

Towards An Ideology of Enforced Uniformity; Standardised Units & Singularised Housing Policy in Post-2000 Turkey

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Abstract

This paper critically and retrospectively re-examines housing scene in Turkey during the first quarter of 21st Century. The study is an attempt to reveal the role of housing mechanisms in the political shift of Turkey from Social Democracy to Autocracy; from social welfare state to neo-liberal state; from secular & constitutional state to conservative & presidential administrative system from pre-2000 era to present day. National housing schemes of this period are tackled as the spatial agent of this ideological paradigm shift.

By asking whether a (pre-meditated and sophisticated) social engineering (by means of singularised 'housing design and production mechanism') has been undergoing, the paper questions true nature of the paradigm shift in housing mechanism that occurred with new millennium. This line of inquiry is conducted through cross-analysis of data provided by governmental institutions of housing. Thus, in regard to the case of housing scene of Turkey between 2000-25, the paper strives to prove its claims that; identical standardisation of housing design/production process within a single mechanism at nation-wide scale, appear as a very strong political device and an ideological agent for changing the genetic codes of existing socio-political contract..

Keywords: housing, legislation, policy, ideology, architecture, urbanism.

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I. Introduction

This study questions how housing is economically and politically instrumentalized in violation of 'publicness' through 'spatial standardization strategies'. In this context, the paper critically and retrospectively re-evaluates the housing scene in Turkey during the first quarter of 21st Century. The study aims to develop a critical stance towards the current housing mechanism of Turkey from the perspective of social, affordable, equitable housing need that has been raising for the last 20 years.

By relating literature of housing and of politics, a clear insight into the links between housing typology and political ideologies (Sandhu & Korzenievski, 2004; Dodson, 2007; Inch & Shepherd, 2019; White & Nandedkar, 2019) can be gained. Therefore, the study explores the plausibility of a social engineering by means of singularised 'housing design and production mechanism' to re-design the structure of society towards a new ideology. Having founded on this basic research question, the paper builds a hypothesis that housing is a strong tool which can be twisted both ways (of political spectrum) in accordance with political will with reference to the case of Turkey. In order to prove its thesis, the aim of this study is to demonstrate parallelism between the changes of housing policy and of housing typologies. Along its hypothesis, the paper argues that centers of power (in Turkey since 2002) have been deliberately executing a 'societal uniformity' program through housing standardisation / similarisation / singularisation. For verifying its argument, the paper defines its scope within the mass-housing initiatives by TOKI (Turkish National Mass-Housing Institution) in Turkey which covers a considerable body (21% according to statistical data based on 2024 Report by TMB-Union of Turkish Contractors) of nationwide housing stock between 2005-2025.

The main goal of the study is to follow traces of the motives and operational modes behind a major swing occurred from 1960's-70's-80's-{even} 90's understanding / approach / practice of public welfare and social housing initiatives, into the comprehension, production and branded mass-marketing of individualistic, competitive, prestige-oriented, materialistic, speculative-profit-based, yet close-packed housing epidemic after 2000.

The outset of this transfiguration coincides with the change of government in 2002 which still prevails. This long-lasting reign has been frequently associated with; political, cultural, social, economic decay by a substantial majority. This negative association has manifested with a simultaneous downfall in (almost) all

social indicators. The policies spanning over a quarter of a century, brought along a series of radical changes and resulting rise in; unrest, violence, regression, inequality, segregation, polarisation, poverty, insecurity, precarity, etc. Most of these downwards parameters have been running parallel with emergent transformation (yet imbalanced abundance) in housing production and supply.

Thus, the exercised housing policies have eventually and inevitably portrayed; unaffordable, inaccessible, unequal picture of housing scene (in Turkey). So, an antithetical viewpoint is needed whereby relation between ‘architectural aspects’ and ‘political aspects’ of housing is centrally placed. Such a viewpoint requires an angle for examining and evaluating the housing mechanism in regard to its capacity and performance as a social right and social service for all. In other words, looking at housing as an issue of (public) policy-making with a focus on; people, their equal rights, their public benefits, their spatial justice, their well-being/elfare, etc.

Therefore the paper develops its arguments and methodology of evaluation along this viewpoint. One of the primary arguments of this paper is founded on these pillars;

- The awareness about the dichotomy of Anonymity versus Uniformity,
- The significance of the nuance between Collective-Housing and Mass-Housing.

Moving from these two primary dichotomies, the paper is organized along a spinal structure of thought which systematically deciphers the attitudes towards these dichotomies by re-evaluating data obtained from sources such as; National Housing Institution (TOKI), National Statistics Institution (TUIK) of the Turkish State, independent agents of statistics (BATEM, EuroStats etc.) and various independent civil organisations such as; IMKON, TMB etc. This structure can be defined as; systematically unveiling socio-political dimensions of space (Lefebvre, 1992-2013; Harvey, 1973-2019; Sassen, 1999-2012; Castells, 1985-2002; Engels, 1872) with specific reference to mass-housing initiatives. Along this spinal structure, the efforts of spatialisation through large-scale housing projects are postulated as significant acts of implementing certain political strategies (Birrell & Murie, 1975; Harloe & Martens, 1984; Houghton, 2008; Zavisca & Gerber, 2016; Marshall, 2020) to re-shape the society.

