



The Transformation of Urban Leisure Culture in İstanbul: The Case of Florya as a Cultural Landscape

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This article evaluates the modern summer leisure culture that developed along the southwestern coastal line of İstanbul, focusing on the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion and its surrounding summer leisure facilities. This assessment is conducted through consideration of the historical and social parameters following the proclamation of the Republic. In this framework, the settlement is examined through an integrated approach encompassing all its spatial and social facilities. The study aims to demonstrate that in addition to its role as a recreational area, Florya also served as a space for public transformation, embodying the Republic's ideals of modern life. The complex was designed and used as an area reflecting modern summer leisure culture. Designed by Seyfi Arkan, incorporating the rational architectural approach of the period with the principles of functionality, simplicity, openness and integration with nature, the project was completed in 1935. It produced different scenarios of public life with the beach, changing cabins, promenades and the casino designed around the mansion. Within this scope, the Florya Marine Mansion and leisure facilities demonstrated that architecture is not merely a product of its time but rather a stage where the public could express themselves physically, culturally and socially. In this context, the study examines the settlement with all its summer leisure facilities by evaluating these aspects. Through an examination of both social and spatial production dimensions, the area is defined as a cultural landscape where the principles of modern architecture intersect with public life, nature and leisure culture and through which Türkiye's modernization story can be read through space.

Keywords: Cultural landscape, Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion, Modern architecture, Modern leisure culture, Public space

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INTRODUCTION

Summer leisure areas can be defined as places designed for the temporary escape from urban life. However, this concept should not be limited to this definition specifically for İstanbul. These areas should be considered reflection of redefined public life, differentiated social hierarchies and the evolving relationship between the public and nature along the coast. Therefore, in this study, the concept of “leisure” is used within both a spatial and a cultural framework.

When evaluated particularly for İstanbul, summer leisure areas served as spaces where city dwellers could escape the routines of daily life and experience renewal. This concept stands out for its diversity, considering the development and transformation of modern architecture is often interpreted through housing. When all the elements of modern summer leisure areas are examined, it becomes evident that these areas were increasingly distanced from the centre of İstanbul at the time, and that the functional diversity in these areas was increased. This diversity, emphasized in the definition of modern architectural heritage, is also related to the way these spaces define their own modernity while existing in different regions.

These areas, with their distinctive summer leisure culture, continued to develop from the mid eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, especially during the Republican era, these areas not only exemplified the architectural characteristics of the period but also became part of the cultural life. Therefore, the formation of the modern coastal leisure concept should be considered not only as an architectural transformation but also as a broader restructuring of daily practices and social behaviour.

The first traces of this culture began in İstanbul with the palace elite and the upper classes and remained closed to the public. It is important to consider that this leisure lifestyle became particularly prominent in the Bosphorus, Kadıköy, Florya and the Princes’ Islands with sea baths, piers, hotels and gardens serving as semi-public social areas. The development of summer leisure culture was evident in the period when housing started with seaside mansions, rented residences and garden houses, when transportation to the Bosphorus, the Princes’ Islands, Yeşilköy and Kadıköy regions was provided by ferries with the establishment of Şirket-i Hayriye, and when urban/intercity coastal transportation increased with the opening of suburban lines. Ultimately, summer leisure areas increasingly expanded beyond the city center. Summer houses on the Princes’ Islands reflected the city’s cosmopolitan character, mansions in Moda and Fenerbahçe represented new bourgeois lifestyles and the waterfront residences along the Bosphorus shores represented the social visibility of modernization. These areas, collectively, reflect the transformation of urban identity through the experience of modernity.

After the proclamation of the Republic, this transformation took on a more ideological dimension, as coastal planning became a tool for expressing the modern nation-state’s vision of progress and urban

reform. The system based on private property has acquired a public character and it was opened to a wider public through the social life policies of the state and local governments. In this process, the planning and publicization of coastal areas became indicators of the legitimacy of the new regime. These varying leisure functions led to the formation of public beaches and other facilities beside private properties, particularly along İstanbul's southwestern coastal line, and large-scale leisure complexes began to appear in these areas. The evolution of swimming, which started with bathing culture -from isolated sea baths to open public beaches- constituted a symbolic step towards modern urban life. During the early Republican period, private summer housing function gained a more organized and publicly oriented spatial dimension. In this context, the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion and its public beach, designed by Seyfi Arkan, stands out as one of the pioneering examples of this transformation. Florya, with its simple yet compelling design, has integrated nature with urban life and redefined leisure as a collective and modern experience rather than an exclusive privilege (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The southwestern coastal line of İstanbul and the location of Florya (Harita İstanbul, 2025).

This study aims to evaluate the development of the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion and its surrounding leisure facilities, which hold a central place in the development of summer leisure on the southwestern coast of İstanbul. In line with the aforementioned conceptual and historical framework, the study examines Florya as a cultural landscape, while also emphasizing the settlement's multidimensional structure at the intersection of the Republic's modernization policies, its modern architectural heritage and changing coastal usage patterns. Thus, this study reveals how Florya became both a symbol and a concrete example of modern life in early Republican Türkiye, addressing evolving themes such as functionality, spatial diversity and public accessibility.

2. SUMMER LEISURE AS A MODERN WAY OF LIFE: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PUBLIC SPHERE ON İSTANBUL'S COASTS

Building on this historical and ideological framework, the concept of "leisure" derives from the Latin verb "licere", meaning to be free or permitted. It was used as "loisir" in French and became "leisure" in English, meaning free time, generally free from obligations. Corbin

(1994) explains that coastal settlements first emerged in the eighteenth century as seasonal retreats for the aristocracy and later evolved into more collective and public forms of leisure. The term “sayfiye”, which was used in Ottoman Turkish in the nineteenth century is derived from the word “sayf” in Arabic meaning summer. “Sayfiye” can be defined as a coastal settlement for recreation visited during the summer. In its early periods, this culture was a tradition for the palace elite and upper income groups and was largely not open to the public. Over time, it contributed to the social and spatial modernization of the city.

