



Research Article

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## Interpreting the Factors in Forming the Sense of Place: The Case of Kuzguncuk Neighbourhood, Istanbul

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### Abstract

#### Purpose

Over the past few decades, cities have been subject to dramatic interventions such as rapid developments, increased modernization and capitalist production of spaces. These changes, occurring in parallel with globalization, have changed the long-lasting environmental perception and damaged the sense of attachment by transforming urban spaces into unidentified areas. In this regard, the main purpose of this paper is to explore the components of the sense of place and identifying its factors under the changing conditions. This conception aims to develop an integrated proposal that provides a better understanding of fluxional urban areas.

#### Design/Methodology/Approach

The methodology of this study consists of two parts; literature review and, field survey which adopts a qualitative approach through a web-based survey and semi-structured short interviews with locals. Within this scope, by chronologically reviewing the literature, the first part of the article questions how the sense of place can be defined and what components can serve to define its perception. In the second part, Kuzguncuk, which is one of the historical and most liveable neighbourhoods of Istanbul, is examined as the case study of this research. Due to its recent designation as an urban transformation area, the study focuses on to reinterpret Kuzguncuk according to its residents' sense of place.

#### Findings

After the findings are obtained and evaluated with a five-point Likert scale, the effect levels of the components on the quality of urban areas and the satisfaction of the people in the neighbourhood are determined.

#### Research Limitations/Implications

Due to the pandemic measures, the survey conducted to the residents of Kuzguncuk was carried out digitally, and the interviews were realized by taking into account social distance.

#### Originality/Value

This paper foresees to contribute to the literature by developing an empirical study on the concept of sense of place with its descriptive and interpretive approach. Further studies, which can utilize the results of this article, may answer questions about how the components related to sense of place sought out and reinterprets these factors over historical places.

**Keywords:** *Environmental perception, Kuzguncuk, sense of place, urban identity*

## INTRODUCTION

The formation and sustainability of urban identity is embedded in daily life and social values created by people who have lived together in settlements for many years. The development and enrichment of collective identity depends on the readability and perceptibility of ongoing social and cultural symbols, as well as the long-lasting tangible-intangible values of these settlements. However, interventions, such as rapid developments in cities and the production of capitalist spaces, cause the loss of values of public spaces and daily life, which are the main actors of the interaction between individuals and urban space (Sennett, 1978) (Sorkin, 1992) (Mitchell, 1995) (Kayden, 2000). With regard to this gradual change, individuals, on the other hand, are drawn into an urban system where they have become alienated and/or isolated over time. Correspondingly, the city moves away from community-minded use and designs with its decreasing open green areas and public spaces offering limited activities under over-monitoring. Such urban decisions and practices that deeply affect the formation of the modern city offer individuals limited memories and experiences about the city and urban spaces. In parallel, urban areas have become vague with the increase of wasted, neglected and undefined areas (Trancik, 1986) (Cupers & Miessen, 2006) (Aral, 2009) (Villagomez, 2010).

This study, which aims to explore the tangible and intangible elements that make up and embody qualified urban spaces, reinterprets them by questioning the concept of the sense of place. In this context, the factors that make up this sense have been questioned to provide an alternative perspective to the multifaceted urban problems highlighted. In order to achieve this goal, Kuzguncuk neighbourhood, which still maintains its local characteristics despite a changing urban texture with regard to its designation as an urban transformation and development area, was chosen as the study area of this article. Besides its historical value and architectural features, its integrative structure showing semantic and imaginary features has been a factor in the selection of this neighbourhood as the study area.

The case study, which adopts a mixed methodological approach in data collection and analysis on the sense of place, was completed by analysing the data obtained from residents living in the neighbourhood. In the last part of the study, where the data are assessed using by the Likert scale, evaluations are made regarding the variations of the residents' sense of place.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*"They are all spaces which people have made meaningful. They are all spaces people are attached to in one way or another. This is the most straightforward and common definition of place – a meaningful location."*

(Cresswell, 2004)

