revealing their specific characteristics and singularity to pursue diverse political, economic or social goals.[52] The conscious initiative of local governments to create a specially-designed identity and promote it to markets is considered almost as old as the government itself.[53] Undeniably, increasing globalization of contemporary power relations has contributed to the ways of treating urban areas as products to be promoted. Ashworth and Voogd put emphasis on the fact that promoting places for the profit is nothing new, however, they underline what is new, "is the conscious application of marketing approaches by public planning agencies not just as an additional instrument for the solution of intractable planning problems but,

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[49] Margit Mayer, "First World Urban Activism," *City* 17, no. 1 (2013): 9.
doi:10.1080/13604813.2013.757417.
[50] Maria C. Paganoni, *City Branding and New Media: Linguistic Perspectives, Discursive Strategies and Multimodality*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p.3
[51] Ron Griffiths, "Making Sameness: Place Marketing and New Urban Entrepreneurialism," in *Cities, Economic Competition and Urban Policy*, edited by Nick Oatley, 41. London: P.C.P., 1998.
[52] Mihalis Kavaratzis, and Gregory Ashworth. "Place Marketing: How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Going?" *Journal of Place Management and Development* 1, no. 2 (2008): 151.
doi:10.1108/17538330810889989.
[53] Ibid.

increasingly, as a philosophy of place management."[54] Thus, in order to critically evaluate the branding of city images in the context of urban planning and governance, it is necessary to address the relationship between selling, marketing and branding.

Hall points out the importance of differentiating selling from marketing: selling is a process where the advertising is dependent on the features of product and convincing the consumer to buy is the main goal, however, marketing is a strategy where the product is being shaped by the advertisement according to the consumers' needs and desires.[55] Place marketing/branding expert Mihalis Kavaratzis touches upon the fact that, today, place marketing is widely practiced around the world[56] and describes city branding as the appropriate way to implement marketing strategies to cities.[57] Furthermore, he underlines the application of city marketing strategies in the branding process is dependent on the production, transmission and management of the city's image; "as it is accepted that encounters with the city take place through perceptions and images. Then, the object of marketing is the city's image, which in turn is the starting point for developing the city's brand."[58] In brief, it can be inferred that, while marketing strategies enable the city representatives to promote and propagate their brand messages, the city branding is referred to competitive, constructed and controlled image and identity of a locality. Hence, when city branding as a marketing strategy takes role in urban politics or development practices, it tends to create a misconception of non-existent, symbolic representations of urban life and built forms. Fırat and Venkatesh define the general term of marketing as "the conscious and

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[54] Gregory J. Ashworth, and Henry Voogd, 'Marketing and place promotion', in *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions*, edited by John Robert Gold and Stephen V. Ward, (Chichester: J. Wiley, 1995), 39.
[55] Hall, "Selling," 29.
[56] Kavaratzis, and Ashworth, "Place Marketing," 150.
[57] Mihalis Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Developing City Brands." *Place Branding* 1, no. 1 (2004): 58. doi:10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990005.
[58] Ibid.

planned practice of signification and representation"[59] that eventually "isolates products from their contexts and culturally imbued functions, and presents them almost solely as autonomous representations of images."[60]

For further discussion, they argue:

> Marketing practices have thus played a key role in isolation of products as objects that have meanings independent of their functional uses. The underlying disconnectedness of the object from its culturally ordained function has been perpetuated by marketing because of the competitive nature of the market. The isolation of a product from its context, even if partially, is not original to marketing by any means as evidenced in sacralization of products by consumers through attributing values and meanings to them independent of their original function or status. However, marketing practice has exploited this potential by promoting products with specialized focus.[61]

Based on this argument, it can be asserted that, when the city image is translated into the marketing discourse, it replaces the product, while being detached from its context it was attributed with new values and meanings separately from its consumers - in this case citizens. As described by Kavaratzis, city branding aims to: define a single place identity, identify ways in which the defined identity is relevant to audiences, and convince these audiences that the place is relevant to them.[62] Here, again, the emphasis is on the creation of a singular 'identity' –which is defined by Lynch as one of the main components of the city image– for diverse population of citizens through decision mechanisms. According to this point of view, the identity of a city can be shaped by deciphering the local values, and it also can be produced, marketed,

[59] A. Fuat Fırat, and Alladi Venkatesh, "Postmodernity: The Age of Marketing," *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 10, no. 3 (1993): 246. doi:10.1016/0167-8116(93)90009-n.
[60] Ibid. 234.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Mihalis Kavaratzis, "From "necessary evil" to necessity: stakeholders' involvement in place branding," *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 5 Issue: 1, (2012): 11. doi:10.1108/17538331211209013

consumed, renewed, distorted and transformed.[63] It is this line of thinking that made Manuel Castells come to the conclusion that all identities are constructed, yet, "The real issue is how, from what, by whom, and for what."[64]

He derives from the fact that the production of identities uses all sort manufacturing equipment ranging from history to biology that extends from personal fantasies to power devices. Yet he signifies that "individuals, social groups, and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework."[65] Castells constructs his hypothesis on, in most cases, the answers to the questions of 'who aims to construct a certain identity' and 'for what purpose', which have the ability to define the symbolic extent of this identity, as well as the meaning that is evoked in the minds of the supporters or opponents of this specific identity.[66] By addressing the power relationships as the main initiator of the social production of identity, Castells proposed three different types of identity building: *Legitimizing identity* which is "introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination *vis à vis* social actors,"[67] *resistance identity* that is generated by actors those who are stigmatized by the logic of domination, and lastly *project identity* which refers to the processes where social actors build a new identity that reflects their own positions in society.[68]

When the city branding notion is evaluated under Castell's conceptualization of the identity construction, it fits into the form of *legitimizing identity* by definition.[69] Within this context, architectural projects built for city branding purposes also can be

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[63] Emel Kayın, "21. Yüzyıl Kentlerinde Küresel-Yerel İkilemi ve İzmir," *Ege Mimarlık* 64, no. 1 (2008): 40.
[64] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Vol 2.* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 7.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 8.
[68] Ibid., 8.
[69] Kavaratzis, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

viewed as "part of a system of significations (alongside language, images, public discourse, etc.) necessary to produce a new identity for the *élites* or institutions in need of reinvention."[70] The ways in which the images produced for branding purposes reflect the identity of a city –or in this case the brand of a city– are viewed as one-dimensional and symbolic. Sökmen argues that a city whose identity is marketed through media, unlike a city that is known for personal experiences and emotions, transforms into a mosaic of urban scenes presented in the form of a series of spatial and social clichés and loses its true integrity.[71] Hall and Hubbard noted on that, since transforming a city's image became an essential part of entrepreneurial governance, "it is perhaps best to consider the entrepreneurial city as an imaginary city, constituted by a plethora of images and representations."[72] It can be inferred that city branding is particularly based on representations, allows public to experience not the city itself but its constructed meaning through symbolic identifiers.

The symbolic identifiers in architectural forms are considered as the most preferred branding device in the city image production process by the cities in pursuit of global-city status.[73] Under Harvey's conception of urban entrepreneurialism, widely promoted large-scale urban development projects are listed in the three main aspects of the entrepreneurial government agenda. The so-called "prestige projects" have the potential of targeting all the main desires of an entrepreneurial government at once; encouraging investment, changing perceptions of business decision makers and/or potential visitors from outside the city, attract national and international attention, boost reputation, and increase the economic activity and wealth within the locality.[74]

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[70] Maria Kaika, "Architecture and Crisis: Re-inventing the Icon, Re-imag(in)ing London and Re-branding the City," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no. 4 (2010): 454. doi:10.1111/j.1475-5661.2010.00398.x.

[71] Polat Sökmen, "Batı Kentlerinin Gelişmesinde Bir Politika Aracı Olarak Tasarım," *Tasarım+Kuram,* no.1 (1999): 19.

[72] Hall and Hubbard, *The Entrepreneurial,* 7.

[73] Griffiths, "Making Sameness," 51.

[74] Patrick Loftman, and Brendan Nevin, "Prestige Projects and Urban Regeneration in the 1980s and 1990s: A Review of Benefits and Limitations," *Planning Practice & Research* 10, no. 3-4 (1995): 301. doi:10.1080/02697459509696280.

In this study, a "prestige project" is chosen as an umbrella term that stands for the widely pronounced titles by real estate developers, local authorities and architects to define their urban development projects for branding purposes such as; 'city symbol,' 'icon,' and 'landmark.'

In Loftman and Nevin's definition, a prestige project is "a pioneering or innovative, high profile, large-scale, self-contained development which is primarily justified in terms of its ability to attract inward investment, create and promote new urban images, and act as the hub of a radiating renaissance-facilitating increases in land values and development activities to adjacent areas."[75] In most cases, prestige development projects are planned to be located in, or adjacent to the central business districts and/or the waterfront which are known as the greatest private sector development potential offering areas in the cities when the emphasis is on financial benefits.[76] Kaika describes the common characteristics of the historical city icons as follows:

> […] these buildings share a commitment to impressive design and a desire to dominate the urban skyline they nevertheless are distinct in significant ways - notably their symbolic role, the ways in which they relate to the city that surrounds them, their relationship to time/ruination, their production process, as well as the ways in which they become scripted into the public imagery.[77]

However, she indicates today the icon is replaced with the prestige projects that tend to develop much symbolic and material relationship with the city, while describing them as "islands of development that do not have, and perhaps do not wish to have, any relationship with the city that surrounds them."[78] Tuna Taşan-Kök also had a parallel comment on the lack of relation of these developments with the urban life; she argues that spaces of neoliberalism and entrepreneurial urban politics have resulted in the creation of "disconnected patches of elite islands, and thus discontinuity and

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[75] Ibid., 300.
[76] Loftman and Nevin, "Prestige," 300.
[77] Maria Kaika, "Autistic Architecture: The Fall of the Icon and the Rise of the Serial Object of Architecture," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 6 (2011): 970. doi:10.1068/d16110.
[78] Ibid., 977.

detachment in the city."[79] It is argued that, entrepreneurial ways of governing in general, has resulted in the fragmentation of cities and the urban regeneration and planning policies became project-focused or site-based.[80] Wilkinson indicates that, the adoption of such practices represents a desire for urban fragmentation, the planning of single elements instead of comprehensively integrating urban systems.[81]

Griffiths states that, these large-scale buildings also tend to go tall; ongoing branding and transformation of city image is widely secured with office towers.[82] On the specific importance of high-rise buildings in the city image production, Heathcote argues that, in the competitive urban context, high-rise buildings are being utilized for bringing a physical logo to characterless cities, and further he argues that high-rise building types reflect the self-image or the ego of a "corporation, a developer, a city council or an architect."[83] Öner and Pasin consider the high-rise building as an important component of the contemporary city due to its branding potential, yet they also argue that in many cities these buildings are promoted as symbols of economic power.[84] While many big companies are now working on the adoption of campus type settlements, Heathcote states, "the allure of a city center icon, an exclamation mark on the horizon, remains, it seems, irresistible."[85] In parallel, Kaika remarks on the tendency of building tall, she argues that "the urgency to institute a new social imaginary for cities that corresponds to the desire of new urban elites has […] turned fixing the skyline into something of an obsession, a fetish, for planners, architects,

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[79] Tuna Taşan-Kök, "Introduction: Contradictions of Neoliberal Urban Planning," in *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning*, edited by Tuna Taşan-Kök and Guy Baeten, 18. (1st ed. Netherlands: Springer, 2012. EBook.)
[80] Patrick and Nevin, "Prestige Projects," 305-306.
[81] Sue Wilkinson, "Towards a new city? A case study of image-improvement initiatives in Newcastle Upon Tyne," in *Rebuilding the City: Property-led Urban Regeneration*, edited by Patsy Healey, 209. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1992.)
[82] Griffiths, "Making Sameness," 51.
[83] Edwin Heathcote, "Egos Search for Icons to Mark World's Cities," in *The Financial Times,* Sept. 28, 2005.
[84] A. Ceylan Öner and Burkay Pasin, "Emerging Towers in Bayraklı: Sustainability as a Branding Strategy or a Tool for Local Development?" *Buildings* Vol. 5, No. 3 (2015): 839.
[85] Heathcote, "Egos Search for Icons,".

developers, architectural patrons and urban authorities."[86] However, in the competitive urban climate, Griffiths argues, the owner of the 'World's Tallest Building' title is constantly changing; as it was being constructed by a number of other cities, somewhere in the world another city might be working on plans to have even taller structures in the competitive pursuit to receive "symbolic advantage from architectural giantism."[87]

Batuman points out that architecture has begun to find more space in the media. Especially in the advertising of high-rise housing projects, more and more references have been given to architects and architecture.[88] However, many investor-developers' and professionals' way of approaching the design and application of tall buildings have not helped to convince the masses in the debate of the adaptation high-rise buildings to urban life. According to Wood, most of the high-rise commercial towers follow the standard global model; "the rectilinear, air-conditioned box"[89] with minimum effort given to the relation of ground floor and street level. He suggests that, "The 'transportability' of these non-site-specific models allows export across the world, without regard for either the impact on environment or the relationship to the places in which they are located."[90] In turn, Wood concludes, the spread of the 'one size fits all' mentality across the global urban centers resulted in "an alarming homogeneity and monotony."[91] Loftman and Nevin point out that prestige projects may be one of their kind and also innovative developments for the time they were first constructed, yet, since those projects are designed to be flashy and prominent, they are often imitated elsewhere as a result of both the local and global attention they attracted.[92] It is indicated that serial reproduction of similar architectural forms and

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[86] Maria Kaika, "Architecture and," 471.
[87] Griffiths, "Making Sameness," 51.
[88] Bülent Batuman, "Politik Fail ve Politik Bağlam Olarak Mimarlar Odası," *Dosya* 25, (June 2011): 12.
[89] Antony Wood, "Green or Grey? The Aesthetics of Tall Building Sustainability," 2008, in proceedings of the *CTBUH 8th World Congress Tall & Green: Typology for a Sustainable Urban Future, Dubai, 2008,* 2.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Loftman and Nevin "Prestige," 307.

specific urban development patterns[93] is another outcome of inter-urban competition for investment. The process where many of the developments designed to make certain cities more attractive to investors and to be known as cultural and consumer centers, were quickly imitated by other cities to gain any competitive advantage within a temporary city system[94], made Harvey to ask the question of "How many successful convention centres, sports stadia, disney-worlds, harbour places and spectacular shopping malls can there be?"[95]

Prestige projects and their potential effects on urban life are praised by the proponents of these developments; they argue that these projects provide benefits for all citizens through the production of wealth, job opportunities, and enhancement of physical environment while creating new places to be visited, appreciated and enjoyed by the city residents.[96] In his book addressing the flagship buildings as an essential part of city marketing, Hedley Smyth describes flagship developments as "an expensive means to effectively promote urban regeneration, that is, economic growth and social well-being, within an area."[97] In her essay which critically analyzes the mega projects in New York, London and Amsterdam, Fainstein concludes that; public-private relationships hold the potential of providing benefits to public such as job commitments, affordable housing and cultural amenities, however, they also illustrate, projects in that scale have risky results regarding both public and private actors, "must primarily be oriented toward profitability, and typically produce a landscape dominated by bulky buildings that do not encourage urbanity, despite the claims of the project's developers."[98] On a similar note, Baeten argues that when a prestige project is not designed accordingly to its context, it often creates a setting where it "is in the city, and feeds off the city, but is not *of* the city; it uses the city, but does not

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[93] Harvey, " From Managerialism," 10.
[94] Ibid., 12.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Hedley Smyth, *Marketing the City: The Role of Flagship Developments in Urban Regeneration*, (London: Routledge, 2016): 7.
[97] Loftman and Nevin "Prestige," 304.
[98] Susan S. Fainstein, "Mega-projects in New York, London and Amsterdam," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32, no. 4 (2008): 783. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00826.x.

want to belong to it."[99] When these building types are built in developing countries that generally lack proper infrastructure and design policies, they represent the future image or vision of the city they are located, while evoking the appearance of world cities in the minds of observers. Swyngedouw et al. touch upon the cognitive connotations of prestige projects as, "The emblematic *Project* captures a segment of the city and turns it into the symbol of the new restructured/revitalized metropolis cast with a powerful image of innovation, creativity, and success."[100] Representation of power in social, economic and political terms come together with the so-called prestige that is provided through large-scale urban development projects.

Prestige projects are considered as the "material expression of a developmental logic"[101] that recognizes urban development projects and city branding as tools for creating future growth and for undertaking the competitive struggle to attract capital through investments. These kinds of developments are, therefore, viewed as not the pure outcome, reaction, or aftereffect of political and economic change that is practiced elsewhere. On the contrary, Swyngedouw et al. argue, prestige projects are the very "catalysts of urban and political change,"[102] furthering ongoing processes to be effective in not only local spheres but regionally, nationally, and globally as well. It is such concrete practices that form and signify transformations in spatial, political and economic adjustments. Mixed-use office towers, convention centers, waterfront developments, all portray the existing material process through which "postmodern forms, post-Fordist economic dynamics, and neoliberal systems of governance"[103] are being organized and through which a new order of regulatory and governmental policies is produced. Therefore; in the entrepreneurial city, what the architectural projects represent has become not the result of political regimes, but rather the actual

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[99] Baeten, "Normalising," 34.
[100] Erik Swyngedouw, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodriguez. "Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy." *Antipode* 34, no.3 (2002): 562. doi:10.1111/1467-8330.00254
[101] Swyngedouw *et al.*, "Neoliberalism," 546.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

trigger of urban policy changes. Eraydın points out that these specific changes not only result in the degradation of urban spaces into commodity, "but also create the opportunity to use urban land development processes as a wealth transfer mechanism to certain social groups in return for political support."[104] On this regard Uzun et. al. assert that, private-sector actors, such as "developers, landowners, advisors and professionals"[105] have been actively supporting the entrepreneurial implementations. Under the politics of entrepreneurial governance, urban design, planning and architecture become tools of transformation of the city image while the image itself is produced and reproduced by decision mechanisms.

For further discussion, Swyngedouw et al. indicate that prestige projects often are "project-focused market-led initiatives"[106], which have replaced comprehensive-statutory planning while being considered as the most favored way of intervening localities. On that note, Brenner et al. describe the three components of entrepreneurial urban mechanisms as follows: The privatized spaces for the elite or corporate consumption, prestige projects to attract private sector investment and reconfigure local land-use pattern, and the gated communities, and other sterile spaces of social reproduction.[107] Further, they argue that the principle of 'highest and best use' became the basis for major land use planning decisions, as a result of generic approaches adopted by policymakers in search of 'quick fixes' for planning problems.[108] Project based planning, which is equipped to stimulate economic growth and to organize the urban development both organizationally and economically has indeed become the main strategy of decision mechanisms. Swyngedouw et al. describe the specific relationship of prestige projects with existing planning tools and regulations as a

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[104] Ayda Eraydın, "Contradictions in the Neoliberal Policy Instruments: What Is the Stance of the State?" in *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning*, edited by Tuna Taşan-Kök and Guy Baeten, 76. (1st ed. Netherlands: Springer, 2012. EBook.)
[105] Nil Uzun, Ö. Burcu Özdemir Sarı and Suna S. Özdemir, "Urbanisation and Urban Planning in Turkey," in *The Urban Book Series Urban and Regional Planning in Turkey*, 8. (Netherlands: Springer, 2019. EBook)
[106] Ibid., 562.
[107] Brenner et al., "Neoliberal Urbanism," 61.
[108] Ibid.

central issue in image transformation processes.[109] These projects are generally incorporated into existing planning policies on paper. The design phases and the implementation are within the limits of formal planning guidelines. Thus, there is always a framework of "exceptionality" where the legal norms and procedures are transferred to a secondary place. It is argued that, local authorities legitimize this exception and their attitude towards project-based planning on the basis of various factors such as, "scale, the emblematic character of the operation, timing pressures, the need for greater flexibility, efficiency criteria, and the like."[110]

Inferring from all the former discussions in this part, there is a consensus among different authors that prestige projects have become the driving force, and direction for entrepreneurial urban development.[111] Nonetheless, according to Borja and Castells, it should be emphasized that behind a large-scale urban development project, there is always a general city plan or schema, either apparent or hidden.[112] The plan may have a variety of legal foundations, may have more or less social reinforcement, or may prefer a development that is compatible or incompatible with the current urban fabric of the city; but the presence of a specific political purpose expressed by title deed or omission is defined definite.[113] Another point asserted by Borja and Castells is that these prestige projects often initiated by or related with certain actors –private economic agents or public officials, especially those with landholdings– who are interested in staying outside a mandatory framework.[114]

In literature, most of the criticism on city branding is regarding the incompatibility between the advertised image and the produced image through the actual prestige projects. This argument is based on the fact that these images represent a renewed, lively city without any attempt on improving the existing urban or technical issues in

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[109] Swyngedouw *et al.*, "Neoliberalism," 572.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Borja and Castells, "Local and Global," 306.
[112] Ibid., 307.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

the city.[115] In most cases, new image branding and new imaginary urban identities create physical and psychological boundaries among citizens, which may result in social exclusion. Since the target audience of city branding is those who have the means of affording such luxurious life style, the new city images are especially tailored for the habitation of wealthy.[116] As an outcome, the 'entrepreneurial city' is often under the risk of becoming the polarized city. Saskia Sassen denominates this polarization between regenerated and neglected parts of the city as 'glamour zones' and 'poverty zones.' Even in the globalized and well-managed cities of developed countries, it is possible to see the uneven distribution of public services, and the "clash of visual orders and topographies."[117] Brenner et al. underline that city branding policies are "mutually destructive"[118] which, as a result, create a platform where global capital is freed from its responsibilities for local social reproduction, and "in which urban citizens are increasingly deprived of the power to shape the basic conditions of everyday urban life."[119] In parallel, Griffiths points out the fact that the branding of a city is a far complicated process than a company's marketing agenda. He argues:

> A city is not the 'product' of a single producer; it cannot be taken out of production if it 'fails' in the market place, nor can its characteristics be modified in the short term except in very limited ways; competition between rival products cannot be internalized by one producer taking over another; the effects of product failure have ramifications far beyond the balance sheet of any individual firm.[120]

On the basis of aforementioned discussions, it can be concluded that; city branding processes that involve the production of city images and the conscious manipulation of these images through the physical and political construction of prestige projects have become the popular response of local authorities to inter-urban competition,

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[115] David Harvey, "Voodoo cities: Our cities are going in for glitzy facelifts," *New Statesman and Society*, September 30, (1988):35.
[116] Hall, "Selling," 27.
[117] Saskia Sassen, "When Cities Become Strategic," Architectural Design 81, no. 3 (2011):127, doi:10.1002/ad.1250.
[118] Brenner et al., "Neoliberal Urbanism," 65.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Griffiths, "Making Sameness," 56.

which became the symbol of social and physical segregation in the city. In the following part, the discussion will be formed around the emergence of urban conflicts due to the contradictory nature of neoliberal urban governance while putting emphasis on how the media devices are functionalized in the process, both for the dissemination and legitimation of political agendas, and as virtual public spheres of social mobilization.

2.3. Urban Opposition and its Representation in the Media

Throughout the history, cities have always been in a constant change under the effects of various factors that are operating in their region. Each city has its historically particular social, political and economic dynamics. Yet, these particularities are under the ongoing influence of the specific social forces that affect wider scopes, together with the actions of local actors and institutions.[121] In Cacciari's words, "The city in its history is the never-ending experiment to shape the contradiction", changes tend to create duality; different sides of an argument. "The city arises and develops through conflict,"[122] Cuppini argues, resulting in the continuous tension between the opponents where the city itself becomes the venue of the race as well as the alliances formed in the process. On this manner, Castells indicates that, "Power is exercised by means of coercion (the monopoly of violence, legitimate or not, by the control of the state) and/or by the construction of meaning in people's minds, through mechanisms of symbolic manipulation."[123] Yet, societies are bound to be conflictive and contradictory by nature. If there is an operation of power, there is also a counter power,

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[121] James Simie, "Planning, Power and Conflict," in *Handbook of Urban Studies*, edited by Ronan Paddison, 385. (London: SAGE, 2001.)
[122] Niccolò Cuppini, "The Globalized City as a Locus of the Political: Logistical Urbanization, Genealogical Insights, Contemporary Aporias," in *The Urban Political: Ambivalent Spaces of Late Neoliberalism*, edited by Theresa Enright and Ugo Rossi, 74. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.)
[123] Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, 5. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015.)

which in Castells' conception has the capacity to challenge the core of the existing power in the institutions to demand representation for their personal values and interests.[124]

The appearance of neoliberal agendas in city management has been a contradictory process since the past four decades. Today, the "neoliberal restructuring strategies interact with pre-existing uses of space, institutional configurations and constellations of sociopolitical power."[125] Currently, the entrepreneurial urban governance has brought new conflicts of interest into the urban sphere, together with the branding strategies and image reproductions. Baeten indicates that, today the neoliberal interventions on the urban setting are being normalized:

> Closed architectural competitions, compliance in the local press, a focus on the very construction of the project as a main motivation, the virtual absence of social matters, and the virtual absence of debate, dispute or disagreement altogether, have become ordinary elements in the planning of larger development in the city.[126]

Even so, many scholars who wrote on neoliberalism and its infiltration into local scales and Baeten himself indicate that neoliberal tendencies should not be seen as fixed, unalterable realities of modern day.[127] Brenner et al. describe neoliberal urbanism as a hybrid regime which coincides with its counterpart; the city of social concern and other forms of resistance such as "Local struggles around fair housing, living wages, land use regimes and environmental justice, each in their different ways, expose pointedly relevant, progressive alternatives to neoliberalism."[128] The place-specific projects' potential of becoming the focal point in the public eye was one of

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Brenner et al., "Neoliberal Urbanism," 54.
[126] Baeten, "Normalising," 21.
[127] See for example: Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 13; Taşan-Kök and Baeten, *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning*, 12-26; Leitner et al. *Contesting neoliberalism: Urban frontiers*, 1-26; Brenner et al. "Neoliberal Urbanism: Models, Moments, Mutations", 49-66; Mcguirk, "Neoliberalist Planning? Re-thinking and Re-casting Sydney's Metropolitan Planning," 59-60.
[128] Brenner et al. "Neoliberal," 65.

the main aspects of Harvey's conception of entrepreneurial urban governance.[129] When Castells' hypothesis of legitimizing identity is revisited under the light of all aforementioned arguments, one can comprehend the reasoning behind his theory that each identity building process gives birth to another outcome related to society.[130] In his framework, he suggests that legitimizing identity production leads to the generation of civil society, which comprises organized and structural social actors as well as institutions and organizations.[131] These organs of civil society, on one hand, are part of the ongoing urban governance. On the other hand, they are a part of the local people. Castells argues that, this dual character of civil society is the reason of its durability against the governance mechanisms, having a common ground organized around the citizenship.[132]

Harvey points out that, urban development is not a fundamentally dangerous process where political and economic arrangements take place. Instead, urbanization should be considered as a spatially based social process where "a wide range of different actors with quite different objectives and agendas interact through a particular configuration of interlocking spatial practices."[133] In Margalit and Kemp's description that such processes "sit *inside* society and not *above* or *against* it, as they shape the actors concerned, their positions, and the ways in which they imagine what development is or can be."[134] On the same terms, Mcguirk in her essay where she examined the political construction of spaces of governance states that, such processes require the "state orchestration, practical acts of discursive production, and active mobilization by a range of actors pursuing strategic–spatial interests within actual material and political– institutional settings."[135] These spatial interests such as large-

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[129] Harvey, *op. cit.*, 23.
[130] Castells, "The Power of," 8.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 9.
[133] Harvey, "From Managerialism," 5.
[134] Adriana Kemp, and Talia Margalit, "Resisting Neo-Liberal Skylines: Social Mobilisations and Entrepreneurial Urban Development in Tel Aviv," In *Development As A Battlefield*, edited by Bono Irene and Hibou Béatrice, 164-88. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017.)
[135] Mcguirk, "The Political," 180.

scale urban development projects are defined divisive[136] by nature. Since they are planned to be built in one specific and also strategic area in the city and designed to give a prestigious impression, they tend to steal the spotlight, while putting the rest of the city in shade together with all the problems they possess.

Local struggle against a prestige project is regarded as the manifestation of wider social discontent in relation to the neoliberal practices. Elitist projects as the materialized symbol of the current political agendas are being protested because the local authority's attention is shifted to the needs of small elites rather than the demands of wider groups of citizens. Swyngedouw et al. argue that such projects have been the fields of power struggles that portray the positions of key political, economic, social or cultural elites, and still continue to act as one in the current day.[137] They further their argument as follows:

> The scripting of the project highlights and reflects the aspirations of a particular set of local, regional, and national -and sometimes also international- actors that shape, through the exercise of their socioeconomic, cultural, or political power, the development trajectories of each of the areas.[138]

Disruption of the urban fabric and fragmentation of the neighborhoods that are realized through urban development projects or urban transformation processes are seen as the physical representation of this elitist approach. Growth oriented, capital-based initiatives of entrepreneurial urban governance have been legitimized by the actors such as local authorities, investors and politicians with the practical and ideological justifications that invoke the perception of 'the public interest'.[139] While some groups react positively to the constant imposing of neoliberal agendas intended for the legitimization of implementations in the city by seeing it as the inevitable part of the development, others think the exact opposite and express their positions towards

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[136] Taşan-Kök, "Introduction," 17.
[137] Swyngedouw et al. "Neoliberal Urbanization," 563.
[138] Ibid.
[139] E. R. Alexander, "The Public Interest in Planning: From Legitimation to Substantive Plan Evaluation," *Planning Theory* 1, no. 3 (2002): 233-4. doi:10.1177/147309520200100303.

the ongoing events in the forms of urban mobilizations. In an urban atmosphere where cities are transformed into gated communities and divided into privatized spaces, where the districts are increasingly separated as wealthy and poor by barriers such as prestige projects, and the access to amenities and infrastructures become more and more limited for the poor, the opposition of the public has become inevitable.

Discursive and developmental practices aiming for short-term acquisition of urban wealth may bring along serious environmental and social problems in the long run, while triggering urban mobilization.[140] Lefebvre's and later Castells' influential exploration of urban opposition in the 1960s and 1970s form a basis for the examination of urban movements in the current context. Lefebvre's conception of the 'right to the city' rests on the prioritization of the use value over the exchange value of the built environment.[141] Growth and capital-based urbanization tend to reduce the urban space to a commodity when, according to Lefebvre, it should be the medium – in his term an *oeuvre*– that is shaped by the encounters and struggles of different people. "In and through these struggles the working class revendicates the 'right to the city', or, in other words, the right to urban life."[142] From another perspective, Castells' conception of urban activism consists of three factors: collective consumption, cultural identity and local politics.[143] Collective consumption refers to the politicization of the reproduction of labor by local authorities where the prosperity is a form of class control and collectively consumed goods –such as education and housing– are distributed by local governors, while cultural identity stands for the

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[140] Taşan-Kök, "Introduction," 21.
[141] Henri Lefebvre, Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 147-159, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.)
[142] Maarten Loopmans, and Toon Dirckx, "Neoliberal Urban Movements?: A Geography of Conflict and Mobilisation over Urban Renaissance in Antwerp, Belgium," in *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning*, edited by Tuna Taşan-Kök and Guy Baeten, 101. (1st ed. Netherlands: Springer, 2012. EBook.)
[143] Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, (London: Arnold, 1983.)

opposition to homogenization and repetition of urban patterns, and finally, local politics denotes the demand for democracy in local politics instead of the state domination.

Since the urban movements have differentiated and fragmented in various ways and expanded to different directions after the 1980s, based upon Castells' conception, Margit Mayer examines the contemporary forms of urban mobilization under the effects of neoliberal urban development. Mayer argues that, the current social struggles are far from their past forms; while the entrepreneurial ways of governance has led to new conflicts; the goals, strategies, organizational structures and action patterns of urban mobilization have changed significantly.[144] Therefore, the notion of contemporary urban mobilization should be evaluated thoroughly. For the exploration of new forms of urban mobilization, at the beginning of the 2000s, Mayer defined three main trends that are closely related to urban movements: entrepreneurial urban development projects, the increasing of political control of local authorities and growing social segregation connected to the erosion of welfare.[145] Mayer indicated that the trend of implementing large-scale projects frequently triggers "middle-class-based, quality-of-life-oriented movements focused on protecting their home environments – from too much traffic or development."[146] The trend of imposing political control over the urban mobilization is realized through municipalities' employment of social movement organizations, which results in a contradictory environment where their responsibilities to the employer and to citizens are collided. Finally, the trend of social segregation, unemployment and poverty "have led to the emergence of movements that primarily consist of disruption to protest against social injustice, to effect resource redistribution, and to generate empowerment."[147]

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[144] Margit Mayer, "Manuel Castells' *The City and the Grassroots*," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no.1 (2006): 202-3.
[145] Margit Mayer, "Social movements in European cities: Transitions from the 1970s to the 1990s," in *Cities in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Arnaldo Bagnasco and Patrick Le Galès, 147-8.
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.)
[146] Ibid., 139.
[147] Ibid., 148.