As mentioned above, both international and national literature demonstrates that summer leisure was not just a recreational area but also a spatial expression of social transformation. This transformation demonstrates continuity with both earlier practices and modern reinterpretations. Beginning in the eighteenth century in Western Europe, leisure culture emerged as an aristocratic practice through seasonal stays in rural or coastal areas. With the rise of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, this privileged model, while retaining some aspects of elite culture, evolved into a collective and more public form of leisure (Corbin, 1994). In his book examining modern urban leisure culture and the processes of its restructuring through contact with nature, Urry defines this concept, which spread in European cities from the nineteenth century onward, as a temporary space where urban individuals could escape the city, reconnect with nature and experience physical and mental renewal (Urry, 1990). Thus, leisure functioned not only as a reflection of modernization but also a site of negotiation and contestation where daily practices could challenge and reproduce dominant social norms.

With the development of modernism and concepts of free time, sea baths based on health and nature ideologies became widespread, particularly in England and France. These developments accelerated the production of functional and nature compatible structures in modern architecture and increased the number of recreational areas. The perception of the sea as a source of health and nature redefined the relationship between the body and the coastal environment.

During the Ottoman period, the culture of leisure began to develop in areas such as the Bosphorus, the Princes’ Islands, Kadıköy and Florya, and they became places of socialization through spatial arrangements such as hotels, sea baths and piers. As can be observed, summer leisure areas were not built solely for housing. They became spaces where social life and culture coexisted. With the development of ferry lines and coastal transportation, they expanded beyond the city center of the period. These new spaces, which opened up on İstanbul’s social and spatial map, diversified with their housing and related functions.

The post-Republican modernism era was driven not only by economic and political reforms, but also by new spatial interventions. This agenda was explicitly articulated in space. The method employed in summer leisure areas was to manage the relationship with nature in a planned

manner. Planning approaches and legal regulations diversified coastal use; areas that had been primarily private property were transformed into public use. Public health and recreational areas gained importance, and in addition to spatial transformations, the foundations for a social transformation were started. Together with the socio-economic developments, planning and legal developments were other factors that influenced this period. Although unregulated before, the 1926 Civil Law permitted the construction of a single house on a single plot, addressing private ownership, thus shaping patterns of ownership and access. This made it more difficult for the middle class to own a house, but it accelerated the construction of detached houses along the coastal line (Tekeli, 2013). In his 1936 planning studies, Henri Prost approached the city as an integrated whole for the first time, designing *espaces libres* to organize the relationship between public and private realms. He distinguished between two forms of public space: one political, representing the presence of citizens in public life, and another administrative and legal, defining the public realm within the urban fabric (Akpınar, 2024). In this context, the distinction between planned and lived space, later conceptualized by Henri Lefebvre, becomes relevant -revealing how the official design of public areas and their everyday social practices could diverge in meaning and use-. Public beaches, green spaces and parks planned and implemented during this period demonstrate the efforts made to enrich the coastal line with public character. Thus, the middle class became integrated into summer leisure culture; concurrently, multifunctional coastal programs -housing, recreation and services- expanded.

The 1943 ten-year development program included numerous decisions affecting the coastal line including the redesign of Florya Municipal Beach and the opening of Bağdat Avenue. The change in the Notary Law in 1954 increased housing construction by cooperatives and built-and-sale businesses (Yağan, 2015). When liberal economic policies began to take hold, transportation axes were developed with the 1954 Master Plan and new housing areas began to appear. During this period, when the middle class could also afford housing, state-planned public facilities began to appear along the southwestern coastal line. The land expropriation laws intended to be enacted during the implementation of the Prost plans were only enacted in 1956, granting municipalities the authority to expropriate land. With the rapidly growing population, land subdivisions were undertaken along İstanbul's coastal line, particularly the east-west coastal axis. Development projects during the Democrat Party era are notable for the roads built along various axes. These roads had a significant impact on summer leisure areas, broadening access while reconfiguring patterns of use and class-based presence.

The 1964 Floor Regulation Plan increased floor heights in some areas, and the 1965 Property Ownership Law allowed unit based ownership, facilitating the entry of small investors and increasing construction and sales. The most dramatic change during this period was the transition

from single summer houses to apartment buildings. Rapid population growth and migration during these years led to an increase in the number of informal settlements and the city's landscape began to change. With the emergence of new destinations, summer leisure areas gradually developed. For example, Kilyos in the northwest, Dragos, Bayramoğlu and Yalova in the southeast, and Kumburgaz, Güzelce and Silivri in the southwest became popular. These new areas, reflecting diverse social structures, demonstrated that coastal leisure was no longer reserved for the elite.

The Coastal Law (1972) ensured the protection of the coastal line and the Bosphorus Law (1973) restricted construction along the Bosphorus. The master plan prepared in 1973, which imposed height restrictions on apartment buildings, significantly impacted summer leisure areas. The Bosphorus Bridge and the connecting roads were opened that same year, and this infrastructure transformation, along with other factors, redefined access to coastal areas and reshaped leisure.

With its multilayered historical structure and geographical location, İstanbul has become a distinctive city with diverse summer leisure areas and cultures since the nineteenth century. This culture is reflected in its spatial forms, from waterside residences along the Bosphorus, the summer residences on the Princes' Islands, the mansions on the eastern shores and the coastal settlements along the southwestern coasts. However, by focusing on the southwestern coastal line and centering on Florya, this study will highlight the visibility of the social, ideological and spatial transformation of summer leisure areas during the process of modernization. In this context, Florya is not considered a singular representation of modernity, but rather a component of the multiple modernities that shape İstanbul's coastal landscape.

3. THE FORMATION OF MODERN LEISURE CULTURE ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERN COASTAL LINE

The southwestern coastal line of İstanbul stands out as an area on the edge of the city, characterized by spaces of high social diversity. It is an area where leisure culture has been spatially shaped in a dynamic manner. This dynamism has made coastal areas increasingly accessible, collectively experiential and socially visible. From this perspective, these coasts can be evaluated as public arenas where modern public culture is produced. Each reflects different versions of modern life and exemplifies the coexistence of multiple modernities within İstanbul's evolving cultural landscape.