Cities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are shaped in accordance with the design approaches such as standardization, functionality and zoning implemented within the framework of the early conditions of modernism. Such cities were organized with an approach that ignores the human dimension, mostly because of the material and human relations. During this period when the modernist approach was dominant, instead of personal experiences of individuals, universal and functional concerns shaped in line with economic and technical needs were prioritized in the shaping of the space (Asiliskender, 2004). Indeed, many cities designed in the light of the planning principles of the modernist period were organized in a hierarchical order, and the production of building blocks with poor environmental context caused the urban space to be in a regular fiction (Jacobs, 2009) (Trancik, 1986). Criticisms about such rationalist approaches, which bring about problems such as the derivation of unidentified spaces in cities, have led researchers to work much more on the development of the individual's life experiences and the identification of the place itself. In this context, over the years, studies have been carried out by researchers about what constitutes urban quality and sense of place, and many different theoretical approaches have been developed in this direction. Indeed, the researchers, who studied architecture through environmental relations between the years 1960-80, developed various studies by focusing on topics such as geometrical forms and shaping of urban spaces (Krier, 1979), evaluation of formations suitable for human scale through movement and perception (Cullen, 1971), eclectic integration of objects and addressing the city with dialectical associations (Rowe & Koetter, 1978), and the identifiability of areas depending on the boundaries and the sense of enclosure (Alexander et al., 1977). Eventually, such objective studies based on principles fed from the physical characteristics of urban space have been followed by studies on the particular aspect of urban design based on ground psychology, senses and the experience of individuals.

Kevin Lynch is one of the earliest researchers who developed a perceptual and sensory study alongside the physical attributes of place. According to Lynch, people have their own images connected to the urban environment and a workable image requires three components: "identity", "structure" and "meaning". He states that an environmental image may be analysed firstly by its identity, which implies the distinction from other things, its recognition as a separable entity. Second, the image must include the spatial or pattern relation to other objects. Finally, this image must have some practical and/or emotional meaning for the observer (Lynch, 1960). Therefore, images not only with physical features, but also with their perceptual features should come together to create an environmental image. Further, his work entitled "The Image of the City" (1960) provides an alternative way of thinking about the sense of place. In this context, Lynch underlines that

urban images depend on an efficient interrelation between the elements of five groups: paths, districts, edges, nodes and landmarks.

Following the study of Lynch, theorists, such as Relph (1976), Canter (1977) and Punter (1991), developed further views of the components of place with various abstract diagrams. According to Relph's comprehensive study (1976), vitality and diversity of activities as well as individual and public meanings attached to urban space are also fundamental concerns about any place. Accordingly, he focuses on the concept of identity of place and describes it in terms of three components: "social activities", "physical setting" and "personal and shared meanings". Created through people's experiences and intentions, a clearly identifiable and imageable place may therefore enhance the depth of experience of the users (Seamon & Sowers, 2008).

Canter (1977), with a similar thought, considers place as the combination of images and human conception. Canter's metaphor combines the physical attributes of place with activities and perceptual experiences. He suggests that not only the "activity" and "physical attributes", but also the "conceptions" give a place its meaning. Punter also adopted a similar approach to Relph and Canter and even elaborated these views by including in his model a number of sub-headings. In his model, "activity", "physical setting" and "meaning" are involved in the creation of a sense of place. According to Punter, the sense of place, as a narrative that covers the past, present and future, and is a continuity, is the most important feature of the historical urban area.

By pointing out the subjective and objective distinctions of the approaches, Montgomery (1998) presented a similar model again including three elements: "activity", "form" and "image". In line with the conceptual framework of Canter and Punter, he stated that urban quality should be handled much more broadly than the physical characteristics. In this context, he emphasized that the concept of urban quality is of great importance in terms of activity and image as well as form of place.


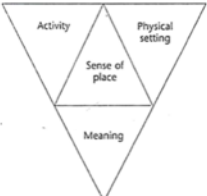
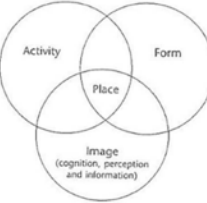
Within the scope of his work carried out in 2010, Schultz put emphasis on the principles related to place and its formed mental image that creates the meaning and sense of place. According to Schultz, "typology", "topology" and "morphology" that define a sense of place and support its ongoing evolution are as important factors of place-making as the links between human and space in ensuring the quality of urban space. Therefore, in order to create a sense of place, these four components should intermingle with each other.