Thus, the paper is positioned to conceive & to define the new spatial agenda (of housing policies and design between 2005-2025 in Turkey) as a multi-faceted strategy by which these primary dichotomies are targeted and intervened. In regard to its methodology, the study endeavours to analyse this seemingly-complex strategy by breaking it into its (economical, geographical, cultural, socio-psychological) components. For each component, key question of “how these two primary dichotomies have been handled?” is posed. Along this path, it is examined whether this strategy was implemented either by changing the axis of (aforementioned) dichotomies or by shifting the poles of these dualities. In other words, it is of interest to understand whether the existing paradigm of ‘dualities’ that have enabled (until 2000) accessible, affordable, collective and humane housing for greater sections of society, and whether this paradigm had been deliberately knocked down after 2000. Moreover, if this has been the case, it is also of interest to understand ‘how’ this intervention (and radical transformation) could have been achieved by deploying ‘which’ specific socio-spatial tactics.

II. Conceptual Framework For Discussion On Housing

The paper tackles the problem of housing not only as a primary human right but also as a matter of social policy. In that context, the conceptual framework, on which this study relies, can be defined as ‘spatial justice’. The paper investigates diverse components of housing in Turkey to detect ramifications of ‘urban ethics’. The study explores possible intentions of various power groups to re-format ongoing ‘social order’ by changing the established ‘social consensus’ towards a new and devious ‘social contract’ through new housing estates as an initial step. So, the paper pursues apparent deficiencies of ongoing housing processes in Turkey within this framework. The study addresses the matter of housing scene in Turkey from a framework the corners of which can be defined by following facets;

- The conflicts of; public benefit-private profit, public space/private property,
- The problems of; commodification of (*public*) space, private ownership of (*public*) space, class-based dispossession of (*public*) land & space, social/spatial injustice, spatial segregation,
- The threats of; privatisation, speculative profit, imbalanced wealth distribution/accumulation, laundering illegal economy via real-estate, spatial polarisation,
- The parametres of; public realm/space, public land, public ownership, public welfare, public benefit, public rights (*of sheltering/healthy accomodation-living*)

Therefore, the study approaches the notion of housing scene in Turkey from an angle which accentuate its social and ethical dimension with primary conflicts such as; public *versus* private, poor *versus* rich, collective *versus* individual, shared *versus* owned, collaborative *versus* competitive, participatory *versus* enforced, diversified *versus* identical, etc. In other words, the paper conceives the matter of housing as a manifestation and crystallisation of humane values / virtues & communal principles.

Nonetheless, ongoing dynamics that shape the housing mechanism and its architectural morphology, create certain vulnerabilities in that regard. Thus, attributes of fragility / vulnerability for the housing system at the peril of aforementioned values/virtues can be grouped under following points;

- House as a consumption product in a economic & cultural contexts of “extreme consumerism” (*inevitably turning the ‘house’ into an object of desire and of quick consumption*) as a result of globally-imposed neo-liberalist economic policies.
- House as a speculative financial asset in a economic & cultural contexts of “extreme speculation” particularly in ‘the sectors of banking, real-estate and construction’,
- House (*particularly ‘branded’ housing schemes*) as an object of (*a class-based sense of*) prestige in economy-political & socio-cultural contexts of “the societies of spectacle & media/image”,
- House as a object of illusion (*hallucination and/or dream*) in socio-cultural & philosophical contexts of “the societies of post-truth & virtuality”,

Hence, within this four-fold climate, the study claims that; the identical standardization of housing design and singularisation of housing sector at a nation-wide scale, appear as a very strong political device and ideological apparatus, as exemplified in the case of housing scene of Turkey between 2000-25.

The paper’s main argument about an intended/targeted ‘societal uniformity’ program through housing standardisation / similarisation / singularisation, necessitates critical review of the following;

- The process of intervention to TOKI since 2005 until 2025 as a period when TOKI is officially instrumentalised by central government as a catalyst agent for overall social transformation,
- The physical reflection of this political and ideological intervention at the scale of everyday-life as well as its socio-cultural ramifications particularly at the changes in social (*and mass*) behaviours towards issues of accomodation & settlement as primary urban rights.
- The escalating problem of accessibility/affordability to housing (*produced by TOKI since the aforementioned intervention began*) as a fundamental aspect of urban livability and spatial justice & welfare in Turkish cities.

Therefore, the article, which is organised along this conceptual framework, is structured as such;

First, the relation between notions of ‘identical house units’ and of ‘anonymity or uniformity of their inhabitants’ is examined with an emphasis on the difference of ‘anonymity’ from ‘uniformity’. Afterwards, the place of housing problem in political and architectural agendas of Turkey before and after 2000 is explored. Later, housing is discussed as a political discovery to be weaponised for an ideological warfare after 2002. Finally, housing is argued as an ideological sub-text which is disguised in-between the lines of a new urban-architectural narration.