Completed in 1871, extending from Yedikule to Küçükçekmece, the suburban line initiated the development of the surrounding neighborhoods. When the line was extended to Sirkeci in 1872, it further integrated these districts with the city centre, becoming a fundamental factor in the development of the southwest coastal line. As transportation infrastructure continued to expand along this line, the section of the İstanbul-Edirne-London highway was put into operation in 1937. The

route started from Topkapı and extended to Lüleburgaz, further strengthening the connection between the city center and the southwestern coastal line. In 1956, some sections of the highway were widened, some sections were extended to a shorter distance to Topkapı and the route was reopened under the name İstanbul-Edirne State Highway (Marshal Boulevard) (Üngür, 2018). These roads were directly connected to the southwestern leisure line in a way influencing daily and seasonal transportation (Figure 2). In addition to their spatial impact, these infrastructural improvements also served as key factors in the democratization of leisure. By expanding access to the coastal areas, they facilitated new forms of mobility and participation that reshaped both the geography and the social structure of modern leisure practices.

During this period, Bakırköy was a densely populated settlement between the railway and the sea. With its planned and modern housing projects, beaches, camping areas and motels, Ataköy became one of the areas that best reflected the new perspective on leisure. Although designed as a planned modern settlement, Ataköy's identity was reshaped by the daily life practices of the middle class, reflecting the tension between conceived and lived space. Especially after the 1950s, planning in this area allocated the coastal area for public use and the landward side for social housing. Yeşilköy's summer leisure culture, which had existed since the Ottoman era, continued with single summer houses and apartment buildings until the 1960s. This area, whose development accelerated with the opening of the airport, rapidly transformed into a residential area with the enactment of the Property Ownership Law. After the 1970s, as seasonal use gave way to permanent residences, the area gradually began to lose its character. The Çınar Hotel, located in this area, with its sea-integrated structure, swimming pool, ballroom and restaurant, has become a significant representative of modern leisure architecture, popular culture and social memory. In addition to its architectural features, the hotel combines elite and public entertainment. It reflected the new lifestyle where architecture meets social identity.

Küçükçekmece and Avcılar, on the other hand, have grown in popularity with their lake and seashore locations. In addition to residential functions, municipal beaches and recreational areas have become places where social life and entertainment culture intersect. This intersection emphasizes the multifunctional nature of the residences, along with their supporting functions.

Meanwhile, the coastal residential texture was prominent in almost all neighborhoods of Büyükçekmece. Particularly Kumburgaz and Güzelce gained popularity as easily accessible destinations after the 1960s. Silivri, on the other hand, became a district where leisure facilities, complexes and sites became prominent. Multifunctional leisure complexes held a particularly significant place in social life and leisure culture, and their place in collective memory reinforced this significance. These facilities have become a part of the region's cultural landscape, where memory and

daily life converge to form a collective modern identity. Among these newly emerging leisure environments, Florya stands out as a unique example of the intersection of state planning and public recreation. Located between Yeşilköy and Avcılar on the southwestern coastal line, Florya has become a designed representative space of the Republic, an experimental environment that embodies the foundations of modern leisure culture in İstanbul.

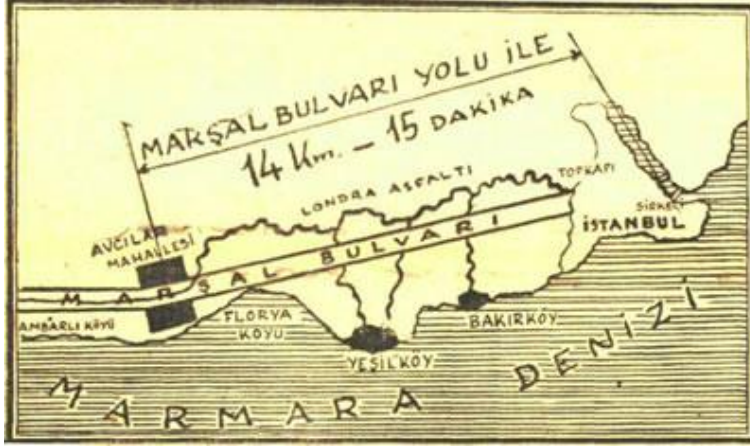


Figure 2. Relationship between the transportation axes (Cumhuriyet, 29.11.1953).

4. FLORYA AS THE STAGE OF MODERN LEISURE: A READING THROUGH ITS ARCHITECTURAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE DIMENSIONS

Florya, located in the southwestern coastal line between Yeşilköy and Avcılar, became a state-planned representative area of the Republic. Therefore, it can be considered as the foundation of modern leisure areas. Rather than serving as a single model of modernity, it served as a symbolic intersection within multiple modernities. The public space along İstanbul's southwestern coastal line became a space where different versions of urban modern life coexisted, interacted and were enacted.

The bath culture, which began with sea baths in İstanbul, evolved into public beaches along this coastal line. This has led to a reassessment of public space in modern leisure use. The coastal line has become a space where new modern identities and collective life intersect. The custom of segregating men and women in sea baths began to be abandoned, and beaches began to appear in these areas. Especially from the 1930s onward, the publicization of these coastal areas accelerated under the direct influence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, transforming the area from the vacation spot of the leader of the modern Republic to a showcase of modern life. Bozdoğan argues that the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion was nourished by the symbolic codes of creating the modern individual: hygiene, naturalness, openness, simplicity and controlled publicity (Bozdoğan, 2001). At the same time, although this state-led publicization expanded public access, the experience of leisure remained socially stratified. Therefore, while Florya functioned as an elite representation,

it simultaneously operated as a semi-public sphere -a setting where the ideals of modern life were both performed and observed. This duality between representation and participation also informed the architectural program of the surrounding complex, where spatial design itself became a medium through which the ideals of modern life were performed and observed.