In one of the current studies on this subject, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) (2013) divides the components creating a great place into four: "uses & activities", "sociability", "comfort & image" and "access & linkages". According to this latest method created by a group of experts from different disciplines, each of the four categories specified contains a number of factors, dedicated to creating and sustaining successful

places that build stronger communities. Hence, an effective sense of attachment can only be achieved through the provision of these elements together.

It can be seen in Table 1 that the theories listed chronologically describe the components of the sense of place. This table further shows that there are patterns of agreement between different researchers with regard to their image of places, and the ways of evaluating this image. With reference to this holistic research, it is possible to say that the social and psychological dimensions of this relationship have started to come to the fore, while the relationship between human and space was based on the physical and cognitive space reading approaches of urban space in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Table 1. Descriptive components of the sense of place

Theorist (s)	Theory and Diagrams	Components of the Sense of Place		
Lynch (1960)	"Environmental image"	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Relph (1976)	"Identity of place"	<b>Social activities</b>	<b>Physical setting/form</b>	<b>Personal and shared meanings</b>
Canter (1977)	 "Nature of place"	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Physical Attributes</b>	<b>Conceptions</b>
Punter (1991)	 "Sense of place"	<b>Activity</b> Land uses Pedestrian flow Behaviour Patterns Noise and smell Vehicle flow	<b>Physical setting</b> Townscape Built form Permeability Landscape Furniture	<b>Meaning</b> Legibility Cultural associations Perceived functions, attractions Qualitative assessments
Montgomery (1998)	 "Urban sense of place"	<b>Activity</b> Diversity Vitality Street life People watching Cafe culture Events and local traditions/pastimes Opening hours Flow Attractors Transaction base Fine grain economy	<b>Form</b> Scale Intensity Permeability Landmarks Space to building ratios Stock (adaptability and range) Vertical grain Public realm (space systems)	<b>Image (cognition, perception &amp; information)</b> Symbolism and memory Imageability and legibility Sensory experience Knowledgeability Receptivity psychological access Cosmopolitan/sophistication Fear

<b>Schulz (2010)</b>	"Sense of place"	<b>Typology</b> Moods Perception and Understanding of the Environment Dialog and Discussion Being with others	<b>Topology</b> Landscape (natural entities) Built Complexes (natural entities)	<b>Morphology</b> Space and Character
+			+	
<b>Project for Public Space (PPS) (2013)</b>	<p>"Great place"</p>	<b>Uses &amp; Activities</b> Fun Active Vital Special Real Useful Indigenous Celebratory Sustainable	<b>Sociability</b> Diverse Stewardship Cooperative Neighbourly Pride Friendly Interactive Welcoming	<b>Comfort &amp; Image</b> Safe Clean Green Walkable Sittable Spiritual Charming Attractive Historic
				<b>Access &amp; Linkages</b> Continuity Proximity Connected Readable Walkable Convenient Accessible

Table 2. The holistic theoretical framework proposed as a result of the evaluation of the data in Table 1

Theorists	Components of the sense of place	Factors
Canter (1977) Punter (1991) Schulz (1980) Montgomery (1998)	<b>Physical Attributes</b>	Built form Permeability Landscape Furniture Scale Intensity Landmarks Public realm
Canter (1977) Punter (1991) Schulz (1980) Montgomery (1998)	<b>Social Activities</b>	Behaviour Noise and smell Diversity Vitality Street life People watching Cafe culture Events and local traditions/pastimes Pedestrian/vehicle flow Attractors Being with others Perception and understanding of the environment
Relph (1976) Canter (1977) Punter (1991) Montgomery (1998) PPS (2013)	<b>Personal and Shared Meanings</b>	Cultural associations Perceived functions Qualitative assessments Symbolism and memory Imageability and legibility Sensory experience Knowledgeability Receptivity Cosmopolitan/sophistication Safety/fear Cleanliness

Accordingly, a sense of place can be explained as a concept consisting of the three intertwined components: a specific landscape including **physical attributes**, a pattern of **social activities**, and a set of **personal and shared meanings**. This in-depth literature review is presented through a sample case study by conducting a questionnaire to collect empirical data, within the scope of the three components and their related factors determined for the sense of place and shown in Table 2.

