

Full Length Research Paper

Urban transformation process and its contributions: Sekapark case-Izmit, Turkey

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Examined within the context of urban transformation, industrial transformation projects are brought to pass within the industrial fields which have lost their functions and values. Transformation projects are needed as a part of an urban transformation not only to make positive and eminent contributions to the urban identity within the context of urban design project but also to bring the public interest to the front stage. The most extensive industrial transformation project application in Turkey is Izmit Sekapark. This project is the most up-to-date model for the urban recreation-focused transformation of the industrial fields which have lost their functions as being stuck within the city. Within the body of this work; the reflections of the users upon urban images are examined and the contributions of an urban transformation to the urban identity are stressed. In the study, it is concluded that the transformation project is the center of urban development, fortifies the urban identity and can be a model for other similar projects.

Key words: Urban transformation, identity, industrial transformation, Sekapark, Izmit.

INTRODUCTION

In modern urban design projects, urban identity, urban gentrification, protection of the present identity, urban transformation and renewal issues have gained importance. Urban identity is defined as the features, which basically and inarguably pertain to a city and which helps a city transfigure; and as the elements used in differentiating a city from another (Lynch and Rodwin, 1958).

Identity is an indicator of a character. Relph (1987) defines identity as the features which differentiate a place that has permanent similarities and associations. The process of spatial identity construction is influenced by historical, cultural, socio-economic events and by several perceptive and cognitive interpretations that persons attribute to a place (Gökbulut and Yücesoy, 1999).

The spatial and social factors, which build a location's

features to the city and that location thereby identity and differentiate it, ascribe original and local distinguishing them from the others (Özer, 2001). Çöl (1998) describes urban identity as a coherence of meanings which have come to pass as a result of a dynamic process stretching from the past to the future that influences urban image as possessing original features on different scales and interpretations, and being shaped by the citizens' lifestyles, physical, cultural, social, economic, historical and structural factors. Urban identity is dynamic since it is affected by a physical and social process (Ocakçı, 1993). Urban spaces play an important role in the processes of formation, change and reproduction of urban identity (Baris et al., 2009). Nowadays cities get transformed in terms of identity as a consequence of physical factors such as global warming, wars, natural disasters along with rapid industrialization, population increase and unguided urbanization as well as the governments' planning decisions and new design works.

Apart from that, industrialization and immigration to big cities affect both citizens and cities in a negative way.

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Modern people need peaceful locations away from stress-filled environment so as to feel the nature. Though, gradually diminished among high buildings, green fields have become insufficient for the citizens' spare times. Due to the increasing urban population, the site selection of urban open areas and the forms of protection from the ill effects of urban-industrial ecosystems have increasingly gained importance in cities which are compulsorily built. Herein, the urban transformation projects are inevitable and the urban open field reserves become the centers of modern urban projects (Uslu, 2003). For example in Turkey, Dikmen valley residential and environmental development project and Portakal çiçeği valley urban regeneration project are the first pioneering implementations which take place in Ankara's urban development. However these projects by disintegrating the city from their valleys, pay little attention to ecological conditions, geomorphological and topographical aspects (Kaplan and Tuncer, 2006; Uslu and Yetim, 2006).

The concept of transformation means connecting places which are related or unrelated to the city itself, and it also means physically, functionally, socially, economically and ecologically interfering in the field usage within that geography. In other words, transformation is a phenomenon which influences and changes the macro form of the cities. Transformation brings about the recognition and understanding of any city since it includes the changes in due course (Günay, 1999). According to this point of view, urban transformation is considered within the context of urban design projects (Uçkaç, 2005).

According to Kap, urban transformation and renewal are the bodies of an integrated vision and the actions, which aim at enlivening the urban places being on the verge of physical and social collapse, by means of activating the dynamics which belong to local economy (Anonymous, 2008).