Henri Lefebvre's triadic model of the social production of space provides a useful conceptual foundation for interpreting Florya's spatial perspective. Space is produced through the interaction of these three dimensions: conceived, perceived and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Conceived space expressed the representations and plans produced by architects, planners and the state -the mental and ideological construction of spatial order-. Perceived space is linked to the material and sensory dimension of spatial experience -the networks, movements, and physical practices that shape daily perception-. Lived space embodied the space of social experience and imagination, where symbols, emotions, and daily practices converge. As a modern summer leisure landscape, Florya rendered the intersection of these three dimensions legible as a form of social space. The conceived space was produced within the Republic's modernization ideology and the design framework by Seyfi Arkan, one of the leading architects of the period, in collaboration with other prominent architects discussed in other sections. While perceived space manifests itself through the area's transportation systems, coastal infrastructure and leisure facilities, lived space is shaped by the embodied practices of modern leisure and the controlled visibility of public life, exemplified by the public presence of the leader himself.

Building on this conceptual framework, the Florya complex exemplified the reinterpretation of post-Republican summer leisure as a "planned public space" where architecture and landscape collectively staged the codes of modern life. The interrelationship between form, function and ideology was reinforced by a series of facilities -mansion, beaches, seaside casino (gazino: a seaside entertainment hall) and the promenade-. Improved transportation networks further integrated this coastal landscape into the city, expanding public participation. The result was not only coastal architecture but also a pedagogical stage for modern life along the coast.

The mansion was completed in 1935 following Atatürk's visit to Florya, his request for the development of this area, and the quick implementation of Seyfi Arkan's design. It is known that the General Secretariat and Adjutancy buildings were added to the site after the mansion's completion, forming part of a unified complex of buildings. The inventory fiche prepared by the Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Property (No.1) states regarding the selection of the project "(...) selected as one of three projects participating in the competition. (...)" (Aşık, 2017). Seyfi Arkan describes Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion in his book detailing his own projects, "special competition" under the "contests" heading (Arkan, n.d.). This supports the claim that a

competition was held. In the same book, Seyfi Arkan mentions the Çankaya Hariciye Köşkü (Foreign Affairs Pavilion in Ankara) project competition in the Atatürk section, stating, “Atatürk, satisfied with the construction of the pavilion, appointed Seyfi Arkan as his special architect for the Florya Marine Mansion, the General Secretariat and the Adjutancy buildings, and other structures.” Another source reports that instead of a competition, projects were requested from three architects (“Florya Cumhurbaşkanlığı Deniz Köşkü”, 2012). Esra Akcan, referring to the three participants, including Berlin Municipality Zoning Director Wagner, who was the İstanbul consultant at the time, stated, “The reason Seyfi Arkan’s project was chosen was that the overall design scheme included a public beach that the public could also use.” (Baytar, 2008). According to this understanding, the Mansion and its surroundings represent the architectural expression of the collapse of the hierarchy and symbolically suggested the democratic re-establishment of modern Türkiye.

At the same time, the mansion’s design reflects international programmatic and design affinities. Evidence of this orientation can be found in the municipal publication *Güzelleşen İstanbul* (1944), which observes that “in some European cities not located on the seaside -such as Wansee in Berlin- artificial lakes were constructed, surrounded by beaches, cabins, and casinos that enabled tens of thousands of people to bath. In coastal European and even Balkan cities, beaches such as those in Varna and Constanta were preserved as well-organized and modern recreational facilities” (İstanbul Belediyesi, 1944). This comparison highlights how Florya’s coastal design conceptually aligned with European practices that framed leisure, hygiene, and recreation as integral components of modern urban life. Therefore, these designs can be considered a blending of universal functions with local morphology and a demonstration of the open, semi-open and closed spaces that Seyfi Arkan skilfully integrated in his designs. Designed based on the Republic’s vision of spatial modernization, the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion and its associated leisure complex of beach, cabins, casino and motel embody the function oriented principles of modern architecture. It clearly demonstrates that summer leisure areas should be considered not only for accommodation purposes but also as a complex of functions and culture. Therefore, this place, through its planning, presents a model of life disciplined and integrated with nature. The mansion and its surrounding facilities are also part of the same ideological organization. They have become tangible tools of the public lifestyle produced by the state. When interpreted from architectural, sociocultural and cultural landscape perspectives, its spatial configuration reveals the interrelationship between representation, physical form and daily spatial practices.

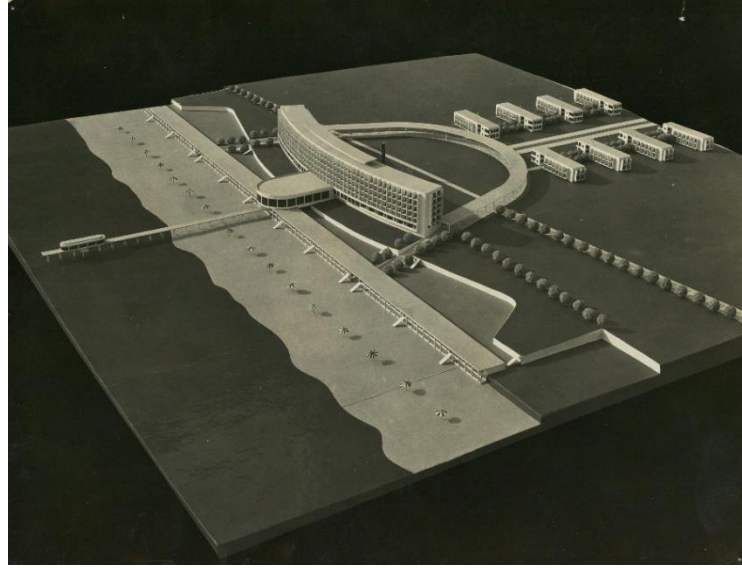


Figure 3. The model of Florya Beach (Salt Research, n.d.).