## **INVESTIGATING KUZGUNCUK NEIGHBOURHOOD THROUGH THE SENSE OF PLACE**

### **Methodology**

The qualitative research method of this study, which focuses on the interpretation of the components of the sense of place through the Kuzguncuk neighbourhood, consists of two parts: a web-based questionnaire and semi-structured short interviews. The sample group of the study are composed of 60 randomly selected locals in Kuzguncuk neighbourhood. The web-based survey includes twenty questions. The first part of the survey determines the demographic profiles of the participants. Four of the twenty questions included in the survey are about designating the levels of satisfaction of residents in the context of the factors of the sense of place. The next two questions are aimed at understanding how neighbourhood residents define Kuzguncuk, and what factors affect their desire to live in Kuzguncuk. The other two questions are aimed at identifying the changes observed from the perspective of the residents in the neighbourhood texture as a result of the urban transformation studies that took place in Kuzguncuk. All the remaining questions are open-ended, requested to understand the level of knowledge, belonging and neighbour-relations, as well as to convey their problems and suggestions about the district.

Following the evaluation of the data obtained as a result of the survey conducted, the physical attributes, social activities and personal and shared meanings of the sense of place are examined through the views of the residents of the neighbourhood. The survey results question which of these criteria is more effective in giving the neighbourhood a sense of place. All the data obtained as a result of this phase conducted with residents living in Kuzguncuk are interpreted and digitized through graphs and tables with the help of the Likert scale.

### **A Transforming Historical Neighbourhood: 'Kuzguncuk'**

Kuzguncuk is a small neighbourhood on the Anatolian side of Istanbul that stretches in the northwest-southeast direction between Üsküdar and Beylerbeyi. Located in a valley between the two hills where Fethi Pasha Grove and Nakkaştepe Cemetery lie, it is one of the historical settlements that continues to show the characteristics of traditional Bosphorus villages (Figure 1).



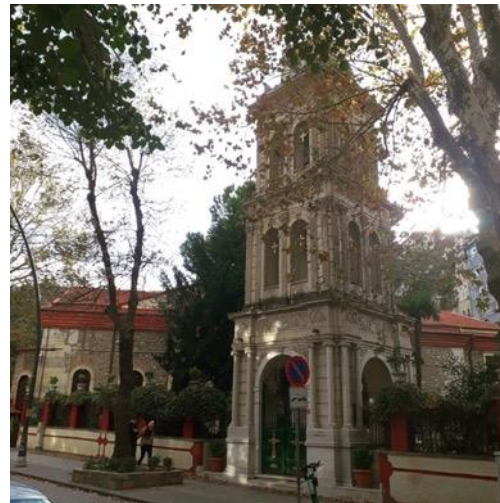
**Figure 1.** Kuzguncuk's location and boundaries in Istanbul (Renderings prepared by authors, 2020)

According to Evliya Çelebi, the name Kuzguncuk, meaning "little raven" in Turkish, was believed to originate from a guardian named "Kuzgun Baba" who settled here in the time of Mehmed II (1451-1481). Another belief is that the old name of Kuzguncuk was "Hrisokeramos", and this name, which means "Golden Tile", came from a church whose roof was covered with gilded tiles built by Iustinos II (565-578 AD). In fact, the recorded history of the neighbourhood stretches back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The coastal settlement of Kuzguncuk has defined an area where Muslim, Jewish, Armenian and Greek populations were greatly present, between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This harmonious existence of different ethnic and religious groups is an indication of the cultural richness of the area. Indeed, the coexistence of two synagogues (Bet Yaakov Synagogue and Bet Nisim Synagogue), two Greek Orthodox churches (Ayios Yeorgios Church and Iglesia de San Pantaleon Church), an Armenian church (Surp Krikor Lusavoriç Church) and a mosque (Kuzguncuk Mosque) that rise side by side is an important indicator of the designated cultural mosaic (Figure 2).

The general settlement layout of Kuzguncuk, which can be said to be one of the rare districts that preserves the common life culture, consists mainly of historical wooden or masonry civil architecture and colourful



row houses built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The busiest area of this historical neighbourhood is Icadiye Avenue, which lies as a linear commercial axis across the urban pattern (Figure 3). Other transportation axes that make up the road texture of the district consist of long narrow streets or colourful stairs connecting the building blocks.