The concept of urban transformation and urban renewal deals within the context of urban design in both different situations whereas they seem alike. Transformation is essentially a broader concept including urban renewal and it is not merely a physical, social and economic amelioration of an urban area. Transformation is a phenomenon, which exists with global, economic and social constructions and shapes our daily lives (Güley, 2001). Simultaneously, transformation encompasses the concept of globalization. Being a broader phenomenon for urban transformation, globalization is accepted as the most important transformation of the 20th century which changes the social and political environment we live in, as well as the political and social structures, although it is very much debated (Aslanoğlu, 2000). Industrial transformation projects examined within the scope of urban transformation are actualized within the industrial fields, which have lost their functions and values. In this context, it includes all or some of the industrial fields either within the city or in the upstate. The project's main idea is the

formation itself by transforming with various applications. The landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord is a well known industrial transformation project which was established in 1988 by the name of "Emsher Park" in Germany. It can be described as a post industrial park—a symbol of the grip of nature being re-established after the grip of industry has been relaxed. "...Landschaftspark put 'nature', its processes and humankind's interventions in them, at the heart of the park" (Tate, 2001).

Industrial transformation is a new phenomenon in Turkey. There are no industrial fields, save for those, where few historical industry structures are restored and brought into function. In this sense, İzmit/Kocaeli, the biggest industrial city of Turkey, has reserve fields as a pilot city. The most eligible of these fields is Seka Paper Factory which is located at the coastal stretch of Kocaeli, the central district of İzmit. Handed over to Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality, the factory has gathered a city park identity as being transformed from a paper factory, and its name changed to Sekapark. Seka, with its new situation, historical background and image, has become the focus of urban development, dominating the city's improvement.

In this study, Seka Paper Factory's industrial transformation is decided as the material of work. Urban industrial fields under the headline of urban transformation projects are studied within the scope of urban identity concept.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

Sekapark located in İzmit, is the central town of Kocaeli, the conversion project is prepared for Sekapark and implemented survey data in Sekapark makes up the main materials of this project.

Methods

In total, 15 questions are asked 204 persons in order to determine Sekapark's influences and contributions as an urban/industrial transformation, and to find out whether it can be a model for other similar projects and applications which would be carried out throughout Turkey. The sample size was determined according to the greatest extent of people that can be reached in the survey period. The questionnaire has been formed in accordance with the survey's targets, questionnaire techniques and methods. The questions have been expressed in no uncertain terms for the users in the sample group to understand clearly. There are 6 close-ended and 9 open-ended questions in the question sheet.

The survey has been made by random sampling technique in Sekapark field realized via the urban/industrial transformation of Seka Paper Factory located in İzmit, the central county of Kocaeli.

The application of the survey was realized in Sekapark field on the border of 1st stage, in March 2008, between 1 pm and 8 pm on Thursdays and Fridays; and between 11 am and 7 pm at the weekends. "Question-answer" method was applied face-to-face with the experimental subjects in order to collect data. SPSS packet



Figure 1. Location map of İzmit- Kocaeli in Turkey.

programme was applied in the evaluation of the data collected from the questionnaires that were applied to Sekapark users. Data analyses were carried out through the crosstabs which enabled the variables to be compared. Chi square test was applied in order to determine whether or not the crosstabs were independent from each other. In the analysis, it is admitted by 95% credibility that there is a statistical relation between the tables since its margin of error (p) remained 0.05 and below.

With the aim of using statistical data in the interpretation of tables, the gamma relation test was applied in order to determine in what direction and value the relations between data were. This technique demonstrates that the margin of error as regards gamma relation coefficient p value is remaining 0.05 and below, showing that the value and direction of the relations between tables could be determined statistically and meaningfully by 95% credibility.

Within the body of the survey, the influences of the urban industrial transformation upon the urban identity and users were searched and, considering these findings, Sekapark project and Sekapark application were examined.