III. The Correlation Between ‘Homogeneity Of Spatial/Building (House) Units’ And The ‘Anonymity Or Uniformity Of People’

Spaces and people having reciprocal relation of shaping and reflecting eachother, the notion of housing which covers the majority of urban settlements, emerges as a primary spatial tool to shape society. In that regard, housing appears as a direct object of ‘spatial ethics’ and ‘politics of human spatiality’. Spatiality of housing, as an agent both to homogenize built environment and to anonymize society, is of special interest. Therefore, understanding the spatial aspect of a ‘social contract’ is of utmost importance.

Before discussing how spatial homogeneity conditions homogeneity of a society, duality between the phenomena of ‘Anonymity’ and ‘Uniformity’ should be identified. Dichotomous nature of sources of the need for social homogeneity, leads us to the conclusion that there may be two basic (and opposing) categories. Therefore, ‘Anonymity’ and ‘Uniformity’ can be considered two types of homogenisation as ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’. In the context of housing settlements, while the first is based on natural and inclusive modesty, the second is indexed to artificial perception of exclusive superiority. There is also ideological duality between them on the basis of participation and common labour as well as the spirit of sharing through communal equity. The comprehension of homogeneity and its change through ages (from ‘Anonymity’ to ‘Uniformity’) has direct impact on the way standardisation is conceived and spatially practiced.

The phenomenon of standardized housing units, which emerged as both a tool of the egalitarian social and legal system in prehistoric society and a reflection of that order, now appears as a single-type mass housing in modern and post-modern society as a manifestation of inequality and dispossession of the majority. The differences concentrate on three points: whether they are collectively produced, whether they are integrated into the outdoor public spaces, and finally their scale (numerical size and horizontal-vertical spread/concentration). The current state of TOKI housing standardisation appears to be complete opposite of conventional standardisation and homogeneity by shifting from ‘Anonymity’ towards ‘Uniformity’.

The subsequent duality between ‘Anonymity’ and ‘Uniformity’ of settlements seem to be embedded in the difference between two basic types of standardisation:

- Standardisations produced by collective traditions,

- Standardisations conditioned by sector dynamics.

The former corresponds to a unifying anonymity that is engraved in all of our minds and evokes human emotions, perceptions, meanings and associations, expressing a more homogeneous, harmonious, solidaristic community consciousness. Here, one can talk about an anonymity that is experienced by individuals who have the awareness and responsibility of being included in a community on equal terms. The latter, however, corresponds to uniform settlements that have come out of a factory line and clearly have a kind of 'monopoly' behind them, where each unit and each individual in these units accepts an existence of their own, without caring about even the adjacent unit. The fundamental difference between the spatialisations of these two ideological approaches is that the former adopts the concept of 'collective and communal life', while the latter adopts the concept of 'multiple but individual life'. Conventional standardisations exhibit a situation where collective, human and moral values are embodied in modesty, while current standardisations carried out from a single center (e.g. TOKI) exhibit a situation where monopoly, greed, rent, unjust gains, exploitation, corruption, selfishness and the relevant 'new' value judgments are dominantly embodied.

The current housing settlements (by TOKI) in Turkey, have epitomized 'standardisations conditioned by sector dynamics' particularly after 2005. Thus, they bring about a huge crowd and its spatialisation, consisting of arrogant and selfish individuals who are blinded by their own ambitions and to whom the false-impression (hypnotic illusion) of having acquired an independent existence is also sold along with this mass-product. These settlements exactly constitute the mass (crowd) spirit that totalitarian, conservative and neo-liberalist regimes prefer.

The ideological roots of sameness ('Anonymity' and 'Uniformity') and spatial standardisation examined above are undoubtedly dependent on a 'social consensus' to be able to dominate the social functioning and its spatial reflections. Therefore, spatial (housing) politics play crucial role in establishing such a social consensus. The spatiality of a 'social consensus' to run the 'social order' according to its 'social contract' emerges as a vital component. Fundamentally, a 'social contract' is an outcome of a strong ideological narrative that will ensure the desired type of homogeneity. Furthermore, its implementation is achieved through praxis of its directly associated spatiality (Castells, 1985-2002; Harvey, 1973-2019; Lefebvre, 1992-2013; Foucault, 1980-1995; Deleazue & Guattari, 1980; Virilio, 1977; Lyon, 2001; Auge, 2009; Weizman, 2017). Thus, mass-housing emerges as one of the most influential means of such a spatial praxis due to its vast-scale impact area. Therefore, it has always been the subject of politics (on both ends of the spectrum) and the most powerful device (or even weapon) to be conquered for all politicians and leaders.

