

ATINER CONFERENCE PRESENTATION SERIES No: PLA2018-0092

ATINER's Conference Paper Proceedings Series

PLA2018-0092

Athens, 19 September 2018

Effects of Konak Tunnel in Izmir on Lived Space

Zeynep Dünder

Athens Institute for Education and Research

8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10683 Athens, Greece

ATINER's conference paper proceedings series are circulated to promote dialogue among academic scholars. All papers of this series have been blind reviewed and accepted for presentation at one of ATINER's annual conferences according to its acceptance policies (<http://www.atiner.gr/acceptance>).

© All rights reserved by authors.

ATINER's Conference Paper Proceedings Series

PLA2018-0092

Athens, 19 September 2018

ISSN: 2529-167X

Zeynep Dündar, Research Assistant/PhD Student, Dokuz Eylül University,
Turkey

Effects of Konak Tunnel in Izmir on Lived Space

ABSTRACT

Large-scale decisions taken for the city, due to political and economic reasons, apply pressure to the spaces of daily life and do not ignore the urban space and the right to the city. The construction of Konak Tunnel in İzmir which connects Konak, the political and trade center of İzmir city, to the other important parts of the city started in September 2011 and finished in May 2015. The construction of tunnel started without geological studies, ÇED reports and even bidding. Civil society organizations, chambers and municipalities opposed to the project from the beginning. During the construction process, cracks and damages emerged on the several houses and roads in Damlacık which is the neighborhood located just above the tunnel. Expropriation decisions taken for Damlacık caused rent debate due to Körfez view, proximity to the city center and not given clear information to the public about the damage before the tunnel construction. Damlacık with the history of 400 years is one of the oldest Turkish quarters of Izmir. Although it is 100 meters far from the city center, because of the wrong city politics the area has stayed away from the city center and in time, it has become a neighborhood that has been forgotten and even forced to be forgot. During the process, the residents of Damlacık who were faced with the danger of losing their homes organized forums and showed their reactions to the project but many houses in Damlacık were damaged and expropriated. This case clearly shows that urban planning of the public sector is based on the accumulation of capital and it disregards the lived spaces of the city. In this study a comprehensive reading of the situations which Konak Tunnel has caused from the beginning of the Tunnel planning will be discussed according to the terms “right to the city”, “lived space” and “daily life”.

Keywords: daily life, lived space, Konak Tunnel, urban transportation.

Introduction

Large-scale decisions taken for the city often ignore the human factor. Such decisions pay attention to the benefit of government planners and private capital more than the daily life of citizens. Large-scale decisions taken because of political and economic reasons apply pressure to the spaces of daily life and do not ignore the urban space and the right to the city.

Economic and political power has an impact on spaces due to the neoliberalism seen since the 1980s. Neoliberalism dictates to the citizens with economic and political decisions taken by the governments. Thus, the right to speak on the spaces they live is taken away from the citizens. Therefore, urban spaces in major cities turn into a commodity and capital that relies on power becomes the new arbiter for design of urban space.

Konak Tunnel is one of the promised projects of the government during the 2011 General Elections. In this study a comprehensive reading of the situations which Konak Tunnel has caused from the beginning of the construction process will be done. Konak Tunnels created a range of problems for different city dwellers at each phases of the project: planning, implementation and operation. The tunnel cuts through the center of the city and affects the daily life of city. The tunnel between Yeşildere and Konak caused cutting trees in Konak, demolition of houses in Damlacık and destruction of the physical connection between Konak Square and İzmir city.

In the study, the demolitions that Konak Tunnel caused in many historic neighborhoods during the construction and mistaken expropriations are discussed according to the terms “right to the city”, “lived space” and “daily life”.

Tunnel of Konak

The construction of Konak Tunnel in İzmir which connects Konak, the political and trade center of İzmir city, to the other important parts of the city started in September 2011 and finished in May 2015. Tunnel was planned and constructed by Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications and General Directorate of Highways. The aim of the project is to connect Şirinyer and Konak in 10 minutes and also to provide connection between Mustafa Kemal coast road that is the west side of İzmir and Buca, Bornova, Karşıyaka that is the north side of İzmir.