The importance of working fields and the urban/industrial transformation project

İzmit, where Sekapark project was realized, is the central county of Kocaeli and located in a coastal site near the east point of the gulf. The site had been formed in Marmara Region upon Turkey's most important passage routing between Asia and Europe (Figure 1).

Nowadays, the population of İzmit, where the industrial areas belonging to large-scale industrial establishments are situated, has reached to 202,003 people. The city's historical background dates back to Frigs who had lived in 12 B.C. The city, where a dense industrial and urban usage abounds, has shouldered 22% of the country's industry until today. Moreover, due to the unguided housing, which had been applied since former times in the name of urban planning, it seems that İzmit has become a city where it became hard to live. However, the city is a site which has

extraordinarily fine values with its nature and historical fabric. Seka Paper Factory was established in the 1930s just after the declaration of the republic. So, the factory where the first modern paper production was realized in Turkey, is the symbol of the industrial revolution of 'Turkish Republic.' As of 14.08.1934 when its foundation was laid and 27.01.2005, when the business made a loss and was closed, it maintained the mission of preventing the foreign-source dependency which was Great Atatürk's mission (Oral, 2007).

The factory had lived its golden ages in the 1970s. The factory increased its capacity till 1980s. 1984 marked the start of ominous years for Seka. Private sector exerted its authority over national paper industry and Seka began to shrink. Not having been invested for many years, Seka Paper Business was not able to compete with private paper producers anymore and it had to stop most of its machines.

In the 2000s, Seka Paper Business needed about 30 million dollars of investment excluding purification plant in order to transform the appearance of its facility, which had remained from 1935 - 1940s, into a modern business. And, it was decided by the High Board of Privatization in November 2004 that İzmit Seka Paper Factory be closed down since it became a serious burden on the country's economy due to its insuperable expenses. The closed factory was totally handed over to Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality. In the decision taken by the assembly, it is stated that the facility's area would be handed over to the municipality if only it would be turned into a green, recreation field, which would be open for public usage. In this sense, Seka's role is conspicuous since it is a great opportunity for the future of İzmit; because the basis of the agreement looks after the benefits of the citizens for the future social place necessities and future image. After a while, the municipality initiated Seka Paper Project for the transformation of the field.

The main idea of the project was the recreation of the field, where Seka Park Factory was located, in terms of transformation with public functions in order to strongly connect the citizens with the city and to provide the continuity of greenness along the gulf.



Figure 2. Sekapark layout plan.

The design consisted of three stages in total (Figure 2). In 1997, the first stage was achieved and opened usage for public (Figure 3). Once all the stages of project application are achieved, Sekapark promises to be an exemplary industrial transformation park in



Figure 3. Sekapark phase1 application project.

international dimensions, where memory, human, place and city receptions are strengthened and sea, ground and railway urban transportations are provided.

Seka paper factory urban/industrial regeneration project: Field analyses and design process

In the study, the analyses are handled under the titles of the present situation analysis, the immediate surroundings and transit-accessibility analysis, site immediate surroundings green field

analysis and construction quality analysis.

Factory site has a field stock of 1,210,965 m² in total. If we have a look at the situation of the factory just before 2005, when it was handed over to İzmit/Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality, we encounter quite an urban breakdown field. German architectural construction stocks, which remain from the early years of the republic within the empty factory field, attract the attention. The present plant stock has a great deal of importance, when we look at the central coastal stretch where the factory is located, since the plant stock could only flourish isolatedly in the factory site which was close for public daily usage. Seka field is the region where the most dense plant fabric exists along İzmit's central coastal line. These above-mentioned plants are mostly pines, magnolias, and buttonwoods. It can be seen that plants including centennial buttonwood and magnolia trees pertaining to the present plant stock were under protection while no construction in the factory site was officially registered.

Seka Paper Factory is divided into two parts by a railroad line, which physically started from İstanbul and stretched towards Anatolia. This situation makes the users' reaching the sea from Sekapark's interiors impossible.