IV. Housing Problem & its Place in Political Agendas in Turkey Before and After 2000

Within the framework of Turkish housing policies, collective-housing (in terms of both urban/architectural design and production/distribution processes) has been always seen as a solid political ground for capturing and convincing the anonymously homogeneous labour class since 1950's (with emphasis on cooperatives) up to late 1990's (Cengizkan, 2005). Such a ground had to be founded on the notion of collectively improving the living conditions of this large class. The year 2000, however, appeared as a fracture point whereby housing has turned into a political bait for seduction of upper classes by promoting housing as a matter of speculative profit, prestige and exclusivity.

Nonetheless, concepts of prestige and exclusivity (particularly of white-collar executive workers and urban neo-riches) have become manifest in housing scene through new type of uniformity which reflects speculative profitability of housing units and settlements. Thus, only the 'meaning' and 'labelling' attached to housing have started to shift; from 'collective' to 'individual', from 'useful' to 'profitable', from 'modest' to 'ostentatious', although the method and means of design, production & distribution were still based on mass-production with identical units.

After having decided that housing should totally be neo-liberalised by the hand of government itself, it seems that a paradigm shift has occurred from 'Anonymity' towards 'Uniformity' as parallel to the deviation from 'Collective-Housing' towards 'Mass-Housing'. This dual operation demonstrates that such a comprehensive modification is accomplished by changing the axis of (aforementioned) dichotomies and by shifting the poles of these dualities.

V. Housing Problem & its Place in Architectural Agendas in Turkey Before and After 2000

In parallel with the former (i.e. pre-2000's) perception of housing as a political ground to satisfy and/or persuade working class masses, the architecture of housing, too, used to address their true needs with spatial means. However, with the changing (i.e. post-2000) winds of; manipulation, coercion, desperation, submission, etc. in the political perception of mass housing, the architecture of housing also has gone through major transformations; from in-depth spatial and typological diversity / richness and complex homogeneity or humble-dignified sophistication, towards repetitive-monotony, cosmetic-glossiness and unrefined experimentality, etc.

So, the design component of housing architecture has been compromised or alternatively tackled as an acrobatic endeavour in mere form-creation and/or façade-design.

In 'conventional' understanding of housing design; It is necessary to try to cope with many complexities such as; human life, its diversity, richness, complexity, human culture, traditions, accumulations, typologies, collective dynamics, social order - spatial order relations, public life, spatial rights, spatial justice, interior - exterior space relations, human perception and senses, spatial psychology, color, texture, material, etc. This multi-dimensional complexity is managed through a balanced combination of house and building typologies as well as their interaction with spatial hierarchy of open, semi-open and indoor spaces in response to human needs & preferences, human perceptions, human behaviour patterns, human diversity in society, human values/virtues and dignity, etc. However, in the current singularised housing system; firstly, identical house units are designed for a hypothetical individual having a 'template life' foreseen by neo-liberalist consumer society, and later, these units are multiplied as many times as possible until reaching the desired density of people and real-estate property.

The enormous demand for these 'life-capsule stacks' produced by the institutions that monopolise design, production, sale and operation of 'housing' as well as astronomical prices offered and/or paid for them, altogether prove that housing has completely ceased to be a living space, and has become a commodity object that is purchased by calculating its near-future profitability. Based on the concrete reality that housing is spatial equivalent of humanity's fundamental right to shelter, the fact that housing is not a commercial commodity but a basic public service has been forgotten. This creates a significant mass-injustice and victimization as a result of an economic-political choice. This overt strangeness and submission have been deliberately normalized, legitimized and normed in the eyes of masses.

The problem of standardisation (as a matter of repetitiveness) includes; the 'repeating unit' being the same as well as the 'repetition interval, frequency or rhythm' being the same. These two elements constitute the essence of monotony. If this problem is translated into the language of mass housing, it can be defined as the fact that in addition to housing types being the same, the way these units are brought together (or multiplied) does not accommodate any modular variety or variation. This brings us to the subject of richness that can be achieved in the outdoor space formations between houses. It is possible to overcome monotony of standardisation by designing various spaces around houses as well as houses themselves, and thus by observing design criteria such as rhythm, variation, balance and emphasis in mass-housing design. However, there are many restricting inputs in TOKI's housing architecture. These inputs emerge with economic, social and political motivations and contexts. Therefore, when these are considered holistically, standardisation and monotony/monopoly have an ideological substructure.

Basic Design concepts in architecture such as; Order and Hierarchy concepts and their relationships, Part-Whole / Figure-Ground relationships, Modularity, Multiplication/Derivation systems, Repetition and Rhythm, Balance-Emphasis, Theme-Variation relationships, constitute formal tools and methods for resolving social complexities through existing corpus of architectural typologies and urban morphologies. These formal tools and methods, especially in housing (and settlement) design, have the potential to offer design strategies in which many social (including sociological, cultural, economic, etc.) inputs will be embodied and translated into spatial language, so that multiple disciplines will come together, cooperate and coordinate. However, field of housing design, which has been deprived of some very basic rules and systematics, has also been gently distanced from social input and values.