Konak Tunnel consists of 1,674 meters two tubes. Two-year period for construction was foreseen but during the construction, the area was declared 2nd and 3rd degree archeological, urban and natural site by İzmir Number 1 Regional Conservation Council of Cultural and Natural Wealth. So the construction lasted four years. The construction of tunnel started without geological studies, ÇED reports and even bidding. Civil society organizations, chambers and municipalities opposed to the project from the beginning.

During the construction, important historic monuments and ruins were found because the tunnel area has at least 400 years of history. However the government

preferred to ignore these situations. Despite the significant deficiencies, Konak Tunnel was opened in May 2015. After the opening, only one tube of the tunnel was used for a while and all deficiencies were completed after the opening.

Damlacık: Upper Level of the Konak Tunnel

Damlacık is located between Konak Square and Eşrefpaşa; and is also adjacent to Bayramyeri, Değirmendağı, Varyant and Kemeraltı. The area is a five-minute walk from Konak Square. Historical İpek Road (Roma Road), Öğretmenevi, Cicipark are the other important places close to Damlacık (Figure 1). As a transition area, Damlacık is one of the shortcuts, which connects Eşrefpaşa and Kemeraltı by walking. The area is located on the ridge of Kemeraltı therefore, it has an exclusive location in the the silhouette of İzmir. Many homes in Damlacık have a bird's-eye view of the Gulf of İzmir. Hence Damlacık has a privileged location in İzmir.

Figure 1. *The Location of Damlacık*



Damlacık with the history of 400 years is one of the oldest Turkish quarters of İzmir. Although it is 100 meters far from the city center, because of the wrong city politics the area has stayed away from the city center and by time it has become a neighborhood that has been forgotten and even forced to be forgot.

Due to the neglected streets, houses, urban spaces and infrastructure of the area, former residents of Damlacık moved from the district and new residents settled for cheap accommodation.

Damlacık, in the middle of İzmir, is one of the rare places where the neighborhood culture and union are still alive. Neighborhood culture in Damlacık can still be observed despite the gated communities such as site, satellite city which are the results of urbanization policy of last years in Turkey.

After the Tunnel: Expropriation and Rent Debate

During the construction process, cracks and damages emerged on the several houses and roads that are located just above the tunnel. Damlacık is one of the areas that damages were commonly seen. The expropriation decision for damaged houses became a necessity. Expropriation decisions taken for Damlacık caused rent debate due to Körfez view and proximity to the city center. Before the tunnel construction, clear information did not given to the public by government about these damages.

After rent debates, Abdülkadir Uraloğlu, 2nd Regional Director of Highways, explained that there would be no intervention to create any rent and 8 homes in the area would be restored (Yıldırım, 2014). Therefore, either the area would be transferred to the museum for cultural purposes or it would be turned into cafes for touristic purposes. According to the plan that was foreseen for Damlacık, the area until Cici Park and the expropriated area above the tunnel would together be designed as urban green space for city dwellers. Also during that period, an uncertain image which shows the area after the demolitions appeared in the media (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *A Proposal for Damlacık after Demolitions*



Source: <https://bit.ly/2xqrkhG>. [Accessed on 12.06.2016].

Uraloğlu said that there was not any example in Turkey that an expropriated area is used for any kind of construction and he also added that their duty is not to earn money, is to make roads (Yıldırım, 2014). It is not possible to construct on the area because the expropriated area is defined as “renunciation for road” in

property deeds. However, the explanations of General Directorate of Highways did not satisfy the public.

In the first stage, 33 houses were demolished due to expropriation decision taken by Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications and those demolitions lasted until November 2015. The problematic and suspicious issue is the expropriation decision was taken during and after the construction not before the tunnel construction. Konak Tunnel not only threatened Damlacık but also a wider region through which the tunnel line runs along.

Right to the City

Foucault (1967) expresses the city as simultaneity and he defines simultaneity as everything's being in relation to each other. Cities have a structure which contains complex and multiple networks. Today the city can no longer be explained by simple ingredients as the definitions of the past. Social space is a social product (Lefebvre, 2014). Urban space can only be defined with potentials and relationships of change, transformation, indeterminacy and uncertainty. Therefore, all the interventions on urban space affect social relationships and everyday life and urban space is reproduced at every time. These interventions sometimes respond to right of citizens, on the other hand sometimes cause inequalities and injustices.