As if saying that the site should not be forgotten as an industrial field, railway lines used for the purpose of freightage and metal seamed natural stone floors, which come by from place to place, make a reference about the general speculation to the project whose overall stages are about to be finished in the future. When we look at the coastal part of Seka, we see great gaps designed for the purpose of serving logistic aim and a crane pier of Seka utilized in the sea transportation. In the crane pier, which was seriously damaged by earthquake, and in other large and small loading piers, we see the traces of 1999 Gölçük earthquake.

Seka Paper Factory has been situated along the central coastal strip of İzmit, Kocaeli's central district, on the parallel of D-100 Highway in its north, and right in the centre of coastal strip in its south, at a point, where sea transportation is most optimally utilized. It is located right in the center as its position in the city. A railroad, which expands from Haydarpaşa to Baghdad, passes through this factory site (Oral, 2007). Considering these facts, it can be concluded that Seka Paper Factory is a place, which has extremely important open and close reserves for the city and which must be utilized during project design, since it is highly convenient for sea, land and railway transportation and since it is located at the center of the city.

Sekapark has passive green field stocks which continue along mountainous areas at the field's north, and which link to the gulf. The unique character of the constructions is another unignorable point for the protection. All buildings, which have a specific purpose of usage and which demonstrate this as the construction quality, were protected during design.

Fire station, gasoline silos, substructure and energy center construction, water stores and chimneys paste cylinders, object elements, and inter-building passage galleries have been protected since they offer daily life exterior appearances with their forms in the field.

The structure's originality is another important issue in the protection and re-functioning matters. Original structures, structure fragments and the units, which offer architectural approaches of the era, when they were built, have been dealt in protection coverage in the design stage. These structures and structure fragments are arterial roads' clenched steel column-beamed places, railroad traces that were made up of the factory field transportation lines, façades which resume their originality, structure entrance places and Selüloz Tower. Seka Paper Factory's structure stock value and the spatial feature issues that will arise after the transformation are other structure-protection criteria. At this point, a design team acted with the idea of protecting the structure; thanks to its present place-offering capacity, its dimensions and strength; although it was worthless in terms of structural design and technique.

Having been considered before the project, the function values had been reflected in the anticipated fibre mechanic atelier. And, some goods storehouses and auxiliary functioning structures near the main production structures were taken into consideration along with the structures protected by new functions. Sekapark's other design criteria is the protection of natural and historical heritage. Seka Urban and Landscape Design Project, which was realized in this context, is environmentally sound. It is a project, which protects all the historical structures in it and attributes the same functions to all those with "live and let live" concept. Special arrangement decisions belonging to all historical places, which are presently located in the place, have been taken. Within the scope of these decisions, no design was envisaged, where historical remnants were found; so the future archeological works were leaded up.

Before the project design was begun, a survey was carried out by means of gathering the opinions of the responsive citizens, who stated their points of view after the presentation meeting. These data have become one of the decisive factors in the process of project-making. The project was designed in accordance with archeological workings related to historical remnants.. Accordingly, in the project, the protection of historical and natural inheritance was taken as a basis therefore pioneering the future works in this field.

Another sensitive issue related to the project is the protection of Seka in urban memory. Nowadays, at least one relative of every citizen of İzmit no doubt had worked in Seka. Accordingly, Seka has an important place in İzmit's and its dwellers' memories. In this context, all İzmit people come together with the city's history; thanks to Seka Urban Landscape Design Project.

Within the context of Sekapark, structures, which dated back to first ages, when they were designed by German architects, were put into re-function. Selling departments such as Seka Paper Museum, Visual Arts Museum, Exhibition Saloon, Art Studio, Cinema, Theatre, Photography, Modern Dance Studios, Industrial Design Galleries, Education Centres, Cafes and Restaurants, Pocket Theatres, Library, Meeting Saloons, Wedding Halls, Bowling Sallons, Book/music outlets and Souvenirs are assigned as new functions to the protected structures.