After a decade, Mayer developed her conception around the particularities of neoliberal urbanism and their implications for urban social movements in a recent study. She defined four dimensions: the increasing role of the investors and real estate developers on the planning and development of urban space, spatial segregation and the gentrification in the city through partial transformations, adoption of branding policies to attract investment, and provision of opportunities to wealthy artists and cultural producers for the transformation of the built environment.[148] In another essay in which Mayer approaches the notion of 'right to the city' in the context of changing social movements, she indicates that today, the slogan itself is echoing with activists while resonating the questions of who should benefit from the city, and what kind of city it should be.[149] Concurrently with Margit, Harvey has studied the urban mobilizations based on Lefebvre's conception of right to the city, under the light of contemporary urban practices. In his study, Harvey refers to urban social movements as the reaction to the threatened notions such as identity, belonging and citizenship.[150] According to him, the current right to the city "is far too narrowly confined, in most cases in the hands of a small political and economic elite who are in a position to shape the city more and more after their own particular needs and hearts' desire."[151] In today's urban climate, domination of capitalist class power operates not only in the governance and distribution of the social and infrastructural reinforcements, but also in the lifestyles and cultural values of populations as well as their perception of place and conceptions of the world.[152] All these factors cause protests in different settings, scales and ways on all over the world. Another aspect of the urban protests that has taken a different form after the 2000s is that they form a medium where the social solidarity manifests itself.

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[148] Mayer, "First World," 9.

[149] Margit Mayer, "The 'Right to the City' in the Context of Shifting Mottos of Urban Social Movements," *City* 13, no. 2-3 (2009): 367. doi:10.1080/13604810902982755.

[150] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, 15. (London: Verso, 2012.)

[151] Ibid., 24.

[152] Ibid., 66.

Today, the means of public communication has exceeded the limits of the interpersonal communication. With the current developments of the digital age, it is possible to communicate through all domains, while the media itself continues to expand the reach of all areas of social life in a network that is local and global at the same time. The rise of the internet and social media has brought revolutionary changes to how the urban opposition is produced and circulated. In the current social environment, urban movements work as a counter-power by establishing themselves in an autonomous communication process, breaking free from the control of actors with institutional power. As mass media is predominantly controlled by governments and media organizations, communicative autonomy in the 'network society'[153] is primarily formed in internet networks and wireless communication platforms.

Effective use of all media organs can produce new performative spaces that may trigger the constitution of a public realm shared by citizens. Yet in the era of network society, the internet became the main environment that individuals express themselves and reach to the information. Sassen argues that; digital networks, combined with the struggles of localized actors, led to the creation of a new type of politics and subjectivities in modern day.[154] It is a fact that today, even the local actors who are geographically immobile and resource-poor can be involved in and contribute to the "virtual public spheres"[155], thus creating an atmosphere where the local political subjectivity would be moved far beyond the local borders. Digital networks are increasingly being used to intensify the local information exchanges and serve to strengthen the transactions among residents of a city while assisting them to gain an extensive understanding of local issues.[156]Cyberspace as a widespread and interconnected digital technology, and a platform for interaction, allows non-formal

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[153] Manuel Castells, *Rise of the Network Society, With a New Preface: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture,* Volume I, 2009.
[154] Saskia Sassen, *A Sociology of Globalization*, 191. (New York: Norton Et Co., 2007.)
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., 211.

and historically excluded actors to be involved in the political scene and to have a voice to express their positions, whereas it is very difficult at the national level.

The networked social movements have spread to the urban life through the wireless internet and have been supported with the viral images and individual ideas that turned into slogans. Castells argues in his preliminary book investigating the social movements of network society that these movements are essentially processes of symbolic construction that are widely dependent on the messages and frames formed and diffused in multimedia networks. He continues as, "Although each individual human mind constructs its own meaning by interpreting the communicated materials on its own terms, this mental processing is conditioned by the communication environment."[157] The formation of free community in this symbolic place, allows residents of a city to participate in a public space, a space of hope and deliberation which carries the potential to become the political space of today, or in Castells words, "a space for sovereign assemblies to meet and to recover their rights of representation, which have been captured in political institutions predominantly tailored for the convenience of the dominant interests and values."[158] The new form of urban opposition is described as fundamentally political even it does not aim for seizing the state or create parties, instead, the ultimate goal is transforming the state by expressing individual positions and triggering debates.[159]

Today, internet provides an environment where groups of people or citizens are able to get notifications on their smartphones from news portals and send it to their friends and families, exchange their views on comment sections of online newspaper articles on a new city agenda or mobilize against a civil wrong by forming a social media group page. Networks established through multimedia tools create a sense of togetherness, which may be the starting point of becoming a community. Castells describe togetherness as a key issue to overcome fear and discover hope in

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[157] Castells, *Networks of Outrage,* 6.
[158] Ibid., 11.
[159] Ibid., 256.

contradictory situations[160]; even if people in movement have their different views and goals, sense of togetherness work as a starting point for common mind. Active use of internet tools and social media accounts has the potential to strengthen the social bonds in societies while decelerating the ongoing individualization and civic disengagement[161] which, in various cases, may turn into an urban mobilization that crosses the country boundaries and become a world-wide example of public opposition. Castells points out that, although these oppositions usually start on the social media platforms, "*they become a movement by occupying the urban space*, be it the standing occupation of public squares or the persistence of street demonstrations."[162] The constant engagement of virtual communities against the conflictive practices forms a platform that allows the organization of public manifestations in the streets.

Thus, just as the informal actors, formal actors such as politicians, government leaders or financial elites have their own presence in media platforms. Politicians and government representatives are delivering opinions and making statements through social media platforms, metropolitan municipalities and ministries have their own dedicated websites, news sites make interviews with party leaders and spokesmen or promote new developments initiated by certain prominent actors. Furthermore, even the free platforms of social media are monitored and controlled to some extent by the programmers and media bosses. In that sense, the influence of a media baron and a college student is not equal. As aforementioned in Harvey's articulation on the dissemination of neoliberalism, media is widely utilized for broadcasting the ideologies and political agendas of elites.[163] In a similar way, Hall defines media as the main operation base of the cultural and ideological influence, which has a dominant position in terms of how social relations and political problems are defined and also in the production and transformation of popular ideologies in the target

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[160] Ibid., 253.
[161] Castells, *Rise of the Network, 388.*
[162] Castells, *Networks of Outrage*, 250.
[163] Harvey, *op. cit.*, 19.

masses.[164] Ideology is political by nature, it produces a prescriptive medium for the legitimation of social and economic arrangements of dominant actors. Therefore, the presence of media discourses is merely ideological and discursive media practices are mainly employed for the illustration of wider maps of meaning.

Certain patterns and signs appear in the discourses that represent "range of social meanings, practices, and usages, power and interest 'written in' to them"[165] while differentiating the creation of intended social reality. Boyle and Rogerson indicate that, "notions of 'power' and 'discourse' interweave with the production and legitimation of city development trajectories."[166] More often than not, discursive media practices are used for legitimation and/or obtaining public consent. Deniz Kimyon in her essay examining the role of media practices in urban politics, points out "the actor and agents in (re)producing the urban space and association of the media in this context as an emergent crucial phenomenon for the urban policy studies,"[167] and underlining the fact that media is being utilized for the legitimation of large-scale interventions which in turn reinforces the urban hegemony construction.

Based on these arguments, it can be concluded that today; multimedia tools, especially the social media platforms, are used by both the political actors and opponent groups for the purposes of protest and legitimation. Since opposing to legitimation practices of politicians and their provision of financial benefits to elites are the main motives of many urban movements, Castells argues the acknowledgement of these values by the governmental mechanisms is unlikely.[168] For a movement to be influential and cause a change in urban policies of a locality, it should be at least supported by a political

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[164] Stuart Hall, "Introduction to Media Studies at Centre," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*, edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis, 104. (Routledge, 2005. EBook.)
[165] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79,* edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis, 123. (Routledge, 2005. EBook.)
[166] Mark Boyle and Robert J. Rogerson, "Power, Discourses and City Trajectories," in *Handbook of Urban Studies*, edited by Ronan Paddison, 402. (London: SAGE, 2001.
[167] Deniz Kimyon, "The Role of Media Practices in Urban Politics: The Case of Sinpaş Altınoran Housing/Residence Project" *Planlama* 24, no.3 (2014): 154. doi: 10.5505/planlama.2014.69188
[168] Castells, *Networks of Outrage*, 262.

actor, generally, for the purposes of gaining support in public opinion or securing votes for upcoming elections. Tying the policy changes to election results is a popular practice followed by many politicians. Under these circumstances, there is little possibility of a positive interaction between the movements and the political class to initiate a political reform.[169] Therefore, the actual purpose of action of these urban oppositions are; to raise awareness about life quality, allow residents to deliberate about their country's conditions, empower masses to think and act on social issues and ultimately make people feel confident that they can make their own decisions regarding certain controversial issues. Castells considers that if the social and cultural influences of urban movements reach to the younger generation and penetrate their minds, insightful politicians would want to be their voice and express their concerns and values, again, for the electoral gain.[170]

Entrepreneurially governed cities where neoliberal urban developments are fueled by city branding discourses and marketing of the city is secured with prestige projects that are legitimized by media practices, have also created an environment for the urban protest, operating on social media and streets. Neoliberalism, which is claimed to have emerged in order to restore the power of the high-income groups from the very beginning, shows its polarizing impact on cities as creating visible barriers which result in the segregation of districts as wealthy and poor, while the neglected neighborhoods are struggling to access urban amenities and infrastructures. The global inter-urban competition, which is defined as the triggering mechanism of entrepreneurial ways of governing, has led many cities in the world to undergo the same destructive processes under the branding practices and urban development projects. These similarities and common urban problems have also led to the global articulation of urban opposition.

In the next chapter, the aforementioned urban practices will be correlated with the case of new urban development project proposal for a particular plot at Basmane, –known

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[169] Ibid., 263.
[170] Castells, *Networks of Outrage*, 264.

as Basmane Pit– located in Izmir, Turkey. Before the extensive analysis of the case, the past and current context of Izmir and the present entrepreneurial agendas will be introduced in a chronological order.

CHAPTER 3

URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF IZMIR AND THE CASE OF BASMANE

This chapter focuses on a specific history of a single urban plot and how it turned to its current state known as the Basmane Pit – "Basmane Çukuru", which has the quality of illustrating the adopted urban practices in Izmir with all the processes it has been through. Following two urban competitions and several changes in the planning decisions and judicial procedures, a particular plot known as Basmane Pit has been the object of an unresolved urban question for years. In 2016, the plot re-entered to the city's agenda as an investment tool. The new mixed-use, high-rise building project that was to be located in the center of Izmir, Basmane district, has been selected as the case study. For the preliminary analysis of the case study, the urban context of the project will be illustrated by describing the development of the urban morphology in Izmir. Effects of the adopted urban development practices on today's urban fabric will be portrayed, while providing an understanding on how neoliberal urban policies have emerged in the past and how they operate today. The current planning practices performed in Izmir, which has been regarded as a planned city, will be reviewed. The real estate developers' entry into the urban arena as a powerful actor will be emphasized in this context. For further analysis, the specific location of Basmane district in the central city and its characteristics will be introduced. Lastly, the planning decisions and legal procedures regarding the plot, together with the previous competitions and project proposals, will be examined.

3.1. The Urban Development of Izmir

Izmir has a long history as a Mediterranean city, which can be traced back to its re-foundation on its current location in the Hellenistic period. As "a foreign market-

dependent agricultural product exporter port city"[171] it came to the forefront in the period between the 17th and early 20th centuries. Today it is the third most populated city of Turkey. When compared to other cities in Turkey; the professional chambers, associations, civil society organizations in Izmir are more organized and actively involved in urban processes. The main reason for this political activity is considered as the fact that the majority of people living in Izmir are not supportive of the government policies. Unlike many other metropolitan cities, the local governments of Izmir, has long been ruled by the main opposition party. While the rivalry between the local and central government proceeds, the locals who are currently in opposition to the policies of the central government are unable to remain unresponsive to the local government's operations with parallel policies. Especially in recent years, the project-focused planning decisions of the local government, which are parallel to the central government's urban policies are being held responsible for the city's irregular development, and being criticized by the professional chambers and academicians. In order to gain an insight into today's urban dynamics in Izmir, the city's urban development throughout the history will be examined based on the planning decisions and adopted policies while keeping the historical city center and Basmane as the main area of focus.

Planning processes will be referred frequently throughout the study. Therefore, it is necessary to give the description of the two plan types in the way that they are included in the zoning law. Firstly, the "master development plan" is defined in the zoning law as follows: the plan that cadastral situation is drawn according to; environmental or regional plans, with a detailed report showing the general land use and zoning decisions, development areas, the future population densities, the building densities, transportation systems and possible problem solutions to form a base for the

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[171] Alp Y. Kaya, "19. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla İzmir Ekonomisinde Süreklilik ve Kırılmalar," in *Değişen İzmir'i Anlamak*, edited by Deniz Yıldırım, and Evren Haspolat, 46-47, (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010.)

preparation of future implementation development plans.[172] As for the "implementation development plan," the definition is: the plan that cadastral situation is drawn according to; detailed plans showing city blocks, their density and order, roads and implementation stages that forms a base for the zoning programs that are required for the implementation.[173]

In this part of the study, development processes that have affected Izmir's urban fabric are examined under four periods. The first period covers the years between 1923 and 1950; from the rebuilding of the city to the period when the immigration rate of the city started to increase. In the second period between 1950 and 1980, the rapid urbanization process accelerated and the importance given to the private sector increased. The third period is between the years 1980 and 2000, when the effects of globalization and neoliberal politics became visible. The fourth period involves the reflections of project-based neoliberal urban policies in the city from 2000 to present day.

3.1.1. Re-organization of the Central City After the 1922 Fire

The current urban structure of the central districts of Izmir was reshaped in the early republican period. While establishing the new nation-state, a significant importance has been given to city planning. In this context, the fact that the first Congress of Economics was held in Izmir in 1923, indicates the desire to combine the goal of establishing a national economic center with the goal of building a city that was to represent the new Republic.[174] In this period, the reconstruction of the city destroyed

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[172] "Zoning law dated 9/5/1985 numbered 3194," *Legislation Information System e-Mevzuat*, last accessed April 22, 2019. URL (4).
[173] Ibid.
[174] Cânâ Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet Dönemi Planlaması (1923-1965): 20. Yüzyıl Kentsel Mirası," *Ege Mimarlık* 71, no. 4, (2009): 12.

by the Great Fire of 1922, was a priority for both the central and local government's agenda. (Figure 3.1., 2.) Due to the fire, approximately 300 hectares of land had been destroyed, including both the business center and residential areas.[175]
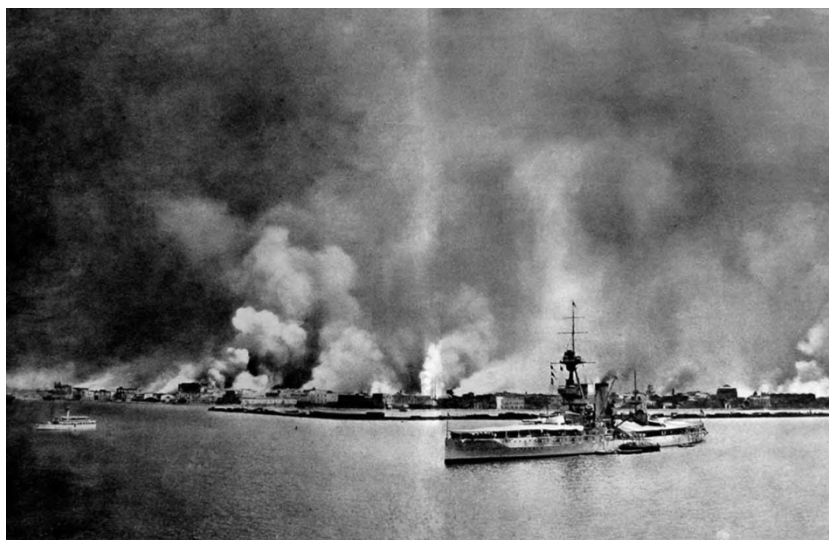
Figure 3.1. Photograph from The Great Fire of Izmir taken in September 13, 1922.

Source: Yaşar Aksoy, "1922 İzmir Yangını," Kent Konak 26, (2016):6.

Figure 3.2. Kordon after the fire.

Source: Yaşar Aksoy, "1922 İzmir Yangını," *Kent Konak* 26, (2016): 10.

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[175] Sıdıka Çetin, "Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde Bir Modernleşme Projesi: İzmir'in Yangın Bölgesinin İmarı," *Mimarlık* 326, (2005): 45.

The areas where the plan should be implemented in priority were designated as fire zones. (Figure 3.3.) Today, the areas that were reconstructed in 1930s are known as Basmane, Çankaya, Alsancak, Kahramanlar and Kültürpark.[176] In addition to re-structuring the fire zones, an extensive plan to provide a functional and spatial organization to revive the city's economy was also required. Therefore; in 1924, Izmir Municipality made an agreement with René and Raymond Danger with the consultancy of Henri Prost. Danger-Prost plan stands as an example of comprehensive urban planning that reorganizes the city as a whole. The plan is considered as the first plan prepared in Turkey that specifically targeted the urbanization problem. Large boulevards and public squares in the plan reflecting the modernist French architecture of the time[177], strengthened the image of a modern and planned city that was aimed to be created during the early Republican period. (Figure 3.4.)

Figure 3.3. Fire zones.

Source: Produced by the author, using the map taken from: Ahmet Akay, "Tarihi İzmir Haritaları." URL (5).

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[176] Fire zones were covered the Greek, Armenian and the Franc neighborhoods where local ethnic groups and Levantine formerly lived together.
[177] Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet," 13.
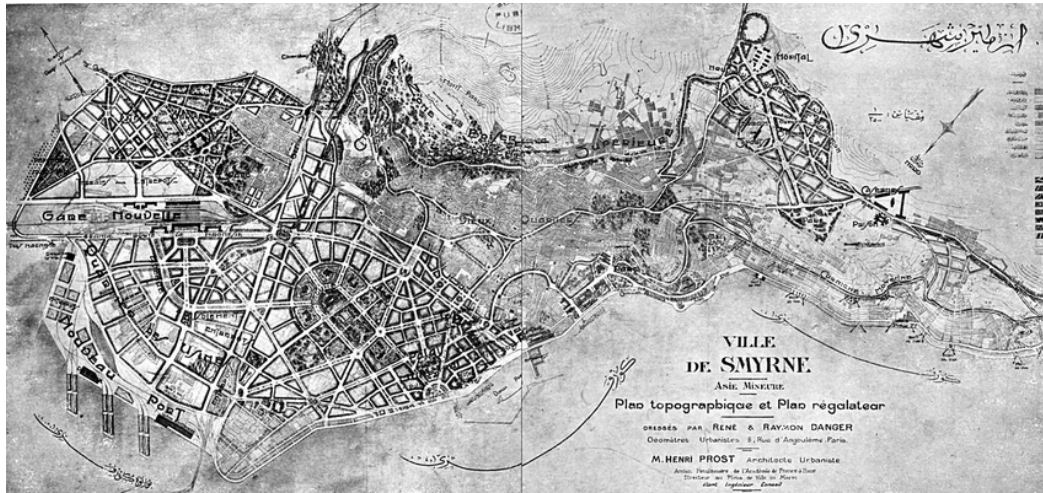
Figure 3.4. Danger-Prost Plan.

Source: Cânâ Bilsel, "Ideology and Urbanism during the Early Republican Period: Two Master Plans for İzmir and Scenarios of Modernization", *METU JFA* 16, no. 1-2, (1996): 16.

Formal organization patterns of the plan follow triangular or star-shaped squares that were created by placing radial boulevards. Each of the boulevards create "a perspective towards the sea, Kadifekale or a monument" as Cânâ Bilsel asserts.[178] This plan is important for two reasons; firstly because the commission formed by the municipality consists of local architects, engineers and doctors defined the planning targets with the planners.[179] Secondly, the current urban morphology of the central city –which can be seen from the aerial views– has been defined by this plan.[180] During the period between 1925 and 1928, there was a rapid urbanization process in the city according to the principles of the Danger– Prost plan. However, The Great Depression in 1929 affected the reconstruction of the fire zones, leaving the municipality in a

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[178] Cânâ Bilsel, "Ideology and Urbanism During the Early Republican Period: Two Master Plans for İzmir and Scenarios of Modernization," *METU JFA* 16, no. 1-2 (1996): 17-18.

[179] Cânâ Bilsel, and Haluk Zelef, "Fairy Tales: Turkey's Prospects for World Fairs, Projects for İzmir and İstanbul," Le Culture della Tecnica 25, (2014): 203.

[180] Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet," 14.

financial shortage. When Behçet Uz was elected as the mayor of Izmir Municipality in 1931, the municipality took some planning decisions and made initiatives to generate income through cheap land sales.[181]

The real development of the fire zones in terms of housing was realized after 1934.[182] Izmir International Fair and Kültürpark project dated 1936, was the main factor that triggered the development of the area and the project has become the spatial indicator of the ideal of creating a modern city. In addition to being an urban park similar to the examples in foreign countries, Kültürpark also turned into an education center and architectural exhibition.[183] The project was initiated in 1934 when Suad Yurdkoru became the deputy mayor of Izmir Municipality and prepared the program of Kültürpark that was influenced by the Gorky Park in Russia.[184] Mayor of the time, Behçet Uz contacted the prime minister İsmet İnönü about the project and Kültürpark started to be designed by the civil works department. In the central green axis proposed in the Danger-Prost plan, a circular area of 36 hectares was reserved for the development of Kültürpark. Later on, the total area of the urban park has reached 42 hectares with the addition of the triangular plot adjacent to Kültürpark that faces the 9 September Square (9 Eylül Meydanı).[185] Kültürpark, as an end product, offers physical and cultural education as well as recreation and entertainment to its visitors, has a combination of theaters, museums, exhibition spaces, ceremony grounds, sport areas and playgrounds, a parachute tower and botanical gardens.[186] (Figure 3.5.)

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[181] Özgecan Akbayırlı, "1923'ten Günümüze İzmir'de Planlama Kararları ile Konut Dokusu ve Mimarisinin Etkileşimi" (Master's Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 2009), 22.
[182] Çetin, "Erken Cumhuriyet," 46.
[183] Emel Kayın, "Mekânsal ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Ayrıksılıklar Geriliminde İzmir: Küresel-Yerel Fenomenler," in *Değişen İzmir'i Anlamak*, edited by Deniz Yıldırım, and Evren Haspolat, 350, (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010.)
[184] Bilsel and Zelef, "Fairy Tales," 204.
[185] Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet," 15.
[186] Gökhan Karpat, "İzmir Kültürpark ve Fuar Alanının Tarihsel Gelişim Sürecinin Araştırılması ve Geleceğe Yönelik Tasarım Programının Oluşturulması," (Master's Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 2009), 110.

Figure 3.5. Kültürpark Fair aerial photograph taken in 1943.

Source: Cânâ Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet Dönemi Planlaması (1923-1965): 20. Yüzyıl Kentsel Mirası." *Ege Mimarlık* 71, no. 4 (2009):14.

Some changes were made to the Danger-Prost plan in 1926 with the revision of the municipality. Later in 1938, the Mayor of the period, Behçet Uz, initiated the revision of the plan and the implementation of the five-year development program between 1938-1944. The fact that the urban population increased with the start of the migration to the city, the lack of resolution of the housing problem has been effective in the increase of the housing deficit and the unplanned growth of the city.

3.1.2. 1950-1980 Period

In the 1950-1980 period, there have been significant changes that affected the urban development processes in Turkey. With the transition from a single-party period to a multi-party period and the adoption of liberalism instead of the étatism of the previous period has brought the participation of private entrepreneurs in state-dominated industrialization. Ataman defines the formation of squatter areas around the cities, the

lack of infrastructure and a dual urban development as the main features of this period.[187] As a result of the liberal policies adopted and the encouragement towards industry-centric growth in this period; phenomena such as rapid development of cities, vertical urban growth, internal migration and squatter settlements have led to a new transformation process in Izmir, like most cities in the country. The development was regarded as a renewal and the historical fabric of the city was damaged throughout the years together with the continuous increase of the building density and the lack of technical and social infrastructure. [188,189] The main urban processes in this period in Izmir can be summarized as; the growth of the city, the renewal of the urban fabric with the demolition and rebuilding of the existing buildings, and the transformation of the residential buildings from single houses to apartment blocks. Legalization of these processes has been made possible by the decisions taken and the laws adopted by both local and central authorities.[190] Penpecioğlu states that the authorities at the time did not adopt a comprehensive, holistic and long-term perspective of planning to tackle with the urbanization problems, but "rather they tend to make clientelist urban policies through distributing the rights of construction to particular social classes by partial interventions to urban space."[191]

In 1951, the municipality initiated the preparation of a new city-wide master plan and the Provincial Bank of Turkey has organized a competition. Kemal Ahmet Arû, Emin Canbolat and Gündüz Özdeş won the İzmir Development Plan Competition and their development plan was put into practice in 1953.[192] (Figure 3.6.) They used a functionalist planning that divides the city into functional zones as housing,

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[187] Orol Ataman, "75 Yılda Kentleşme ve Planlama," *Ege Mimarlık* 30, no.2 (1999): 32.
[188] Ataman, "75 Yılda," 33.
[189] Kayın, "Mekânsal ve," 350.
[190] Ataman, "75 Yılda," 32.
[191] Mehmet Penpecioğlu, "The Political Construction of Urban Development Projects: The Case of İzmir," (PhD diss., METU, 2012), 139.
[192] Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet," 16.

commerce, industry, port and logistics. (Figure 3.7.) However, the fact that the rapid increase of the population in the city at the time were not taken into account caused the plan to lose its applicability in a short time.

Figure 3.6. Aru-Canbolat-Özdeş Plan.

Source: Cânâ Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet Dönemi Planlaması (1923-1965): 20. Yüzyıl Kentsel Mirası." *Ege Mimarlık* 71, no. 4 (2009):16.
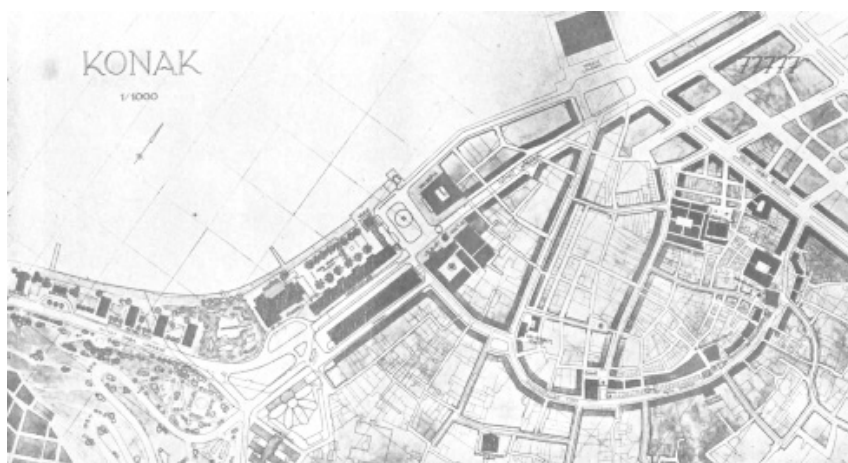
Figure 3.7. Konak district in Aru-Canbolat-Özdeş Plan.

Source: Cânâ Bilsel, "İzmir'de Cumhuriyet Dönemi Planlaması (1923-1965): 20. Yüzyıl Kentsel Mirası." *Ege Mimarlık* 71, no. 4 (2009):16.

A new urban process was started following the Zoning Regulation dated 1958. Many houses located near Kültürpark and in Alsancak district were demolished and rebuilt with more storeys. The increase in the scale affected the fire zone and became visible for the first time through the housing texture of Kordon, then Alsancak and Kahramanlar districts. Afterwards, due to its location in the city center and its proximity to the sea, the housing areas in Alsancak did not developed towards the periphery and experienced a considerable increase in the density through demolition and rebuilding.[193]

As a result of the rapid urbanization and dense housing after 1960; a metropolitan system where cities are managed by several district municipalities, was adopted by the major metropolitan cities that were formerly controlled by a single municipality. During this period, in search of a new plan, the municipality contacted Albert Bodmer and he prepared the plan in 1960. Similar to the 1953 Arû Plan, over time the population exceeded the predictions of Bodmer's plan. Kaya indicates the fact that, even though the Bodmer Plan was not approved by the municipality and Aru plan was carried out until the end of 1970s, the land use decisions in the Bodmer Plan were mainly implemented through revisions made on the Arû Plan.[194]

With the approval of the Flat Ownership Act in 1965, a city-wide rebuilding process was carried out and the buildings were designed independently.[195] As a result, the master plan adjustments made on the existing urban texture and construction permits that were given for rent purposes, gave rise to multi-storey buildings. In order to find solutions to the problems of urbanization that accelerated in the country after 1950s the government consulted to foreign experts. In line with the consultancy of these experts specialized planning institutions were founded for the major cities in mid

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[193] Akbayırlı, "1923'ten Günümüze," 94.
[194] Nursen Kaya, "Analysis of the Interaction Between Urban Theory and Practice in Urban Planning; Understanding İzmir Case," (PhD diss., İzmir Institute of Technology, 2002), 153.
[195] Ahmet Eyüce, "İzmir'de Kentsel Değişimler ve Mimari Gelişmeler Çerçevesinde Kent ve Mimarlık İlişkileri" *Ege Mimarlık* 53, no.1 (2005): 39-43

1960s.[196] Thereupon, Metropolitan Planning Bureaus were established in the major cities of Turkey: İstanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. These bureaus used an interdisciplinary team of experts to create metropolitan plans that would respond to the existing urban challenges.[197]

Izmir Metropolitan Planning Bureau (İMPB) started to working on a comprehensive plan using detailed analyses and structural planning techniques in 1968 and completed this plan in 1973. After that, a revision plan was prepared in 1978 in line with the changing conditions and urban developments. Arkon and Gülerman define the 1973 Metropolitan Master Plan as "the first comprehensive plan in terms of the area that is covered by and the applied planning methodology."[198, 199] İMPB proposed multiple investment projects to be implemented by public and private institutions in the plan. However, Kaya points out that, "because of financial and bureaucratic problems most of the decisions postponed and some of them like the improvement of railway system or bay treatment project could only be realized at the end of 1990s."[200] In the following years, mainly because of the investment strategies adopted by the government and illegal residential developments[201], the urban form started to develop in a way that neither the 1973 plan nor its revision in 1978 were able to respond to the urban problems of Izmir.

In the 1950-1980 period, several development plans were prepared by professionals. Yet, the constant increase in the population and urban sprawl led to the insufficiency

[196] Ataman, "75 Yılda," 32.
[197] Ibid., 33.
[198] Cemal Arkon, and Ali Rıza Gülerman, "İzmir Büyükşehir Bütünündeki Nazım Plan Çalışmaları Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Planlama*, no.1-2 (1995): 15.
[199] The plan was prepared on 1/25.000 scale and was covered an area of 75.000 hectare. Mimarlar Odası İzmir Şubesi, "İzmir Kenti Planlama Tarihi," last accessed April 10, 2019. URL (6).
[200] Kaya, "Analysis of the Interaction," 170.
[201] Eyüce, "İzmir'de Kentsel," 38-40.

of the plans. Decisions taken and laws passed during this period, gave way of partial interventions and as a result, the density in the city especially in Alsancak increased considerably.

3.1.3. 1980-2000 Period

Post 1980s in Turkey has been a period when the military government took control and changed the constitution. In the meantime, the world entered a new period when the neoliberalization movements started to be effective in urban policies. The implementation of the new political and economic solutions has affected the whole world in the post-1980 period. In line with the global developments, Turgut Özal, the Prime Minister of Turkey at the time, initiated the use of free trade, privatization of public investment, neoliberal economic policies and new monetary policies for the integration of the country's economy into the global system.[202] During this period, tourism and construction sectors come to the forefront and big mass housing sites, skyscrapers, campuses outside the city, international trade centers, new airports and infrastructure facilities were constructed.[203] Due to the political instabilities and economic difficulties in the country, a real understanding of planning was not carried out. This situation led to the partial planning and zoning regulations were adopted. Thus, the concept of modern planning, which was more stable and comprehensive in the previous periods, were replaced with the piecemeal investment decisions of the government.

