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REVIEW REPORT (A)

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Decision: Revisions Required

The text is captivating in many respects and fits very well within the scope of the special issue (although the very idea of "coastal squeeze" does not appear as such and could/should be made explicit for the purposes of contextualization). Not only does it bridge a theoretical and empirical approach, but the empirical work combines field research with the construction and analysis of a database. The case study is both compelling and relevant, with comparative insights that add depth to its broader significance. Visual elements effectively illustrate the case study and present the data in a "tangible" way. In short, this article—which has a powerful title with "Selling Paradise"—will be a valuable contribution to the special issue.

Below are a few comments and suggestions that might help refine certain (especially) theoretical aspects. In addition, some formal suggestions are included in the annotated separate file.

On the concept of "field": The use of "coastal economic field"—and especially "REM coastal economic field"—in the text raises a few questions.
Bourdieu's concept of a field refers to large-scale or macro-social structures that encompass entire social universes and all the agents involved. Such fields cannot therefore be multiplied; for example, there is only one scientific/academic and media/journalistic field, even if both are diverse and heterogeneous. The economic development of a coastal region seems too specific/local to qualify as a field on its own. In this respect, the idea of "autonomization" (p. 17) feels hard to support, as the social practices described appears, on the contrary, to be heavily shaped by general structural logics.
Strictly speaking, a field presupposes the existence of a specific type of capital, whose value is determined by/in that field. For instance, publishing an article in an academic journal has high value in the scientific field but very little elsewhere (one may then speak of academic capital); the ability to score goals is highly valued in the soccer sub-field, but carries little weight outside of it (one may then speak of sporting or corporal capital), etc. In the text, however, it is the "usual," generic forms of capital that seem to hold value rather than a specialized type tied to a particular field.
Fields involve struggles between agents not just over positions (climb up the hierarchy, get a dominant status, etc.), but also over the very definition of the field's boundaries and goals (what should be the proper/legitimate objectives and rules of the field). In the manuscript, the struggles described among developers seem mostly positional, without much evidence of alternative discourses, such as ecological advocates or local residents challenging the development itself and/or proposing a different, competing view of what should be rightly considered as "development".
Also, the argument that using the concept of "field" avoids the biases of using that of "market" (p. 8) feels a bit outdated. When Bourdieu published his 1997 article, neoclassical discourse was hegemonic, and economic sociology was still underdeveloped in France, offering little counterweight—despite notable contributions, such as Marie-France Garcia's 1986 article on the

“construction of a perfect market”. Since then, economic sociology has developed significantly and become a legitimate research domain. The neoclassical paradigm remains dominant in economics, but the notion of markets as “ahistorical systems governed by an invisible hand” has been greatly weakened in the social sciences, the idea of markets as a social (and state-made) construction being now widespread.

To explore this further, it may be helpful to see (in English):
- Gisèle Sapiro’s online piece titled “Field” (especially the section on “Uses of the Concept of Field and Methodological Questions”).
- Bernard Lahire’s chapter on “The Limits of the Field” in Bourdieu’s Theory of Social Fields (edited by Hilgers and Mangez).

The concept of “sociodicy” feels a bit broad here. It usually refers to a broad/general discourse that justifies domination, like the idea that class inequality would simply be the result of “merit.” What the manuscript describes as “legitimizing narratives” might be better captured by expressions like “dominant discourse” or “ideology”. While the concept of ideology is often associated with Marxist authors or currents, Bourdieu also employed it, notably in his famous text co-authored with Luc Boltanski, “The Production of Dominant Ideology”.
For more on this, this might prove helpful:
- Victor Shammas’s “Sociodicy: Notes on the Thought of Pierre Bourdieu” (Critical Legal Theory, 2023 - online).
- Simon Susen’s “Towards a Critical Sociology of Dominant Ideologies: An Unexpected Reunion between Pierre Bourdieu and Luc Boltanski” (Cultural Sociology, 2015) or “”Reflections on ideology: Lessons from Pierre Bourdieu and Luc Boltanski” (Thesis Eleven, 2014).

As far as “capital” is concerned, the following passage (p. 26–27) could benefit from clarification:
“This statement reveals the process of a symbolic capital reconversion: luxury is not merely a category of consumption, but a form of cultural capital that developers must acquire, embody, and deploy to position themselves as legitimate actors in the REM’s coastal economic field.”
There seems to be a twofold issue here. First, it seems hard to say that luxury itself can be referred to as a “form of cultural capital”. We might say this about the ability to recognize or appreciate what (supposedly) would be luxury (the “good taste”), but that is not quite the same thing. Second, the idea of “capital reconversion” is generally used to refer to individual or collective strategies to use the type of capital acquired in one field to another—for example, a famous athlete converting his/her bodily capital into media capital by becoming a sports commentator. This idea of a “symbolic capital reconversion” is not that clear in the text. I may be misunderstanding, but maybe some clarification would be welcome.

One small regret: the “ecological” dimension feels a bit underdeveloped in the text. Beyond the “blue flag” certification, it’s not entirely clear how ecological concerns are part of the process. One might get the impression that even though it is about an “ecological route”, ecological claims are at best superficial, if not purely rhetorical. Perhaps further development on the role and significance of ecological arguments would be useful.

Regarding the graphic representation: the word clouds in Figures 10, 13, and 15 are visually appealing, but they are not entirely convincing as a demonstration tool as they don’t convey the relative weight of terms very precisely. A more standard chart might present the data more clearly and rigorously.