In particular, the uniformity of (TOKI housing) production technology and its mode of production has confirmed inhumane and non-collective nature of this scale-jump by completely eliminating the architectural/urban voids through which inhabitants of these units could establish contacts, relationships and solidarity.

VI. Discovery of Housing After 2002 As A Tactical (*Economic, Cultural, Geographical-Spatial & Psychological*) Weapon At Urban Scale For An Ideological Warfare

Increasing human density in a settlement emerges as initial step towards an agenda of social engineering. Densely populated settlements via new housing initiatives serve perfectly to the creation of larger masses to manipulate through mass-communication by means of mass-media which is owned and controlled by the same center(s) of economic/political sovereignty. Such a manipulation concentrates on the perception of housing.

Aiming at a (mental as much as intellectual) shift in comprehension of the issue of housing in the eyes of larger masses of society, a strong tool was needed to realise this ambitious goal. In a frantic search for a lever arm to implement this major shift, an existing institution of purely social/public nature, namely TOKI, drew the attention of highly-determined authorities. Having enhanced with new legislative gear and reinforced with new financial support, TOKI was modified towards a central and neo-liberalist real-estate developing and contracting body by 2005.

Instantly, notion of housing was totally stripped off from its social essence / public responsibility and barely left not only to the primitive & destructive struggles but also wildest waves of capitalism and recurrent economical crises. Thus, majority of people in society has been exposed to radical increases in prices for purchase and rental of houses without any social support mechanism. In a context of new government's economic structure that is almost entirely based on construction (and obviously high real-estate speculation) at the peril of other essential, productive, creative, value-added industries, notion of (mass) housing had appeared as a useful device for implementing *as terminus a quo*. Indeed, the ratio of construction sector in GDP has jumped from 7.5 % in 2003 to 17.2 % in 2018 (Orhangazi, 2020; Türkmen et. al., 2018). Nonetheless, 2024 data provided by TMB (Union of Turkish Contractors) ve IMKON (Confederation of Building Contractors) shows that the bankruptcy rate of small and medium-sized contracting companies has increased by around 20% within 1 year. These data imply that only a handful of contracting companies (serving TOKI) are leading the over-expanded construction (thus, housing) sector. Besides, pushing masses into spending, investing or running into debts was also a useful tool in a prevailing context of consumer culture to mass-control/manipulate not only the behavior but also minds and thoughts.

Thus, already existing national housing administration manifested itself as an appropriate institutional instrument to orchestrate a totally new socio-political con(s)tract via new legislative arrangements under the climate of insidiously growing authoritarian attitudes at the ranks of power since the very early phases of 2000's. Eventually, the matter of housing was skillfully weaponised against low & middle income segments by this strategic manoeuvre lead by the government in favour of highly-exclusive elite that monopolised housing mechanism in Turkey.

VII. Economic Monopolization Of Urban Spatiality Through Singularised Construction Technology

The first strategy to weaponise housing ideologically, is to turn the idea and object of 'house' from a 'living space or unit' into; an ordinary product, a commodity, a highly-profitable investment tool, a mere economical asset, and by the same token, into a cost-effective commercial merchandise the cost of which must be minimized (to its bare-minimum) through advantages given by industrial means of mass-production.

In that sense, construction method and building techniques are also among the major factors which directly reflects the character of society not only towards its immediate environment but also its community. For instance, prefabrication techniques emulate the nature of a society of mass-production in contemporary era. Nonetheless, early mass-production techniques have rapidly evolved to a level which mirrors a society of mass-consumption. Building and housing has been no exception. Construction technologies have been exploited to reshape a society of mass-consumption. Tunnel Formwork R. Concrete Mass-Construction Technology has long been chosen as the leading technology for mass-production of housing in Turkey. In the meantime, however, it has also benefited monopolisation of housing construction throughout whole country. From this perspective, housing practice via TOKI after 2005 seems to have deployed this technology as part of its broader agenda for social uniformity.

A large portion of housing production is carried out by consortia formed by a small number of real-estate and construction monopolies under the institutional protection of central/local governments. It can be seen that end-products of mass production, which is proudly introduced as housing initiatives of state, are 'living-capsule clusters' that are accessible only to a certain segment and can be purchased at exorbitant prices despite not being very qualified, while providing significant rents to these monopolies. In such a process aiming at an anonymous user and a consumption template, genuine aspects about the 'quality of space' would not be of concern in a housing product that is standardized but attributed brand (exchange) value with its external imagery.

It must be noted that there is a direct connection between 'capsule clustering' approach and tunnel formwork construction technology. Because this construction technology (based on countless repetition of a spatial unit) appears as the most suitable technique for realising a spatial framework with template-lives of anonymous (and abstract) users. Therefore, this technology has been vigorously adopted as the only means for housing production by TOKI since it perfectly matches with societal agenda of the governing bodies.