There are triangulation points which can be expressed as urban focus points within Sekapark Project. These ones enable the places, which were experienced, to be remembered and provide the users with the urban image, which can be counted as a meeting point. Sun clock, reed port where steel reeds exist, kite hill, and artificial climbing wall are some of these aforementioned triangular (Figure 4).

FINDINGS

By means of the survey carried out within the scope of the study, via the users, different questions are investigated to determine whether Sekapark implementation was successful or not as an urban/industrial transformation project; whether it could be the urban focus to direct İzmit's development and whether it made contributions to the urban identity:

- a) Additionally the survey sample is random, 41% of the survey participants are females and 59.3% are males.
- b) The age gaps of survey participants are discussed in 5 main categories (Table 1). In this context according to the results, users between the ages of 21 - 30 indicate an intensive use of park compared to other age groups.
- c) It is observed that people from different educational levels use Sekapark. The composition of the participants



Figure 4. Sekapark kite hill.

Table 1. Age groups of survey participants.

20 years and under	21 - 30 years	31 - 40 years	41 - 50 years	Over 50 years
13.2%	38.7%	22.1%	11.3%	14.7%

according to education level reveals that 2% has an education level of elementary school, 7.8% secondary school, 32.8% high school, 45.1% university, 9.8% master degree, 2.5% Ph.D degree.

d) Participants have different work status of which 9.8% are housewives, 12.7% retired, 25% students, 5.9% unemployed, 1% farmers, 8.8% employer, 9.3% managers and 11.8% are officers. Survey results show that the main group who uses the park mostly is the students.

e) Majority of those surveyed are native of İzmit (45.1%). Of the participants 10.8 % has been living in İzmit for 5 - 7 years and 23% of them for 7 - 10 years.

f) In terms of income level, the vast majority of survey participants are members of the middle income families whose income ranges between 400 - 2000\$.

g) Participants are asked about the symbol of İzmit. Among the responses, 26% of them consider Clock Tower, 45.6% them reports the Gulf, 21.6% states Seka Factory, 5.4% reports Fair Ground and 1.5% considers Fevziye Mosque as the symbol of the city. According to these results, having a history going back to the Republican-era SEKA Paper Mill stands in the first three symbols of the city.

h) Eighty-seven percent of the survey participants identifies Sekapark as the best project that changed the town's image in İzmit. In this context when Sekapark first stage implementation is compared with the current other project implementations, it is observed that Sekapark

attracts the most attention with regard to both the space volume of Seka in the city scale (approximately 330,000 m²) and the place of the factory in the city memory as an open space.

i) Majority of the participants indicated İzmit as an industrial city (60.3%), followed by those who identify it as a coastal city (27%). Other respondents noted the city as a university city (6.9%) and as a historic city (2.9%) respectively. This finding (22%) reveals the fact that İzmit is recognized by the residents as the largest industrial city in Turkey.

j) Most respondents think that closure of Seka Paper Mill and its conversion to Sekapark has changed the image of İzmit (97.5%), whereas 2.5% of participants do not agree. Based on this data, almost all the participants having either a positive or negative opinion regarding a change of İzmit, dominant idea seems that Sekapark has an effect.

k) Of the respondents who think there is a change in the image of İzmit, 97.5% of them qualifies the change as positive, while 2.5% of them thinks in a negative way. The results show that Sekapark has been evaluated as a good project by the people of İzmit. This is an important issue with respect to the scale of the project in Turkey.

l) The vast majority of survey respondents state that they find Sekapark remarkable (94.1%), while the rest does not like (5.9%). This result reveals that implication has been approved by most of the participants irrespective of the user's age, occupational group, educational status

and income levels.

m) Sixty-eight percent of survey participants think that Sekapark Project meets İzmit's need for green areas, while 31.9% of them have the opposite idea. According to the result, it can be concluded that for the moment the level of green areas are found sufficient by the public, whereas at later times İzmit will be in need of new green space.

n) Of the participants, 16.7% use Sekapark once in three months, 20.1% once a month, 22.1% once every fortnight, 33.8% once a week and 7.4% everyday.