After the military coup in 1980, Metropolitan Planning Bureaus were closed. During this period, many housing laws and a zoning amnesty law were enacted and all the squatter houses built before 1981 have benefited from the amnesty. In 1983, the Motherland Party (MP) came to power and won the municipal election in Izmir which resulted in Burhan Özfatura to become mayor in 1984. With the new planning law

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[202] Kaya, "Analysis of the Interaction," 170.
[203] Ibid.

enacted in the same year, the planning authority was decentralized, and the municipalities were granted with the authority of the preparation and approval of development plans with the aim to accelerate the approval processes.[204] With this decision, the amount of resources allocated to municipalities were increased, as a result the urban development practices accelerated in almost all major cities.[205]

In response to these acts, the social union in Izmir began to develop in the second half of the 1980s. While the popularity of the concept of civil society was increasing, the urban rise of neoliberal policies supported the attempts to limit the role and activities of the state, which contributed to the expansion of the field of civil society.[206] This development led to the expansion of the range of actors that produce discourses on the urban dynamics. Civil society organizations and associations were added to the palette of urban actors along with the local authorities, planners and architects.

In 1985, the preparation of a new master plan has started and former decisions of the Metropolitan Planning Bureau were transferred to the new plan. The Metropolitan Master Plan Revision was approved in 1989. It was formed by the combination of former implementation plans.[207] Kaya indicates that the plan did not offer long-term strategic solutions to urban problems of the city,[208] and cannot be classified as a rational comprehensive plan like the previous ones. Işın Can also points out that the plan lacks theoretical background and/or method that could cover the design of the city.[209]

In the 1989 elections, the candidate of the Republican People's Party (RPP), Yüksel Çakmur, was elected as the new mayor. During Çakmur's mayorship, a national

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[204] Arkon, and Gülerman, "İzmir Büyükşehir," 19.
[205] Anlı Ataöv, and Sevin Osmay, "Türkiye'de Kentsel Dönüşüme Yöntemsel Bir Yaklaşım," *METU JFA* 24, no. 2 (2007): 65.
[206] Gülgün Tosun, "İzmir de Toplumsal Örgütlenmenin Boyutları," in *Değişen İzmir'i Anlamak*, edited by Deniz Yıldırım, and Evren Haspolat, 537, (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010.)
[207] Arkon, and Gülerman, "İzmir Büyükşehir," 19.
[208] Kaya, "Analysis of the Interaction," 173.
[209] Işın Can, "Urban Design and the Planning System in Izmir," *Journal of Landscape Studies* 3, (2010): 185.

competition was organized for the rearrangement of Kültürpark. At that time, Kültürpark was declared as a second-degree natural protected area, and in response, the announcement and the conditions of the competition attracted negative reactions from the locals. Later on, the competition was re-arranged to meet the requirements, but after the next municipal election the master plan covering Kültürpark area was changed again, and as a result, the winning design could not be implemented.

The urban development projects that were initiated by Özfatura, who was reelected as the mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir (MMI) in 1994, emerges as the notable implementations of the period. The major projects constructed in the second half of 1990s were Mass Housing Projects, Aegean Free Zone Project and İzmir Hilton Hotel Project. Penpecioğlu underlines the importance of the fact that these projects were funded by using different resources, which enabled the introduction of the foreign capital to the city as "an actor in the production of urban space in İzmir."[210] There were some projects that were planned but not implemented after 1995. One of these projects was Izmir Tourism and Trade Center which was planned to be located in the plot adjacent to Kültürpark. The way that the contractor company, which had close relations with the former mayor Burhan Özfatura, handled the project and the judicial processes experienced afterwards, made the project insoluble and caused the land to remain idle for years. This project will be critically evaluated as the case study in the following part.

During the 1999 local government elections, these projects were announced to the public as part of Özfatura's campaign. Penpecioğlu argues that in fact, the discourse of "world city" was used during this election for the first time and "[w]ithin this vision of "world city," Burhan Özfatura and his right-wing local political leadership proposed some emblematic urban development projects to construct a neo-liberal urban development vision."[211] During this period, the urban development projects

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[210] Penpecioğlu, "The Political Construction," 165.
[211] Ibid.

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were presented to public eye under the discourses of "investment tools" and "urban competitiveness". The 1999 municipal election resulted with the victory of the Democratic Left Party (DLP) candidate Ahmet Piriştina. After Piriştina's sudden death in 2004, Aziz Kocaoğlu took over his duty.

While comprehensive plans that embraced the idea of a modern city were produced during the previous periods, profit-oriented, project-based interventions and legalizations have come to the fore during this period. The short-term solutions that have focused on income generation, have had long-lasting effects in the city. Between the years 1980 and 2000; the planning authority was transferred to local administrations and construction activities was intensified, especially in the outskirts of the city. The transformation of the squatter houses to apartment buildings accelerated. These policies, which in turn encouraged the increase in built environment, have gained a different dimension and accelerated with the change of political power by the year 2002.

3.1.4. 2000-Today: Implementations of Real Estate Developments

Osman Balaban indicates that when the development of construction sector activity in Turkey is examined, two major growth periods are observed; firstly, in the1980s and secondly in the 2000s.[212] In both periods, the state has supported the growth of the construction sector through both direct and indirect investments, as well as legal and administrative arrangements. It can be observed that the construction sector has developed under the leadership of governments, which adopted a neoliberal economic program in the post-crisis period and controlled by powerful center-right parties.[213] After 2000s, the state has played a major role in the development of the construction sector by means of neoliberal policies. While state institutions became the leading actors in the construction sector, legal arrangements made it easier to sell property to

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[212] Osman Balaban, "İnşaat Sektörü Neyin Lokomotifi," *Birikim* 270, (2011): 22.
[213] Penpecioğlu, "Kapitalist kentleşme," 71.

foreigners and new housing loans were put into effect. From the 2000s onwards, this role played by the state is observed through the laws that rearrange planning authority, central management institutions focused on the construction of shopping malls, luxury housing production, urban transformation and mega projects; and the public lands allocated to the private sector for tourism purposes.[214]

The organization of special laws on urban interventions in this period could not be considered as a coincidence. These interventions are the reflection of the efforts to create an infrastructure directly related to the new economic policies. The neoliberal policies of the post-2000 period that prioritized the rant-oriented trends rather than production, pushed planning and public investment into the background; and foreign trade and exchange policies left the industry vulnerable to destructive competition in Izmir as, just as they did in the whole country.[215]

In 2001, MMI organized the International Urban Design Idea Competition for the Port District of Izmir for the design of the new Central Business District (CBD). The aim of the competition was stated as: The enhancement of the contemporary image and international status of Izmir.[216] Based on the proposals of the competition, MMI has prepared the Master Plan for the Development of the New City Center in 2003. The main aim of the plan was to direct the future developments towards a new center, which will be located in Bayraklı-Salhane harbor district to decrease the pressure of construction on the historical city center. The views of investors, local capital organizations, professional chambers and academicians were taken during the planning process that followed the competition, and the Master Plan for the Development of the New City Center was approved in 2005 by the consensus of local

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[214] Mehmet Penpecioğlu, "Büyük Ölçekli Kentsel Projeler, Mekânın Üretimi ve Neo-Liberal Hegemonya: İzmir Örneğinde Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma," *Megaron* 8, no.2 (2013): 100. doi: 10.5505/megaron.2013.87597
[215] Mustafa Sönmez, "Küresel Krizin İzmir'e Etkileri," in *Değişen İzmir'i Anlamak*, edited by Deniz Yıldırım, and Evren Haspolat, 185, (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010.)
[216] "Final Report on İzmir International Urban Design Idea Competition for the Port District of İzmir," *Arkitera,* accessed April 9, 2017. URL (7).

governments, investors and professional chambers in the planning process. According to Penpecioğlu, the public opinion about the CBD project between 2005-2010 was formed around hegemonic discourses such as; 'competitiveness,' 'entrepreneurship,' 'investment,' 'employment' and 'local economic growth,' and the Metropolitan Municipality, investors, local capital organizations, Izmir Branch of the Chamber of Architects and media institutions have played an important role in the production and dissemination of these discourses.[217] Former mayor of MMI Yüksel Çakmur and some of the MMI Council members had filed a lawsuit against the Master Plan for the Development of the New Central Business District because the geological characteristics of the CBD area were not found suitable for a high-density high-rise urban development.[218] As a result of the lawsuit, the plan was canceled in 2010 for the insufficiency of geological surveys. However; in the following period, MMI has completed the geological surveys required and approved the master plan in 2011. (Figure 3.8.)

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[217] Penpecioğlu, "Büyük Ölçekli," 101.
[218] "Yine dava açtı," *Milliyet*, last modified October 24, 2010. URL (8).
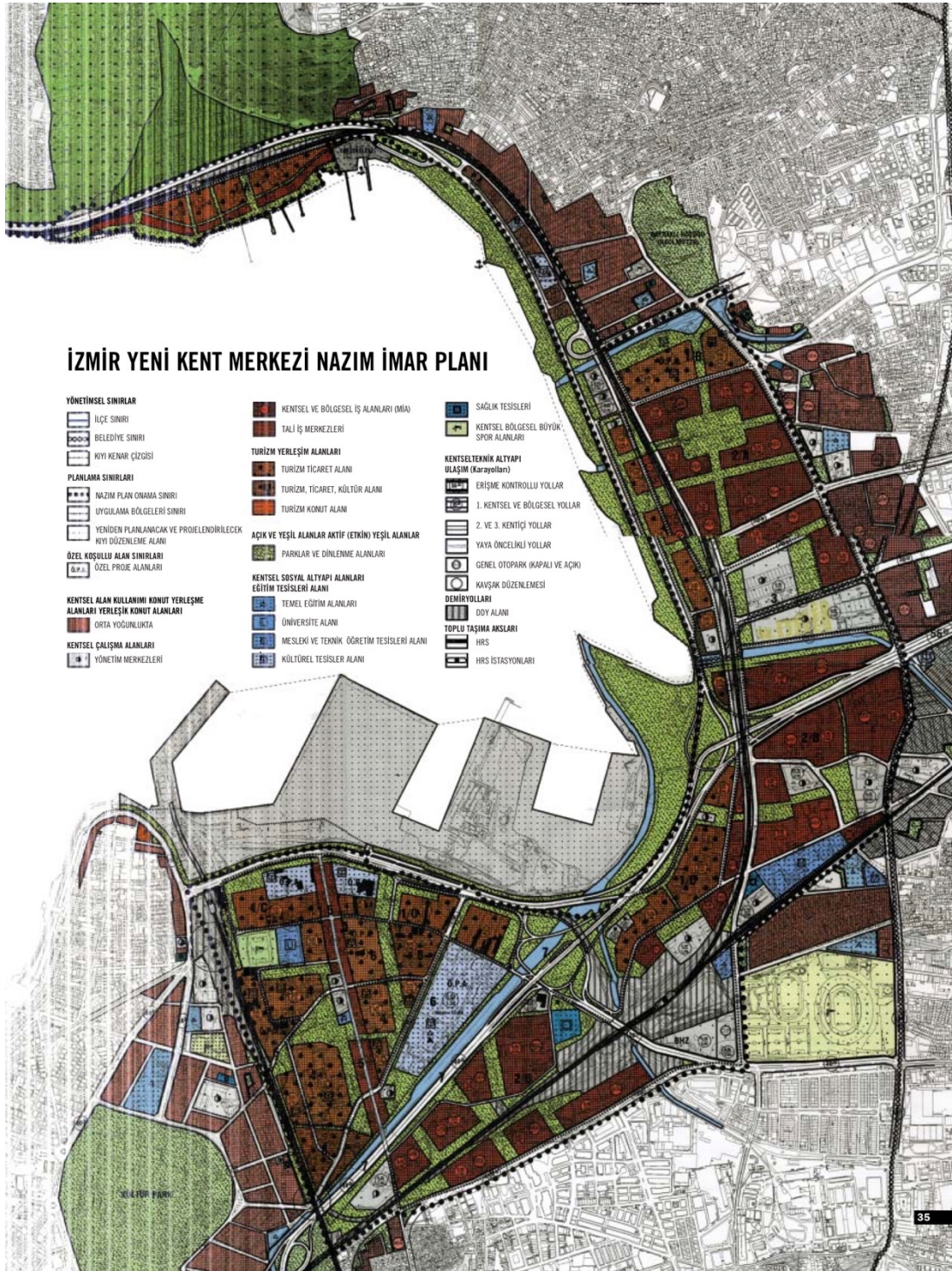
Figure 3.8. IYKMNIP.

Source: Eylem Bal, Ayşegül Altınörs and O. Eylem Doğmuş, "Kente Yön Veren Aktörler Temelinde İzmir Yeni Kent Merkezi Nazım Planı," *Ege Mimarlık* 53, no. 1 (2005): 35.

The mass housing law amended in 2004 and the municipal law amended in 2005 have stipulated that local governments should produce spatial and institutional strategic plans with the participation of local actors.[219] Following this decision, the Urban-Region Development Plan (IKBNIP) which determines the basic strategies and spatial distribution of the future of Izmir in the next 25-30 years, was approved in 2007 and later revised in 2009. The plan was prepared in a rather unhealthy planning system where there were ongoing changes to the legislation; in fact, Aysel and Göksu on İKBNİP point out that there was no upper-scale plan to direct the preparation of this plan.[220]

In the plan, the historical city center's differentiation from the upper-scale plans due to the increase in illegal construction, the lack of infrastructure and the increasing density were defined as the ongoing urban problems; whereas the strategy of limiting the further construction in the city center and the decentralization were suggested as solutions.[221] Izmir Port region was intended to support the city center with tourism and trade areas, as determined in the CBD project.

According to Balaban, the political actors in Turkey wanted to utilize the construction sector not only for the economic purposes but also for short and medium-term political purposes.[222] Yet, as the ruling party of Turkey, Justice and Development Party (JDP) was not successful in the local elections in Izmir during this period and the MMI was ruled by the main opposition party RPP. It is understood from the data provided from Sönmez that; Izmir did not get enough shares from the growth process experienced after the entry of external capital after 2002.[223] According to Sönmez, the influence of the political attitude of the JDP government, which cannot attract the interest of the

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[219] Ataöv and Osmay, "Türkiye'de Kentsel," 69.
[220] Funda Aysel, and Sezai Göksu, "İzmir Kentsel Bölge Nazım İmar Planı'nın Değerlendirilme Biçimi Üzerine," *Ege Mimarlık*, no.1 (2010): 36.
[221] Mimarlar Odası İzmir Şubesi, "1/25000 Ölçekli İzmir Kentsel Bölge Nazım İmar Planı Revizyonu Açıklama Raporu (2009)," 101-104, accessed April 9, 2017. URL (9).
[222] Balaban, "İnşaat Sektörü," 26.
[223] Sönmez, "Küresel Krizin," 185.

expected electorate from the city, is a very important factor in the reduction of public expenditures in Izmir.[224] Nevertheless; today, just as in the rest of Turkey, it is possible to observe the effects of neoliberal policies on the construction sector of Izmir through architectural projects and their critical location choices. In regard to the local and central governments with different political ideologies adopting similar urban policies, Neslihan Demirtaş-Milz in her essay covering Izmir and its citizens in relation with neoliberal policies, addresses that when the local policies are examined, regardless of the identities of the political parties, a more democratic and a participatory urban regime differing from the current neoliberal urban policies cannot be noted.[225]

Upon examination of the new CBD, it can be seen that the new urban center includes central business areas, tourism areas, mixed uses and recreative uses. In CBD, Folkart Construction Company's Folkart Towers project has attracted by far the biggest interest. Izmir's highest, Turkey's second and Europe's fifth-highest building project in the new CBD, has made a distinctive conjecture of the hegemonic power of neoliberal urbanization both in the city skyline and in the immediate vicinity of the project. Today, the twin-towers are evaluated as one of the most significant outputs of the decisions of the New City Center Plan, which includes targets aligned with neoliberal restructuring processes in the city.[226] (Figure 3.9., 3.10.)

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Neslihan Demirtaş-Milz, "Neoliberal Zamanlarda İzmir ve İzmirlilik Tahayyülleri," in *Değişen İzmir'i Anlamak*, edited by Deniz Yıldırım, and Evren Haspolat, 421, (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010.)
[226] Eylem Bal, and Didem Akyol Altun, "İzmir'de Neoliberal Kentleşmenin Manifestosu Olarak Folkart Projeleri," *Arkitera*, last modified January 3, 2017. URL (10).

Figure 3.9. CBD silhouette, 2017.

Source: "İzmir Gökdelenleri," Facebook, posted in April 15, 2017. URL (11).

Figure 3.10. View of CBD from Bornova district, 2018.

Source: "İzmir Gökdelenleri," Facebook, posted in May 17, 2018. URL (12).

Ataöv and Osmay, in their essay on urban renewal in Turkey indicate that; in the 2000s, the construction of luxury housing estates outside the city increased by the interventions of the private sector and in urban centers, the historical housing stock continued to be used as new residences or business centers.[227] In Izmir, especially after 2010, the scale of the capital directed towards luxury housing production has grown significantly, and it is observed that the early investments have encouraged other investors.[228]

On the basis of these parameters, Folkart Construction has played a prominent role in accelerating the process and strengthening this tendency in the city by putting forward the examples of neoliberal urbanization practices all over Izmir. As of now, the firm has completed twelve different projects scattered around the city such as Narlıdere, Bornova, Mavişehir, Çeşme; with the functions of residences, hotels and mixed-use business centers. The five ongoing projects of the firm in Izmir are designed as shopping mall, residence and mixed-use. (Figure 3.11.)

However, there is one planned project that has not been included in the firm's website, despite the fact that it has been on the local agenda for some time and took great media coverage. Folkart Construction Firm's Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center Project Proposal for Basmane is selected as the case study due to the following reasons: the project stands out as the most powerful example of the neoliberal urbanization trends experienced in Izmir due to its symbolic characteristics which was promoted as an "icon" or "prestige project," and the way that the proposal projects were presented to the locals exemplifies the mental legitimacy of neoliberal hegemony. In addition, for the location of the project, the plot in the center of the city, adjacent to Kültürpark –which is enlisted as a natural protected area– was chosen instead of the new CBD that was designed to reduce the density at the city center.

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[227] Ataöv and Osmay, "Türkiye'de Kentsel," 69.
[228] Bal, and Akyol Altun, "İzmir'de Neoliberal Kentleşmenin Manifestosu,"
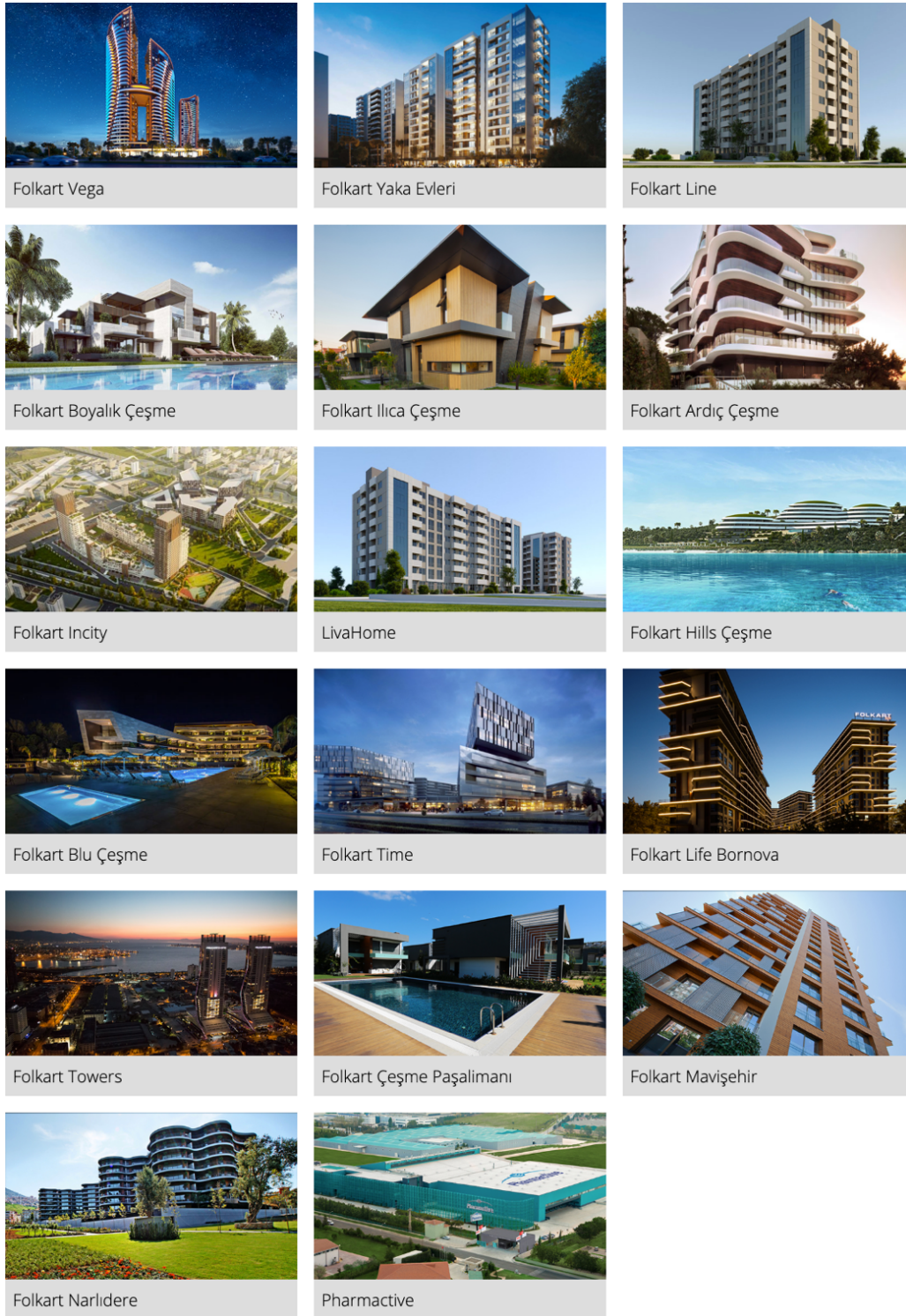
Figure 3.11. Folkart's ongoing and completed projects in İzmir.

Source: Folkart Construction website, last accessed April 27, 2019. URL (13).

From the beginning of the 2000s to present day, Kayın mentions that almost all cities want to have flashy buildings/places defined by adjectives such as "the highest, the largest, the widest" and that historical/contemporary architecture is removed from the local context and presented to the consumption environment by instrumentalization.[229] In this case, while historical places are subjected to destruction in the face of global demands, modern architecture becomes the scene of socio-economic, technological and political power demonstrations.[230] Kayın defines 2000s as a period when the main target is economic and urban growth instead of healthy development and the imported mega visions are frequently raised, a process in which urban proposals are addressed, not as a whole, but in fragments. In the following part of the thesis on the case study, which represents these aforementioned processes experienced after the 2000s, will be examined.

3.2. Characteristics of Basmane District and its Location in the Central City

Basmane district, one of the oldest settlements of Izmir, was partly destroyed during the Great Fire of Symrna in 1922; three quarters of the neighborhood was completely burned. In 1930s, Kültürpark was established on a section of the fire ground. Today, Basmane district is located in the central district of Konak and consists both the neighborhoods that were rebuilt after the fire and the historical neighborhoods that have been preserved to this day. Orhan Beşikçi, a city observer, defines the boundaries of Basmane district as,

> Stand in front of the 9 Eylül Gate of Kültürpark while facing Kadifekale, and extend your left arm towards the historical Kervan Bridge and your right arm towards the Çankaya district. The area that you embraced with your arms is Basmane district.[231] (Figure 3.12., 3.13.)

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[229] Kayın, "21. Yüzyıl Kentlerinde," 41.
[230] Ibid., 42.
[231] Orhan Beşikçi, *Basmane*, (İstanbul: Heyamola Yayınları, 2011.)

Figure 3.12. Central city districts.

Source: Produced by the author, using visuals taken from Google Maps.

Figure 3.13. Location of Basmane district in the central city.

Source: Produced by the author, using visuals taken from Google Maps.

While the major part of Basmane district is located in the central city, Basmane Pit faces the 9 Eylül Square which is located at the heart of the city center. The exact location of the selected case study area within these parameters can be described as; the triangular plot formed by the intersection of two boulevards[232] and adjacent to one of the five gates of Kültürpark, the Gate of 9 Eylül –which is one of the three gates that are named after the squares they are facing.[233] (Figure 3.14.)

Figure 3.14. Location of The Basmane Pit in the central city.

Source: Produced by the author, using visuals taken from Google Maps.

As one of the city's first settlements, Basmane is an important place in the history of Izmir. Some of the oldest business and shopping centers (known as "han" or "iş hanı" in Turkish), Turkish baths, churches and mosques of Izmir are located in this district, along with important structures such as the 9 Eylül Square, 9 Eylül Gate of Kültürpark, Konak Municipality, Agora Open Air Museum and Basmane Train Station. Hotels Street (Oteller Sokağı), which has received an award from the Union of Historical

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[232] Dr. Refik Saydam and Cumhuriyet Boulevards.
[233] Those five Gates are; 9 Eylül Gate, Montrö Gate, Lozan Gate, 26 Ağustos Gate and Cumhuriyet Gate.

Towns, is also located in this region. Basmane Train Station located on the Izmir-Aydın railway has had a great impact on the formal organization of the district. The metallic structure of the station was designed by the engineering firm of the French engineer Gustave Eiffel and was built in 1876. Today, it still maintains its importance as the first building seen by the people arriving at the city by train. In the district, old houses that survived the fire and especially the Hotels Street have gained importance as the last remnants reflecting a period in history. However, due to lack of maintenance, the district is now losing its architectural value.

Inhabited by various civilizations throughout the history, this district used to house many different ethnic groups before the fire and the declaration of the Turkish Republic. Today, the northern part of Basmane towards Alsancak, is inhabited by the white-collar upper-middle income groups; whereas in the south, the lower-income groups, immigrants from other cities, and especially in recent years, Syrian refugees are living. While the city center is generally associated with prestigious workplaces, hotels, restaurants, entertainment and nightlife, cultural and art activities; especially the southern part, including Basmane, is identified with small retailers, forgotten professions and handicrafts, historical but neglected streets. This segregation is also reflected in the formal organization of the city center. The clear segregation of the historical city center can be observed upon examination of the current urban fabric of the district. The northern part of the central city is formed by radial boulevards and triangular squares that were constructed according to Danger-Prost plan, whereas the southern part reflects the characteristics of a traditional urban fabric which consists of irregularly formed narrow side-streets. (Figure 3.15., 3.16.)
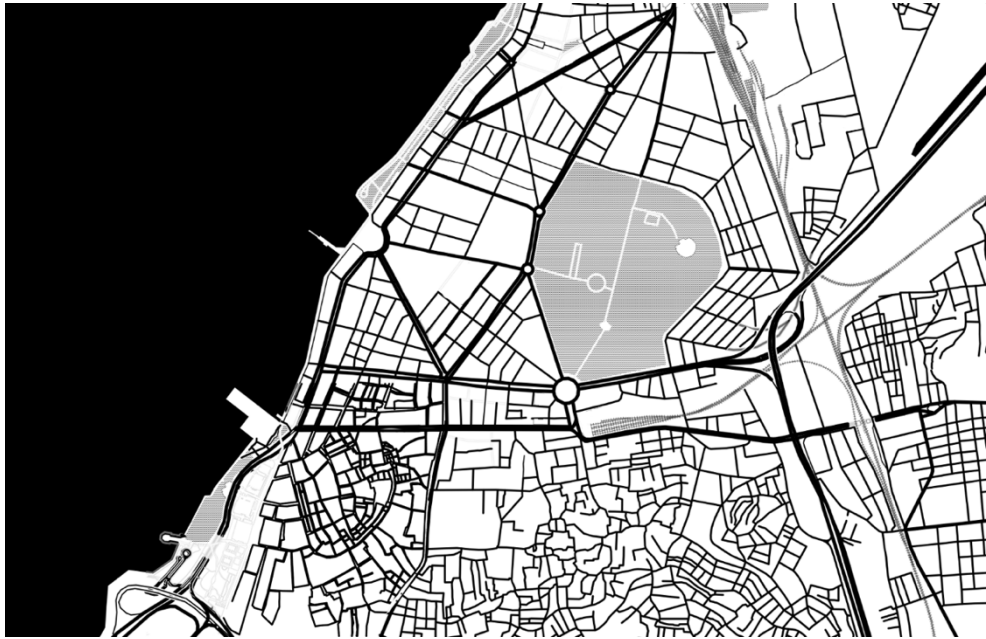
Figure 3.15. Street network of the city center.

Source: Produced by the author.

Figure 3.16. Figure-ground map of Basmane district.

Source: Produced by the author.

In the previous years, various events have been organized to emphasize the history and cultural importance of the Basmane district. One of the most prominent events was the Basmane and its Vicinity History, Culture, Art and Archeology Days which was held annually by the MMI between 2010 and 2017. Annual events were organized in order to attract the attention to the cultural importance of Basmane and its vicinity with the collective effort of MMI, Konak Municipality, Turkish State Railways (TCCD), Craftsman's Association, and numerous NGOs. Throughout the events; trips to historical places, mosaic and musical instrument workshops, theater and pantomime shows, movie and documentary screenings and many painting, sculpture and photography exhibitions are organized. Each year; many historians, writers, journalists, city observers and academicians attend the events to organize colloquiums and discuss the issues related to the history of the environment and urbanization with the contributions of the locals and the local authority. Discussions on current issues such as urban identity and urban consciousness, the conservation of the historical urban fabric of Basmane and its vicinity, preservation-oriented urban transformation, and responsibility of local governments in the preservation of the cultural heritage were carried out during the events. Since the events were not held in 2018 and 2019, it is uncertain whether it will continue in the upcoming years.

3.3. History of Basmane Pit and the Previous Proposals for the Area

The urban plot, which is known as Basmane Pit today, has a complex history that consists of series of processes that overlap over the years: architectural competitions, public-private partnerships, objections and protests, filed lawsuits, and canceled plans. [234] In order to make the process more comprehensible for the reader, the narration of events affecting the land from past to present have been supported by a series of timelines. The first timeline covers the years between 1950-1994. (Figure 3.17.)

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[234] The part regarding the history of Basmane Pit is based on to a great extent the study of: Gökhan H. Erkan, and Adile A. Avar, "Kamu Hukuku ile Özel Hukuku Çatıştıran Protokole-Bağlı Planlama: 'İzmir Basmane Dünya Ticaret Merkezi' Vakası," *Planlama* 27, no.2 (2017): 152-168.

Photograph of the plot from 1960s.

"BASMANE ESHOT GARAGE AREA"

~1950

• The urban plot, was neither idle nor in the form of a pit in the past. It has long been used as the service area for the city's buses; known as the ESHOT Garage Area.

In 1983, the plot was included in a national competition.

Competition Brief:
• A 5 star luxury hotel with a capacity of 1000 beds (51,705 m2)
• A Congress Center (10.386 m2)
• A Trade Center (11.095 m2)
• Technical Services (5070 m2), Parking area (18.750 m2) (500 cars)

1983

1st Competition

Basmane Tourism and Trade Center Architectural Competition *1st Prize.
Winners:
Zafer Koçak & Kemal İpek

• Asil Nadir wanted to turn the winner project of the 1983 competition into a profitable one —which he thought was not "investor-friendly."

The winning project was not implemented.

"Investor-friendly" Project

1984   **1985**

MMI Mayor: Burhan Özfatura

Asil Nadir (investor) had French architect P. Parat prepare a new project.

The notes of:
• "Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 5,
• Height: free," and
• "Application will be carried out according to the special project"
are added for the first time in this implementary development plan.

1986

Plan Revision

The municipality revised the implementary development plan, to enable the construction of the Tourism and Trade Center for the new project.

The Chamber applied to the court, alleging that the project has been improperly prepared and the property rights of the winning architects were abused.

First Objection:
Chamber of Architects

1988

As a result, the City Council decided that the winner project must be implemented.

In response, the investor Asil Nadir gave up the project.

Another national competition covering the Kültürpark Area and the plot was organized in the period of Yüksel Çakmur.

• Conservation Board decided that the competition area should be divided into three zones as A, B, C: Recreation area, Fair, Hotel and Congress Center.

• The Chamber of Architects reacted against the decision of dividing Kültürpark, claiming that the action may destroy its unity.