Neoliberal policies which has influenced all over world since the 1980s, lead to inequalities and human rights violations in cities. Rather than citizens, capital and political forces have a voice on space and dominance of capital on urban space is accepted by everyone. Neoliberal policies dictate to the citizen economic and political decisions taken by the governments. Therefore, the right to speak on the spaces they live is taken away from the citizens, urban spaces in major cities turn into a commodity and capital that relies on power becomes the new arbiter for design of urban space.

However, neoliberal policies caused a reaction which started simultaneously in many parts of the world and which triggers each other one by one. Capital by defining the city with change value commodifies both the city and urban space. The demand of citizens is to regain the use value of the city and by this way cities will be livable, equal and democratic (Baysal, 2011). It is possible to call this demand as "the right to the city". The right to the city was first used in the work of Lefebvre and on the eve of the Paris protest in 1968. The right to the city is a seeking for a democratic city; it is the struggle of citizens for their rights. It is the first sign to fight against neoliberalism and capitalism. According to Lefebvre (2015), if urban space is get back by citizens with the use value, the right to the city which is described as a demand and a cry transforms and gains a new meaning.

Damlacık Forum

The residents of Damlacık who were faced with the danger of losing their homes organized a forum in Damlacık Park at 19th June 2014 under the name of “Bi Damlacık İnsaf”. Sema Pekdaş, Mayor of Konak, gave a support to the struggle of the residents of Damlacık.

As well as the chamber of Geology, Construction, City Planners and Architects, representatives of several non-governmental organizations and citizens also attended open-air meeting in Damlacık Park. At forum, a short film “Bi Damlacık İnsaf” prepared by Konak Municipality was showed. The film tells the history of Damlacık and the story of daily life of people.

Two important decisions were taken at Damlacık Forum. One of them is to found an association for the continuity of the struggle. The other one is the decisions that how Konak Municipality can contribute to the struggle. First of all the decision for founding a unit within the Konak Municipality about Damlacık was taken. Also with the help of “Fen İşleri” and “Park ve Bahçeler Müdürlüğü”, restoration and street renovation works began in the area. In this context, improvement of facades, road and sidewalk repairs, maintenance of sports fields and parking areas were planned. Houses were painted according to the residents’ wishes (Url-1).

Pekdaş stated that they intended to return Damlacık to the old days again and emphasized that people were forcibly separated from their homes and the neighborhood to empty the area and she added that:

‘Their plan is to put a new project on the most beautiful location of İzmir. However, we support that urban transformation should be done on the site and with the residents. Damlacık should not disappear, it should stand up again. So, all the units of the Municipality focused on Damlacık. Our team entered the neighborhood and began to repair all deficiencies. Damlacık will alive again in a short time’ (Url-1).

Residents of Damlacık also showed their reactions about the demolitions at the forum. Residents decided not to leave their homes despite all difficulties to continue to struggle:

‘We do not leave our houses. If they want, they can move from their houses. We can help them for the rent and move.’ Naime Yazıcı, resident of Damlacık

‘We do not know how to live in an apartment. We love here and do not leave. We want move under the leadership of our Municipality. I do not want to give my home because I am happy, I am comfortable at detached house. If I move to ana apartment how can I get used to? We are like a big family in Damlacık, our neighbors are very well, if they send us what will we do?’ Gülşen Türcan, 30 years living in Damlacık (Url-1)

‘Some people do not like but Damlacık is our home, we made these houses with lots of labor, at that age I cannot work, earn money and buy a new home. So we do not think leaving our houses. My opinion, if this area was under the risk, they should leave the ares before the Tunnel construction. Their aim is to empty this area secretly. They seek for rent and they have benefit. We do not

leave from here, our children can play safely, the area is close to everywhere, we have good affairs with our neighbors. As you can see doors are open, nobody enter the other's houses'. Medine Topuk, resident of Damlacık (Url-1).