In this context, Seyfi Arkan's 1935 research trip to Europe marked a significant milestone in the conceptualization of Florya as part of a broader modern coastal strategy. After examining European coastal facilities, Arkan devised a comprehensive program of hotels, a gaming hall, health and recreation parks, pensions, beach cabins and a market, all coordinated within Henri Prost's citywide planning vision (Figure 3). Prost's project aimed to create an uninterrupted coastal boulevard from Sirkeci to Florya, integrating the coast into İstanbul's life and positioning the city as a potential "international coastal city." However, only the first stage of this ambitious plan -the reinforced concrete beach structures, the market area, and the road improvements- was implemented (Figures 3-4). ("Florya Halk Plajı Evleri...", 2012).



Figure 4. News about Florya Coast ("Florya Halk Plajı Evleri...", 2012).

The design of the mansion and its immediate surroundings offer a spatial experience shaped by functional rationality, the interconnectedness of the volumes, and overall composition with nature. This group of structures laid the foundation for Florya's strong summer leisure identity, setting a significant example for İstanbul as a whole. It vividly demonstrates that summer leisure should be considered not only for housing, but as a complex of functions and cultures. Although some of them have lost their integration with the public through changes over

time, they still retain their traces. The authentic facilities reflect every stage of modern summer leisure culture: the entrance, cabins, park, casino, beach and the mansion. The cabins mediate the bodily visibility within publicized leisure time; shade shelters and showers support health-hygiene ideals; and the beach functions as an active point of direct contact with the sea and the axes that can be defined as a promenades have become social stages of viewing, encountering and socializing. Therefore, this place, through its planning, presents a model of life disciplined and integrated with nature. The mansion and its surrounding facilities are also part of the same ideological organization. They have become tangible tools of the public lifestyle produced by the state.

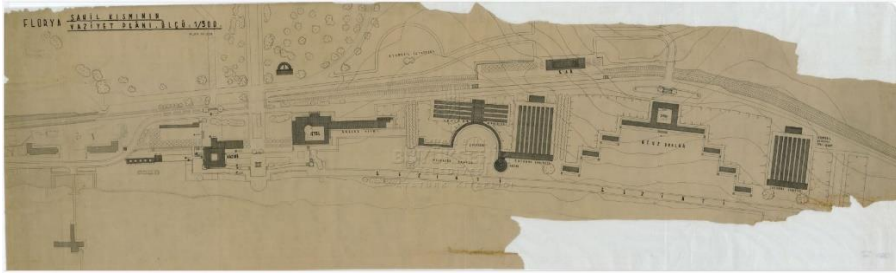


Figure 5. Florya Site Plan (İBB Atatürk Kütüphanesi, n.d.).

The first accessible but undated site plan of the area (Figure 5) shows the General Secretariat and the Adjutancy buildings, the red, white and blue mansions, the public beach, the service buildings and the comprehensive layout of the Florya Casino, which was planned further down the road, in the immediate surroundings of the mansion.

However, because the drawing for Güneş Beach, located to the east of the site, reflects an unimplemented design, it would be correct to interpret this site plan as a document produced for the design of the Florya leisure area. Although undated, the plan is likely from 1938 given its similarities to Rüknettin Güney's Florya Casino drawings and the absence/presence of specific structures.

Another base map (Figure 6), which provides an idea of the topography and the design of the coastal area of Florya, is undated, but is thought to indicate a period after the previous site plan (Figure 5) due to the absence of the White Mansion.

Accessibility has been a defining factor for Florya. In addition to the suburban/bus lines, the continuity of the pedestrian-shore connection has made these amenities both useful and public-facing. In fact, the "designed modern summer leisure area" definition mentioned above could be added to the definition of "scheme of public life". Yahya's Casino, already a key indicator of the existence of a summer leisure in this area, is indicated in the drawing set of the mansions and general secretariat building at Figure 7. The İstanbul Encyclopedia states that this casino was established in the 1930s "as a place where intellectuals, high-ranking officials, members of parliament and foreign diplomats could peacefully reside and be properly entertained. It was successfully operated by founder Mr. Yahya Baydar until 1966." (Koçu, 1973). The owner of the

restaurant -which would later be demolished during road construction- said in an interview in 1966, “(...) for thirty-six years we have served Atatürk, İnönü, Celal Bayar, Menderes, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Ali Çetinkaya, Kılıç Ali, Yunus Nadi, Yahya Kemal and hundreds of other well-known figures whose names I can’t recall right now. Countless diplomats have always stopped by and eaten our meals when they visited Florya. (...) Isn’t it the so-called tourism industry -which develops countries- what we do? (...) While the idea of this place being preserved after us is to be formulated, a lawsuit is being filed against us for its demolition.” (Koçu, 1973). These documents are the most concrete evidence that this place was used as an entertainment and recreational area.

Figure 6. 1/2000 Base Map of İstanbul (İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, n.d.).



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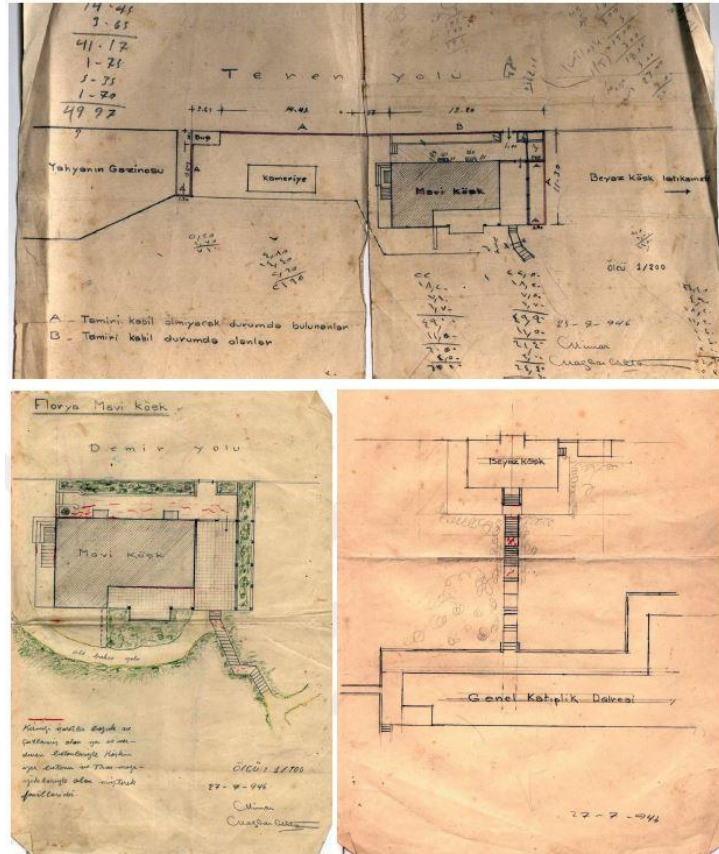