MMI Mayor: Yüksel Çakmur

1989   **1990**   1994

2nd Competition

International Kültürpark Fair Landscaping and Architectural Competition *1st Prize.
Winners:
Şükrü Kocagöz, Merih Karaaslan, Mürşit Günday

85

Figure 3.17. Timeline covering the years between 1950-1994.

Source: Produced by the author.

Figure 3.18. Basmane ESHOT Garage Area in 1960s.

Source: Ahmet Akay, "Basmane'deki Eski Garaj," last modified on March 2009. URL (14).

In the competition brief it was determined that the architectural designs should include: Five-star luxury hotel with a capacity of 1000 beds (51,705 sq.m.), Congress Center (10.386 sq. m.), Trade Center (11.095 sq. m.) Technical Services (5070 sq. m.) and Parking area (18.750 sq.m.) (500 cars). While the competition was organized in 1983, after in 1984 Burhan Özfatura was elected the first mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir (MMI). As a result of the competition, Zafer Koçak and Kemal İpek won the first prize. (Figure 3.19.) The municipality initiated a tender for the implementation of the wining project and Asil Nadir won this tender. However, in a short time, the municipal authority left aside the winning project and made an agreement with a French architect for a new tourism-hotel project for the plot of old ESHOT Garage without the consent of the winners.[235] Tuna states that this decision was influenced by an offer from Asil Nadir who had the project examined by a group of investors and came to the conclusion that the winning project is incomplete and

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[235] Aslı Özbay, "Editorial," *Mimarlık* 229, no.2 (1988): 16.

inadequate in terms of international qualifications, and the hotel can get three or four stars but not five.[236] In this case, it can be concluded that, Nadir wanted to turn this project –which he thought was not investor-friendly– into a profitable one.

Figure 3.19. İzmir Tourism and Trade Center Architectural Competition 1st Prize designed by Zafer Koçak & Kemal İpek.

Source: "Basmane Turizm ve Ticaret Merkezi Konulu Yarışma Sonuçlandı,"*Mimarlık* 204, no.6 (1984): 3.

The municipality revised the implementary development plan of Izmir to enable the construction of the Tourism and Trade Center for the new project. The notes of "Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 5, height: free," and "application will be carried out according to the special project" are added for the first time in this implementary development plan.[237] The 1986 plan has brought two important decisions: The winning project of the competition was put aside, in other words the competition held in 1983 was abandoned. The settlement, which was based on the mass of the architectural project

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[236] Doğan Tuna, "Proje Yarışmaları ile İlgili Bazı Düşünceler," *Mimarlık* 322, no.2 (2005), last accessed April 27, 2019.
[237] Gökhan H. Erkan, and Adile A. Avar, "Kamu Hukuku ile Özel Hukuku Çatıştıran Protokole-Bağlı Planlama: 'İzmir Basmane Dünya Ticaret Merkezi' Vakası," *Planlama* 27, no.2 (2017): 155. doi: 10.14744/planlama.2017.80774
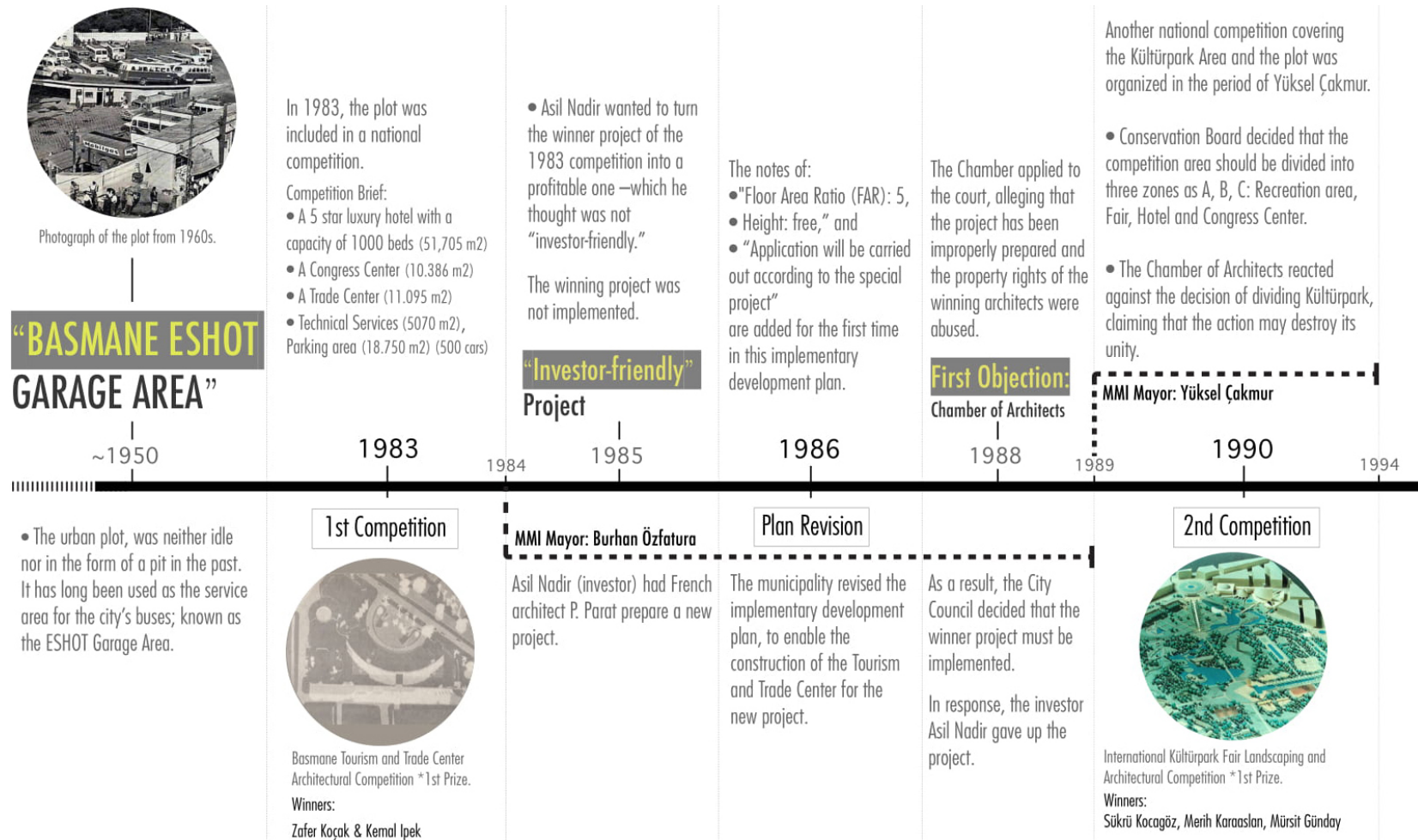
and which was calculated on the 97.006 sq. m. construction area, was converted to FAR: 5. Total construction area was 20,866x5 = 104,330 sq.m. Erkan and Avar state that until 2017, this decision was preserved.[238]

Erkan and Avar point out in their essay, on the case of İzmir Basmane World Trade Center that, while it was thought that the process was going well, the objection came from the Chamber of Architects.[239] The Chamber applied to the court, alleging that the project has been improperly prepared, claiming that the architects who won the competition have not been informed about the change, that it is unfair to give work to foreign architects, and that their property rights as architects were abused. As a result, the City Council decided that the winner project must be implemented. In response, the investor Asil Nadir gave up the project.[240]

Another national competition covering the Kültürpark Area and the plot in question at Basmane was organized in the period of Yüksel Çakmur, who was elected as mayor in the local elections of 1989. Erkan and Avar state that; during the competition, there were intense discussions about the interventions to be made on Kültürpark rather than the Basmane Pit itself.[241] İZFAŞ was established on 30.01.1990 during the preparation phase of the competition. İZFAŞ declared Kültürpark as a second-degree natural protected area. The Chamber of Architects announced on 10.04.1990 that they have filed a lawsuit against the contest specifications. Then, the Conservation Board decided that the competition area should be divided into three zones as A, B, C: Recreation area, Fair, Hotel and Congress Center respectively- and some restrictions regarding the construction was added.[242] (Figure 3.20.)

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[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid., 156.
[242] Ibid.
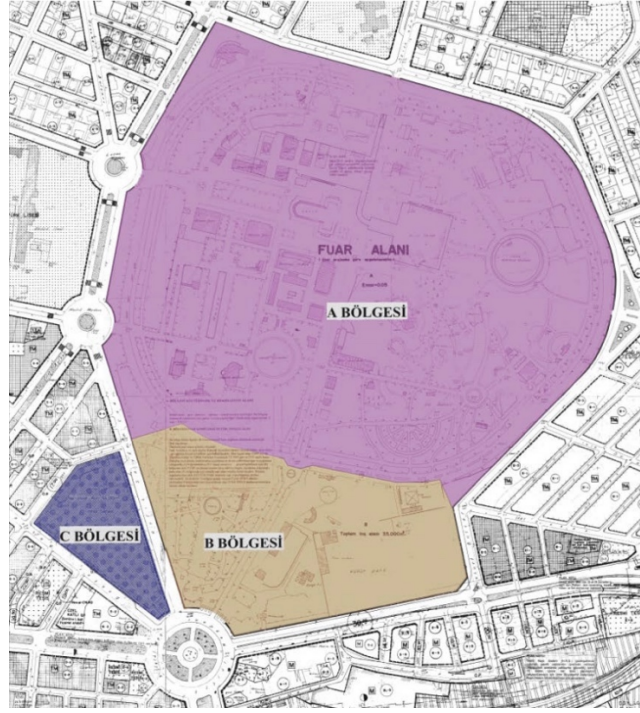
Figure 3.20. The division of A, B, C zones.

Source: "TMMOB İl Koordinasyon Kurulu Kültürpark Projesi Değerlendirme Raporu," TMMOB Chamber of Civil Engineers Official Website, last accessed April 27, 2019. URL (15).

The Chamber of Architects reacted against the decision of dividing Kültürpark, claiming that the action may destroy its unity. Protests, walks, press releases took place. Yet, the competition was held despite the delay, and the new winners of the "International Kültürpark Fair Landscaping and Architectural Competition" were Şükrü Kocagöz, Merih Karaaslan and Mürşit Günday.[243](Figure 3.21., 3.22.) According to Öztan, the aim of the architects in this project was to hide the additional facilities in the Kültürpark within the topography and integrate them with nature while keeping the proposed trade fairs, trade center, hotel and convention center complex in the triangular urban plot where the former garage area was located in.[244]

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[243] Ibid.
[244] Yüksel Öztan "İzmir Kültürpark" Mimarlık 254, no.4 (1993): 41.

Figure 3.21. International Kültürpark Fair Landscaping and Architectural Competition 1st Prize designed by Şükrü Kocagöz, Merih Karaaslan and Mürşit Günday.

Source: Yüksel Öztan, "İzmir Kültürpark," *Mimarlık* 254, no.4 (1993):41.
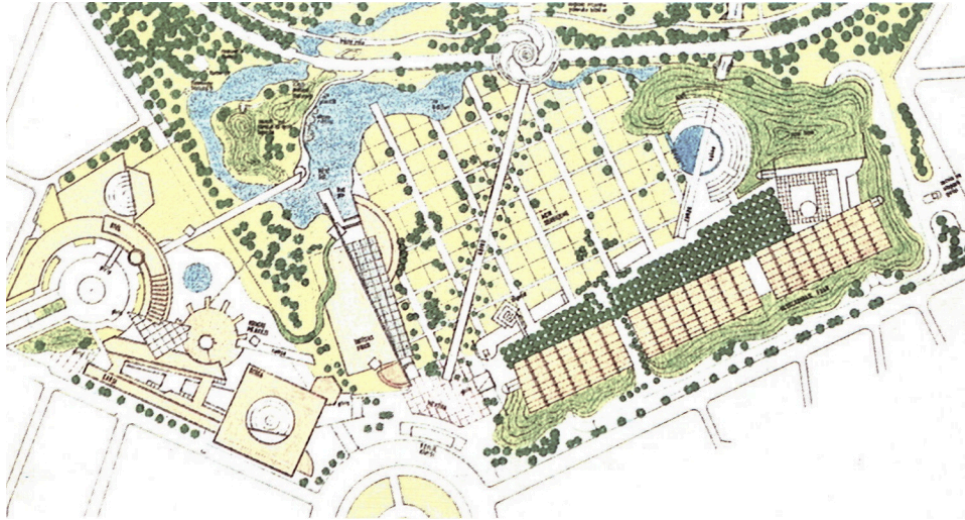
Figure 3.22. Site plan of the 1989 project.

Source: Yüksel Öztan, "İzmir Kültürpark," *Mimarlık* 254, no.4 (1993):41.

The implementary development plan was only approved for A and B; whereas a plan was not prepared for the Area C (Basmane Pit). In the meantime; in 1994, Özfatura was elected as mayor for the second time (Figure 3.23.) and as Erkan and Avar indicate, the municipality immediately prepared a proposal for the implementary development plan revision of the zone C; with the change made in the zoning plan, 'C' was deleted and 'M' was written instead.[245] The letter 'M' was representing the new function of the plot: Metropolitan Activity Center. Therefore, the winning architectural project and the whole competition process were annihilated with a letter change. Six months prior; Zorlu Group had announced in a newspaper, its plans on building a high-rise business center in the place of the old garage area in Basmane district.[246] Erkan and Avar underline the fact that the land was municipal property when this initiative was brought to the agenda.[247] According to the then-current development plan, the zone C was planned, despite the existence of a valid competition project awaiting implementation.

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[245] Ibid., 157.
[246] Milliyet, "Trilyonluk Ege Şirketinde Final," June 29, 1995. URL (16).
[247] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 157.

• Change made in the zoning plan "C" was deleted and 'M' was written instead. The letter 'M' was representing the new function of the plot: Metropolitan Activity Center.

Metropolitan Activity Center

AWTC Project Architectural Model

Design Team:
Ertem Ertunga & Canon Mimarlık

"AEGEAN WORLD
TRADE CENTER"

1998

1994   1995

MMI Mayor: Burhan Özfatura (Re-election)

The winning project of 1990 competition was not implemented.

Güçbirligi Holding and EGS Real Estate comissioned a new high-rise project.

• Yüksel Çakmur filed a lawsuit, for the cancellation of the plan with "M" note.

• The court has ruled the cancellation of the plan and the construction stopped.

A new master development plan was prepared. "M" was deleted and "Culture, Art, Trade Center and Hotel" was written instead.

• "Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 5
• Height: free

Plan Revision-Cancellation

MMI Mayor: | Ahmet Piristina

1999   2000   2001

• Yüksel Çakmur held a press conference stating that the Culture,Art plan is no different from the "M" plan and filed a lawsuit.

The Culture, Art plan was cancelled by the court decision.

• EGS Group, passed to the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (SDIF) due to the financial situation and the plot became subject to debt settlement.

• A new master plan was approved by the municipality.
The density was reduced by 0.5 units, the architectural project revised and the twin towers were abandoned.

2003

FAR: 4,5

Hmax: Free

Chamber of City Planners objected the new plan arguing that the plot should be organized as a public space integrated with Kültürpark.

Yüksel Çakmur applied to court.

The lawsuit opened in 2004 has concluded in 2007 and the new plan was cancelled. The SDIF has put the project up for sale for the liquidation of the debt However, Güçbirligi objected.

Lawsuits and SDIF

2004   2007   2008

MMI Mayor: Aziz Kocaoğlu

Aziz Kocaoglu prevented this action since the project area was partly a municipal property.

In 2008, the share of the municipality in the plot increased from 11% to 30%.

In the new master plan, 30% of the building construction area was planned as the Municipal Service Area (MSA) while the remaining 70% was planned to be the Central Business District (CBD).

The project was announced to include a new City Hall, shopping center, residence and car park.

2009

MSA & CBD Plan

An appeal came from the Governorship of Izmir; the execution of MSA-CBD plan was stopped by a court decision.

Figure 3.23. Timeline covering the years between 1994-2009.

Source: Produced by the author.

Selami Gürgüç, the chairman of the executive board of EGS Holding is also a founding member of Güçbirliği Holding, which was initiated by Kemal Zorlu. In 1998, a partnership was established between Güçbirliği Holding and EGS Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) for the Aegean World Trade Center project. 1/1000-scaled implementary development plan was approved on 14.05.1998 after the grant of the construction license.[248] Erkan and Avar concluded that the goal mentioned back in the newspaper in 1995 has been achieved. Güç Construction commissioned a new architectural project that consisted of two towers to another team (Ertem Ertunga and Cannon Architecture), instead of implementing the existing competition project, which was not considered investor-friendly.[249] (Figure 3.24.) This new project was called the Aegean World Trade Center (AWTC).

Figure 3.24. AWTC project, 1/500 scaled physical model.

Source: Atölye Yetmiş Yedi Website, "Dünya Ticaret Merkezi İzmir." URL (17).

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[248] Ibid., 158.
[249] Tuna, "Proje Yarışmaları,".

In 27.04.1998, the mayor Burhan Özfatura granted the building license without the implementary development plan. Then, on 02.07.1998, the former mayor of MMI, Yüksel Çakmur and twelve other people filed a legal action for the cancellation of the plan amendment, sale of land and building licenses.[250] Erkan and Avar state the importance of underlining the fact that only 40 days prior to the local elections, on 11.03.1999, the metropolitan municipality transferred the land title to Güçbirliği Holding, even though nothing had been built yet.[251] When Ahmet Piriştina was elected as the new mayor of MMI in the local elections held on 18.04.1999, he was confronted with a controversial, 'M' written plot with FAR:5, and a project that was tied by protocol agreements.

Two weeks prior to the approval of the new development plan; Güç Construction, architects of the project, the municipal council, the planning unit and the mayor of MMI had a meeting to discuss the issues related to AWTC, i.e. the Basmane Pit. Following the negotiations, the notation M was deleted from the master development plan and instead, the note of "Cultural, Art, and Trade Center, Hotel" was added.[252] Later on, the new 1/1000 scale implementary development plan was approved. Yüksel Çakmur organized a press conference to state that the new plan was not different from the previous 'M' written plan and they will pursue legal action.[253] The court has ruled the cancellation of the plan. Then, an unexpected development happened. Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK) seized the EGS Bank. Thereby, EGS REIT, which was included in the EGS Group, passed to the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (SDIF) due to the financial situation of EGS Bank and became subject to debt settlement.[254]

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[250] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 159.
[251] Ibid.
[252] İzmir Metropolitan Municipal Council act no. 290 dated 12.29.1999. URL (18).
[253] Hürriyet, "Yüksel Çakmur'dan yeni bir dava," last modified on September 8, 2000. URL (19).
[254] TMSF, *Raf Temizliği: 1- Egebank*, 39-40, (İstanbul: Artus Basım, 2009.)

In the light of the new developments, the area was planned as 'Urban and Regional Central Business District (CBD)-Cultural Facilities District'; FAR: 4.5; height: free. The density was reduced by 0.5; therefore, the architectural project required a revision and the twin towers were abandoned.[255] The first objection came from the Chamber of City Planners; they argued that the plan decision was inaccurate and unfair, because since 1986, the plans containing the same decisions were approved over and over, and the land should be organized as a public space integrated with Kültürpark. Erkan and Avar remark that, those allegations did not make any difference on the issue while underlining the fact that throughout the processes regarding the urban plot, it is seen that none of the initiatives such as press releases, protests, correspondences, petitions, appeals to the plan have been effective, and the rules of the 'game' have been determined by the judicial authority.[256]

Aziz Kocaoğlu, who came to power after the unexpected death of Ahmet Piriştina on 15.06.2004, became the fourth mayor of MMI who faced this problematic situation related to this plot SDIF has put the project up for sale for the liquidation of the debt but Kocaoğlu prevented this action since the project area was partly a municipal property. Kocaoğlu came up with a new solution proposal: the FAR would be 5 again, the share of the municipality would be increased from 11% to 30%, the city council hall would be included in the project and even the MMI building would be relocated here.[257] Yet, the former mayor Yüksel Çakmur commented at this point on the increase in the public share, stating that if they had not opened the law suits, the public share would have remained at 10-15%. In that case who would benefit from this gap between the shares?[258] Then, Izmir Provincial Coordination Committee of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (UCTEA) made a statement,

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[255] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 161.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Milliyet Ege, "Basmane çukuruna kurtuluş formülü," last modified on February 10, 2008. URL (20).
[258] Deniz Sipahi, "İzmir için önemli buluşma," Milliyet Ege, last modified on December 21, 2008. URL (21).

underlining that the reason of this insoluble situation was that the public lands were approached without giving priority to the needs of the public and with no consideration of public interest. UCTEA considered the mayor's efforts to solve this problem positive, however, as a solution to this problem, they suggested that the project that would be located on the plot that belongs to the city and its citizens should be designed with consideration of the public interest and in accordance with the general purpose of use; the design should protect the existing green areas while creating new ones; the project should not increase the urban density in the city center; and it is expected to be compatible with the development plans. The development plan should not be revised for the creation of new rent areas and the public land should not be sold under any circumstances.[259]

The protocol between the Güç Construction Company, EGS REIT and the MMI was amended on 09.03.2009. According to the protocol, 30% of the building construction area was planned as the Municipal Service Area (MSA) while the remaining 70% was planned to be the Central Business District (CBD). The project was announced to include a new City Hall, shopping center, residence and car park.[260] This time, the appeal came from the Governorship of Izmir; the execution of MSA-CBD plan was stopped by a court decision on 09.07.2009.[261] Erkan and Avar noted that the Governorship of Izmir has filed 159 lawsuits regarding the municipality while in İstanbul there were 3 and in Ankara there were 2 cases opened by the governorships.[262] This situation can be associated with the distinct political stance of Izmir, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. Such that, the city is governed by the opposition party, causing a constant adversity within the city itself. Meanwhile, such a conflict was unlikely between governmental institutions in the other two major Turkish cities.

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[259] Çağlayan Bilgen, "Basmane çukuruyla ilgili son mektup," *Milliyet Ege*, last modified on March 23, 2008. URL (22).
[260] Mimdap, "10 yıllık sorun bitiyor," Mimdaporg, last modified on January 9, 2009. URL (23).
[261] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 163.
[262] Ibid., 164.

Over the following years the land has been filled with rain water and turned into a lake. (Figure 3.25., 3.26.) Its surroundings began to fill with trees and birds, the land became a sort of ecosystem with all the living creatures, plants and fruit trees it houses. Newspapers have covered reports on a duck and two ducklings that started living in the lake, how the lake itself became a hobby area for the locals who wanted to spend time fishing; as well as reports on the lake's pest and mosquito infestation.[263]

Figure 3.25. Basmane Pit in 2000 (left), and in 2010 (right).

Source: Google Maps.

Figure 3.26. Basmane Pit after 2013.

Source: "Basmane Çukuru'nu kapsayan plan yeniden belediye meclisinde." URL (28).

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[263] Posta, "Basmane çukurunda balık avı," last modified on October 24, 2011. URL (24); Yeni Asır, "Utanç manzaraları yürekleri sızlattı," last modified on June 13, 2011. URL (25).

Over the years, some undesirable events also occurred in the idle urban plot. Such as: a heron with a nylon bag attached to its throat could not be saved despite all efforts and was left to its fate; or a cat in the reeds has unfortunately disappeared and could not be found by firemen and divers.[264] The land has become a source of news for the local media channels for years and started to be referred as "Basmane Pit" both by the media and locals. (Figure 3.27.)

Meanwhile; in an interview, the Chairman of EGS REIT made it clear that they would not give up on the project, stated that the construction costs of new projects were estimated to be around 150 million dollars, with an estimated return of 300 million dollars.[265] During this period, the first master development plan with official validity covering the city center was approved. In other words, there was no master plan for Izmir city center until then; the whole area has been studied with partial plans for years. 2010 Alsancak 1st Stage 1/5000 scale master development plan covered the AWTC area. This time, the land was planned as the Special Project Area (SPA).[266] Yüksel Çakmur and Izmir Branch of Chamber of City Planners opened a lawsuit claiming that theuse of the land was uncertain according to the new plan. Finally, the court cancelled the new plan. Thereupon, MMI mayor Aziz Kocaoğlu made the following press statement:

> This business turned to an endless story. The most recent development, I proposed to the authorities of Güçbirliği Holding to implement the plan prepared during the time of Yüksel Çakmur's mayorship. If he even objects to his own plan, leave him to it. These agreements have been made before my time and have become inextricable through legal processes. If it was up to me, I would have expropriated this land.[267]

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[264] Haberler.com, "Balıkçılı Aks 110 Ekipleri de Kurtaramadı," last modified on April 17, 2014. URL (26); Beyaz Gazete, "İzmir Basmane'de itfaiyenin kedi seferberliği," last modified on April 11, 2013. URL (27).

[265] Yeni Asır, "Akgün'den Çakmur'a çözüm için çağrı," last modified on February 8, 2010. URL (29).

[266] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 163.

[267] Utku Bolulu, "Basmane Çukuru'nda radikal karar yolda," *Hürriyet*, translated by the author, last modified on May 5, 2011. URL (30).

Folkart Construction won the SDIF's tender, and anounced three proposals for their new mixed-use high-rise project.

The high-rise project has triggered a public debate on its possible impacts on the environment and Kültürpark.

Professional Chambers prepared Environmental Impact Assessment reports together with the petitions of objection to the concerned authority.

• Professional Chambers and NGOs organized petitions, press statements and protests with the slogan: "We do not want; Skyscraper in Basmane, Municipality in Skyscraper."

Protest organized by Kültürpark Platform

• Both of the plans were revised and approved.

In the special construction provisions section of the plan notes, it is stated that the municipal service area can be built without any need for a plan decision in the area designated as Tourism-Trade-Housing.

Plan & Project Revisions

• On May 13; as the legal period was completed, Folkart announced the return of their rights on the plot to the SDIF due to the 30-month time limit for the start of the construction.

"BASMANE ÇUKURU"

2010

• The cancelled master development plan was revised and the plot became a Tourism-Trade area.

2013

"FOLKART HBTC"

2016

2017

2018

MMI Mayor: Tunç Soyer

2019

MMI Mayor: Aziz Kocaoğlu

Tourism - Trade

In order to settle the debt, SDIF reinitiated tenders for several times.

"Folkart Housing, Business and Trade Center" Project proposal.
Winner:
MAD Architects

Protests&Lawsuits

A lawsuit opened by Yüksel Çakmur and his friends regarding the Alsancak-Kahramanlar region 1/1000 Implementary Development Plan Revision, 1/5000 Master Development Plan, Plan Report and Plan Notes of the matter in the disputed urban plot.

Both of the plans were cancelled by the court decision.

230374,4 sq. m. construction area decreased to 104.000 sq. m., as in the original planning decision.

The project wass being revised upon Kocaoglu's request for a separate building design for the Municipal Service Building, independent from the towers.

The Plot's Return to SDIF

Upon this development, various governmental figures including the new mayor Tunç Soyer and the chambers, agreed that the plot should be planned considering the public interest.

Over the following years the land has been filled with rain water and turned into a lake and and started to be referred as "Basmane Pit."

2010 Alsancak 1st Stage 1/5000 scale master development plan covered the plot. The land was planned as the Special Project Area. Yüksel Çakmur and Chamber of City Planners opened a lawsuit. Plan was cancelled in 2011.
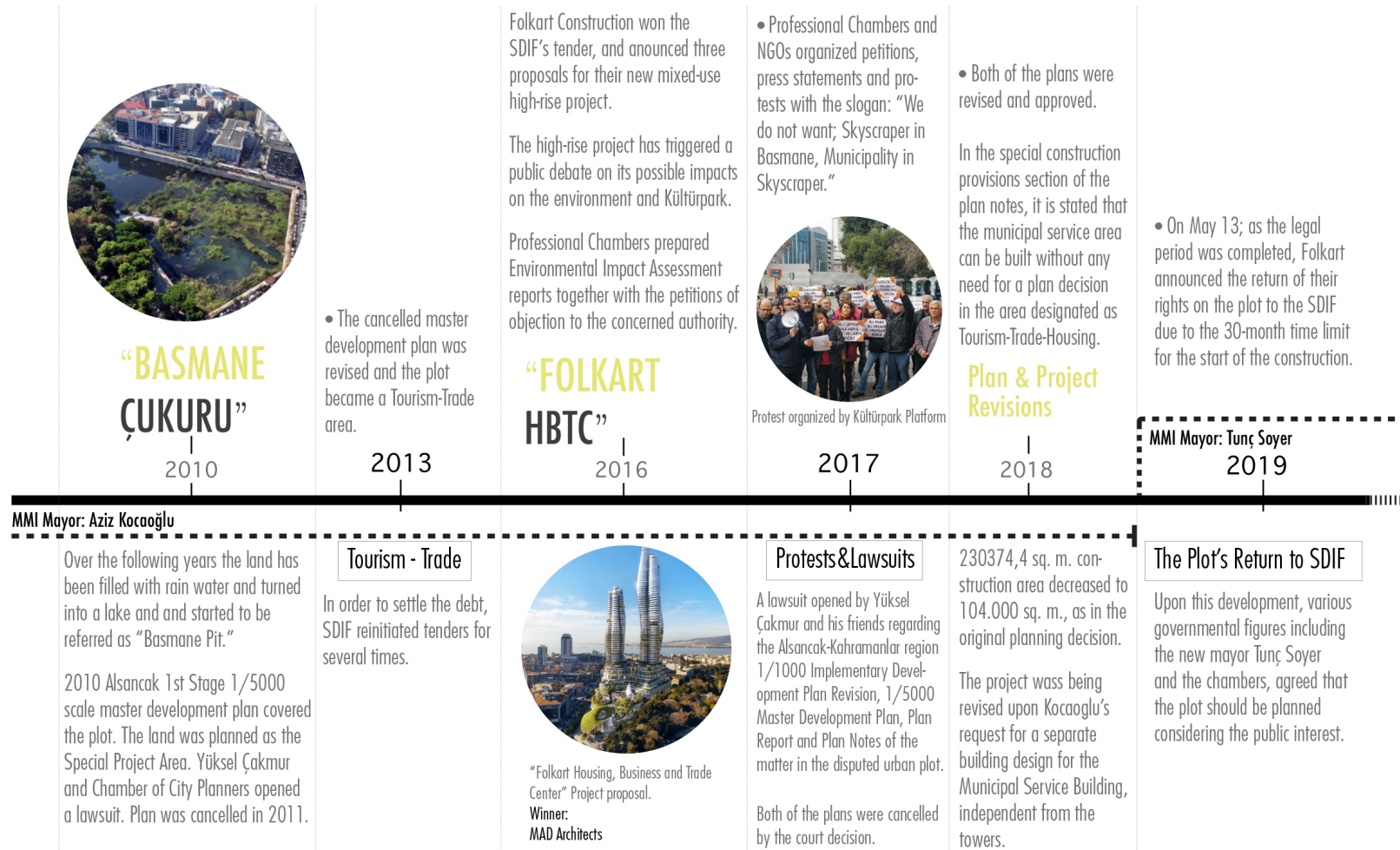
Figure 3.27. Timeline covering the years between 2010-2019.

Source: Produced by the author.

Erkan and Avar indicate that; with the involvement of another former mayor, Burhan Özfatura, in the ongoing argument, the underlying relations behind the skyscraper project planned to be built in Basmane was revealed even before the establishment of Güçbirliği Holding. [268] In an interview, Özfatura stated that in the past, he observed that Izmir needed a 'symbol project'. Therefore, thanks to their close friendship with Zorlu Group, they had realized a sale that was well above the actual value, which in turn would become a great profit and capital source for the future projects of the municipality.[269] Under these circumstances, it can be concluded that the project details have been based on personal relationships and share of profits rather than the technical and social requirements as well as the actual needs of the city.

Later on, the cancelled master development plan was revised and passed by the majority of the votes in the metropolitan municipality council meeting held in 14.06.2013. In the previous version, the area was planned as SPA. Now it is planned to become a TT (Tourism-Trade) area. Those prepared plans were defined as urgent measures against SDIF processes.[270] In the meantime, since there was no development from the companies' side, SDIF became a resale contract for debt. In order to settle the debt, SDIF reinitiated tenders for several times. Eventually, on January 19, 2016, the estimated price of 80 million dollars was tendered; Sancak Family who own Livamine Mining Inc. that contains Folkart Construction won the tender.

As seen from the past to the present processes, together with the urban development practices and adopted urban politics experienced in Izmir; with the introduction of neoliberal policies and entrepreneurial ways of government to the agenda, the city which was once planned comprehensively, is now exposed to piecemeal planning processes, projects tied with protocols, relationships based on self-interest, competitive investors and rent-seeking governors. These changes in the urban context resulted in the uneven development of the urban fabric. In the process, an urban plot

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[268] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 165.
[269] Yeni Asır, "Şehir, yatırımda yasak bölge oldu," last modified on July 17, 2011. URL (31).
[270] Erkan and Avar, "Kamu Hukuku," 166.

in the central city with a specific location near Kültürpark, became the subject of two architectural competitions and underwent numerous juridical processes, whereas the plot itself remained idle for decades. Based on the urban context presented, the next chapter of will focus on the critical analysis and detailed evaluation of the new project proposal of Folkart Construction in The Basmane Pit: "Folkart Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center."