After Damlacık Çimentepe, Tınaztepe, Kocatepe, Duatepe ve Zafertepe quarters which are located on Konak Tunnel decided to struggle against to the problems of tunnel together. "Konak-Yeşildere Tüneli Mağdurları Dayanışma ve Yardımlaşma Derneği" (YTM-DER) was founded after Damlacık Forums. YTM-DER organized a forum in October 2014 and citizens from the five quarters, non-governmental organizations, bureaucrats of Municipality, councilors, Mayor of Konak, Sema Pekdaş attended the meeting. Citizens who attended the forum for "Beştepeler" decided not to leave their houses as in Damlacık despite the urgent expropriation (Url-2).

The president of YTM-DER, Gürcan Alıcı, defined the tunnel as "gecekondur" and added that "we will not be silent, we will be effusive, as in the past; we will share our troubles and happiness in our neighborhood" (Url-2).

The right to the city can be evaluated as right to participation. According to the right to the city, citizens can actively participate in all decisions about the production of urban space, can produce space for their wishes and occupy space. The process lived during the expropriations in Damlacık shows that citizens want to be informed about decisions that concern them.

According to Lefebvre (2000) the government produces capitalist spaces such as house, infrastructure, transportation services, prepares their legal infrastructure and by this way it commodifies the urban space. Capitalism has the ability to change and transform itself according to the terms of the period and it supports space to be produced as a commodity. The city which has become a commodity is now the object of consumption and demonstration.

As seen in many examples in the past, capital which holds political and economic power converts urban space into a rent area. Sulukule and Tarlabasi from Istanbul are some examples of this situation. People living in Sulukule were moved from their homes by giving the promise of urban transformation but then they could not afford the price of housing built in Sulukule and had to move to other places. Sulukule became the area of a middle-income class. In Tarlabasi many homes in poor condition were destroyed, some of them were expropriated for restoration and a new project called "Tarlabası 360" emerged appealing to upper income groups. Finally, the residents were forced to get out of the city centre. Due to many incidents like this, people in Damlacık did not rely on the promises and informations of the state about neighborhood's not opening rent.

Unlike the urban renewal process in slums demolitions in Damlacık can be evaluated in a different way. Damlacık as an old settlement is not a slum area. There are no problems with the property. It is the process as a result of a rushing decision mechanism taken according to no scientific basis.

'On the other hand, planned interventions that occur in large and medium scale, leads to alienation of the city's lived spaces; a widespread anomie

emerges in society, the personal and social meanings of urban spaces and community ties are destroyed. The city's everyday life cannot find a place in the official story, the official story is written for capital accumulation; people who focus on buildings forget that the spirit and life of a place does not shape with physical environment, it shapes with experienced life' (Friedmann, 1999, 4).

Urban planning of the public sector claims to be scientific but often neglects the human factor is claim to be scientific (Lefebvre, 2015). This kind of urban planning do not hesitate to destroy the city, it pays attention to cars, communication and information networks. Large-scale projects enforce on the spaces of everyday life, ignores the right to the city and cause alienation by damaging the citizens' life. Right to the city and daily life does not carry any value against "brand projects" for government planners and capital (Friedmann, 1999). The tunnel project destroys the experienced space and the daily life in Damlacık.

For people living in Damlacık, right to the city is not only right to housing. If they are given a new house elsewhere, right to transportation, right to be close to their works and neighbors will be prevented. A road project that is decided by considering the right of the owners of motor vehicles ultimately eliminates the right of another person. As Marcuse (2009) indicated right to the city is not an individual right, it is a holistic demand of right that encompasses many independent individual rights.

Urban Spaces produced by Speed

Tunnel basically is the shortest path between two points. Maps as a plane which is a bird's-eye view are used to plan this route. Konak Tunnel produces a new map. We can only read the trace of tunnel through the entry and exit points. We can see the tunnel entrance and exit on the map, we cannot see the road, but we can follow the trail. This kind of an intervention at city center creates a shrinking in the urban space.