**Figure 2.** Religious buildings that are symbols of Kuzguncuk's multiculturalism (Kuzguncuk Mosque and Surp Krikor Lusavoriç Church from top to bottom) (Personal archive of authors, 2020)



**Figure 3.** Historical wooden row houses of Kuzguncuk (Personal archive of authors, 2019)

Kuzguncuk has also been the setting for a number of books, films and tv series. A few examples of such include “Ekmek Teknesi”, “Perihan Abla”, “Kara Sevda”, “Fazilet Hanım ve Kızları”, “Hayat Bilgisi” and “Kumral Ada Mavi Tuna”. Some other common names known to be related with the neighborhood are Ohannes Minasyan - an Armenian doctor who worked in Kuzguncuk, Rıfat Ilgaz - a Turkish poet, novelist and story writer who was known to live in Kuzguncuk for a long time and Can Yücel - a Turkish poet who lived in Kuzguncuk and has written poems about it. Another feature that makes the settlement special is the Kuzguncuk Urban Garden (Kuzguncuk Bostan). This greenery, set back a few meters from the road, promises a country life in the middle of the city. As a recreation area consisting of small planting gardens where vegetable and fruit cultivation is continued, it further defines a public area within the boundaries of the district that is open to everyone (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Kuzguncuk Bostan (Personal archive of authors, 2020)

Kuzguncuk appears within the “front-view area” determined by Bosphorus Development Law No. 2960 enacted in 1983. With regard to this very specific legislation, the existing skyline and urban pattern could be preserved. The number of people and tourists visiting the neighbourhood is increasing day by day. However, as the area attracted more attention, Kuzguncuk started to show interest in the artistic scene. In fact, it has become a preferred settlement by architects, writers and artists since Turkish architect and poet Cengiz Bektaş bought an old Kuzguncuk house into which he moved after making upgrades during the 1980s. With this wave, the settlement has become a kind of fashion hot spot. As a result of this trend, art galleries, cafes and small restaurants, antique stores, boutiques as well as workshop studios including the culinary atelier of Refika Birgül within the district have increased in number. While these new developments contribute to

Kuzguncuk on the one hand, it also poses a threat for the neighbourhood in terms of the sense of place.

This situation that started with the gentrification process and resulted in the perception of the settlement as a type of attraction by the investors continued after the district was declared an "Urban Transformation and Development Area" in 2018. Just after the transformation label was attached, Kuzguncuk became popular, and the demand for the neighbourhood from those located in other districts of Istanbul has increased (Figure 5). Over time, the large-scale projects carried out in connection with the urban transformation started to drag this neighbourhood under its influence, as in many districts of Istanbul. As a matter of fact, new buildings, which have caused a noticeable increase in property prices, started to dull the urban memory of Kuzguncuk, negatively affecting the urban images acquired by the settlement over many years.



**Figure 5.** Urban transformation activities and cafe culture in Kuzguncuk (Personal archive of authors, 2019)

## FINDINGS

This study aims to identify attributes of the sense of place and determine the factors that form it. In accordance with this purpose, it was questioned which of the factors related to the sense of place are more effective in this neighbourhood and the satisfaction level of the residents with the factors.

Itemization of the answers was arranged by the authors in accordance with the evaluation flow of the article, unlike the questionnaire directed to the participants. The questionnaire was not presented to participants in this way, it was only used for visualization in the article.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the participants

	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	32	53.3
Male	28	46.6
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	1	1.7
26-35	13	21.7
36-49	24	40
50 >	22	36.7
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Primary school graduate	2	3.3
High school graduate	8	13.3
University graduate	30	50
Post-graduate	20	33.3
<b>Years lived in Istanbul</b>		
1-9 years	7	11.7
10-19 years	7	11.7
20-29 years	10	16.7
30-39 years	9	15
40 years >	27	45
<b>Work status</b>		
Unemployed	10	16.7
Self-employed	14	23.3
Civil servant	14	23.3
Private sector employee	22	36.7

Table 3, in which the frequency distribution of the demographic profiles of the residents is shown, indicates that 32 (53.3%) of the participants are female, and 28 (46.6%) are male. Of the participants, 47 (77%) are over 35, 1 (1.7%) are 18-25 years old, 13 (21.7%) are 26-35 years old, 24 (40%) are 36-49 years old, 22 (36.7%) are over 50. Of them, 2 (3.3%) are primary school graduates, 8 (13.3%) are high school graduates, 30 (50%) are university graduates, and 20 (33.3%) had post-graduate education. Of them, 10 (16.7%) are unemployed, 14 (23.3%) are self-employed, 14 (23.3%) are civil servants, and 22 (36.7%) are private sector employees. Of the participants, 7 (11.7%) have been living in Istanbul for 1-9 years, 8 (13.3%) for 10-19 years, 10 (16.7%) for 20-29 years, 9 (15%) for 30-39 years, and 27 (45%) for more than 40 years. In addition, 31 (51.7%) were born in Istanbul, 8 (13.3%) were born in Ankara. Other participants stated that they were born in various cities.