CHAPTER 4

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDY

In this chapter of the thesis, the case study of the new project proposal for the selected plot at Basmane will be critically analyzed within the urban context of Izmir, which is described in Chapter 3 and through the notions introduced in Chapter 2. For a detailed analysis; it will be examined in which political context the proposal was presented to the public, through which discourses it was supported and in which platforms it was promoted. The designation of architecture firms by the construction company, for the design of the project and the presentation of the three final project proposals will be critically reviewed, together with the architectural images produced for the representation of the project. The company's method of choice for the selection of the project to be implemented among these proposals will be discussed in relation to the notions of participation and legitimacy. For further analysis, the projected technical and sociological impacts of the winning proposal will be critically evaluated under the headlines specified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Reports prepared by the legal experts from local professional chambers. Issues that were underlined in the expert report, which emerged as a product of the legal process initiated against the project, will be presented. In order to examine the legitimacy process and the urban opposition against the project proposal; discourses that were covered by media sources will be classified depending on the actors who generate them, i.e. supporters and opponents of the project, and the emergent dominant discourses of the groups of actors will be critically analyzed. Which notions were used to reinforce the actors' discourses, what kind of issues and opportunities were raised, the targeted audiences of these discourses and which mechanisms were utilized for the dissemination of the discourses will be discussed in the analysis. Lastly, the course of action of the urban

opposition will be discussed with the introduction of the legal process while the case study is evaluated through the dualities between: the legitimacy and legal action, and urban development and public interest.

4.1. Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center Project for The Basmane Pit

In this study, Folkart Construction firm will be evaluated as one of the significant actors that played an active role in the urban development process with its large-scale development projects and its recent declaration of Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center Project to the public as the new "icon" of the "new image" of Izmir. Folkart Construction firm has, by far, the biggest impact on the transformation of the image of Izmir with its increasing number of projects in the construction or designing phase, with the selection of specific locations in the city, its size and the target audience. The main goal of Folkart Construction is stated as becoming a brand in the construction of luxury residence.[271] The reason why they chose Izmir as their main working area is the lack of upper-class housing and office buildings in the city.[272] Inarguably, Folkart Towers project in Bayraklı district has drastically affected the skyline of Izmir because it is one of the tallest building projects in Izmir, and it has a key location in the new central business district.

Folkart Construction's recently announced "Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center" project proposal, planned to be located in the heart of Izmir in Basmane district, is selected as the case study. The area selected for the construction of the project, known as "Basmane Pit," is a triangular urban plot near Kültürpark, facing the 9 Eylül Square, at the very center of Izmir. Basmane Pit, was used as the municipal garage area for buses before 1980s. In 1998, the plot was sold by the MMI to a private company and was found as a business center titled "Aegean World Trade Center"; but the construction was not carried out in the framework of the lawsuits opened and the

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[271] Gamze Kurt, "Mesut Sancak 'Gidişatı İzliyoruz'", *Kanal Ben*, April 3, 2018. URL (32).
[272] Bal, and Akyol Altun, "İzmir'de Neoliberal Kentleşmenin Manifestosu Olarak,"

area remained idle. SDIF's tender for sale of the commercial and economic integrity of the land was held on January 19, 2016. Sancak Family's Livamine Mining Inc., which includes Folkart Construction firm, won the tender at an estimated price of 80 Million Dollars. Following the tender, by the beginning of 2016, the land has been owned by Folkart Construction while the shares of the MMI have been kept. (Figure 4.1.)

Figure 4.1. Basmane Pit, 2016. Photograph taken by Tolga Uşaklı.

Source: Kültürpark'a Dokunma Facebook Group Page. URL (33).

The firm created a website called "www.kararizmirin.com". in November 2016 for the promotion of this project. The website showcased the three proposals of high-rise mixed-use blocks for the new "icon" of the city, with the slogan of "Decision Belongs to Izmir". (Figure 4.2.) In the website, it is stated:

We are inspired by this wonderful city, with our love for Izmir. With your support, we are putting our signature into projects that will be suitable for the beautiful Izmir. Now, we want you to choose our new project that will be located at the center of Izmir.

The firm started a public poll on the website for the selection of the winning proposal and asked the viewers: "Which project? Click on the project that you want to take place in the center of Izmir, Basmane." (Figure 4.3.) In addition, viewers could also suggest a name for the project they were to select on the website.

Figure 4.2. Karar İzmir'in Website, first look.

Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

Figure 4.3. Three project proposals.

Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

For this project, Folkart Construction worked with six national and international architectural firms in the first stage.[273] Then, they selected three projects designed by Tabanlıoğlu Architects, MAD Architects and DDG to be presented to the public, without indicating which project belongs to which firm. However, as soon as the visuals for the proposals were uploaded to the internet, people found out that Proposal No.1 belongs to Tabanlıoğlu Architects, No.2 to MAD Architects and No.3 to DDG. (Figure 4.4., 4.5., 4.6.) All of the proposals have towers with glass facade systems; office, residential, commercial and municipality service building uses. In proposals No.2 and No.3, especially on the ground level, the use of vegetation is prominent and an important part of the design. Whereas in proposal No.1, green areas are not included in the design or unobservable from the visuals. The heights of the towers increase in each proposal from the first to the third; 248 meters, 270 meters and 315 meters respectively. The tallest building in the vicinity of Basmane is Hilton Izmir Hotel with a height of 135 meters. Therefore, the three proposals change the urban scale with an unprecedented height in the center of the city. In fact, the height difference between Hilton and proposal No.1 is clearly emphasized in one of the visuals. (Figure 4.7.)

Figure 4.4. Proposal No.1.

Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

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[273] Those architectural firms were; Roy Higgs International, Tabanlıoğlu Architects, Yağcıoğlu Architects, DDG, MAD Architects and Korucuoğlu Architects.

Figure 4.5. Proposal No.2.

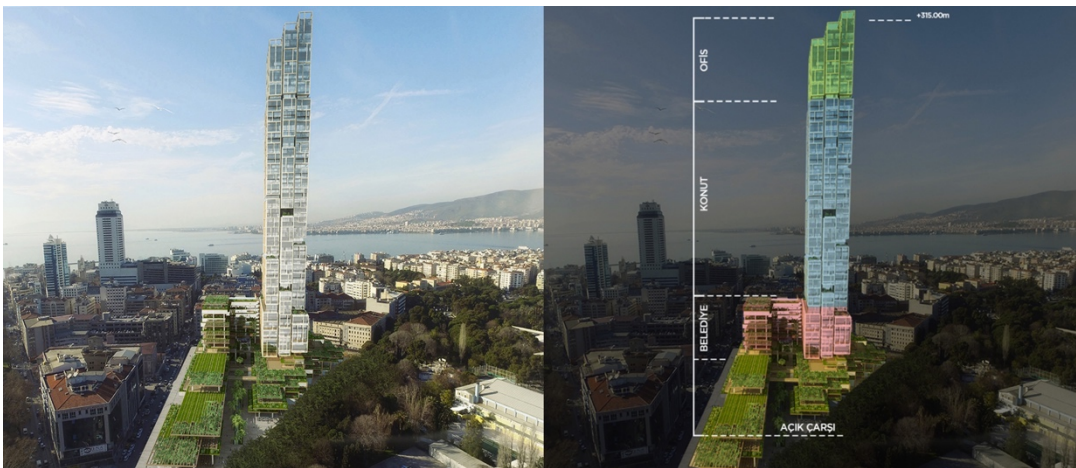Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

Figure 4.6. Proposal No.3.

Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

Figure 4.7. View of Hilton from Proposal No.1.

Source: URL (35). Last accessed October 14, 2016.

The firm announced the public poll through the media; the poll appeared frequently in the local newspapers and news portals, and it has spread to a wide audience through the social media. In the meantime, the project has triggered a public debate on the way that the firm obtained the lot and its possible impacts on the environment; but most significantly on the way the firm presented this project as the new "icon" of the "new image" of Izmir. Bal and Altun point out that the general concept of the project is criticized by local actors; academicians, trade associations and nongovernmental organizations, mainly in terms of the traffic load that will be caused by the multi-storey structure, its negative impacts on the immediate environment and the historical city silhouette, possible loss of prestige caused by the placement of the municipality service building into a private-commercial complex; and lastly, negative effects on the

shopkeepers by the inclusion of an outdoor shopping center[274] even though the firm indicates that they are not planning to open a shopping mall because they do not want to interfere with the businesses of the local shopkeepers.[275]

At the beginning of the project, it was stated that six preliminary versions of the proposals were produced with and without a shopping mall. During the design process, it is indicated that Folkart has investigated the possible impact that a shopping mall would bring to the traffic at Basmane.[276] In a local newspaper article, it is stated that, Folkart Construction had a professional firm prepare a Traffic Impact Assessment Report that examined the characteristics of the surrounding buildings, the historical features of the district, the new Kültürpark project of the MMI, the locations of Basmane Train Station and the Metro Station and explored the landuses of the whole vicinity.[277] It is indicated that the construction of the new service building of MMI was also taken into consideration; from car traffic to the width of the regional roads and to parking demands, all details were put on the table. The expert committee has decided that the addition of a shopping mall to this project would cause a serious increase in the level of traffic at the heart of Izmir. Folkart administration examined this report; and Mesut Sancak, the chairman of Folkart, emphasized that they felt responsible for Izmir. He stated that, they approached their projects in Izmir with respect and wanted to contribute to the city. Therefore, they decided not to make a shopping mall, despite the fact that it would be more profitable for the firm. Sancak also stated that the mayor of MMI, Aziz Kocaoğlu responded positively their proposal and supported the firm's decision.[278]

However, upon examination of the visuals for Tabanlıoğlu Architects' final project proposal No.1, it can be seen that a part of the project was designed as a shopping mall

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[274] Bal, and Akyol Altun, "İzmir'de Neoliberal Kentleşmenin Manifestosu Olarak,"
[275] "Folkart İzmir'e kulak verdi: Basmane'ye AVM yok," *Star*, last modified on June 11, 2016. URL (36).
[276] "Folkart Basmane'de AVM yapmayacak," *Hürriyet Ege*, last modified on June 10 2016. URL (37).
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.

and various high-end brand stores were included in the renders. (Figure 4.8, 4.9.) In the same visuals, a name plate for the project, "Folkart Icon" can be seen even though Sancak stated that the name was to be decided after the public poll and chosen among the suggestions of the participants.[279]

Figure 4.8. Exterior Visualization from Proposal No.1.

Source: URL (35). Last accessed October 14, 2016.

Figure 4.9. Interior Visualization from Proposal No.1.

Source: URL (35). Last accessed October 14, 2016.

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[279] "İzmir'in kalbinde Türkiye'nin gururu" *Folkart Dergi*, (Summer 2016): 39.

Throughout the duration of the public poll, locals commented on the proposals and voiced their thoughts through social media and online forums. When visitors accessed *kararizmirin.com* towards the end of 2016, they were greeted by a message from the firm. It was stated that, the voting process for their new project that will be located at the heart of beautiful Izmir and that will be defined as the new icon of the city, has ended in the first minutes of 2017. They have also stated that the election results could be followed from this website. They thanked everyone for their participation and emphasized that their goal is to do their best by prioritizing their love for Izmir and their responsibility towards their beloved city. The text concluded with their best wishes for the new year.[280] Yet, the result of the poll was already available on online newspapers and forums after November 2016. The second proposal, which was designed by the Chinese architecture firm MAD Architects, was announced as the winner through media organs. (Figure 4.10., 4.11.) However, the winning proposal was never published in the *kararizmirin.com* website and before long, the website was shut down.

The reason why neither the winning project nor its name was announced on the website at the beginning of 2017, and why it has not been announced by any official press release may be attributed to the fact that the project promotion file has already been prepared in November 2016.[281] On November 18, 2016, Izmir Directorship of Environment and Urbanization announced the start of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the project. In this case, it can be concluded that the project promotion file for the EIA was prepared before the results of the poll were obtained. All of these processes have proceeded independently, while ignoring the online poll and its results.

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[280] "Teşekkürler İzmir," *kararizmirin.com*, last accessed January 5, 2017. URL (34).
[281]"Folkart Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center Project Promotion File," dated November 15, 2016, prepared by Aktif Çevre Environmental Consultancy Company.

Figure 4.10. The Winning Proposal.

Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

Figure 4.11. The project inserted in the city silhouette.

Source: URL (34). Last accessed November 27, 2016.

In the project promotion file, the name of the project was stated as "Folkart Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center," and the details of the winning project were introduced as follows:

> 2 blocks will be built in the project area together with 420 housing units in different sizes (1 + 0, 1 + 1, 2 + 1, 3 + 1, 4 + 1). At the same time, a business center consists of 170 independent departments and a trade center consists of 40 independent departments will be made in the project area. An area of 31.200 m² in the project will be used as Metropolitan Municipality Service Area. In addition, green spaces, sports fields, open and closed car parks, pools, etc. will be placed in the project and will become a center of attraction in today's technology and a settlement in the form of modern residence and business center will be established and sold. The project is planned to be completed by June 2020. [...] The floor height of the project is planned as Block A= Ground Floor + 67 floors, Block B= Ground Floor + 48 floors. The basement consists of 3 floors and it will be used as car park.[282]

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[282] "Folkart İzmir Housing, Business," 1.

114

Furthermore, the reason behind the selection of the project site and the importance of the project defined in the promotion file were as follows:

> One of the leading reasons for the selection of the project area is to establish a modern center of attraction that is worthy of Izmir and that is designed by the world's known architects in the "Basmane Pit," which has created a visual pollution for years and criticized by the citizens of Izmir. In addition, the fact that Izmir Metropolitan Municipality service building will be included in the complex increases the importance of the project.[283]

In the file, work flow diagrams of the construction and operation processes of the project were introduced in detail, as well as the technical issues such as waste water and oil, excavation, types of energy sources, exhaust and dust emissions, and ambient noise levels. As part of the master development plan regarding the project site; satellite imagery, earthquake resistance of the site, photos of the Basmane Pit, number of storeys, floor areas in square meters, ground and first floor plans were among the elements included in the file. The fact that the floor plans of the project were prepared and added to the EIA report in November 2016, prior to the announcement of the winner of the public poll, is also another indicator of the poll which was once advertised in every platform and is now disregarded by the firm. All these indicate that the poll was used by the firm as means of promotion, rather than being a medium for a participatory design process.

4.2. Environmental Impact Assessment Reports

Following the preparation of the project promotion file for the EIA process, four Izmir branches from the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB-UCTEA) –Chamber of Environmental Engineers, Chamber of Architects, Chamber of Landscape Architects and Chamber of City Planners– submitted their professional opinions as the result of their in-depth evaluations regarding the project

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[283] Ibid., 1-2.

promotion file and prepared their own EIA reports together with the petitions of objection to the concerned authority. These assessments on the project will be reviewed under three different sections: the urban, technical and legal aspects.

4.2.1. Urban Implications of the Proposal

In its report[284] regarding the EIA process of the project, the Chamber of Landscape Architects argues that the negative effects of the occupation of the Bayraklı coastal area by high-rise buiding blocks, which was planned as the new central business district in recent years, are beginning to rapidly affect the city and its citizens. According to this chamber's arguments in the report; this new project is expected to pave the way for a similar urban development process in Basmane, a district located in the heart of Izmir city. The Chamber of Landscape Architects underlines that such major changes that will affect the city, should be done with a master plan considering the whole city. However, it is pointed out that although there are exceptions, in Turkey, high-rise buildings have generally been developed in a piecemeal way through the amendments done to the master development plan. The Chamber predicts that this situation will bring several negative consequences for the city, starting with the deterioration of the city's silhouette.

The Chamber states that, as seen in many big cities of Turkey, a study of the urban silhouette has been conducted for Izmir and the construction of high-rise buildings in recent years, has been done without considering its effects on the city's skyline. However, in the report, it is acknowledged that even if there are gaps between these types of structures, the urban topography changes and deforms with the addition of skyscrapers to the silhouette. Due to this reason, the Chamber asserted that, when

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[284] Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated November 25, 2016, prepared by UCTEA Chamber of Landscape Architects, İzmir Branch, addressed to Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization.

viewed from the Gulf; Izmir city, which boasts to be the pearl of the Aegean region, is losing its features at a great pace; and also indicated that these drawbacks also apply to the project to be constructed in Basmane Pit.[285]

According to the Chamber of Landscape Architects, the project proposal would also affect the historical urban fabric of the city and its identity. The Chamber describes the specific location of Basmane Pit as being located within the historical triangle that covers Kültürpark, which is of great significance for Izmir, and the historical places such as the Ancient Agora, the old neighborhoods at İkiçeşmelik and Kadifekale, the historical Kemeraltı Bazaar, Cumhuriyet Square, Alsancak, Kordon coastal strip and Basmane Train Station. The Chamber states that the construction planned in this area will cause the city's existing image to be damaged and the urban identity to be completely altered due to the suppression/damage of historic areas (old buildings, squares, streets etc.). In the report, it is emphasized that an urban development decision that will cause such an impact should not be carried out solely based on obtaining rent, but should be carried out with the common decision of all the citizens of Izmir. In the report, it is stated that making skyscraper projects in the middle of the historical urban fabric is regarded as a seizure made to the environment.[286]

The report also mentions the effect of the high-rise structures on human health and psychology. While acknowledging the fact that high-rise structures are far beyond the human scale, in the report, the Chamber of Landscape Architects also argues that people who are not in contact with the earth and the street level lose are more prone to lose their connection with everyday life and the community, and such artificial living environments negatively impact the health of their inhabitants.[287]

The Chamber of Landscape Architects underlines the fact that the contribution of skyscrapers to the city economy cannot be compared with the burden they bring to

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[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Ibid.

117

public spaces. The Chamber has defined the decision for making an implementation of this magnitude, as an irreversible mistake for the future of the city. Subsequently, demolishing such a high building causes great losses and costs.[288]

Towards the end of the report the Chamber mentions that, in the United States, the construction of high-rise structures has become less in demand. The fact that big companies are carrying their facilities out of city centers, is pointed out as the first signs of this new tendency. Major 'international companies such as Ford, Chrysler, Nike, Microsoft, are provided as examples of companies' that have facilities outside of the city, sometimes in green areas and/or in the form of small businesses. In the report, it is also mentioned that one of the reasons why the skyscraper is becoming a less desirable structure type, is that now, it is understood that such large structures are not economical. It is stated that in developed countries, it can be seen that there is a trend towards integrating people with nature and street level.[289]

In the concluding remarks of the report prepared by the Chamber of Landscape Architects, it was emphasized that approaching skyscrapers with reference to concepts such as the right to property, social rights, right to solidarity, and public interest, may provide a broader perspective of this form of construction within the framework of social justice and urban identity.[290]

4.2.2. Environmental Aspects of the Proposal

According to another EIA report, this time prepared by Izmir Branch of Chamber of Environmental Engineers[291], the statements in the Project Promotion File, "the project area and its immediate surroundings are located within the urban context and there is no natural flora fauna existence" and "the project area does not have any status of

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[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated November 25, 2016, prepared by UCTEA Chamber of Environmental Engineers, İzmir Branch, addressed to Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization.

protected area and not included in any urban, archeological, or natural protection area," are considered as the proofs of that the construction firm only focused on the construction area while overlooking the urban and archaeological context of the Basmane-Konak area, and does not take into consideration the possible effects on Kültürpark, which is located near the project area and has a protected area status.[292]

Additionally; in the same report, it was stated that the assessment of the environmental impact of the project in the project promotion file were made on an additional population calculated as 5870 people/day. In this calculation, the legal expert of Chamber of Environmental Engineers indicates that the accepted population load units for different uses (housing, office, trade, municipality) do not seem realistic. According to the legal expert, considering the scope of the project which consist of 420 housing units, 170 offices, 40 shopping stores (open bazaar-shopping mall), sports areas and indoor-outdoor swimming pools, 30.000 sq. m. MMI Service Building; additional population and traffic load added to the project area would be much higher than the construction firm's prediction. The miscalculation of these loads would result in the incorrect assessment of drinking water, wastewater, solid waste, transport/traffic infrastructure, and environmental impacts such as energy, emissions, noise, etc.[293]

Furthermore, in the report; it is stated that the project promotion file does not assess the additional load that the project will bring to the traffic flow of the zone. The report also underlines the fact that there is no assessment about factors like planning, emission and noise, which will occur within the scope of traffic load.[294]

In the concluding remarks of the report prepared by the Chamber of Environmental Engineers, it has been emphasized that in the processes of urban transformation and development related especially to the construction of high-rise buildings, should be evaluated in a holistic manner. Especially the evaluation of environmental factors such

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[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.

as heat islands that are formed by high-rise buildings, microclimate effect, wind corridors, effects on air quality, urban infrastructure processes, traffic, noise, green space requirements, reduction of concrete and evaluation of negative processes for rainwater drainage etc. should be handled with a holistic approach and implementation of planning and construction phases should be done accordingly, in order to achieve a healthier urbanization.[295]

The Chamber of Landscape Architects also delivered their professional opinions on the environmental aspects of the project proposal in addition to their aforementioned comments on the urban implications. The experts have expressed their concerns regarding the environmental and technical issues under three titles; environmental effects, impacts on the microclimate and lack of proper infrastructure.[296]

Environmental effects:

The Chamber of Landscape Architects indicates the fact that high-rise buildings such as the building proposed in Basmane Pit, are usually built at high costs due to the use of expensive vertical construction systems. Additionally, it is stated that maintenance and repair services, which require higher energy and cost, are also more difficult than those applied in other building types. Especially large engineering vehicles such as cranes, excavators and dump trucks, which are constantly used during construction, increase carbon emissions. In addition, the materials used in the construction of these structures are often brought from different parts of the country, even the world. For this reason, the Chamber of Landscape Architects states that even the carbon footprint of the construction activity is huge on its own when compared with other structures. The heating, cooling and lighting the building every day, as well as trying to move other services to the upper floors constantly requires enormous energy. In summer, glass-facade buildings, which are heated by the sun but are inefficient in terms of

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[295] Ibid.
[296] Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated November 25, 2016, prepared by UCTEA Chamber of Landscape Architects, İzmir Branch, addressed to Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization.

energy efficiency, require a continuous cooling system. The canyon effect that they create catches the pollutants and reduce the quality of the air in the lower levels of the zone they built in.[297]

Impacts on the microclimate:

In its statement on the proposed project's possible effects on the microclimate, the Chamber of Landscape Architects points out that, high rise structures have significant effects on the microclimate of cities due to their interaction with the wind movements and their role in the reflection of sunlight. Especially in the case of structures with glass facades, as in the project proposed for the Basmane Pit, the sunlight is going to reflect to a great extent and therefore, the Urban Heat Islands, stated as "one of the biggest threats to the cities," will become a serious problem. According to the Chamber, while this situation makes cities unlivable, it also results in the acceleration of the global warming process. Shades created by high-rise building blocks are defined as another important problem, especially for the surrounding buildings. Experts stated that high rise structures affect wind movements in two ways: The first of these is the strong winds blowing in the city streets, open areas and squares formed by the condensed air stream created by the downward movement of the wind that hits the building surface. This is associated with the accidents as well as the cause of both physical and psychological influences on the people living nearby. Second effect is the building acting as a barrier and preventing airflows from reaching the inner city.[298]

Lack of infrastructure:

The Chamber of Landscape Architects stated that in Turkey and Izmir, skyscrapers are planned in a piecemeal way; changes that have been carried out in the master development plans allow the high-rise buildings to be constructed by demolishing existing buildings. This creates a great pressure on the urban infrastructure, which was

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[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.

originally calculated for bearing a much lower load. The high number of users of these structures will increase the use of infrastructures directed towards energy, the use of water and the traffic density. Experts also add that most of the time, these projects are designed for the areas where the infrastructure has not been completed. The number of visitors is usually high due to the office and trade functions in the skyscrapers. In the report, it is argued that this user density creates congestion in the transportation arteries. The skyscrapers, which also have the function of housing, increase the burden of public utilities such as medical and educational institutions in urban areas.[299]

4.2.3. Legal Aspects of the Proposal

The Chamber of Architects prepared their assessment report in accordance with the respective building bylaws.[300] In the report, it is stated that the project should have been planned according to the corresponding decision in the development plan as follows;

> Determined construction area is 104.000 sq. m. while the 30% of this area will be used for the Metropolitan Municipality Service Building and the remaining 70% of the area will be used for Tourism-Trade functions. The area that will be used for housing function cannot be more than 1/3 of the construction area.[301]

However, in the EIA report it is stated that the planning of the project was not made in accordance with this bylaw; in the project promotion file, the pre-determined construction area was exceeded by 126.374,4 sq. m. and planned as 230.374,4 sq. m. instead. The Chamber points out that where the Trade Center and Business Center functions will be located in the project was not indicated by the construction firm. If the tower part was dedicated to office use; then, the Business and Trade Center was designed to serve as shopping area. According to the EIA report; when the 31.200 sq. m. service building area is removed from the 86.894 sq. m. area that is defined in the

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[299] Ibid.
[300] Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated November 24, 2016, prepared by UCTEA Chamber of Architects, İzmir Branch, addressed to Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization.
[301] Ibid.

promotion file, it is predicted that the remaining 55.694 sq. m. would be used for the shopping area. The Chamber underlines the facts that although the housing use should be limited at 34.666 sq. m., the firm planned it as 38.877 sq. m. There is no home-office function defined in the building bylaw defined in the development plan for the project area. Therefore, when this function is integrated to the current housing program, its area increases to 66.979,9 sq. m. In the report, it is stated that the number of people who will use the building, was under-calculated as already stated in the EIA report of the Chamber of Environmental Engineers. Chamber also criticized the lack of strategy for the additional traffic load that project would bring to the site. In the conclusion part, The Chamber of Architects expressed that, according to their aforementioned concerns and evaluations, the project should not receive a positive decree in EIA.[302]

The Chamber of City Planners was against the whole EIA process as a result of their examination and evaluations regarding the project[303] in the same way as the Chamber of Architects. They articulated the four main reasons for their objection as the project was in conflict with the law, the zoning legislation, the public interest and the city planning principles. According to the report, the first reason is related to the project's construction area. In the project promotion file, construction area was defined as 126.000 sq. m., approximately twice the size of the area determined in the development plan. It is stated that the construction area, in which the project is defined, should not exceed 104.000 sq. m. The Chamber asserted their second reason of objection regarding the housing area. In the report it is stated that the housing area exceeds the size specified in the development plan and additional housing area is designed instead of the defined tourism area. Third objection concerns the amount of green area per person; in the promotion file, it is stated that the project is expected to attract a population of 5870. The Chamber underlines that in the building bylaws the

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[302] Ibid.
[303] Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated November 24, 2016, prepared by UCTEA Chamber of City Planners, İzmir Branch, addressed to Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization.

green area per person is calculated as 10 sq. m. Yet, in the promotion file there is no specified green area; it is either not calculated or not considered. The fourth and final objection of the Chamber of City Planners is related to the development plans regarding the project area. In the EIA report, the Chamber pointed out that,

> The area is defined as trade-tourism-housing in the 1/5000 scale master development plan. However, in the 1/1000 implementary development plan, the area is planned as tourism-trade and housing use is added to the plan notes. There is a difference between the master plan and the implementary plan. The construction or licensing of the project, while the two plans remain incompatible, is against the legislation, regulations and the building law.[304]

In the final notes of the Chamber's report, experts addressed their objection to EIA process of the project, and indicated that: "Relating the plans covering the city center to their environment and implementing the development decisions that will affect the city in a holistic manner are important planning principles and legal requirements.[305]

4.3. Urban Opposition to the Project and the Legal Processes

Meanwhile, when the firm presented the promotion file and was preparing for the construction phase; Kültürpark Platform organized a protest against the project. This event was the beginning of the many upcoming protests of the local opposition against the project. The platform was established with the collaboration of locals who were against MMI's Kültürpark Revision Project and their aim was to preserve the natural, historical, cultural and social structure of Kültürpark Fair with a common mind,[306] and was generally organized via the social media platform Facebook. Kültürpark Platform comprise of locals and chamber members who united through Facebook groups, which are dedicated to protect their values and environment, share their thoughts regarding

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[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ibid.

124

the developments in the city and come together, mobilize, resist and protest when necessary. The protest was held on November 29, 2016, in front of the 9 Eylül Gate of Kültürpark Fair, near the Basmane Pit. (Figure 4.12.)

Figure 4.12. Protest against the project, November 29, 2016.

Source: Kültürpark Platform Group Page, Facebook. URL (38).

In the protest, the public statement of the platform was read by the head of Izmir Branch of Chamber of City Planners, Özlem Şenyol Kocaer. In the statement, it was emphasized that in order to protect the only green area at the center of the city, the citizens of Izmir should and will struggle against the local authority. It is stated that, the skyscraper project to be built in Basmane Pit along with the congress center that MMI is trying to build to Kültürpark, would plunder Kültürpark directly and also would pave the way for the destruction of other green areas in Izmir. Kültürpark and all the green areas of the city neither belongs to MMI nor the real estate developers; the only party to say the last word on these areas, the only decision authority is the people of Izmir. They concluded their words indicating that, if locals do not struggle, the only green space in the center of the city will become a gray concrete jungle. Banners prepared for the protest was another highlight of the event. These banners

were not only directed to Folkart's skyscraper project with MMI, but also to Sancak Family who own Folkart Construction. In the banners, it was stated that "Kültürpark belongs to the public not Sancaks," "Demolish the skyscrapers, built parks in place of them," "We do not give Kültürpark and make benefits available for the Sancaks who are supporters of the government." Following the protest, the platform organized a petition against the project. Towards the end of 2016, volunteers from the platform have collected the signatures of the locals at several locations scattered across the city, for the petition against the project. (Figure 4.13)

Figure 4.13. Petition against the project, December 24, 2016.

Source: Kültürpark Platform Group Page, Facebook. URL (38).

During the petition campaign, the public was informed about the possible impacts that the project will bring to its vicinity, such as traffic load; and how it paves the way to harming Kültürpark, a natural and protected zone, with the construction of such a tall

structure. The platform stated that they reached large numbers with the petition, yet it was not enough. They wanted to see locals who do not remain silent for city crimes, on the streets.

On April 23, 2017 which was the National Sovereignty and Children's Day, the platform handed out brochures in the Kültürpark to the visitors with the slogan: "We do not want; Skyscraper in Basmane. Municipality in Skyscraper, Congress Center in Kültürpark." (Figure 4. 14.) Since it was a national holiday, the brochures reached many locals. During the event, the platform encouraged the locals to object both to the Congress Center project for Kültürpark and skyscraper project in Basmane.

Figure 4.14. Distribution of the brochures. April 23, 2017.

Source: Kültürpark Platform Group Page, Facebook. URL (38).

Platform members organized another protest on September 27, 2017, in front of Basmane Pit, which was encircled with Folkart's promotional panels and billboards. This time, the platform focused solely on protesting Folkart's Project for the Basmane Pit with the slogan: "We do not want; Skyscraper in Basmane, Municipality in Skyscraper." (Figure 4.15.)

Since the planned project is adjacent to Kültürpark and attracted a wide public attention, the platform has expressed their concerns regarding the project such as; the fact that Basmane Pit is actually an area that has been taken away from the Kültürpark and closed to public use, the planned high-rise building will have a negative impact on urban infrastructure and spatial quality, especially traffic and city silhouette, and the share of the MMI, which was planned as congress center, culture and arts function in past, is now changed to Municipality Service Building.[307] In this context, considering the fact that the plan and project decisions that will affect the balances of the whole city should be holistic, they've stated in their public statement that if the proposed project with such a large construction density and incompatible design with the texture of the immediate environment is built; it will bring many environmental problems, both in the Kültürpark and in the historical city texture and, it will destroy the hope for a more livable city while producing irreparable outcomes.[308] They have invited MMI mayor Aziz Kocaoğlu to be more transparent in the arrangements

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[307] Kültürpark Platformu, Public Statement on the Folkart's Basmane Pit Project, September 27, 2017.
[308] Ibid.