VIII. Cultural Desertification Of Urban Spatiality Through Constricted Linguistics Of Architectonic

The second tactic to weaponise housing, is to cleanse its cultural content, its rich repertory of spatial conventions, its diversity of well-rooted (space & building) typologies etc., by narrowing down its architectonic grammar and vocabulary (to their bare-minimum) into mechanically standardised units under a broader agenda of 'cultural desertification' of the city-life.

'Cultural desertification' program has an intrinsic consistency whereby all components of life are subjected to this plan. It extends from the way people dress, make-up, to the way they eat-drink, entertain as

well as from the way people speak or communicate to the way they shelter. With skin-deep cosmetic diversity and two-dimensional facade attractions (despite apparent visual diversity) seem to 'converge' to the same. People seem to run a very uniform and templated life within this decor, which is actually a collection of standard units, hidden/camouflaged behind cosmetic claddings. No matter what group or sociological class people are in (apart from the quality of the materials they use and the size of our spatial units), people actually are made to live a single type of life presented to them with the same tactics (cultural devices that also include spatialisation). With a very successful marketing strategy, this deep 'sameness' is skillfully presented as an illusion of imaginary diversity, as if it were reality, and an excessive demand is created for these illusions. Such a superficial and artificial way of living and spatialisation manifests itself in the use of language too.

The analogy between language and architecture has always been crucial in understanding the communicative capacity of built environment. Considering the strong connection between politics and rhetoric, linguistic analogy resurfaces as a strong aspect to interpret political and ideological dimension of housing architecture in shaping environment and society simultaneously. Indeed, difference between speaking any language with a rich vocabulary and eloquence or with a limited vocabulary and primitive style (e.g. today's shorter, incomplete sentences, abbreviations, signs, emojis) is equivalent with the difference between any urban-architectural language of affluent glossary and that of restricted / poor lexicon. Thus, housing architecture which is reduced into a single scheme and typology, single dimension, single material, single technology, delivers a culturally barren environment. Therefore, singularisation of housing mechanism in parallel with identical design & production of housing units, works best for cultural and political desertification of society.

Having seen from this angle, housing practice after 2005 seems to have deliberately adopted a 'poor architectural language' as the spatial/physical part of its general agenda for the intended social uniformity.

IX. Geographical Invasion Of Urban (Public) Land For Achieving Wealth Transfer Towards Urban-Riches

Another tactical move to turn housing into armament is not only to enable invasion of public urban land by urban-riches towards total abolishment of the public character of urban realm, but also to use mass-housing for this unethical purpose. By playing off all the instruments of wealth transfer such as; forced eviction, extortion of public and private land or real-estate, gentrification, ownership and development rights for agricultural/forest land and of (natural and heritage) conservation areas etc., commodification of all possible urban (public) land in favour of richest minority could be ensured. It would then be possible to turn every piece of land into profitable assets within free-market with no restrictive conditions for public subsidies. The wealthiest segments of society would be given all the opportunities, benefits and rights to dictate prices of purchase and rent at the peril of middle and lower classes. Within prevailing context of 'rentier economy', great majority of the masses of people would be confronted with problems of affordability/accessibility to housing. This process would eventually lead to the practice of 'domicide' (Rajagopal, 2022) as defined in housing literature to express the threat of mass-destruction of poor people (referring to 'homicide') through neo-liberal urbanisation policies. All of these steps have been taken one-by-one; all of these initiatives and arrangements have been coordinated and operated directly by TOKI since its re-formulation in 2005.

Having seen from this perspective, housing practice of TOKI since 2005 seems to have conciously deployed 'land speculation' as part of its overall agenda for the targeted socio-economic eversion. Thus, previously established traditions of housing initiatives (of TOKI) in favour of public benefit has been abandoned to pave the way for 'land speculation' in the field of mass-housing. The public housing mechanism has been de-facto privatised in disguise of bringing solution to housing problem by providing the contribution of private sector investment.

X. Mental Enslavement Of Urban Masses Through Macro-Scale Hypnosis Using Singularised Urban-Architectural Spatiality

The final plot for turning housing into an ideological weapon is 'social-psychology' to turn the previous perception of housing upside-down. Targeted effects and results are usually not only economical but also political and even ideological in regard to how 'housing' helps re-designing mass-behaviour, mass-thinking, mass-perception, mass-appreciation, mass-communication and mass-domination of society.

At this stage it is convenient to ask the critical question of; "Could such a spatial intervention at such a grand scale/magnitude, be a necessary and preliminary step towards establishing 'total obedience', which, perhaps much later (after 2017), would occur/emerge/reveal itself behind its long-endured disguise?". Yet, it must be pointed out that the answer may not be comforting. Because, twisting the spatial configuration of cities, has been appropriated as a direct and guaranteed formula for total mental- behavioural control. Thus, a mastermind seems to have committed by centrally manipulating urban/architectural design so as to 'hypnotise' large masses by an 'extreme-repetition scheme' towards mental enslavement. It is known (from biopolitics literature) that totalitarian ideologies break mass-will and provide domination/control through routines and

repetitions. The use of 'housing' through its 'design' and its 'production/distribution' mechanism to pre-condition people for further suppression and intimidation, has become the major (actually sole) policy for mass-sheltering both aspects. Larger masses have been subdued, subjugated, pasified and tranquilized by both urban-architectural morphology of new housing settlements and banking/mortgage mechanisms.