Figure 7. Yahya’s Casino at the sketches of the other facilities (Aşık, 2017).

Over time, this area evolved into a cultural landscape reflecting modern leisure culture, with activities like sunbathing, swimming and strolling during the day, and enjoying the scenery, music and gathering in the evening. The authenticity and uniqueness of the mansion, designed over the sea, also influenced the surrounding building complex, and this same approach was continued, even in designs by other architects (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion (Şipka, n.d.).

Following the mansion and its annexes, the construction of the “private cabins” now known as the “Municipal Building”, can be seen in photographs taken in 1936. Similarly, details of the general secretariat building and the private cabins at the rear can be seen in photographs taken of Atatürk with his adopted daughter Ülkü (Figure 9). Although still under construction in 1936, these private cabins are part of the overall planning scheme.



Figure 9. Atatürk, Ülkü and the municipal building under construction in the background (Aşık, 2017).

The drawings referred to as “changing closets” added to the side of the aforementioned municipal building (private cabins) (Figure 10); the drawings of the structures referred to as “changing cabins” added to the landward side of this building (Figure 11) were signed by Leman Tomsu and approved by Prost in 1936. In addition to these, the drawings of the sports and recreational equipment in front of this building are dated 1937 and signed by Rüknettin Güney (Figure 12). However, the information

about the implementation status of the structures on the seaward side is limited.

Figure 10. Changing closets, Leman Tomsu, 1936 (İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı).

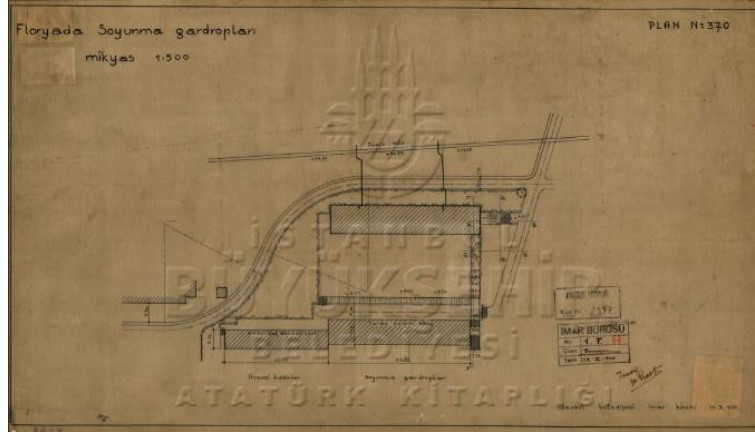


Figure 11. Changing cabins, Leman Tomsu, 1936 (İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı).

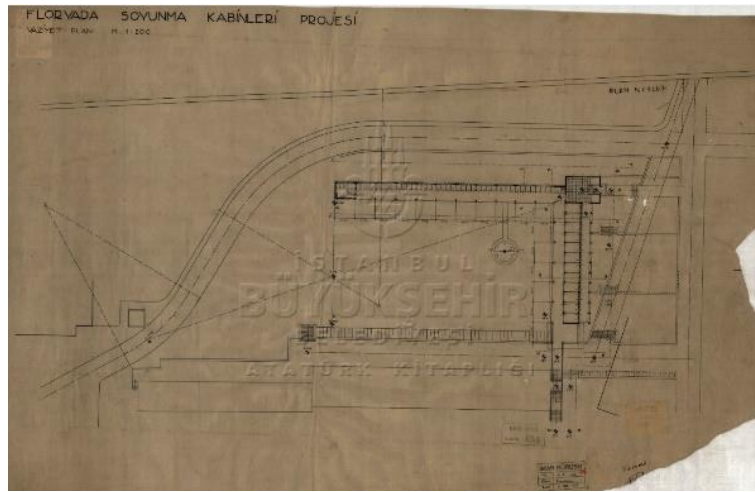
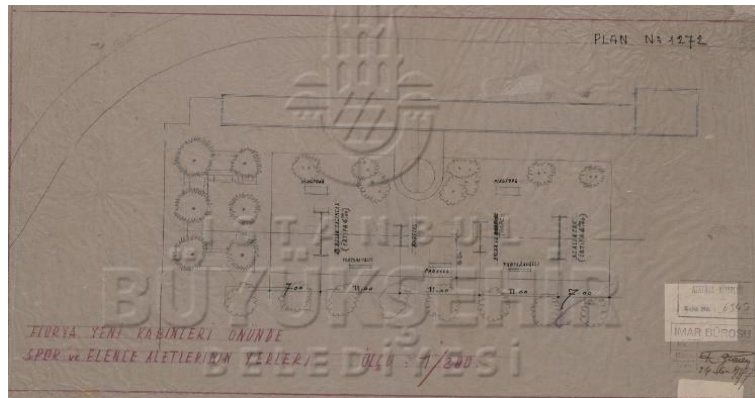


Figure 12. The sports and recreational equipments, Rüknettin Güney, 1937 (İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı).