128

regarding the public property. They have emphasized that a contemporary and social democrat municipality should allow every citizen to follow processes and control whether their right to city is protected. The statement was concluded by the platform's wish to achieve a future where municipality contacts every actor that produces knowledge, reports and thoughts while drawing a new road map through dialogue and cooperation to keep this area alive, as well as protect it.[309]

As the protests and objections continued, a new development that would affect the progress of the project, has occurred. Following the protests and the EIA reports prepared by the chambers from UCTEA, a series of lawsuits have been filed. As a result, the development plan revision in 1/1000 scale, including the project construction area that has been approved by the MMI in 2013, and the master development plan in 1/5000 scale regarding the same area that was approved by the municipality in 2015, were sued.

4.3.1. Lawsuits and the Expert Reports Regarding the Proposal

The lawsuit opened by former MMI mayor Yüksel Çakmur and his friends was regarding the Alsancak-Kahramanlar region 1/1000 Implementary Development Plan Revision, 1/5000 Master Development Plan, Plan Report and Plan Notes of the matter in the disputed urban plot. They accused the defendants of disregarding the previous juridical decisions that canceled the plans by designating the location of the real estate as a Tourism-Trade Area and paving the way for the construction while violating the principles and foundations determined by the former expert reports.

In the defense of MMI, it is stated that the plans were prepared by considering the general principles and strategies of the 1/25000 scaled Izmir Metropolitan Environmental Plan, their relationship between the sub-scale development plan decisions and the environment. The plot in dispute was not included in the adjacent natural protected area, which includes Kültürpark, has also been indicated at the

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[309] Ibid.

beginning. In the following part of the plea; the emerged possibility of using the plot as municipal service area according to 1/1000 implementary development plan, aim of creating a prestigious project because of the central location of the real estate and the goal of creating a new center of attraction in the region with the new structure to be built on the plot, the fact that the existing municipality building cannot meet the needs of the city was being the underlying reason of the changing the land-use of the plot to tourism-trade area, the fact that in terms of the density of construction and setback distance, decisions of a higher density and height than the immediate environment is not introduced in the plan, the compatibility of the plans in dispute and the lower and upper-scale plans, and lastly the compatibility of the plans in dispute to the principles of urbanism, planning principles, legislation and public interest is stated and the refusal of the case was requested.[310]

In its defense, the other defendant Konak Municipality stated: the implementary development plan revision proposal regarding the 30% to 70% division of the plot was approved and no objection had been filed within the required timeline; the land use of the plot was compatible with the surrounding plots, there was no problem in building a Hotel, Congress Center, Exchange and Rant Facilities without any maximum height limits, since the plot is located outside of the natural protected area; the plans in dispute are compatible with the principles of urbanism, planning and legislation. Depending on these statements the refusal of the case was requested.[311]

The court has initiated an expert examination in order to determine whether the plans in question are compatible with the lower and upper scale plans and if they are suitable for the principles of urbanism, planning, legislation as well as the public interest. Fatma Şenol, Erkal Serim and Nicel Saygın, academicians from the Department of City and Regional Planning of the Izmir Institute of Technology, prepared the expert report.

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[310] İzmir 5th Administrative Court decree no. 2017/1261.
[311] Ibid.

In the expert report it is stated:

> The plot's function is planned as central business area in the plan, the plot is not included in the natural protected area yet the fact that it is neighbor to Kültürpark necessitates the regulations bounding the planned project or planning decisions regarding the plot to be different than ordinary urban plots, since the planning decision indicates one-third of the plot must be allocated for housing, it is inaccurate to add tourism-trade functions in terms of the planning techniques, only if the social reinforcement areas are provided the plot will become suitable for the housing function, providing a night usage for maintaining the liveliness at night should be one of the main objectives of the project to create a sense of security in this part of the city. The planning decisions in question regarding the plot will possibly result in the construction of horizontally large, vertically huge building masses. Masses of this size should be designed by focusing not only on their construction plot but evaluating its relation with the neighboring plots and environment. In contrast with the defendants' claims, this evaluation cannot be made by focusing only the set-back distances of the plot, floor area ratio and the number of floors to be built, since the plot in question is three times larger than the immediate plots, with the decisions of free height and FAR: 5 the final form of the proposed project will end up with a gigantic building mass. The project will have a serious impact on the road, sidewalk and ground relations in the streets it is facing. Based on the limited information shared with the public it is expected that the planned functions of the plot (housing-tourism and trade-municipal service building) will increase the pedestrian and vehicle density in the region, the plot in question is not an ordinary urban area, it is a sensitive area in the eyes of the public due to its specific prestigious location in the heart of the city and the planning, construction and cancellation processes that have caused a public loss for 32 years, the revision of the prepared plan should shape the architectural project that will be located in a large plot that has a potential to increase the public interest, the quality of public life and space in its immediate surroundings. However the contents of the planning decisions regarding this sensitive urban area is only limited by the FAR value, maximum height and set-back distances, there is no indication of the principle of public interest and equality in the content, the importance given on the relation of solid-void, its relations with the environment, streets and especially Kültürpark should be elaborated with city planning and urban design notions, principles and concepts in the plan then it should be presented to the public[312]

The experts reported that the 1/5000 and 1/25000 scaled plans are compatible. However, the fact that the 1/1000 scaled plan was approved before the 1/5000 scaled plan, has violated the principal of hierarchical approval of plans. Therefore, the

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[312] Ibid.

revision of the 1/1000 scaled implementary development plan was found to be irregular. Due to these reasons, 5th Administrative Court of Izmir has decided to cancel the revisions of the 1/1000 scaled implementary development plan.

Thereby, the 1/1000 implementary development plan, which was the base for the project planned for the area known as Basmane Pit, has been canceled and the area remained completely unplanned in terms of the development plan for the field application. However, when the previous processes are taken into consideration, these legal decisions regarding the construction area are not surprising. One of the actual reasons why the area remained idle for years was the local elections, the changes in the authority and the juridical decisions regarding the revision or cancellation of the development plans of the district.

Following the cancellation of the 1/1000 scaled plan, Izmir branch of Chamber of City Planners filed another lawsuit, this time regarding only the 1/5000 scaled Master Development Plan.[313] The court concluded the following: firstly, for the case of Konak 1st Stage (Alsancak-Kahramanlar area) 1/5000 scaled plan, the development decisions regarding the 'Trade-Tourism Area' and 'Trade-Tourism-Residential Area' were not evaluated in relation with the current urban fabric, the integrity of the plans, the accessibility of the projected building and its effects on the overall city silhouette in terms of the contextual relations. Second, there is no decision either regarding the distribution of functions related to mixed-use areas and the main building program or concerning the current parking problem in the city center, which is predominantly a commercial area. The technical-social facilities are supposed to be used for parking needs, but it does not contain any provisions regarding the survey, analysis and landscape characteristics required for parking use. Therefore, the plan in question has

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[313] İzmir 3rd Administrative Court decree no. 2017/1601

been canceled by the decision of 3rd Administrative Court of Izmir decree no. 2017/1601, on the grounds that it is not in compliance with the urban principles, public interest, zoning legislations, planning techniques and court decisions.[314]

In the court decision the following are stated; considering the fact that all around the world, traffic and car parking arrangements and pedestrian priority applications are evaluated with special studies in the historical city centers, the plan for the case has uncertainties that do not allow a healthy prevision for the future of Izmir and currently, it requires more specific strategies and currently in need of more specific strategies for the transportation and parking arrangements. Additionally, it is indicated that, in this region, where the trade functions and traffic load are intense, the strategies for mixed-use areas should be clearly defined and plans should produce a guiding and developing decision on transportation, traffic density and parking requirements. Yet, in contrast, the plan suggests solutions for the parking problem, in the form of public underground spaces, which may pave the way for a situation that would lead to chaos in traffic. On the other hand, it is emphasized that the plan decisions that will bring such density to the area, are in contrast with MMI's decision to reduce vehicles at the city center and implement practices that prioritize pedestrians while encouraging public transportation.[315]

On the cancellation decision, Özlem Şenyol Kocaer, the head of the Chamber of City Planners Izmir branch, states in an interview that the new planning process of the area commenced with the cancellation and that the plan needs to be revised according to the new regulation by the MMI and the implementation plan should be revised by Konak Municipality.[316] Kocaer also stresses that this situation is an opportunity to

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[314] UCTEA Chamber of City Planning, "Public Statement regarding the Decision of Cancellation of Konak 1st Stage (Alsancak-Kahramanlar Region) 1/5000 scaled Master Development Plan," last accessed January 4, 2018. URL (39).
[315] Ibid.
[316] "Basmane Çukuru sil-baştan," *Ege Postası*, January 4, 2018. URL (40).

think about the public interest. A new plan should be drafted and the new planning process should be conducted in a participatory manner, and underlined that the chamber is ready to contribute to this process.[317]

4.3.2. Recent Protests and Current Situation of the Project

Following the court decisions, Kültürpark Platform organized another protest that invited everyone to claim the public land and the case of Izmir. (Figure 4.16.) The public statement was made next to Basmane Pit, in front of the 9 Eylül Gate of Kültürpark with the same slogan, "We do not want Skyscraper in Basmane, Municipality in Skyscraper." (Figure 4.17.)

Figure 4.16. Protest poster by Kültürpark Platform, December 4, 2017.

Source: Kültürpark Platform Group Page, Facebook. URL (41).

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[317] Ibid.

Figure 4.17. Protest organized by Kültürpark Platform, December 6, 2017.

Source: Evrensel, "Kültürpark Platformu: Gökdelen istemiyoruz," January 6, 2017. URL (42).

Upon cancellation of the zoning plan that allowed the construction of a skyscraper on the plot in question, the Kültürpark Platform has indicated in their public statement that they invite the local government to claim this large public land in the city center and not to continue the mistakes of the past. It was argued that the construction permit obtained from the Konak Municipality for this plot was no longer valid and has become a document with no provision due to court's cancellation of the implementary development plan. During the protest, Özlem Şenyol Kocaer, head of the Izmir Branch of the Chamber of City Planners, summarized the process and stated that:

> This area has remained open for many years in the city center near Kültürpark and historical Kemeraltı district, and now it is surrounded by the panels that contain the advertisements of the construction company and remains as a construction site.[318]

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[318] "Kültürpark Platformu: Gökdelen istemiyoruz," *Evrensel*, January 6, 2017. URL (42).

Kocaer also made remarks on how it became an area that a company has transformed into an advertising space, right in the middle of the city, where the municipality has been also a shareholder. Kocaer stated that it is unknown how this situation was permitted.[319] Lastly, the platform stated that they wanted to see the return of this public space to the public.

In the following process, the 1/5000 scaled plan revision was discussed in the first meeting of MMI City Council's January session. Regarding this development, Kocaer stated that: The reasons for the cancellation of the plan cannot be eliminated in such a short time, and indicated that a very comprehensive technical study was required.[320] As one of the shortcomings of the plan was the lack of infrastructure required to meet the needs of high-density commercial development of the region, she asked how this new plan that has been drafted in such a short time span, could prove to be healthy.[321] In her concluding remarks, Kocaer clarified that, if this is the case, they will look at the new plans with suspicion because it seems that the metropolitan municipality has prepared a new plan in a very short term and this situation is contrary to the procedures and principles of planning.[322]

Yet, initially, Konak 1st Stage (Alsancak-Kahramanlar Area) 1/5000 scaled Master Development Plan Revision (Figure 4.18.) and shortly after that, the new 1/1000 scaled (İsmet Kaptan Neighborhood) Implementary Development Plan Revision were approved. In the 1/5000 scaled plan, Basmane Pit was planned as a Tourism-Trade-Housing area. In the special construction provisions section of the plan notes, it is stated that the municipal service area can be built without any need for a plan decision in the area designated as Tourism-Trade-Housing. In the 1/1000 scaled plan, the issue of showing the construction area as 230374,4 sq. m. instead of the determined 104.000

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[319] Ibid.
[320] "Basmane Çukuru'nu kapsayan plan yeniden belediye meclisinde," *Evrensel*, January 7, 2018. URL (43).
[321] Ibid.
[322] Ibid.

sq. m. –which was previously addressed in the EIA report of Chamber of Architects–
was resolved by decreasing the construction area to 104.000 sq. m., as in the original
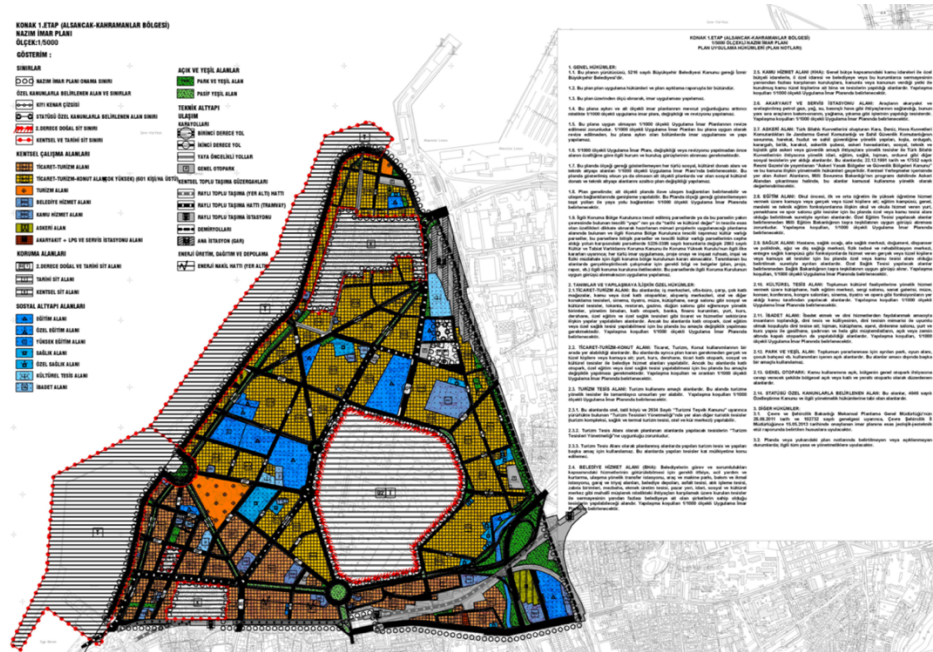planning decision. (Figure 4.19.)

Figure 4.18. Konak 1st Stage (Alsancak-Kahramanlar Region) 1/5000 scaled Master Development
Plan Revision.

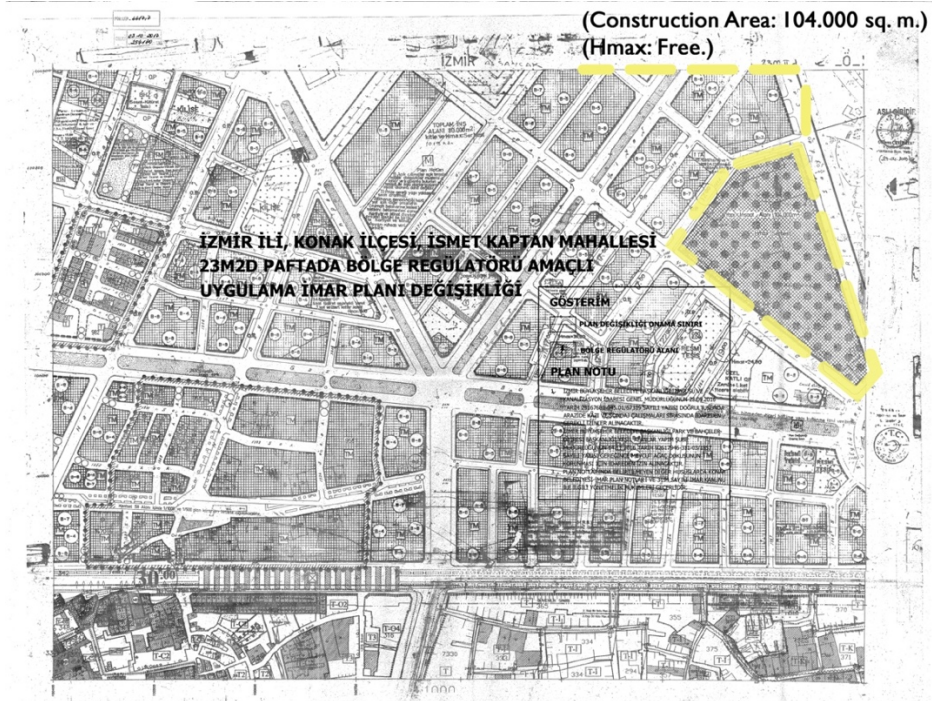Source: İzmir Metropolitan Municipality Website. URL (44).

Figure 4.19. İsmet Kaptan Neighborhood 1/1000 scaled Implementary Development Plan Revision Plan Note.

Source: Konak Municipality Website. URL (45).

Prior to the approval of the plans, a new demand from MMI to Folkart Construction appeared on the media. According to the public statements of MMI, the mayor Kocaoğlu had expressed his request for a separate building design for the Municipal Service Building, independent from the towers.[323] On this matter, Mesut Sancak, chairman of the Folkart Construction, stated that they have decided to revise the project in line with this request while underlining that, the project will change from the beginning.[324] Sancak also indicated that the construction of the project will be delayed by 3 to 5 months but the important thing is to realize a symbol project and give as a gift to the city with a project that will satisfy and comfort all the parties as well as the citizens of Izmir. Sancak emphasized that there are no disagreements between them and the MMI stated: "Our architects will evaluate the project accordingly and new drawings will be made. A delay of 3 to 5 months, is not important

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[323] "Büyükşehir'in İstediği Değişiklik Yapılacak," *Arkitera*, May 8, 2017. URL (46).
[324] Ibid.

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for such an iconic building."[325] This sudden request from the mayor can be attributed to two interconnected events: The first thing was the reduction of the construction area in the 1/1000 scaled plan due to the lawsuit. The second thing was: the discourse of Professional Chambers and the public on how 'municipal buildings should not be located in towers', began to turn into a slogan and reach the ears of the mayor himself through the protests.

Since the events regarding Basmane Pit had a wide media coverage throughout the years and especially since this new project was promoted through many media organs from the beginning, people who were intrigued by this unresolved urban problem, have voiced their thoughts on this new development through online forums. One of the most discussed posts was the 'leak' of a visual from the new proposal. (Figure 4.20.) There were mixed reactions to this new design: some of the forum members responded positively to the decrease in height, while some of them criticized this new form.

Figure 4.20. Project revision visual.

Source: Wow Turkey. URL (47).

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[325] Ibid.

There were not any developments regarding Basmane Pit later in 2018. The construction on the site was stopped due to the court decisions and the pit was filled with rain water once again. Just as everybody thought that the pit was reliving its past and that the entire cycle began to repeat itself, it was now time for the local elections of March 31, 2019. For Izmir's mayoral elections, Aziz Kocaoğlu did not run for the Office. Instead, the new candidate of RPP, Tunç Soyer campaigned and won the elections. Again, with the elections, the faith of Basmane Pit was in the hands of new mayor. However, with a recent development, the time limit set by SDIF for the construction was over and Folkart Construction returned the plot to SDIF.

On May 13, 2019; as the legal period was completed, Folkart announced the return of their rights on the plot to the SDIF due to the 30-month time limit for the start of the construction, which was determined by the SDIF in the tender contract.[326] The chairman of construction company, Mesut Sancak, stated that the start-up period could not be realized. Due to the lawsuits, and the construction could not be started as the tender period ended, although Sancak indicated that the case was concluded in favor of the project. It is important to point out that, as it was addressed previously in this study, lawsuits resulted against the project, and the plans regarding the project site were cancelled. In this case, it is not clear what is the purpose for claiming that the cases were concluded in favor of the project.

Folkart Construction announced that they would be willing to join the re-tender for the construction of the plot that will be initiated by SDIF in the upcoming period. Folkart made a public statement on the subject. It said:

> We had a new process in our Basmane project which was carried out with the cooperation and contribution of MMI and which we have been working for a long time within the boundaries of the law. Now, since the 30-month period has been completed for our company in the signed contract agreement and our contract has ended with the SDIF, we aim to find a solution within the framework of the common sense of Izmir. In other words, we have returned the

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[326] "Yasal süre doldu, Folkart 'Basmane Çukuru'nu iade etti," *Habertürk*, last modified on May 14, 2018. URL (48).

plot in Basmane to SDIF by adhering to the contract signed after the tender specifications with respect to the principle of the rule of law. It is especially important to note that this return has not been carried out by the request of any institution or person, but rather by the provisions of the contract. Due to the lawsuits filed, the period of commencement to work defined in the provisions of the contract has not been realized so far. As a result, the lawsuit was concluded in favor of our project. In this context, as the period of tender has ended, the construction of the architectural project could not be started. Yet the drawings, which were prepared with great effort, are now completed. The time period has ended before the details of the project prepared by award-winning architectural offices and esteemed architects throughout the world and in accordance with the requests of the MMI and the citizens of Izmir, were shared with the public. In the event that the SDIF re-auctions the land in the next period, Folkart wants to be able to do this project with our love for Izmir and due to our serious sense of responsibility towards the city. To this date, our company has shown a sincere and extraordinary effort to solve this problem in Izmir and will continue to be the strongest candidate in the implementation of the project, in case SDIF opens another auction in the upcoming term. First and foremost, we hope that this new situation will be beneficial for Izmir. We shared the developments with the MMI mayor Mr. Tunç Soyer. We would like to thank Mr. Soyer for his sensitivity. We would like to draw particular attention to the fact that MMI was the main owner of the plot in Basmane, which was given to Güçbirliği and EGS 22 years ago. Again, thanks to MMI for their contribution to the process. We are indebted to them.[327]

This new development and the statement from Folkart have triggered new debates. An important call came from the professional chambers. The Chamber of City Planners, Izmir Branch, interpreted the decision of the investors to return, as an opportunity and called for the re-expropriation of the land, which has become a "necrosis" in the city center. Özlem Şenyol Kocaer, head of the Izmir Branch of the Chamber of City Planners, made a statement on the discussions that started with the return of the land to SDIF; stating that the people of Izmir should have a word in the process, this land should be converted into a state-owned public space and it should be presented to the service of the people of Izmir. Kocaer, stated that:

We do not say that this area should be built in a specific way. On the contrary, we say that this decision should be made by the people of Izmir and a common decision must be taken. A process in which people, professional chambers, the

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[327] Ibid.

local government and non-governmental organizations have a say in the process should be carried out. This is an area taken unjustly from the public. There's a 22-year time loss in the middle. Such an important area of public interest was given away in exchange for financial benefits. Now we have an opportunity ahead of us and it should be evaluated. At this point, the MMI has important duties.[328]

Kocaer continued her statement by calling for the review of the plan decisions on the field, stating:

> Before everything else, this is a historical area. In the past, it was a municipal land that was part of Kültürpark and later, it was used as a garage. Its historical, cultural and natural values should be returned and the intense construction rights and plan decisions should be canceled. We are calling for the arrangement of a new plan to introduce this area to the use of the public. All these decisions in the cancelled plan would damage several aspects such as, transportation, environment, infrastructure, social reinforcement area, road, and parking areas. A new assessment should be made within the framework of science, reason and law. We will continue our struggle until the end, on a legal and legitimate ground.[329]

Another statement came from Halil İbrahim Alpaslan, the head of Chamber of Architects Izmir Branch. Alpaslan stated that the privatization of the plot has been unlawful since the beginning.[330] Alpaslan recalled that the area was previously in the hands of the municipality and was in the public domain; the problems started with privatization. He indicated that the Chamber of Architects has repeatedly stated that Folkart's intention to build a tall structure was very wrong since such a high structure in Basmane would be very harmful to the historical city center. Yet, according to him, at the end of more than 20 years, the mistakes still continue. The fact that Folkart gave up its project on the area is regarded positive. Yet, Alpaslan stated that the danger continued as another company could also take over the land with a similar intent. Therefore, Alpaslan pointed out: "This place should be returned to the public once

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[328] "Şehir Plancıları Odası'ndan 'Basmane Çukuru' açıklaması," *Ege Postası*, May 14, 2019. URL (49).
[329] Ibid.
[330] "H. İbrahim Alpaslan SonsözTV'ye konuştu: Basmane Çukuru Tekrar Kamuya Dönmeli," *izmimod*, May 14, 2019. URL (50).

again. The expropriation of the land could be costly, but it can be discussed. In principle the land should be returned to the public. The land should be utilized by annexing it to Kültürpark."[331]

Following the return of the land and the statements of professional chambers, the tone of the arguments on the online forums, social media posts and comments sections of news portals have changed. People began to discuss the possibility of opening the land to the public and other potentials, rather than the construction of the skyscraper project. Kültürpark Platform made the following written statement:

> We have fought against the construction projects of the 70-storey skyscraper planned to be built at the Basmane Pit. Aziz Kocaoğlu, the previous mayor of MMI, said that the municipality owns 30% of the shares; that the city will gain a new skyscraper and a congress center; and the municipality will transfer some of its departments to this building. We, as the democratic mass organizations of the city, have stated that; we need to claim the nature, the identity, the history, the urban fabric, the cats-dogs-birds of the city. We also argued that, in addition to being a living green area, this area has a historical identity and it cannot be turned into a commercial one because of its relation with the urban texture of the city. However, the desires that resemble the wish to reach the Tower of Babel, should be terminated; even the capital owners who regards the high-rise constructions penetrating the sky as 'urban transformation' say so today. We emphasize again; the area called the Basmane Pit should be brought to the city as a part of Kültürpark. The public interest should be considered in this process, and this land should take its historical place in Kültürpark as well as in the identity of the city.[332]

On the same day Basmane Pit was returned to SDIF, RPP Izmir Congressman Atilla Sertel addressed the MMI regarding the new development. Sertel made a statement through the social media stating that he considers the withdrawal of Folkart from the

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[331] Ibid.
[332] "Kültürpark Platformu Duyuru," Facebook Group Page, posted in May 13 2019. URL (51).

project as a chance, and called for MMI to reach an agreement with SDIF to build a national park in place of the Basmane Pit and open the area to the use of the people of Izmir.[333]

Sertel suggested that the 40 thousand sq. m. area known as Basmane Pit, is a part of Kültürpark Fair, which has a natural protected area status that does not grant legal construction permit. The area of 40 thousand sq. m. should be added to the 400 thousand sq. m. and then, it should be declared as a national park. The fair area should be increased to 440 thousand sq. m. in total. The traffic in this area should be taken under ground while expanding the breathable areas for the people of Izmir. Sertel concluded his words emphasizing: "It should not be forgotten that rent and benefits are not everything. While the city is transforming into a city like İstanbul day by day with the construction of tall buildings, together, we must protect the green areas of our city."[334]

The new MMI mayor Tunç Soyer, who was also the candidate of RPP, replied the call from Sertel. Soyer, who inquired this development as soon as he was elected, explained that it is difficult for the municipality to buy SDIF shares. He stated that there were important problems in the construction of the project, but Basmane Pit could not stay in its current form any longer. Soyer added that, although they have not been finalized as of yet, they began working on a few ideas. One of these ideas is to turn the pit into an artificial pond in order to create a public area with benches, fountains and trees. They are also planning to take the street next to the pit underground and connect it to Kültürpark with a bridge.[335]

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[333] "Sertel'den Soyer'e çağrı ve öneri: Basmane Çukuru 'milli park' olsun!" *Ege'de SonSöz*, May 13, 2019. URL (52).
[334] Ibid.
[335] "Başkan Soyer'den Basmane Çukuru ve meydan müjdesi..." *Gazetem İzmir*, June 7, 2019. URL (53).

4.4. Discursive Practices of Different Actors Involved in the Process

Throughout the time span of 22 years, from 1997 to 2019, various actors were involved in this unresolved urban problem, which is referred as Basmane Pit today. Each actor produced discourses parallel to their political, individual, professional or collective perspectives. This part of the study will be focused on these discourses that were covered by media sources, from past to present. Discourses will be grouped into supporters and opponents of the project, and the dominant discourses of each group will be critically analyzed. This analysis will address answers to questions such as: which notions were selected by actors to reinforce their discourses, what type of issues and/or opportunities were defined, who are the targeted audiences of these discourses and through which mechanisms these discourses were disseminated.

The prominent actor groups involved in the process are as follows: MMI Mayors, Real Estate Developers/Investors/Construction Firms, Professional Chambers (UCTEA-TMMOB), General Public, NGOs, Professionals (City Planners, Architects etc.), Governmental Actors and Media Organizations.

MMI Mayors: In 22 years, five MMI mayors served to the public. Those mayors are: Burhan Özfatura, Yüksel Çakmur, Ahmet Piriştina, Aziz Kocaoğlu and Tunç Soyer. As mentioned in the previous parts, during the term of the former mayor Burhan Özfatura, the way for the construction of AWTC was opened with the prepared master plans and contracts signed between the investor group and MMI. Yet, the construction was stopped in September 1999 by a court decision of a lawsuit opened by Yüksel Çakmur, another former mayor of MMI. It is important to emphasize again that Özfatura was elected twice; firstly, as a candidate of Motherland Party (MP) and secondly, as a candidate of True Path Party (TPP). During the period of MP, which is located at the right of the political spectrum as a conservative party, the transition to the neoliberal system in Turkey was strongly supported and their implementations and demonstrated accomplishments were in that direction. On the other hand, Yüksel Çakmur was the candidate of RPP, which is a center-left political party that has

adopted the views of Kemalism and social democracy, together with the socialist and social liberal tendencies. The disagreement between these two former mayors regarding the Basmane project still continues to this day; and it is not unusual considering their political stances.

In the process, the master plans, which were renewed twice during the period of the late mayor Ahmet Piriştina, were canceled upon the objection of Yüksel Çakmur although they were both from the same political party. After the decease of Ahmet Piriştina, Aziz Kocaoğlu became the mayor who held the responsibility for the longest time. He has held the responsibility for the last 15 years until the election of Tunç Soyer again from RPP in 2019. The discourses of mayors were mostly political, including notions that were ranging from urban entrepreneurialism to public interest, depending on the political opinion of the mayors.

Real Estate Developers/Investors: The plot was opened to construction with the plans prepared and the contract that were initiated by Burhan Özfatura between MMI and the chairman of Güçbirliği Holding, Kemal Zorlu. Later on, EGS REIT became a partner of the AWTC project. After the bankruptcy of EGS Bank, SDIF confiscated the shares. In 2016, Sancak Family who own Livamine Mining Inc. that contains Folkart Construction, won the tender of SDIF regarding Basmane Pit. Folkart became the leading construction firm in Izmir with the number of projects they had. Meanwhile, the chairman of Folkart, Mesut Sancak was very vocal about their project on Basmane. Sancak made press statements about this project and gave interviews to many newspapers and magazines, and also appeared on the local TV news. The main discourses produced by the capital owners were based on neoliberal development, city branding and prestige projects.

Professional Chambers (UCTEA): Izmir branches of UCTEA; the Chamber of Environmental Engineers, the Chamber of Architects, the Chamber of Landscape Architects and Chamber of the City Planners have prepared their own EIA reports, which reflected their professional views by producing scientific discourses regarding

the new project proposal for the plot called Basmane Pit. Those discourses varied from environmental to social justice and from public interest to judicial discourses. Although the Chamber of Architects has given many statements throughout the years, the chamber that was involved in this process the most active one was inarguably the Chamber of City Planners. Especially the head of the Chamber, Özlem Şenyol Kocaer was the primary follower of the process, and has expressed her professional opinions at every opportunity.

General Public: Since the beginning of the process, the people of Izmir have been the most important followers of the developments related to Basmane Pit. There are online forum topics opened just for the discussions regarding this plot where people have commented with hundreds of messages and has been active for the past 15 years. In addition to forums, people are very active in the comment sections of the online newspapers, and also in social media. Public debates are very diverse to indicate each; therefore, the dominant discourses will be grouped and then analyzed.

NGOs: Several NGOs were involved in throughout the process and produced discourses about the urban problem called Basmane Pit. Those main NGOs were Kültürpark Platform and Izmir City Strategies Center. Kültürpark Platform produced verbal and written statements on their Facebook page, organized petitions and protests, and prepared brochures and posters. Whereas Izmir City Strategies Center mostly produced their discourses in the form of online articles, which were spread throughout their website. They based their discourses on notions such as citizen rights, public interest, environmentalism, gentrification, legitimacy and crimes against the city.

Professionals (Architects, City Planners etc.): The most important involvement and discourse production of professionals to the case took place during the legal process, through the preparation of expert reports for the lawsuits. Intriguingly, there were several project proposals prepared by teams of well-known architects, to be built in the land. Yet, the architects of the projects have produced little to no discourses at all. Some professionals were interviewed by newspapers on their thoughts about the

subject and their discourses were parallel to those of professional chambers; they have evaluated the technical, environmental, and urban aspects of the project proposals.

The Central and Local Government: Since the urban problem in Basmane has been on the agenda of the media for years, members of the parliament and MMI City Council have also been involved in the process by producing discourses in meetings and through social media. Their discourses were mainly based on the public interest.