Moreover, standardization of housing due to wide-spread 'earthquake fear' (in Turkey) is not only forced on people by law, but also legitimized and normed by being demanded desperately on a mass scale through manipulation of the minds. By using the power of press and social media to create disinformation on earthquake-resilient building, the manipulated masses are driven towards traps of standardisation by the widespread and effective fear of 'survival' (Klein, 2007). The strategy of 'desertification of life' plays a very important role in regimes of fear. Being able to give up the qualities of lives is a very essential element in the instrumentalisation of housing-not-for-living but housing-for-investment.

These four components of the ideological warfare strategy are materialised the following data:

Despite a claimed annual increase (25 %) in housing sales in 2022, house ownership ratio has declined from 60.7% in 2006 to 57.8% in 2020 according to government's own statistical institution (TUIK). However, independent research agencies (such as BETAM) declares the same ratio for 2020 as 55% and for 2021 as 46%. Besides, data provided by BETAM in 2024 demonstrate that house ownership ratio has dropped; from 51.3% to 46% in low-income groups, from 58.5% to 52.8% in middle-income groups, from 70.4% to 66.1% in upper-income groups within 10 years. Furthermore, Coldwell- Banker Real-Estate Consultancy's data reveal that the average footage of housing units has decreased around 20m² in the last 20 years, 15m² in the last 5 years. According to EuroStats statistics between 2020 and 2024, ratio of housing tenancy has increased from 42% to 51%. Statistical data provided by BETAM research agency in 2024 indicate that housing rents have increased 157.2% in 1 year, 474% in 2 year, 801% in 4 year periods. In addition, prices of housing purchase have increased 96% from 2021 to 2022, and 300% from 2022 to 2023 in Turkey. Moreover, Living Condition Statistics by EuroStats in 2023 show that Turkey is the 2nd among European Countries in the ranking according to 'ratio of population living in miserable housing conditions'. IPA (Istanbul Planning Agency) report in 2023 also points out the fact that only 25% of risky buildings has been re-built after the great earthquake of 1999 in Istanbul. In addition to this imbalanced housing scene of inaccessibility/unaffordability, data provided by IBB (Istanbul Greater-City Municipality) in 2024 denote that 1.800.000 privately-owned houses (around 20-25% of total housing stock in Istanbul) are vacant. Besides, IPA (Istanbul Planning Agency) 2024 statistics show that only 1.3% of houses built by TOKI after 2008 are for low-income groups. Above all, the studies of ATEM (Union of Real-Estate Brokers) report that house owners have started to prefer executive managers rather than regularly-waged families in the last 2 years.

In sum, this four-fold (Economic, Cultural, Geographical-Spatial & Psychological) strategy on urban spatiality through mass-housing schemes, seems to be embraced as an urban-scale weapon in ongoing ideological warfare in Turkey after 2000. The 'housing demand/supply mechanism' has been simultaneously rectified in order to convey a 'brand-new narrative of socio-political order' by means of single-handedly re-modelling physical/built environment. The current housing scene in Turkey seems to have accomplished the goals of total domination of society by the prevailing government at the end of her 23-year reign.

XI. Ideological Sub-Text In-Between The Lines Of New And Manipulated Urban-Architectural Narration

Manipulation of urban-scape through intervention to housing settlements, had significant outcomes on ideological level. The amputated urban morphology and re-moulded city fabric due to gigantic mass-housing estates, had great (and negative) impact on how society is administered and how resources & wealth are distributed under new 'social contract'. This mutant urban spatiality seems to have clearly ensured a submissive state of pessimistic & surrendered masses (enabling ever-expanding exploitation) in Turkish cities. This statement can easily be confirmed by correlating the increasing amount in identical housing settlements with social indicators not only in regard to the credibility of political, judicial, (public) health & educational institutions but also in regard to the disbelief or hopelessness for their improvement, and in regard to the frustration about abolishment of democracy.

In order to understand the background of today's residential environments, it is useful to analyze narratives of social consensus that will secure/guarantee the desired type of anonymization. Among these; 'mechanization of space' and accompanying 'space as a war machine' (Graham, 2004), 'panoptic space' (Foucault, 1980-1995), 'surveillance society [and city]' (Lyon, 2001), 'speed society [and city]' (Virilio, 1977), 'non-place' (Auge, 2009), 'architecture of violence' (Weizman, 2017), 'consensual domination and counter-hegemony' (Gramsci, 1991) and 'aestheticized violence' (Baudrillard, 2002) are named. Spatialization of all these concepts based on; destruction/reconstruction, exceeded human scale, devoid of context, without identity, resembling urban scale prisons and/or giant factories. All of these concepts construct a social consensus in

which all individuals of the mass, which are productive/'consumers', obedient subjects, are constantly monitored everywhere with cameras, digital data, social media, mobile phones. It is almost impossible to read today's Mass Housing environments as spatial manifestations of this deviant imagination and new social consensus.