Speed separates the person from the spaces where he is in moving. On the other hand, in places that are moving it neutralizes and standardizes spaces that carries movement therefore, the new city is defined with the trio; speed, escape and passivity (Sennett, 2011). Urban space produced by speed and city dwellers has a tense relationship. How to use a road is based on certain rules. However, when the city dwellers have the potential to change and produce space they live in, they begin to establish a relationship with it. Attitude and position of the people to highways is very clear. Breaking this rule and trying to establish a relationship with the road creates a contradiction. Roads are untouchable places for pedestrians. People can get in touch with the road by another object such as car, train, ship or with the other urban elements such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, overpasses and underpasses. According to the tool of transition, the kind of relationship between people and road changes.

First urban space is divided due the decisions for transportation projects and then it is tried to combine again. Konak Tunnel causes a new division, seperates Konak in two parts; West Konak and East Konak and transforms Mithatpaşa Street to a cul-de-sac of the city. Urban spaces produced by speed first take existing public spaces from pedestrians and then it produces new public spaces instead. As a transitional space providing access between different parts of the city, overpasses are also a kind of public spaces. Konak Tunnel steals space from walking level of pedestrians and produces it at a different level again with an overbridge.

Conclusions

Konak Tunnel is an incorrect and deficient project from the beginning. Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and the government faced about different issues throughout the process. The project did not only affect the region but also the whole city.

Effects of tunnel on urban space are discussed under two parts. One of them is the demolitions of the houses on the Tunnel line and rent discussions. The tunnel ignored the right to the city of people living in Damlacık. Many houses in Damlacık were damaged and expropriated. Residents were forced to move to other parts of the city. This case clearly shows that urban planning of the public sector is based on the accumulation of capital and it disregards the lived spaces of the city. There are already so many examples experienced in Turkey. Damlacık is one of them. The difference in Damlacık is the support given to the residents by Municipality.

At entry and exit point of the tunnel Konak the city center of Izmir. While Konak Tunnel tries to maintain a continuous flow for cars, at same time it interrupts the flow of pedestrian traffic and is divides the center of the city into two parts. As one of the key concepts of our era, urban spaces produced by speed are indispensable founders of urban life.

In conclusion, today's urban policy is in the control of political power and capital. Urban space which becomes a demonstration area of different institutions is getting commodified. Small or large-scale interventions affect urban space from different aspects. Traces left behind of Konak Tunnel are the best example of it. Konak Tunnel Project leads to the destruction of a historic district, damage of the city center, destruction of the urban memory, emergence of technical problems with transportation.

References

- Baysal, C. 2011. Kent hakkı yeniden hayat bulurken [When the right to the city comes to life again]. *Eğitim, Bilim, Toplum*, 36, 31-55.
- Foucault, M. 1967. Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias. Date: 08.10.2014. <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>.

- Friedmann, J. 1999. The city of everyday life. *Disp-The Planning Review*, 35.
- Lefebvre, H. 2000. Right to the City. In *Writing on Cities*, Eleonore Kofman & Elizabeth Labas (ed.) 63-185, Blackwell, London.
- Lefebvre, H. 2014. Mekanın Üretimi [Production of Space]. Sel Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- Lefebvre, H. 2015. Şehir Hakkı [City Rights]. Sel Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- Marcuse, P. 2009. From critical urban theory to the right to the city. *City*, 13, 185-196.
- Sennett, R. 2011. Ten ve Taş: Batı Uygarlığında Beden ve Şehir [Ten and Stone: Body and City in Western Civilization]. Metis Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Url-1 <<http://www.halkizbiz.com/izmir/izmir-damlacikta-halk-yikima-karsi-barinma-hakkini-savunuyor-h8076.html>. >, access date: 24.05.2016.
- Url-2 <<http://www.haber3.com/konak-tuneli-insaati-magdurlari-evlerini-terketmeme-karari-aldi-2939021h.htm>>, access date: 06.06.2016.
- Yıldırım, T. 2014. Konak Tünelleri bitince Damlacık böyle olacak [Droplet will be like this when the Konak Tunnels are finished]. *Hürriyet Gazetesi* (5 Temmuz 2014) <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/konak-tunelleri-bitince-damlacik-boyle-olacak-26742177>.