Media Organizations: Although the mass media and journalist groups have the lowest direct relevance to the subject, their capacity to frame perceptions is as wide as the masses they reach every day. Especially the grammatical characteristics of the produced and disseminated discourses through media texts are important since they can dominate, manipulate or reinforce certain perceptions. For example, the specific alteration of textual structures of headlines can reveal how the discourses supported by journalists, can lead to public legitimacy or opposition.

The findings of the discourse analysis performed on the arguments of the two sides of the urban controversy are illustrated in tables (Figure 4.21., 4.22.), and analyzed in detail in the following part of the study.

Supporter Actors	Prominent/Emphasized notions	Existing problems defined in the formation of the project	Development opportunities defined in the formation of the project	Wordings regarding the Basmane Pit	Wordings regarding the new project
Local Authority	urban development, global city, common mind, governance, public interest, urban design, participation, attracting investment, economic growth, job opportunities	Victimization of citizens through plan cancellations and legal processes, The city's inability to develop due to the legal actions, The lack of attraction for investment.	Increasing the public interest, Providing employment, Attracting new investors, Creating a new global center of attraction.	"idle land" "problematic land" "endless story"	"investor-friendly" "center of attraction" "city symbol"
Real Estate Developers	urban development, common mind, city symbol, public interest, prestigious project, innovation, participation, attracting investment, economic growth, job opportunities, city icon, love of İzmir, people of beutiful İzmir, wealth, pride	Basmane Pit is a serious threat to environmental health and safety, Citizens feel embarrassment, Investors have a negative perception of Izmir due to investments being blocked by bureaucratic obstacles, Basmane Pit is the reason why local and foreign investors stay away from İzmir.	Creating a "symbol for Turkey," Building a green vertical forest, Forming a "center of attraction" Introducing a "exquisite lifestyle" Enhancing İzmir's economy, Creating job opportunities, Enrich the image of İzmir and Turkey	"landscape of shame" "pit of shame" "visual pollution" "the dagger stabbed into İzmir's heart" "obstacle to investments"	"icon of İzmir" "symbol of İzmir" "prestigious project" "work of art" "a gift to İzmir" "center of attraction"
Media Organizations	public interest, prestige project, famous architects, new symbol of İzmir, common mind, job opportunities, attracting future investment.	The pit is in danger of collapsing, The idle land brings shame to the public, The pit damages the image of Izmir, The opponents constantly hinder the development.	Increase in the public interest, Gaining a prestigious project designed by famous architects, Building the new symbol of İzmir with a common mind, New job opportunities, Attracting future investment.	"Shame Pit" "Rats nest"	"design by famous architects" "prestigious project" "center of attraction"
General Public	urban development, attracting investment, economic growth, city icon, famous architects	UCTEA blocks the development in the city, The idle land brings shame to the citizens.	The city will have a prestigious building, Gaining a new image that will attract investors together with further development.	"disgraceful" "shameful" "cursed" "deadlock" "necrosis"	"design by famous architects" "prestigious project" "icon that İzmir needed"

Figure 4.21. Main findings of the analysis performed on the supporters' discourses.

Source: Produced by the author.

149

Opponent Actors	Prominent/Emphasized notions	Existing problems defined in the formation of the project	Development opportunities defined in the formation of the project	Wordings regarding the Basmane Pit	Wordings regarding the new project
Chambers Affiliated to UCTEA NGOs	crime against the city, citizen rights, privatization, gentrification, urban identity, neoliberal governance, public-private partnerships, place-specific development projects, transparency in local governance, legitimacy	Folkart's project proposal is a 'crime against the city', Local authority is focusing on the unlawful profit rather than the public interest, The historical urban fabric of the city center will be disrupted.	New plan and project should be prepared with a democratic, participatory and transparent approach, The land known as Basmane Pit should be expropriated with common mind.	"neighbour to Kültürpark" "problematic land" "precious urban plot"	"crime against city" "piecemeal development project" "skyscraper project"
Experts (Academicians, City Planners)	holistic urban design, common mind, urban mobilization, urban fabric, integrity of plans, density, scale, immediate environment, traffic load, parking problem, center, the canyon effect, heat islands, air blockage	Skyscraper will negatively impact the natural life in Kültürpark, The project will bring an unusual scale and density to its vicinity, The project is not in compliance with the urban principles; public interest, zoning legislation, planning techniques.	A new plan should increase the public interest along with the quality of public life and immediate surroundings, Its relations with the environment, streets and Kültürpark should be elaborated within the scope of city planning and urban design notions, principles and concepts.	"sensitive area" "green area" "natural habitat"	"large-scale urban development project" "skyscraper project"
Media Organizations	urban crime, collective struggle, natural life, investment oriented decisions, disruption of urban fabric, unlawful profit, partisan businessman	Same as those defined by the Chambers affiliated to UCTEA and NGOs, since the news articles covered their comments or public statements	Same as those defined by the Chambers affiliated to UCTEA and NGOs, since the news articles covered their comments or public statements	"neighbour to Kültürpark" "problematic land" "Basmane Pit"	"monstrosity" "tombstones of İzmir" "rant project for Kültürpark" "skyscraper project"
General Public	urban crime, natural life, rant project, investment oriented decisions, unlawful profit, partisan businessman, scale, immediate environment, traffic load, parking problem	Proposing a skyscraper project for the historical city center instead of the new city center designated for the high-rise development, Traffic load that the proposed project will bring to the area.	Expropriation of the land to be designed as a public green space.	"Basmane Pit" "unsolved problem"	"monstrosity" "horrific" "exhaust pipe" "factory chimney" "freak of nature" "tombstones of Izmir" "screws in the dental implants"

Figure 4.22. Main findings of the analysis performed on the opponents' discourses.

Source: Produced by the author.

4.4.1. Analysis of Supporters' Discourses

Actors who support the project, based their various discourses on different notions according to their actor profile. As the political actors of the process, the approaches of MMI mayors, are different than the way investors present the project to the public eye. In addition to their approaches, their definitions of the existing problems and development opportunities defined in the project, also differs from each other.

Since all this privatization initiative was made during the mandate of MMI mayor Burhan Özfatura, his name is mentioned whenever the subject of Basmane Pit is discussed. Several urban development projects were proposed during his mandate. Those were presented to the public with the arguments that emphasize the 'attraction of investment' and the 'enhancement of competitiveness'.[336] These neoliberal discourses that serve to the entrepreneurial governance strategies of Özfatura, were aimed to gain public support and create public consent as well as to legitimize his own initiatives on the construction of the project. In an interview dated 2011[337]; Özfatura, who could not accept the cancellation of the construction of the AWTC project, explained his main motive for the construction of the project as 'providing employment for the youth' and his overall argument was based on the notion of 'economic development.' Özfatura stated that there is nothing against the law in the master development plans. However, there is a 'naysayer' group (in other words 'unwilling' and in his words, 'istemezükçü') and because of them, the city has become a forbidden zone for investments and declined in terms of 'urban development.' Özfatura claimed that the plot in question has no connection to Kültürpark and there was a need for a 'symbol project', as they foresaw at the time. According to his vision, this project, which was located in the middle of Izmir, would enable the development of its environment and "develop Izmir's economy" as a whole. Özfatura also made it

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[336] Penpecioğlu, "Political Construction," 166.
[337] "Şehir, yatırımda yasak bölge oldu," *Yeni Asır*, June 16, 2011. URL (31).

clear that, he made an agreement for the construction of AWTC with Zorlu Family, owners of the Güçbirliği Holding, who have a close relationship with Özfatura himself.

According to Özfatura's argument, the advancement of Izmir as a city, is directly dependent on the 'construction of urban development projects.' By labeling the opponents of the project as 'naysayers', Özfatura damages the spirit of the ongoing urban debate, while his wording led to creation of a negative perception about the opposing people. He frequently refers to the discourse of 'reinforcing the economy' in order to legitimize his initiative that he regards as the 'symbol of Izmir.' In the interview he distorts the facts by claiming that the land has no relations with Kültürpark. The involvement of the personal relationships could be an indicator that; throughout the process, Özfatura thought of attracting investment to the city more than he thought of the 'public interest.' When Özfatura's overall approach to this project is evaluated, it can be concluded that his actions exemplify Harvey's definition of entrepreneurial urbanism by meeting all of the three aspects: public-private partnership, speculative discourse production and place-specific development projects.

Following Özfatura, Aziz Kocaoğlu was one of the main actors who produced most of the declarations on behalf of the MMI in the process since he served as the mayor for 15 years, until the recent local elections which resulted in favor of Tunç Soyer from the same party. In the past 15 years Kocaoğlu has initiated many large-scale projects and often promoted them with such notions as 'common mind', 'governance', 'urban design', 'innovation', and 'participation.' During his mandate, Kocaoğlu commented on the subject in many interviews, meetings, and city council sessions.[338] As one the principal political actors in the process, Aziz Kocaoğlu, reinforces his

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[338] See for example; "Taha Bey doğru adaydı," *Ege'de Son Söz*, August 21, 2009. URL (54).; "Kocaoğlu'ndan 'Basmane Çukuru' açıklaması," *Hürriyet Ege*, January 21, 2016. URL (55); "Kocaoğlu: Kültürpark satılamaz, birilerine peşkeş çekilemez," *Hürriyet*, November 29, 2017. URL (56); "SonSöz TV, Kocaoğlu'yla start aldı… Başkan'dan çarpıcı mesajlar!" *Egede SonSöz,* January 11, 2018. URL (57).

statements with the notions of 'public interest' and 'attracting investment.' Kocaoğlu bases his arguments on the fact that this project was not initiated by him. However, he secured an increase in the MMI's right on the land for the sake of 'public interest.' Kocaoğlu claims that the lawsuits opened and the cancellation of the plans have 'victimized the public' while blocking the attempts to "attract foreign investment." Kocaoğlu states that the fact that lawsuits are being filed for every project and plan, constitutes an obstacle for Izmir to open up to the world and "become a world city."

Kocaoğlu's statement is supported within the "City Marketing Strategic Plan"[339] prepared by Izmir Development Agency (IZKA). In the plan, one of the main goals is to redefine the image of Izmir as "a center of attraction" and open up the city to the "global arena." Another main goal is to "create an investor friendly environment" by; rapidly responding the questions and demands of the investors, strengthening the city's competitive position, focusing on prioritized sectors and sub-sectors in investment, being competitive in tax and investment legislation, increasing investor satisfaction, implementing laws and regulations for investment and providing education, health and transportation services at international standards for investors and their families.[340]

When these strategic goals are considered, the reason behind Kocaoğlu's insistence on the implementation of this new project proposal can be attributed to the desire of transforming Izmir into an 'investor friendly world city', and 'a center of attraction.' Kocaoğlu commented on these goals, arguing the following: "All our plans, all the investment tools that will attract the investors in Izmir, went to the judiciary. Now, without them, without a project to promote Izmir to the local-foreign investors, what is the point of advertising Izmir?"[341] Although Kocaoğlu suggested that the citizens were victims of the process where the plans were cancelled, the project was delayed

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[339] Izmir City Marketing Strategic Plan, IZKA.
[340] Ibid., 66.
[341] Hamdi Türkmen, "Düşman dışarıda değil, içimizde," *Milliyet*, last accessed May 14, 2019. URL (58).

and the land remained idle; it should be emphasized that he did not attempt to expropriate the land, due to the fact that the agreements were signed before his mandate. In response to the recurring cancellations of the plans, Kocaoğlu, by redefining the discipline of city planning, states that all principles and decisions covered by the planning discourse are open to interpretation; errors can be found in each and every plan.

It can be deduced that Kocaoğlu, representing the public authority, based his discourses on the notions of 'city branding through prestige projects' for 'attracting foreign investment' to become 'a world city.' It is interesting to note that both political actors Burhan Özfatura and Aziz Kocaoğlu used similar discourses to justify their decisions, rather than legitimize the project itself. The reason why both mayors stated repeatedly that they are comfortable with their decisions and that they did the right things, is to justify themselves in the eye of the public as politicians. Therefore, the target audiences of their political discourses were the general public and the opponents of the project and the representatives of UCTEA (TMMOB).

Both political actors involved in the process define the existing problems in the formation of the project as; victimization of citizens through plan cancellations and legal processes, the city's inability to develop due to the legal actions and the lack of attraction for investment. On the other hand, the development opportunities in the formation of the project are defined as increasing the public interest, providing employment, attracting new investors and creating a new global center of attraction.

Investors of the project, the chairman of Güçbirliği Holding Kemal Zorlu and the chairman of Folkart Construction Mesut Sancak produced discourses that are distinctly different from each other. According to Zorlu, the existing problem in the formation of the project is that the construction rights of the project belong to Güçbirliği, and they are willing to prepare a prestige project proposal for the plot at Basmane, which is similar to the AWTC proposal of the former group in the 90s. In

other words, they are not criticizing the high-rise building project proposed for the plot at Basmane but instead, they are objecting to the way the plot was obtained by Folkart. Zorlu also claims that there are strong figures behind the Sancak Family and Folkart has a team of professionals that are skilled in conducting "perception operations over the masses".[342] He indicates that immediately after the tender is received by Folkart three different project proposals were presented to the public; according to Zorlu, the proposals could not have been completed in such a short notice. Therefore, they must have completed prior to the tender of SDIF.[343] In addition, Zorlu indicates that the rise of the municipal shares in the ownership of the plot is not the outcome of personal effort of the mayor Kocaoğlu; rather it was a move to fulfill the public interest decision of the court that has canceled the master development plan in 2015. His discourses targeted MMI, which is the local authority, the general public and Folkart Construction.

The most recent contractor Mesut Sancak has worked for the legitimization and promotion of the project while supporting his discourses with a number of different notions. In the press briefings, interviews and appearances on TV programs[344], Sancak defined the problems within the formation of the project as follows: Basmane Pit is a serious threat to environmental health and safety, and it displays a "visual ugliness". Citizens feel embarrassment towards this pit. Investors have a negative perception of Izmir due to investments being blocked by bureaucratic obstacles and Basmane Pit is the underlying reason why local and foreign investors stay away from Izmir. His wordings regarding Basmane Pit are: "landscape of shame," "pit of shame," "visual pollution," "the dagger stabbed into Izmir's heart," and "the plot that brings shame to beautiful Izmir."

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[342] "Zorlu'dan 'Basmane Çukuru' açıklaması," *Hürriyet*, June 28, 2016. URL (59).
[343] Ibid.
[344] *Folkart-Mesut Sancak-İzmir Basmane Çukuru İhalesi*, YouTube video, 17:33, posted by Mustafa Özcan, January 19, 2016. URL (60); "İzmir'in kalbinde Türkiye'nin gururu" *Folkart Dergi*, (Summer 2016): 32-39.; "Basmane Çukuru İçin Mahkemeden İzmir'e Bayram Müjdesi," *Milliyet*, June 30, 2016. URL (61); "Basmane Çukuru'nda yeni projeyi İzmir seçecek!" *Ege'de SonSöz*, November 21, 2016. URL (62); "Büyükşehir'in İstediği Değişiklik Yapılacak," *Arkitera*, May 8, 2017. URL (46).

Sancak defined the development opportunities within their new project proposal as; realizing a project that will be the "most exclusive architectural project" of Europe, creating a "symbol for Turkey," building a green vertical forest at the heart of Izmir, designing an exemplary and inspiring project, presenting Izmir with a project that was designed by world famous architects forming a "center of attraction" at the heart of Izmir, introducing an "icon" that is as valuable as a work of art, becoming the symbol of the new "exquisite lifestyle" in Izmir, providing a major contribution to Izmir's economy, creating job opportunities for five thousand people, preserving the public interest in a public area at the city center, granting a "prestigious project" that will enrich the image of Izmir and Turkey, building a spectacular project for Izmir's future, and designing "the crown jewel of Turkey" that the citizens of Izmir would be proud of. His wordings in regard to Folkart's new proposal for Basmane Pit are, "icon of Izmir," "symbol of Izmir," "prestigious project," "work of art," "a gift to Izmir" and "center of attraction."

Mesut Sancak, who has repeatedly expressed his love for Izmir on every platform at every opportunity stated that he felt welcomed and loved in this city and that he is feeling responsible for the people of Izmir; therefore, the company initiated a public poll to decide which project to build with the "common mind" of the citizens. However, as mentioned before, the EIA process was commenced by the company before the announcement of the winning proposal of the poll. On the lawsuits regarding the project and plan cancellations, Sancak states that:

> I doubt the love of Izmir of the people who sued the master plan that allows this project. This project does not belong to us anymore. It belongs to Izmir and everyone should support this project. It is unfair to criticize such a prestige project to be built on a land that is currently reducing the market value of Izmir.[345]

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[345] *Folkart-Mesut Sancak-İzmir Basmane Çukuru İhalesi*, YouTube video, 17:33, posted by Mustafa Özcan, January 19, 2016. URL (60).

Therefore, the targeted audiences of his discourses were the general public and the opponents of the project. It can be concluded that; Mesut Sancak, as an investor actor, used his arguments to legitimize the project proposal and supported his justifying discourse with the notions that evokes economic development, greatness, wealth, prestige, and pride.

The supporting discourses were disseminated through mass media tools such as; online newspapers and magazines, social media and networking sites, TV newscasts and commercials. Unlike all the other actors, media is the medium in which text structures and grammar uses have the biggest importance. Through slight adjustments, a discourse can hold a different meaning. Media texts possess the powers to dominate, distort, manipulate, disseminate or reinforce discourses together with the perceptions of masses. It has been discovered through an in-depth analysis that, certain alterations made in the textual structures of news headlines lead to the promotion or opposition of particular discourses. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the selection of wording of certain media organizations differed from the others in a way that praised the project or discredited the opponents.

For instance, *Milliyet* online newspaper published the news of the court's refusal of Kemal Zorlu's lawsuit for the cancellation of the project as "Good news from court to Izmir about Basmane Pit."[346] The subheadings of news articles such as "A genuine perspective of an Izmir resident", "Public interest", "5 thousand people will be employed", "There are no obstacles", "Public will choose the project", "Decision belongs to Izmir", "Most significant architects of the World", "It will be the symbol of Izmir", "The most modern municipality building of Europe", and "Investment of 900 millions TL" were also praising and heralding the construction of the project, in parallel to the heading.

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[346]"Basmane Çukuru İçin Mahkemeden İzmir'e Bayram Müjdesi," *Milliyet*, June 30, 2016. URL (61).

Another use of headline that exemplify that provide an example for specifically chosen words, has been produced by *Star* online newspaper: "Izmir Basmane finally gets rid of The Shame Pit."[347] The subheadings of the article are; "Lots of people suffered", "Damaging Izmir's image", "It could collapse at any moment." In this news article, words were used to produce disparaging discourses on Basmane Pit. Instead of naming the land as 'Basmane Pit', the news organization prefers to use, 'Shame Pit.'

In addition to news articles supporting the project, there were also journalists who wrote about the urban problem and Burak Cilasun was one of the journalists who produced a supportive discourse regarding the construction of the high-rise project. In his online article on the Aegean newspaper *Ben.tv*, the headline was: "When will we get rid of the Naysayers?"[348] In the article, Cilasun's statements emphasized how the opponent groups' – in his words Naysayers – actions negatively affected Izmir's image and deprived the citizens from public services. He describes Basmane Pit as "a pit of rat's nest" while portraying the project opponents who carry banners stating 'Skyscrapers should be demolished, parks should be build' as "romantics." Cilasun expressed his best wishes on the realization of this 'exclusive project' which will bring Basmane district -that he defined as a place of crime, prostitution and danger- back to the city of Izmir.

A famous public figure and journalist Hıncal Uluç was another media actor who wrote a column about Basmane Pit and the new project proposal of Folkart in the newspaper *Sabah*. Uluç wrote:

> If only naysayers –a group of people who object every beauty to be added to the city, give happiness and comfort to people, contribute to culture and art, and who get a decision to stop the execution from courts– did not exist, citizens of Izmir would be able to breathe again.[349]

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[347] "İzmir Basmane 'utanç çukuru'ndan sonunda kurtuluyor," *Star*, last updated in January 20, 2016. URL (63).

[348] Burak Cilasun, "İstemezükçülerden ne zaman kurtulacağız?" *ben.tv*, December 25, 2018. URL (64).

[349] Hıncal Uluç, "İzmir'de Bir Yılan Hikayesi!.." *Sabah*, September 29, 2018. URL (65).

In the column, Uluç introduced Burhan Özfatura as "one of the most successful and most prominent mayors of Izmir," while portraying Mesut Sancak as "the idealist chairman of Folkart; the firm that truly contributed to Izmir in great extent, artistically and culturally." It can be inferred that, in the article, Uluç chose his words and formed his arguments to praise the initiators of the privatization and prestige project, Özfatura and Sancak respectively, while discrediting the opponents, namely the Chambers of UCTEA.

It can be deduced that the existing problems in the formation of the project are defined in mass media as: the pit is in danger of collapsing, the idle land brings shame to the public, the pit damages the image of Izmir, and the opponents of the project constantly hinder the development. On the other hand, defined opportunities within the formation of the project are; increase in the public interest, realizing the project with common mind, gaining a prestigious project designed by famous architects, building the new symbol of Izmir with a common mind, new job opportunities and attracting future investment. The supportive discourses disseminated throughout the media were targeted towards the general public, the opponents of the project and UCTEA.

In the process, some of the segments of the general public also produced supportive discourses regarding the project; alongside with the political, investor and media actors. For describing Basmane Pit, supportive general public uses negative wordings such as "disgraceful", "shameful", "cursed", "deadlock" and "necrosis." Two main supportive discourses of the general public that emerged as a result of examining all the texts in the comment sections of social media posts and news sites, together with the online forum topics regarding the Basmane Pit that have been active in the past 15 years, are as follows:

1. Dozens of lawsuits have been filed, investors suffered; as a result, the land remained idle for years. UCTEA's only purpose is to block developments in the city.

2. At last, Turkey will have a world-standard iconic building and Izmir will gain a prestigious skyscraper designed by the world-famous architecture firm, MAD Architects.

It can be inferred that, according to the supportive general public, the existing problems are: UCTEA blocks the development in the city and the idle land brings shame to the citizens. Development opportunities are: the city will have an iconic, prestigious building and a new image that will attract investors together with further development. Their discourses were targeted towards the opponents of the project and UCTEA.

4.4.2. Analysis of Opponents' Discourses

In contrast with the supporter actors, opponent actors' discourses were single-minded and wholly united in many aspects. The reason behind the production of such unified arguments can be attributed the fact that, the opposed actor profile mainly consists of nonprofit, civil society and non-governmental organizations together with local professionals, as opposed to the supporter actor group who has specific agendas and self-interests, like politicians and investors.

Yüksel Çakmur was the only former MMI mayor who produced opposing discourses regarding the Folkart's skyscraper project planned to be built in Basmane. His opposition dates back to 1998; to the lawsuit that Çakmur filed for the cancellation of the plan revision, land sale and construction permits of the AWTC project that Özfatura initiated. Since then, Çakmur filed many lawsuits against the proposed project. In a public statement[350], Çakmur explained his opposition as: during his mayorship he proposed a Cultural Center with an opera theatre and carpark instead of the Trade Center project that Özfatura initiated. Therefore, Kocaoğlu was not obliged to propose or support Folkart's skyscraper project. As a response to the supporter

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[350] "Çakmur'dan flaş Basmane Çukuru açıklaması... Bu İzmir'in davasıdır," *Egeden SonSöz*, January 1, 2017. URL (66).

actors' name calling, 'naysayer', Çakmur indicates that his conscience is clean since he does not have an agenda or self-interest unlike the current investors and the local authority.

Upon analysis of Çakmur's statements, as reflected on the media, it can be seen that the most prominent notion he praises is 'public interest'. His discourses were targeted towards the local authority, MMI. He defined the problems within the formation of the project as: the ongoing perception operation which describes a precious piece of land as a "pit of shame", local authority's focus on unlawful profit, the unlawful actions in the process, and the lack of consideration of the real public interest. The opportunities of development are defined as: the recovery of this important land and its introduction to the service of public, respect for the public interest and realizing a cultural center instead of a mixed-use skyscraper.

However, there is a contradiction in Çakmur's arguments. The contradiction can be explained as follows: In 1992, Çakmur revived the establishment of Konak Square Galleria Shopping Center project, which was formerly initiated by Özfatura in 1989. Again, as a result of the efforts of the Chamber of Architects, the project was canceled by a court decision.[351] After that Konak Square was declared a protected area.[352] It is seen that the idea of occupying a city symbol like Konak Square with a shopping center contradicts everything that Çakmur currently defends in his statements. Interestingly, the Galleria case is an example of yet another urban problem in Izmir, which has also been taken to the judiciary by the professional chambers.

Professional chambers affiliated to UCTEA, are the principal opposing actors who produced a scientific professional discourse through the EIA reports and public statements they prepared. In the EIA reports, which were previously introduced in this study in detail, the prominent notions that support the scientific discourses were: 'the

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[351] Numan Tuna, "Mimarlar Odası İzmir Şubesi Kent Çevre Komisyonu Konak Galeria Raporu," *Ege Mimarlık*, no.3-4 (1992): 48.
[352] "Konak Meydanı İzmirlilerin," *Ege Mimarlık,* no.4 (1993): 24.

threat of gentrification in city center', 'piecemeal urban development', 'deterioration of the city silhouette', 'distortion of urban fabric', 'harming the historical urban identity', 'right to property', 'social rights', 'right to solidarity', 'lack of public interest', 'impacts on the fauna and flora of Kültürpark', 'load of the additional population', 'additional traffic load', 'disruption of traffic flow', 'impact on air quality' and 'wind corridors', 'production of shade and shadow over Kültürpark's natural habitat', 'inefficient energy consumption', 'urban heat islands', 'blocking air flow', 'lack of infrastructure in the area', 'increase in the burden of public utilities', 'miscalculation of the population', 'crime against city', 'investment income concern', 'self-interest', 'conflicting with the zoning legislation', and 'conflicting with the planning principles.' Their discourses targeted the local authority, MMI, and the general public.

The problems within the formation of the project defined by the Professional Chambers affiliated to UCTEA were: all of the notions mentioned above regarding the environmental, technical, urban, social, and legal aspects of the proposed project. The opportunities of development were defined as: deciding the future of the land with a common mind, expropriating the land and opening it to public service, and considering notions such as social rights and urban identity.

Opposing NGOs, Kültürpark Platform and Izmir City Strategies Center, produced parallel discourses in the process. The public statements, prepared banners, slogans and protests of Kültürpark Platform were previously introduced in the study. The prominent notions in their discourses were: 'citizen rights', 'public interest', 'environmentalism', 'privatization', 'gentrification', 'urban identity', 'neoliberal governance', 'public-private partnerships', 'place-specific development projects', 'transparency in local governance', 'legitimacy' and 'crime against city.' Target audiences of their discourses were: the local authority MMI, Folkart Construction and the general public.

The problems within the formation of the project defined by both the NGOs were: Folkart's project proposal is a 'crime against the city', local authority is focusing on the unlawful profit rather than the public interest, skyscraper will negatively impact the natural life in Kültürpark, the skyscraper will harm the city silhouette, the historical urban fabric of the city center will be disrupted, the project will bring an unusual scale and density to its vicinity and the project is not in compliance with the urban principles; public interest, zoning legislation, planning techniques and court decisions. The opportunities of development were defined as: a new master development plan which prioritizes the public interest, compatibility with the historical urban fabric, respecting the natural life in Kültürpark, being scientific and equitable, and compatibility with the planning principles should be prepared with a democratic, participatory and transparent approach, and the land known as Basmane Pit should be expropriated according to common mind.

Professional actors who produced discourses in the process are: Fatma Şenol, Erkal Serim and Nicel Saygın, city planners and academicians who prepared the expert report for the lawsuit, and also Mehmet Penpecioğlu, city planner and academician whose studies on the political construction of the urban development projects in Izmir were referred many times in this study. In the expert report, professional actors supported their scientific discourses with following notions: 'contextual relations', 'urban fabric', 'integrity of plans', 'density', 'scale', 'limited information', 'immediate environment', 'traffic load', 'parking problem', 'comprehensive design', 'social reinforcement areas', 'planning techniques', 'city silhouette', and 'historical city center.' The target audiences of their scientific discourses were: The District Administrative Court and the defendants, İMM and Konak Municipality.

The existing problems within the formation of the project are defined in the expert report as: the plot in question is a sensitive area due to its location at the heart of the city; the planning, construction and cancellation processes increased the public loss for years; the planning decisions regarding this sensitive urban area is only limited by

163

the FAR; there is no indication of the principle of public interest and equality in the content; and the project is not compliant to urban principles, public interest, zoning legislation, planning techniques and court decisions. The opportunities for development were defined as: a new plan should shape the architecture that will take place in a large plot that has a potential to increase the public interest along with the quality of public life and immediate surroundings, and its relations with the environment, streets and Kültürpark should be elaborated within the scope of city planning and urban design notions, principles and concepts.

Mehmet Penpecioğlu indicated that he shares the same opinion with the NGOs, recognizes the discourses in the expert reports and defines the same existing problems in the formation of the project. Yet, Penpecioğlu states that 'urban struggle' does not solely consist of making changes to the plans and emphasizes that the preparation of a new plan does not guarantee that the land will be protected automatically. Instead of that, he suggests opportunities for development as follows:

> The relationships of the land with Alsancak and Basmane districts should be correctly analyzed. Researchers should successfully identify the demands, needs and expectations of people living in Izmir. New concepts and ideas around the world on the use of open green areas should be examined. To this day, neither the local governments nor the professional chambers were able to conduct these studies. If the plan is to be made, there should be a Field Management Plan made for Kültürpark. We should approach Basmane Pit together with Kültürpark in a holistic manner and increase our performance in producing options. Not only the professional chambers but also universities and academicians should state their opinions.[353]

Penpecioğlu supported his statements with the following notions: 'holistic urban design', 'comprehensive urban planning', 'common mind', 'urban mobilization', and 'public participation.' Targeted audiences of his discourses were: local authority MMI, chambers affiliated to UCTEA, the general public and academicians.

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[353] "Dr. Mehmet Penpecioğlu: Basmane Çukuru, Kültürpark ile birlikte düşünülmeli," *İz Gazete*, May 16, 2019. URL (67).

164

The parliamentarians from the two parties such as RPP Izmir Congressmen Atilla Sertel and Mustafa Balbay, RPP City Council President Çağrı Gruşçu, JDP Congressman Mahmut Atilla Kaya and JDP City Council Member Hüsnü Boztepe based their arguments on the notions of 'betrayal to the city', 'crime against city', 'investment income concern', 'expropriation' and 'public interest.' Their targeted audiences were: the general public and the local authority MMI. The parliamentarians criticized the 'income-focused approach' of the previous authorities as the problem in the formation of the project, and invited the new MMI mayor Tunç Soyer to buy the plot and open it to the service of the public as an opportunity for development.

The opposed discourses were disseminated through mass media tools such as: online newspapers and magazines, social media sites and websites about Izmir. It has been discovered through an in-depth analysis that similar alterations to the ones made in the textual structures of supporter media organizations' news headlines also made in the opponent media organizations. These alterations lead to the promotion of particular discourses of opposing actors.

Online news portals *Evrensel* and *Yapi.com.tr* were two of the media organizations that produced opposing discourses. In the process, the news portals published many articles[354] that address the comments of UCTEA with opposing headlines such as: "Izmir, the pearl of the Aegean is being destroyed by skyscrapers", "Skyscraper at Kültürpark: Betraying Izmir like as in İstanbul!" "Tombstones of Izmir!" "Basmane is losing its historical and architectural wealth", "Urban crime is being implemented in the Basmane Pit", "We do not want Skyscraper in Kültürpark", "Collective struggle against the urban crime", and "Kültürpark Protest: Park instead of Skyscrapers." Subheadings of these articles such as: "Endless story of 18 years", "It is Izmir's turn

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[354] See for example; Özer Akdemir, "İzmir'in mezar taşları!" *Evrensel*, November 22, 2016. URL (68); "Basmane Çukuru'nda Kent Suçu Hayata Geçiyor," *Yapi.com.tr*, November 24, 2016. URL (69); "Kültürpark eylemi: Gökdelenler yıkılsın yerine park yapılsın," *Evrensel*, November 29, 2016. URL (70); "TMMOB: Ege'nin İncisi İzmir Gökdelenlerle Yok Oluyor," *Yapi.com.tr*, December 22, 2016. URL (71); "İzmir'de kent suçuna karşı ortak mücadele" *Evrensel*, December 28, 2016. URL (72); "Kültürpark'a gökdelen: İstanbul gibi İzmir'e de ihanet!" *Evrensel*, 29 October, 2017. URL (73); "Kültür Park'ta gökdelen istemiyoruz," *Yapi.com.tr*, January 30, 2017. URL (74).

to be destroyed", "Rant project for Kültürpark", "Project should be withdrawn", "The Canyon Effect", "Heat Islands and Air Blockage", "The right to build has been exceeded twice", "Call for MMI: Do not participate in urban crime", "City will become inhabitable", "They are committing urban crime for investment income", "Accomplice is nothing new" and "It will disrupt the chemistry of the area."