It should also be understood that TOKİ is an organization tasked with shaping the aforementioned object-context (i.e. housing-city) relations in line with state's dominant ideology. It has the power to perceptually manipulate our urban consciousness (considering the size of the resources given to its authority). With this potential power, TOKİ housing manages to hypnotise the urban society.

XII. Conclusion

As the article sets forth; the housing scene and its mechanisms in Turkey display a significant transformation since 2005 with immediate and radical re-structuring of TOKİ by the new government. This change embodies a paradigm shift and new mind-set in regard to comprehension of the matter of housing; from 'public' to 'private', from a 'need/right' to 'commodity', from a 'living unit' to 'financial asset', from a 'social service' to 'private business'. Moreover, this transformation which accomodates an ideological content has moved forward in two parallel tracks; one of 'urban-architectural design' and that of 'economy-political re-composition' policies.

Houses and housing estates/settlements recently built by TOKİ have caused striking dissapointment particularly after a very rich urban housing corpus in Turkey since the late 18th Century. After the end of 1990's, a significant change occurred in housing environment (epitomized by TOKİ housing areas). This rupture also coincides with serious developments in social events in recent history. This rupture manifests itself with sudden increase in number and density of housing, yet a serious shallowness in terms of typological variation richness and a worrying decrease in open space/outdoor supply.

The data on current housing scene of Turkey seem to contradict with; III. UN-Habitat Conference Declaration of Principles (2016), report on 'Adequate Housing' in UN 77th Session of General Assembly (2022) and documents on 'right for livable housing' and 'minimal conditions of a sustainable house required for a life with human dignity' by UN High Commission of Human Rights as well as with "right for sheltering and housing" as stated in the Article 57 of the Constitution of Turkish Republic. The data confirms the report (by L. Farha) on 'financialisation of housing' presented to UN High Commission of Human Rights in 2017.

Nevertheless, this frustrating outcome is neither an accident, nor coincidence. On the contrary, it is direct and intended result of a set of deliberately conditioned character of current housing mechanism. This mechanism is an end-product of delicately engineered, carefully, patiently and skillfully implemented, long-term and ideological agenda. The housing mechanism has been equipped and re-adjusted with willfully grafted deficiencies towards building an ideological war machine, the ammunition of which is the 'spatiality' at larger scales.

In the context of its deficiencies regarding 'publicness', existing housing mechanism inevitably inclines towards domains of; private ownership / property and speculative profit, imbalanced wealth distribution, illegal money laundering and spatial polarisation, and away from the domains of; public realm/space, public land, public ownership, public welfare, public benefit, public rights. Furthermore, phenomenon of (mass)housing had become; not only an economic instrument to motivate people for leveraged over-spending in an extreme climate of consumer-culture and that of construction-driven national economy, but also a useful political device for initiating a new starting point (terminus a quo) for a new social order in such a brutal climate of authoritarian politics.

In conclusion, reshaping the social contract towards a totalitarian regime in which a highly submissive and uniform society is created in accordance with globally driven neo-liberalist economic and locally driven conservative cultural dynamics, appears as the *raison d'être* lying beneath the ongoing political shift (particularly in housing policies) in Turkey for the last 25 years. Along this path, spatial reconfiguration via housing initiatives arise as the *modus operandi* behind this major (conceptual and institutional) swing in re-structuring of TOKİ from a regulatory body securing public benefit into an executive operator ensuring wealth transfer from poorer segments towards the richest sections of society.

Consequently, it is possible to assert that uniformisation of housing in Turkey is instrumentalised as an agent, not only to convert metropolitan cities in Turkey as places of extreme inequality, social divisions, social injustice, unaffordable housing, gentrification, urban poverty, unsustainability, corruption and high-rate criminality, but also to accelerate class-based wealth transfer through real-estate manipulation. No matter how difficult it is to admit how such a radical shift could be 'achieved' by re-designing/re-organising a national housing administration; how such a shift in one single institution is directly determinative at a sweeping transformation from a democratic and secular nation-state regime to an extremely conservative regime with neo-liberal economy and unfair justice system, it seems to be the fact. Such an obvious case of housing scene in Turkey, nullifies the late (neo-liberalist) counter-arguments of free-market's regulating the demand/supply in the most optimised manner and (by the same token) verifies the original-arguments of the significance of public-control on social issues such as sheltering/accommodation/housing within the debate about role/power of

architecture and urban design/planning in shaping societies. These competing arguments demonstrate not only dual nature of housing problem but also the fact that the choice between them is a matter of ideology and political will. These two and contrary choices portrays opposite ends of a wide range of political/ideological attitudes towards problem of sheltering people through housing schemes.

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