

## **The Strip of Enclaves: Tracing Istanbul's Waterfront**

Ezgi Nur Güngör (virtual)  
ezgi.guengoer@polito.it

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The waterfront represents one of the most potent yet fragile mediums of urban speculation, especially in cities like Istanbul, where proximity to water elevates land value, transforming these areas into focal points for elite residential developments and large-scale investments. Over time, this dynamic fosters the emergence of urban enclaves—bounded spaces with distinct functions—and urban voids, underutilized or inaccessible areas. These transformations emphasize the necessity of understanding the mechanisms through which speculative urbanization reshapes waterfronts. Divided by the Bosphorus Strait, Istanbul has experienced diverse urban transitions since the founding of the Turkish Republic. However, increasing neoliberal interventions and decision-making processes since the 1980s have accelerated the accumulation of enclaves along the waterfront, resulting in appearance of a “strip of enclaves”.

Despite this accumulation, the city continues to grow by consuming and draining its waterfront, creating a band of barrier between the inner city and the sea, deforming urbanity of water interface in the city. Current analyses on waterfront of Istanbul primarily address issues such as coastline extensions, the repurposing of industrial heritage, and macro-scale urban expansion. This research argues for a more nuanced understanding of waterfront transformation through the delineation of enclave boundaries and their typological classification to reveal the neoliberal mechanisms shaping these areas.

Employing a hybrid methodology, this study integrates a taxonomy of waterfront enclaves with cartographic analyses to classify their spatial and functional characteristics. This approach identifies diverse enclave typologies, including ports, gated communities, public institutions, historical artifacts, commercial hubs, and industrial complexes. Each typology demonstrates unique spatial forms, accessibility levels, and socio-economic implications, reflecting varying degrees of speculative pressure and planning strategies. By cataloging these enclaves and mapping their distribution across Istanbul's waterfront, the study highlights the processes that not only generate enclaves but also establish conditions for future urban voids. It contributes to understanding how speculative urbanization transforms fragile waterfront environments and provides critical tools for policymakers and urban designers.

Ezgi Nur Güngör is a PhD candidate in the Department of Architecture and Design at Politecnico di Torino, specializing in urban morphology, architectural typology, and evidence-based research. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in architecture from Bilkent University, Turkey. Her master's thesis examined urban typologies in Ankara through the metaphor of an archipelago. Currently, her research focuses on redefining urban morphology tools by studying water interstices in Istanbul.