On the other hand, media organizations such as *politeknik*, *oda.tv* and *soL* emphasized the political aspects of the urban problem. They produced media texts that are directed towards the investor Mesut Sancak's and Sancak Family's political stance, and their relationship with the ruling party of Turkey, JDP. These news portals organized the textual structure and wordings of their headlines[355] in order draw attention to the ideological and political stance of the Sancak Family and their proposed project was as follows: "Judicial authority said no to the skyscraper that will be erected by Sancak Group in Basmane", "The open letter from the CPT[356] to the SDIF: Did Folkart gain an immense amount unfair profit?", "Erdoğan's admirer Sancak family will stab this monstrosity into the heart of Izmir!", "Tayyip admirer Sancak, take Folkart with you and get the hell out!", "Another crime against Izmir: Skyscraper for Basmane by JDP Sympathizer Mesut Sancak", "Objection from Izmir citizens to JDP Sympathizer Sancak's Project: We will not turn a blind eye to the crime against the city at Basmane Pit", "Stop committing crime, and withdraw from Kültürpark!", "Basmane Pit triggered discussions in RPP" and "The state 'donated' 69 million TL to the partisan businessman." In these news articles, instead of using "Folkart Construction" or "Chairman of Folkart Construction Mesut Sancak" the contractor was addressed with

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[355] See for example; Ahmet Çınar, "Erdoğan aşığı Sancak ailesi İzmir'in göbeğine bu ucubeyi saplayacak!" *soL*, 21 November, 2016. URL (75); "İzmir'e Bir Kent Suçu Daha: Akp'li Sancak'tan Basmane Çukuru'na Gökdelen," *politeknik*, November 23, 2016. URL (76); Ahmet Çınar, "Tayyip aşığı Sancak, Folkart'ını da al defol git!" *soL*, November 24, 2016. URL (77); "İzmirlilerden Akp'li Sancak'ın Projesine İtiraz: Basmane Çukuru'nda Kent Suçuna Göz Yummayacağız" *politeknik*, November 29, 2016. URL (78); "Suç İşlemeyi Bırakın, Kültürpark'tan Elinizi Çekin!" *politeknik*, February 2, 2017. URL (79); "Sancak grubunun Basmane'ye dikeceği dev binaya yargı 'dur' dedi," *soL*, November 30, 2017. URL (80); "Devlet yandaş iş adamına 69 milyon TL bağışladı," *oda.tv*, December 15, 2018. URL (81); "TKP'den TMSF'ye açık mektup: Folkart 'Basmane Çukuru'nda vurgun mu yaptı" *soL*, May 22, 2019. URL (82).
[356] Communist Party of Turkey.

expressions such as: "JDP sympathizer investor group Sancak Family", "JDP sympathizer Sancak", "Erdoğan admirer Sancak Family", "Sancak Group who are known with their closeness to JDP", and "Mesut Sancak who is the nephew of Ethem Sancak, known for his closeness to the JDP and the tenders he received from the State."

The media organizations were divided into two groups in terms of the discourses they produced. When the textual structure of the headlines and the general word choices in the opponent media organizations' discourses are analyzed, prominent notions are either 'crime against the city' or 'unlawful profit', and 'partisan businessman.' Existing problems in the formation of the project and the development opportunities defined by the opponent media were the same as those defined by the Chambers affiliated to UCTEA and NGOs, since the news articles covered their comments or public statements. The targeted audiences were: general public, people who do not support JDP, local authority MMI and Folkart Construction.

The involvement of the opposing side of the general public to the urban problem was through the opposing discourses they produced regarding the project on social media platforms, comment sections of online news portals, and topics opened for the discussion of the Basmane Pit on internet forums. On the Folkart's skyscraper proposal designed by MAD Architects for Basmane Pit, opponents used negative expressions such as: "monstrosity", "horrific", "looks like an exhaust pipe", "looks like factory chimney", "freak of nature", "tomb stones of Izmir" and "screws in the dental implants." It can be seen that similar negative wordings have been produced by the project's supporters to describe the Basmane Pit, while the opponents have used such negative expressions to describe the project proposal.

Three main opposing discourses from the general public that emerged as a result of examining all the media texts in comment sections and forum websites are as follows:

1. If skyscrapers can be erected everywhere, then why the New City Center in Bayraklı was designed for? Skyscrapers should only be built in the Bayraklı district.

2. Does anyone think of the traffic load that a project of this scale will bring to the region that already has a traffic problem?

3. The green area in Izmir is very limited. This land should be utilized as a public space and designed as a park or a pond.

It can be inferred that, according to the opposing side of the general public, the existing problems in the formation of the project are stated as: proposing a skyscraper project for the historical city center instead of the new city center designated for the high-rise development, and the traffic load that the proposed project will bring to the area. Development opportunity is defined as the expropriation of the land to be designed as a public green space.

As a result of the analysis, it is also found that the actors involved in the process used the same notions in completely different meanings depending on their particular position and whether they supported the project or not. The prominent dualities between the arguments of both sides of the urban controversy are observed on the notions of "public interest", "investment", "prestige project" and "crime against city". How these notions, which are often used by both of the supporter and opponent groups in their discourses, are used in different meanings are illustrated.

One of the findings is, supporter groups' use of the notion "public interest" stands for "attracting future investment" whereas, for the opponent groups, "public interest" stands for the "expropriation of the plot with common mind". (Figure 4.23)

Supporters		Opponents
Attracting investment.		Opening the plot to public use.
Improve the image of the city.	—— "public interest" ——	Including green areas.
Realizing a prestigious project.		Including social reinforcements.
Initiating a public poll for the selection of the project to be built.		Expropriation of the plot with common mind.

Figure 4.23. Duality within the use of the notion "public interest".

Source: Produced by the author.

As for the use of "investment" notion; supporters of the project imply the "economic development" while groups opposing the project signify "enriching the investors". (Figure 4.24.)

Supporters		Opponents
Attracting future investment.		Unlawful profit.
Improve the image of the city.		Prioritizing the needs of a small segment of citizens.
Creating job opportunities.	—— "investment" ——	
Economic development.		Enriching the investors.
Moving forward in the inter-urban competition.		Ignoring problems such as refugee influx.

Figure 4.24. Duality within the use of the notion "investment".

Source: Produced by the author.

Another finding is noted as the actors supporting the project used the notion "prestige project" to evoke the perception of "symbol of the city" and "center of attraction" while the actors opposing the project used the notion to refer the "gentrification tool" and "crime against city". (Figure 4.25.)

Figure 4.25. Duality within the use of the notion "prestige project".

Source: Produced by the author.

Lastly, the "crime against city" notion was used by supporter actors to refer "hindering urban development" and "blocking the way to future investments" while the notion was used by opponent actors to refer "introducing unprecedented scale in the historical city center" and "harming the natural life in Kültürpark. (Figure 4.26.)

Figure 4.26. Duality within the use of the notion "crime against city".

Source: Produced by the author.

4.5. Evaluation of the Case Study

In the case study chapter, the theoretical framework developed in the former chapters are referred to in order to critically evaluate Folkart Construction's new high-rise

170

project proposal for the Basmane Pit within the urban context of Izmir. To establish the framework of the case study, concepts such as: 'entrepreneurial urbanism', 'new urban politics', 'city branding strategies', 'formation of prestige projects', 'legitimacy and formation of public consent', 'urban opposition', 'discursive practices', and 'media representations' were referred. The context of the case-study was reviewed in Chapter 3 with the introduction of: the specific location of the urban plot in the city center, the processes it has been through, and how the plot turned into its current problematic state as Basmane Pit. After the announcement of the new proposal to the public, further developments regarding the Basmane Pit were given in a chronological order in Chapter 4.

The conjecture, in which the new proposal is announced to the public, was problematic from the start. The land that was once public property was later transferred to SDIF and whether the construction right still belongs to Güçbirliği Holding was a matter of controversy. The new investor firm Folkart Construction, on the other hand, was already appreciated by certain actors and criticized by others with reference to many other projects the firm has realized in Izmir. Moreover, there has been ongoing objections and growing protests by Kültürpark Platform and Chambers affiliated to UCTEA, to MMI's Kültüpark Renewal Project announced in 2016. Above all of these developments, the majority of the people living in Izmir have a spirit of civil society; a citizen profile that is ready to mobilize against unlawful and unfair practices when necessary. Although this attitude of the citizens might intimidate potential investors, it is one of the most important factors that constitute the collective identity of Izmir. The civil society awareness of the citizens can be associated with the fact that Turkey's third most populated city Izmir's local authority is ruled by the main opposition party, RPP. Locals who oppose the government's policies also react to the local authority initiatives that are parallel with the government's neoliberal policies. Especially in the recent past, the local authority's large-scale projects and project-focused planning decisions that were parallel to the government's urban policies and which were

promoted with notions such as: 'urban governance', 'urban design', 'participation' and 'innovation' are being held responsible for Izmir's uneven development by the professional chambers, NGOs and academicians.

Folkart's new project proposal was introduced in such an atmosphere in 2016. The expression adopted during both in the personal interviews with Mesut Sancak and his promotion of Folkart's projects in Izmir, was based on 'the love of Izmir' according to him. While assigning definitions to their projects such as 'the beating heart', 'symbol', 'icon' and 'shining star' of Izmir; the firm promotes their projects as aiming to be the symbol of: prestige, creativity, entrepreneurship, aesthetics, trust and development in Izmir. From the very beginning, Mesut Sancak promoted the project proposal for Basmane, underlining that they took great responsibility to eliminate the 'embarrassment' of the locals from the current state of the plot. At the beginning of the process, Sancak emphasized that this project neither belongs to the construction company nor the investors but to Izmir, and that the plan was to take decisions on the project with the common mind and participation of the people living in Izmir.

The company's three alternative high-rise mixed-use project proposals were presented to the public with the slogan of "The Decision Belongs to Izmir" in the online poll website kararizmirin.com. The public poll spread to every platform and had a wide media coverage. The company's poll website has been turned into a large public relations project. Newspapers published headlines such as "Izmir will decide," and "Folkart will ask to the people of Izmir." However, the project was already determined by the firm as high-rise –the shortest proposal had a tower of 248 meters– and mixed-use with the functions of office, residential, commercial and municipality service building. In such a condition that was organized beforehand, there is no right of selection, participation or common mind process to evaluate. The question asked to the public was not "What would you like to see in the Basmane Pit?" but instead "Which skyscraper project would you like to see?" Although the firm stated that the winning project would be announced at the beginning of 2017 via the website as a result of the poll, it was not revealed as indicated, and also the fact that the EIA file

for the project chosen by the company was already prepared in November 2016 demonstrate that the process carried out was not for participation but for advertising and legitimization purposes.

Professional chambers and non-governmental organizations have also evaluated this process as a planned strategy to gain the consent of the public, and criticized the project in many aspects. Petitions, meetings, protests, manifestations and public statements conducted by NGOs could not change the opinion of MMI to realize this project together with Folkart. EIA reports including expert opinions criticizing the environmental urban and legal aspects of the project were prepared by Izmir Branches of Chambers affiliated to UCTEA and submitted to the Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization. Yet, expert opinions and scientific discourses produced by professional chambers did not affect the cancellation or changes to the project.

As the discussions on the project continued, the discourses in the media became prominent for two sides: opponents and supporters of the project. In the process, the opposing and supporting actors and mechanisms used different forms of expression to support their arguments. The in-depth analysis revealed that; actors and media organizations, that have supported the project chose their wordings either to praise the project or discredit the opposing actors. Similarly, it is concluded that the opposing actors and media organizations have adopted wordings to discredit the investor and the local authority, and criticize the project. Since media texts have the capacity to dominate, distort, manipulate, disseminate or reinforce certain discourses together with the perceptions of the public, the role of media practices in the representation of discourses is an important part of both the legitimacy and opposition processes. As it is thoroughly referred in this study, actors such as local authorities, investors and politicians produce strategic and also ideological discourses to justify their acts and to invoke the perception of 'the public interest.' By this way, capital-based, investor-friendly initiatives of entrepreneurial urban governance mechanisms have been legitimized.

The reasons behind the excessive criticism of the project by professional chambers and experts were: the way the construction company presented the project to the public, and also the entrepreneurial governance strategies used by the local government. When the whole process is examined, it is inferred that all three aspects of Harvey's definition of entrepreneurial urban governance is present in this case: public-private partnership, speculative discourse production and place-specific development projects. In the past, the public-private partnership was formed between the mayor Özfatura and Güçbirliği Holding and today, it is formed between Kocaoğlu and Folkart Construction. In addition to the speculative discourses produced by supporting actors, the planned skyscraper project contradicted with the municipality's own decision to build high-rise structures in the new city center Bayraklı district to protect the urban fabric and reduce the building density in the historic city center. The third aspect, the construction of the place-specific development project – Folkart Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center – was enabled with the specific alterations made in the master development plan notes, such as: changing the area from Tourism-Trade to Tourism-Trade-Residential while reserving the right to build a municipal service area. These specific alterations implemented on the plans and the 'opportunist' approach adopted by the local authority, exemplify Borja and Castells' argument regarding the existence of an underlying or apparent general urban plan or schema behind every large-scale urban development project. They also argue that the strategic alterations made in the plans become another step in the process of legitimization of the prestige projects. Inferring from this argument, in the Basmane Pit case, strategic plan revisions also emerge as a part of the legitimization process carried out by the supporting actors along with the contradictory discourse production and media practices.

Through revisiting Griffiths' argument that theorize the prestige projects as symbolic identifiers in architectural forms and the most widely appropriated branding device in the city branding processes by the entrepreneurial urban governments; the supporter actors' desired route for Basmane Pit can be considered as an example of the

174

aforementioned city branding strategy. In this context, as Kaika inferred, architectural projects built as a part of city branding strategies can also be identified as part of a new system of meaning –along with the discourses, media representations and images– that is necessary for a group of *élites* or institutions imagining a new city identity.[357] When the 'winning' proposal of the Folkart Izmir Housing, Business Center and Trade Center Project is examined on the basis of its architectural form and its capacity to be referred as an 'iconic' building or 'landmark', it should be emphasized that the proposal have distinct similarities to another project called "Absolute Towers," designed for and built in Mississauga, Canada by the same architecture firm, MAD Architects. (Figure 4.27.) These similarities can be listed as: architectural form, facade design, overall layout and most importantly, the firm's approach on the creation of a new identity through landmark design.

Figure 4.27. Photographs of the Absolute Towers designed by MAD Architects.

Source: *URL (83).*

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[357] Kaika, *op. cit.*, 32.

In MAD Architects' website, under the section dedicated to Absolute Towers, it is stated:

> Like other fast developing suburbs in North America, Mississauga is seeking a new identity. This is an opportunity to respond to the needs of an expanding city, to create a residential landmark that strives for more than simple efficiency and that provides residents an emotional connection to their hometown.[358]

Throughout the process, the discourse of "creating a new identity for a locality through landmark design" was seemingly adopted by investors and local authorities. Yet, in this example the discourse is used by the architects. Absolute Towers project is considered as another example of high-rise buildings designed to be a landmark for the construction of a new identity in the given context. However, Absolute Towers were built in a 'developing suburban area' that has no similarities with the context of Basmane in terms of its climate, density and urban layout. As the architectural firm describes the context as an 'expanding city' and as seen from the aerial photographs, it can be understood that this area has similar features to Bayraklı district rather than Basmane district. Yet, MAD Architects' approach to these two very different contexts was parallel. The fact that a tall building project that resembles Izmir's proposed new 'icon' had already been built in another and very different context, clearly shows that Basmane project is designed and promoted to serve as a branding tool instead of a 'landmark.' If the initial aim of the architecture firm and the investor company was to create a 'new identity', the two similar projects should not have been designed in such two different urban contexts. As it has been mentioned in the opposing general public's discourses; if MAD Architects' project for Basmane was being built in Bayraklı, it would not have received such reaction.

As Harvey indicated, when place-specific prestige projects became the main focus of local authorities as well as the public, it usually results in neglecting much broader problems in the locality.[359] In the Basmane Case, the fact the local authority of Izmir aims to attract wealthier population in the area rather than prioritizing the increasing

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[358] MAD Architects, "Absolute Towers." http://www.i-mad.com/work/absolute-towers/?cid=4
[359] Harvey, *op. cit.*, 40.

refugee influx and immigrant flow, could be an example for Harvey's observation. A much wider social dissatisfaction towards entrepreneurial initiatives reveals itself through social struggle against the prestige projects. The local authority's increasing interest in the small group of *élites* is another the reason for urban mobilizations against the prestige projects that have become the architectural symbol of adopted political agendas. The southern part of Basmane district houses people from lower-income groups, immigrants from other cities and coutries, and Syrian refugees; whereas people from upper income groups live in Alsancak, towards north of the district. The land where the project is planned for construction is located exactly at the intersection of these two different social groups. In fact, when a horizontal line is drawn from Basmane Pit, the urban texture of the northern part of the area is seen as regular, organized and planned, while in the southern part; an unplanned, irregular and more organic texture can be observed. The skyscraper project's overwhelming impact on the southern part of the area is as significant as its negative impacts on the natural life of Kültürpark. A project in such a scale is a significant addition to the current urban fabric and also a representation of the denial of the historical city center through its glossy facades and unsuitable design. Even the stores that are attached to the visuals prepared by the architectural firms demonstrate the desired user profile indicating who may use the office towers and public spaces and who may not. In this context, the very plot of the project causes new contradictions between poverty and wealth, as well as fragmented urban patches of poverty and wealth.

Although making plans to change the identity of a city by building a prestige project has its problems, it is possible to find many other examples parallel to Basmane Pit case in the world. In his definition of '*legitimizing identity production*' Castells argues that this process triggers the urban opposition, which consists of mobilized and structural social actors as well as institutions and civil society organizations. The case of Basmane Pit illustrates the entrepreneurial urban development processes experienced in many cities around the world as well as a certain atmosphere where the urban opposition comes into existence. However, what sets this example apart is the

way in which the urban opposition is organized and introduced juridical actions to the process. In the Basmane Pit case study, the opposing actors utilized the law –as an institutional mechanism and type of discourse– to resist and confront the bases of the local authority's entrepreneurial agendas along with the proposed prestige project of investors in a context where every other mobilization mediums and strategies have failed. It is seen that none of the initiatives such as public statements, expert opinions, protests, meetings, petitions, EIA reports and objections to the plans were effective in the whole of the case, but rather the judiciary determined the course of the process.

The main discussion in the case study analysis part of the thesis was around the problematic case where a number of influential actors have utilized the urban marketing discourse as one of the instruments of entrepreneurial urban management specifically to legitimize the prestige project in the eyes of the public to obtain financial benefit. However, this legitimization effort was prevented by a large group of professional chambers, media organizations, NGOs and the general public who supported their opposing positions with scientific discourses and resorted to legal action. With the introduction of legal processes, steps were taken to build a medium where alternative futures for the area would be discussed. In the next stage, there is the possibility of starting a process in which experts from many different fields come together and work on Basmane Pit.

Since cities at the turn of the global age, house the most diverse communities, it is neither democratic nor egalitarian for a single authority to take decisions that affect all inhabitants of the city. As an alternative to the Basmane Pit case; the local authority should aim to create an environment where the municipalities adopted policies that invite locals, university students, academicians, professional chambers, experts, researchers and NGOs to participate in the urban process and encourage them to decide their city's future as a community.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In the Introduction Chapter, the main research problem of the thesis was stated as, "to analyze the particularities of entrepreneurial urban politics and its implications for urban opposition through the Basmane Pit case study." By analyzing the discursive and contradictory aspects of the process of shifting from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism in Izmir through Basmane Pit case study, this thesis has illustrated that the legal procedures can be utilized as effective tools in urban struggles. This study has also proposed an inquiry on the problem of describing how the built environment can be manipulated in the interests of certain influential actors such as local governments and construction companies. The analyses were based on three initial assumptions as follows: 1) Prestige projects are being promoted by influential actors who utilize their discourses to gain public consent and legitimize the project and the overall urban process. 2) In such controversial processes, media organs become the vehicle for both the opposition and legitimacy. 3) When urban struggle is brought to court, it could effectively resist the legitimation processes.

To test and examine these initial assumptions in a literature review , notions of; neoliberalism, neoliberal urban politics, entrepreneurial urbanism, entrepreneurial urban governance, marketing, city branding, city image, prestige projects, urban mobilization/opposition, neoliberal urban movements, and media practices were evaluated in the Theoretical Background chapter through the theoretical approaches of the prominent scholars such as; David Harvey, Neil Brenner, Tom Hall, Tuna Taşan-Kök, Susan Fainstein, Saskia Sassen, Manuel Castells and Margit Mayer. As a result of the inquiry, it has been noted that; local authorities often resort to neoliberal

urban development projects in cooperation with private sector to attract investment for the cities they govern by entrepreneurial policies. To promote and legitimize such projects, both the local government and investors utilize city branding discourse and disseminate their discourses through mass media to gain public consent. However, since neoliberalism itself is defined by Harvey as a project that have been emerged to restore the power of *élite* class[360]; when neoliberal practices are implemented on cities, its polarizing impacts result in the division of districts as wealthy and poor. The discontent arising from the neglected districts along with the legitimation efforts leads to urban opposition, which is also organized and spreads to masses through media.

As another triggering aspect of urban entrepreneurialism, the global inter-urban competition has led many cities to experience similar problematic processes. These parallel tendencies in urban governance and common urban issues have also led to the global expression of urban opposition. To discuss this global shift in the context of Izmir; the adopted urban policies, planning practices and their effects on the urban fabric of the city center were evaluated in Chapter 3, from past to present. To introduce and critically evaluate the urban politics and oppositions around Basmane Pit, its specific location in the city center, previous architectural competitions, planning decisions and legal processes regarding the plot has been addressed. As a result of the contextual and historical background examination it is observed that even though the neoliberal policies have entered the local authorities' agenda in the 80s, the historical city center of Izmir was planned and regulated in the recent past. With the entrance of the real estate developers to the urban arena as influential actors, the balance of power has changed. A model of Harvey's definition of entrepreneurial urban governance which has the aspects of; public-private partnership, speculative discourse production and place-specific development projects,[361] has been observed in Izmir. Such that; the high-rise project proposed for Basmane Pit, which was partially designed as a municipality service building, contradicts the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality's own

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[360] Harvey, *op. cit.*, 25.
[361] Harvey, *op. cit.*, 23-24.

decision. Even though the municipality initiated the New City Center project in Bayraklı district specifically to reduce the density in the existing city center, the same local authority was also behind the promotion of Folkart's new project with an unprecedented scale proposed for the city center. Another finding of the research was that this land has distinct importance due to its relation to Kültürpark and the historical urban and architectural values of the district, and in fact, this was the reason why the future of the plot in question has become a subject of discussion for years. In this study, both the construction company's attempt to erect the "new city symbol" on such a critical and problematical land and the way it was presented to the public were evaluated as equally problematic.

In Chapter 4, the critical analysis of the case study has been introduced with the examination of this new project proposal, especially based upon the Project Promotion File, EIA Reports prepared by the Chambers Affiliated to UCTEA and expert reports prepared for the lawsuits regarding the plot. One of the findings of the case study analysis was: the aims behind the online public poll –initiated by the investor firm Folkart Construction and widely promoted by the mass media with the slogan "Decision Belongs to Izmir"– were to gain public consent and legitimize the project itself. These underlying motivations behind the poll were observed from the fact that the company has prepared the promotion file for the project of their choice and submitted it for the EIA process before the poll results have been announced. The company did not even announce the winning project to the public and the media was informed of the "winning" project proposal only when the EIA process started.

To further analyze the dialectics between urban politics and opposition, a discourse analysis adapted from Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach has been formulated. The findings of the analysis have also been provided in Chapter 4. One of the major findings of the analysis was: Actors and media organizations who support the project, produced discourses that praise and legitimize the project and discredit the opposing actors. In parallel, actors opposing to the project along with the opposing

media organizations have utilized their discourses to discredit the investor firm and local authority, and to criticize the new project proposal. As it is aforementioned in the evaluation part, investor-friendly initiatives of entrepreneurial urban governance mechanisms have been legitimized by the strategic uses of discourses that invoke the perception of 'public interest.'

In the critical examination of the process in which the investor firm claimed to build the "new symbol of the city" it was discovered that; the proposal shares various similarities with another project called "Absolute Towers" designed by the same architecture firm, MAD Architects, and built in Canada. It has been discussed that; if the actual aim of the investor firm was to produce a 'new identity' for Izmir, two similar projects should not have been designed in such different urban contexts. As it is referred in the expert reports and EIA reports, a project in such a scale would be a significant insertion to the current urban fabric. In this study, the project itself has been regarded as a representation of denial of the historical city center due to its pretentious design. It was noted that, the desired user profile can be observed even from the high-end stores that were included in the project proposals' visuals.

Through the literature review and case study analyses all the three initial assumptions of the thesis was proven to be factual. What sets Basmane Pit case apart from the other entrepreneurial urban development processes that led to opposition in many cities around the world, is the way in which the urban opposition is organized in Izmir through the introduction of legal action to the process. It has been observed that none of the initiatives such as; public statements, expert opinions, protests, meetings, petitions, EIA reports and objections to the plans have been effective in the process, whereas the judiciary has determined the future of the area. However, another argument was raised –which could not have been foreseen without this critical case study evaluation. This argument is that urban conflicts and contradictory processes could be viewed as opportunities for achieving urban democracy. Guy Baeten in his essay on neoliberal planning practices notes:

The excitement, pride, respect and recognition that follow from successful neoliberal planning implementations, stand perhaps in sharp contrast with the management of the poor and their poor neighbourhoods within very limited and ever shrinking social budgets.[362]

Although this is exactly the case in Izmir, the spirit of civil society struggling with excitement, pride and glory cannot be denied. In an urban setting where all the influential actors who are empowered by the neoliberal urbanism are promoting the "branding of the city" to "attract investment"; being the advocate of the poor and their neglected neighborhoods, struggling for the "public interest" and "protection of the nature" is becoming increasingly difficult. Yet, in Izmir there are professional chambers, associations, civil society organizations and locals who are; organized, mobilized, tenacious and willing to protest for the right to city and public good. Today, there is an opportunity for the local government to come together with these people and with the involvement of academicians, university students and all volunteers, and work together to search for the possibilities to solve the city's problems. Urban problems and conflicts of interest can be considered as opportunities to come together to achieve democracy in urban management, instead of being regarded as unresolved situations.

Today, Castells' and Lefebvre's preliminary approaches in the study area of urban conflicts and oppositions are still preserving their relevance. Especially Castells' theorization on the representations of urban movements in the multimedia platforms has been one of the most important references in the theoretical foundation of this thesis. Along with the conceptions of Castells and Lefebvre, Margit Mayer's approach, which consists of a more current study on the urban mobilizations under the effects of neoliberal practices, has been adopted in the thesis. Based upon the initial assumption that the new project proposal for Basmane Pit is an example of a neoliberal initiative and a branding strategy that was formed by the pressures of the competitive global market; the whole process involving Basmane Pit was analyzed through the

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[362] Guy Baeten, "Neoliberal Planning: Does It Really Exist?", in *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning*, edited by Tuna Taşan-Kök and Guy Baeten, 209. (1st ed. Netherlands: Springer, 2012.)

adaptations of three main dimensions that Mayer has defined: prestige projects, political discursive practices and the social struggle. To provide a comprehensive examination of the process, a discourse analysis has been conducted based on Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA). In this approach, the social conflict is examined by detecting the discursive representations of contradiction along with the dominance, resistance and disagreement. By formulating a methodology, as an adaptation of Mayer's approach that is reinforced by Fairclough's DRA to critical discourse analysis; this study has examined Basmane Pit case as a long-standing urban problem through the conflicting discourses of the actors involved. Those approaches and methodologies that have been applied in this thesis have contributed on the study of urban conflicts by providing;

o A critical evaluation of the strategies of entrepreneurial urban governance mechanisms in Izmir,

o An in-depth analysis on the relationship between the prestige projects and urban opposition,

o A discourse analysis of influential actors that were involved in such controversial processes,

o An exploration on the civil society that was organized through social media platforms, and lastly,

o An illustration of the inclusion of legal action in urban opposition.

The discourse analysis allows researchers to discover the underlying notions of the actors' discourses on the problematic cases, as well as the issues that are not voiced at all. The absence of the architectural discourse in the concerned urban problem emerges as one of the findings of the case study. Throughout the process concerning Basmane Pit, many architects worked on several different projects to be built on this plot. Yet, architects' professional thoughts on the projects that they have designed were not reflected on the media. There may be two reasons for the lack of architectural

discourse in the process; either the architects were not asked by the media about their thoughts, or the architects did not feel the need/wanted to express their opinions on the projects.

It can be further discussed; how such controversial processes affect the architecture as a practice and the position of architects. On that note, it can be argued that the role of today's architects tends to be reduced to image producing. Unlike images that are placed in a frame, architecture operates in a social and spatial context. When the visual representations produced by architects are framed as images and disseminated to the masses through the media, the architectural work is detached from its context. In turn, architecture is reduced to a practice that produces images that does not communicate the social, environmental and urban concerns. As a further study, the role of the architects and the architecture profession in controversial urban processes could be studied as signifiers of the shifting social, economic and political interests.

In today's world where inter-urban competition has become inevitable, architecture is expected to provide not just recognizable identities but also artistic and aesthetic legitimacy. The shift of approach from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism has made local authorities more responsive to business needs and more aware of intensifying competition between cities. Local authorities come to recognize that spectacular and innovative architecture designed by renowned architects may positively contribute to increase the competitiveness of their cities. The participation of global architects for the use of architecture as a symbol of global power has become a common practice. General public who may not hold a comprehensive knowledge on urban planning, can be easily impressed by grand architecture designed by star architects and their expressive visual representations. In some cases, this aesthetic legitimization may lead to the suppression of urban debate and opposition. Based on the case study of Basmane Pit, the specific cases where renowned architectural firms attempted to legitimize controversial projects or processes through visual representations and discourses could also be questioned.

As it can be inferred from this study, in Turkey as well as in the world, entrepreneurial urban governance mechanisms are proceeding as defined and observed by Harvey. These mechanisms also take part in the *legitimizing identity production* processes described by Castells. Media organizations involved in the processes on one hand contribute to these legitimation processes by promoting initiatives, disseminating discourses and altering perceptions; on the other hand, provide platforms for the civil society to organize and raise awareness. The perception that neoliberal urban developments are "inevitable," "necessary," and "innovative" initiatives has been created by those who profit from these practices, and is disseminated by the media tools. As seen in the urban context of Izmir, while planning and architecture were used to serve to the welfare of the city and its citizens in the past, the fact that the construction sector is only seen as a financial instrument of profit affects the priorities of the professions of architecture and planning. Nowadays, hegemonic projects that will provide major monetary profit in the short term in the city are preferred –even though those projects lead to social segregation through the fragmentation of urban space– instead of projects that will contribute to the city's long-term interest such as; comprehensive planning of the city center, well-maintained neighborhoods, parks and coastal strips, sound and sufficient infrastructure, well-organized traffic flow, well-designed public spaces, and affordable housing.

Cities are more than mediums where local authorities impose their own agendas or investors impose their own visions. Especially over the past two decades in Turkey it has been observed how problematic the interventions made by the mayors to the architecture of the cities have been. Those implementations have been realized either to enforce their own visions or to provide business opportunities. As seen in the case of Izmir Basmane Pit, judiciary action may be a way to stop such attempts. Yet, the cancellation of the plans, the stopping of the construction, and the postponement of the projects are not enough by themselves. Sufficient alternatives to these projects that prioritize the entire benefit of the public, the built environment and nature should be produced to affect the core of the neoliberal urban development. These alternatives

can be achieved as a result of the collaborative work of many actors from different fields such as; local authorities, urban and architecture organizations, universities, designers, financiers, practitioners and public representatives.

The role of the architect in such collaborative setting is then, to actively participate in creative associations and to be part of realizing development models that can go beyond emblematic designs. Project architects can be as effective and influential as the representatives of the professional chambers and have their place in the public realm by using their professional competencies to contribute to collaborative actions. As investment-oriented architectural projects are among the problems posed by growth-oriented urban management policies, architects should be among the actors who produce alternative solutions.

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