The presence of the Rüknettin Güney-designed Casino, which would later be added to the area, and its design, which allowed for day and night use, improved the area's dynamism. In addition to these two uses, the Casino also served as a public entertainment and socializing space where citizens could make an appearance, alongside the elite representation of state officials. This shared the concept of “controlled publicity.” Events such as recitals, balls, and teatimes fueled seasonal or daily social life. Figure 13 shows the structure of the municipal building (private cabins)

and provides clues about the integrity and use of the Florya Casino and its changing rooms.

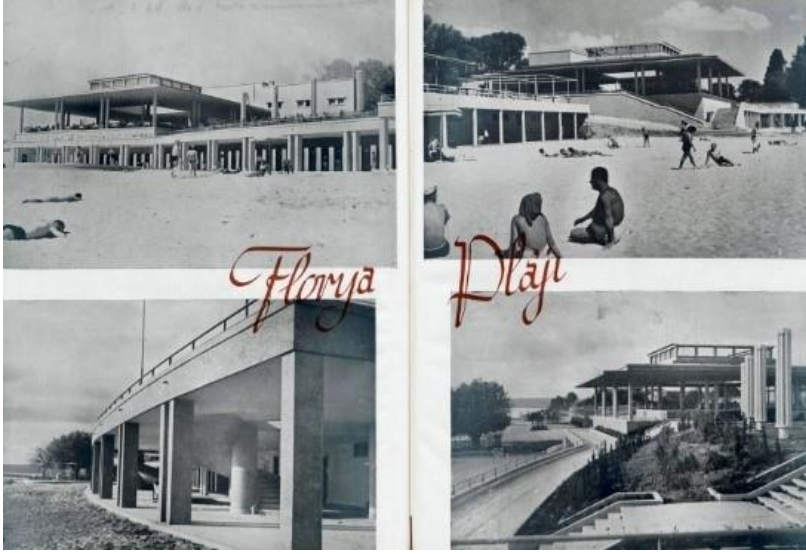


Figure 13. Florya Casino and its immediate surrounding (Daver, et al., 1943).

Later periods were marked by certain milestones, such as the first documented comprehensive restoration of the Mansion in 1968 and its transfer to the Directorate of National Palaces in 1988. The site underwent many changes between these periods. It is known that the White and Blue Mansions were demolished to construct what is now Çekmece İstanbul Street, that the changing rooms at Menekşe Beach were expanded, and that after 1956, a project for the Florya coastal line was commissioned by Sedad Hakkı Eldem and a 25-person committee, in collaboration with the Tourism Bank and the İstanbul Municipality to design for both İstanbul residents and visitors from outside the city (Evren, 2000) (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Florya coastal line master plan, Sedad Hakkı Eldem (Gürel, 2018).

Regarding the project mentioned, the master plan can be seen in the Figure 14, encompassing the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion and surrounding structures, extending from the Menekşe train station toward Yeşilköy. This includes the structures of Menekşe Beach, located southwest of the site, and various structures incorporated into the site. However, not all of the structures depicted in this drawing were realized. The project, approved in 1956, allowed for the construction of two motels, a camping area, and daily beach cabins (Aşık, 2017). With such initiatives, the functions serving the modern summer leisure were diversified, the surrounding area expanded, the infrastructure for the

public summer leisure was established, and the area was used extensively by both residents and tourists.

During the road construction process, the aforementioned Yahya's Casino and other smaller units were demolished, a retaining wall was added, and with the demolition of Red Mansion, a building called Guesthouse (directorate when built) was added to the site. Significant changes were also seen within the mansion during this period. For example, the mansion's steel stilts (vertical marine steel structural system supporting the building above the sea) were converted to reinforced concrete, the terrace roof was converted to a hipped roof (Figure 15), and numerous smaller prefabricated structures were added to the site.



Figure 15. The changes at Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion, 1968 (National Palaces Administration Archives, n.d.).

The 1982 aerial photograph (Figure 16) of the site shows the General Secretariat and the Adjutancy buildings, the municipal building and its annex, the guest house, prefabricated structures and the casino. In this photograph, the municipal building appears to have been converted into its current form of accommodation. Similarly, after the mansion was transferred following the 1988-1994 restoration, the General Secretariat and the Adjutancy buildings are believed to have been rebuilt, largely preserving their seafront elevations. This situation is legible when the 1952 Mazhar Günaltan survey drawings are compared with present drawings, and the following statements: "These single-story, timber-framed buildings were demolished between 1992 and 1995 and reconstructed (...) between these two buildings, which are currently used as the TBMM Social Facilities, a new building, not included in the original plan, was constructed by the Directorate of National Palaces for restaurant purposes." (Kaya, 2000).

The group of buildings repurposed as the TBMM Social Facilities was planned primarily as accommodation units, and the coastal line no longer serves as a public beach. The changing rooms were removed, the Menekşe Beach located to the west of the area was expanded by filling the ground, and a park was created (Figure 17). The Casino Building was

separated from the area. Following these changes, the Mansion was opened as a museum, and the area's use was limited/controlled.



Figure 16. Aerial photograph, 1982 (İBB Şehir Haritası, 1982).



Figure 17. Menekşe Beach (Arkitera, n.d. & Sedat Hakkı Eldem'i Anla(t)mak II: 1950-1980)

This area intersects with the modern architecture's codes such as transparency, simplicity, as well as the Republic's goal of a new society. Florya served as a place where this goal was tested in daily life. The ideological form of the designed space has been mentioned above. Perceived space can be revealed through the facilities and transportation network. Florya's physical layout directs the user relationship established with this layout. The connection between the cabin, park, promenade, mansion, and train combined with the permeable, continuous, and open nature of the coastal line, shapes the visual relationship. Therefore, Florya's design should not be considered merely a backdrop; it should be read as a guide to social behavior. Walking, swimming, sitting, watching, dancing, and sunbathing here have become the modern citizen's learning practice of existence. Thus, daily practices here transformed the space's intended ideology into everyday life. Scenes such as Atatürk interacting with the public, swimming and rowing, along with the train transportation, time spent on the beach and daytime and evening entertainment at the casino, created the "lived" meaning of the space. These experiences enabled the social meaning -the internalization- of modern architectural forms. Therefore, Florya can be considered the earliest systematic example of modern summer leisure culture in Türkiye.