According to this data, in general, Sekapark is used once a week by the habitants of İzmit.

o) One way of expressing admiration is to suggest experiences to others. Thus the participants are asked whether they suggest Sekapark to others or not. 94.1% of the survey participants indicate that they recommend the Sekapark to other people while 5.9% does not recommend it.

p) According to the survey results, both women and men from all aged groups, irrespective of their duration of stay, consider Sekapark project implementation as the best project which changes the image of İzmit.

q) İzmit is considered an industrial city by 60.3% of the participants when the identity of city is questioned.

r) When participants' gender, age, educational status, duration of living in the city and income status are correlated with Sekapark's effect on the image of the city, vast majority of participants (97.5%) indicated that Sekapark has changed the image of the city.

s) When the basic demographic characteristics of survey participants are related with the effect of Sekapark on city's image, 97.5 % of the participants has found the change positive.

The following points can be concluded within the context of survey findings discussed above:

i) The identity of the city emerges in line with the functions and sectors related with the city. Findings point out identities for İzmit as 'an industrial city', 'a coastal city' and 'a university city'. According to these results it is observed that both physical and social elements affect the identity of the city and the users of the city are well aware of defining the identity by considering both social and physical elements.

ii) The opinion about İzmit being an "industrial city" is followed by the idea of the city as a "coastal city ". Although the physical isolation of the city from the Gulf of İzmit is created by the railway and D-100 Motorway, it is seen that the survey participants still perceive the coastal characteristic of the city.

iii) Survey findings indicate that 87.3% of the participants think that Sekapark is the best project implementation that changes the image of the city in recent years. The results also put forward the idea of awareness by the users who experience and evaluate the positive and

negative developments in their living spaces. If the design is appropriate, it has positive effects both on the city and the residents.

Conclusion

The solution of the problems which stem from the rapid urban development can be managed by new approaches and new sustainable environmental policies that simultaneously care for economic development and the protection of environment.

When urban centers and historical parts confront with the appropriate implications which will rescue them from becoming a collapsed area, a transformation occurs physically; once urban centers and historical parts are treated properly in order to be saved from collapse new urban design takes place. Especially the retrieval of the lost industrial places which remains useless within the city, enabling them to re-function, and opening them for public usage is very important in terms of the sustainability of industrial cities and their identities.

Within the context of the survey, it is observed that Sekapark project has the quality as to bestow originality to the city, to make significant contributions to the urban identity, to form urban intellect and to direct İzmit with new environment policies and sustainable development models.

It is also seen that Sekapark is the most comprehensive and biggest example of the transformation model realized in Turkey, similar to the models which has begun to spread in developed states and are mostly encountered in the Doc areas of developed countries such as Germany and England (Anonymous, 2008; LCDD, 1997; Colenutt, 1991). Park will be a reference for other similar projects and project applications to be carried out in the future; thanks to its feature. Survey reveals that being the first example of urban/industrial transformation project in Turkey, SekaPark, has aroused the historical awareness, got the citizens close to the coast, provided socio-cultural interaction, had a place in the citizens' memories and has made considerably good contributions to the urban identity.

Being stuck within the centers of industrial cities, factories like Seka, which has historical importance, are cultural assets. They are part of the image and the memory for the city; they are the reflections of the era, to which they belonged, the present. For this reason, the retrieval of the industrial areas like Seka Factory via making them refunction, opening them for public usage and the opinions about providing cultural and social synergy on an urban scale, increased the importance of the industrial transformation projects even more. In this context, central and local administrations, non-governmental organizations, urban beach-runners and landscape designers have great responsibilities, and the institutions as well as an inter-disciplinary coordination

have great importance.

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