The evaluation of this area as a cultural landscape, as discussed above, has been shaped by the following definition by UNESCO: “Combined works of nature and humankind, they express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment.” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.). The natural morphology of the coast and the formal construction of modern architecture combine to create a designed cultural landscape. Here, nature, rather than being a directly experienced element, has been transformed into a designed space of experience. Over time, this designed experience evolved into a shared memory, gaining continuity and meaning. Therefore, instead of evaluating this area solely based on the physical features of the mansion, it is necessary to consider it as an integrated cultural landscape.

Building upon UNESCO’s definition, the evaluation framework for cultural landscapes also considers factors beyond purely natural values, including “the presence of important natural and semi-natural ecosystems; (...) the presence of sustainable land-use practices; and the existence of outstanding scenic beauty arising from the contrast between natural and artificial elements in the landscape” (Fowler, 2003). In Florya’s coastal context, biodiversity-related criteria are less central; however, sustainable coastal use practices and the scenic contrast between the natural coast and designed architectural elements are particularly relevant, reinforcing its status as a designed cultural landscape at the interface of nature and modern urban life.

In this context, recommendations for Florya include preserving the integrity of the landscape and spatially preserving the relationship between physical elements; maintaining public access to the coast to offer public function through continuity of use; maintaining the museum’s functional interactive use in a way to reflect its impact on the development of Florya’s modern leisure culture; and opting for scientific approaches to documentation and interventions. In fact, what needs to be preserved is not just the form, but the experience itself.

Florya is the embodiment of modern architecture’s claim to build new life in the coastal line: a mansion on the sea, a beach open to the city, a visible leader, and a participatory populace. This combination has ensured that Türkiye’s modernization narrative remains significant not only as a concrete and spatial experience but also as a historical context.

In this regard, Florya should be included within multiple modernities shaping İstanbul’s coastal landscape. It should not be considered as a singular model, but rather as a visible pedagogical stage where modern architecture shapes daily practices.

4. CONCLUSION

Leisure culture in İstanbul became not just a summer practice but also a tool reflecting the city’s social and cultural development. This culture, rooted in elite life during the Ottoman era, underwent a transformation, particularly on İstanbul’s southwestern coast, with developments in the late nineteenth century. With the transformation of socio-economic

conditions and legal regulations, leisure areas began to take shape in order to appeal to a broader public. This transformation demonstrates a profound shift in the city's social geography. Coastal areas, once privileged by the elite, have become public and accessible. These areas have transformed into spaces of collective experience. After the proclamation of the Republic, their modern social nature also acquired an ideological dimension. Summer leisure areas were no longer only places of entertainment; they became pedagogical stages where modern life was observed and practiced. These areas reflected a cultural landscape that revealed the multilayered nature of modernization. Considered in this context, Florya has become a symbol of modernity brought by the Republic as well as a modern coastal settlement.

Designed by Seyfi Arkan in 1935, the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion can be described as a space where Arkan combined modern architectural principles such as functionality, simplicity and openness with the Republic's ideals of public life. The structure, notable for its design situated on the sea, reflects a design approach that utilized nature within a rational order. The mansion functioned both as the leader's living space and as a publicly visible stage. Thus, the image of the Republic's leadership became spatialized. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's visits to the mansion, both during the construction process and after its completion, the time he spent there and his other activities including the hosting of important guests, meetings, swimming and rowing with the public on the beach demonstrate the symbolic proximity between the modern leader and the public. The other structures surrounding the mansion -including the beach, changing rooms and promenade system- possess a comprehensive design approach that complements this ideology. Here, architecture functioned as a guide to social behavior. Within these spaces, people learned new forms of bodily discipline, engagement with nature, social interaction and leisure practices. In addition to reflecting the social ideals of the Republic, Florya has also taken its place in international discourses of leisure culture. Therefore, Florya can be interpreted as a bridge between local experience and the international context. It has become a national symbol of modern leisure culture and a reference settlement. İstanbul's southwestern coastal line should be considered a place that exhibits the most significant spatial and social reflection within the scope of the Republic's modernization. To understand these leisure areas, a multifaceted analysis that examines cultural, spatial and social structures together is necessary. Only in this way İstanbul's modern leisure architecture that is shaping social behavior, identity and daily practices, as well as its architectural form, can be understood.

These transformations, particularly when considered for Florya, can be interpreted within the framework of ICOMOS's 20th Century Historic Thematic Framework (Theme 8: Popular Culture and Tourism) through its subthemes "Growing Access to Leisure" and "Development of Visitor Service Facilities" which reflect social and spatial transformations (Marsden & Spearritt, 2021). This approach not only established a spatial

and social discipline for Türkiye but also established Florya's place within international leisure culture. Located on the southwestern coastal line, this spatial composition helped create a controlled discipline between leisure, public and daily life. Men and women were able to swim together; entertainment spaces became more socially accessible and contact with nature was redefined. Therefore, it can be argued that this area reconstructed the social goals of modernization. In this context, Lefebvre's concept of "the production of space" offers a useful analytical perspective. The transformation of this cultural landscape into both an object and a tool of modernity exemplifies the conceived, perceived and lived space within this area. The social environment created by the development of these three spaces also contributes to the evaluation of Florya as a visible stage. Publicity is not only a reflection of freedom but also a structured visibility here. The relationship between the body and nature is established, and this can only be transformed into action within the relationships determined by the design.

The authenticity of Florya is not only its architectural form. Its integration with İstanbul's broader leisure landscape also underscores its uniqueness. This landscape has been continuously shaped by public involvement. Therefore, it should be considered as more than an architectural project. In this context, Florya, in line with UNESCO's definition of cultural landscape, is a crucial example that presents the interrelationship between human and nature and deserves international consideration. Its rational planning approach, integrating topography, social life and nature, ensures the area's place and continuity in the global discourse on modern leisure heritage.

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