Table 4 shows that 29 (48.3%) of the participants have been living in Kuzguncuk for more than 20 years. Of the participants, 2 (3.3%) have just moved in, 12 (20%) have been living there for 1-5 years, 8 (13.3%) have been living there for 6-9 years, and 9 (15%) for 10-19 years. Of the participants, 23 (38.3%) are tenants, 13 (21.6%) are owners, and 24 (40%) are staying in family/relative's property. In addition, 11 (18.3%) participants' residences are in the area indicated as No. 1, 4 (6.7%) of them in the area indicated as No. 2, 22 (36.7%) of them in the area indicated as No. 4, 15 (25%) in the area indicated as No. 5, 5 (8.3%) in the area indicated as No. 8. Other data in Table 4 are on relations in the neighbourhood. Of the participants, 20 (33.3%) marked the frequency of meeting with their neighbours as "every day", 15 (25%) marked it as "once a week", 15 (25%) marked it as "2-3 times a week", 7 (11.7%) marked it as "once a month", 3 (5%) marked it as "once a year/never".

Table 4. Descriptive components of the sense of place

	n	%
<b>Place of residence</b>		
1	11	18.3
2	4	6.7
3	1	1.7
4	22	36.7
5	15	25
6	1	1.7
7	1	1.7
8	5	8.3
9	-	-
<b>Years lived in Kuzguncuk</b>		
1-5	12	20
6-9	8	13.3
10-19	9	15
20 >	29	48.3
<b>Ownership status for housing</b>		
Tenants	23	38.3
Owners	13	21.6
Family/Relative's property	24	40
<b>The frequency of meeting with neighbours</b>		
Every day	20	33.3
Once a week	15	25
2-3 times a week	15	25
Once a month	7	11.7
Once a year/never	3	5

First, two questions are prepared confirming the participants' knowledge of their neighbourhood. Following the answers given to these questions, 27 (45%) of the participants correctly marked their neighbourhood borders. In addition, according to the answers given about which of the public characters/movie plots of Kuzguncuk they remember, over 45 participants are familiar with the television series shot (Ekmek Teknesi, Perihan Abla) here. Also, of the participants, almost 40 remembered Cengiz Bektaş and Can Yücel. On the question of items related to this neighbourhood, 8 (13.3%) indicated "Golden Tile", 18 (30%) marked "Kuzgun Baba", 24 (40%) "Dr. Ohannes Minasyan", 31 (51.7%) checked "Refika's Cuisine", 10 (16.7%) marked "Kumral Ada Mavi Tuna".

As stated in Table 5, the residents are asked to rate the 12 factors (determined in the context of the theoretical framework) they thought appropriate to describe the neighbourhood. When the answers given to the factors related to 'social activities' are evaluated, it was found that 5 (8.3%) of the participants find the relation between the cafe culture, one of the factors of sense of place, and the neighbourhood excellent. 18 (30%) of them find it poor, and the other 18 (30%) find it good. 19 (31.7%) of the participants find the relation between street life and the neighbourhood good. 23 (38.3%) of the participants find the relation between the noise-smell factor and the neighbourhood good. 19 (31.7%) find events and local traditions of the neighbourhood very good.

When the answers to the relevant factors on 'physical attributes' are examined, it is found that 19 (31.7%) of the participants find the public realm of the neighbourhood very good, while 8 (13.3%) find it poor. Of the participants, 34 (56.7%) find the landscape qualification of the neighbourhood excellent, 28 (46.7%) find the landmarks of the neighbourhood excellent, 27 (45%) find the neighbourhood's-built form very good.

When the answers given to the factors related to 'personal and shared meanings' are evaluated, Table 5 shows that 23 (38.3%) of the participants find cultural associations very good, 27 (45%) of them find the qualification of the neighbourhood's symbolism and memory excellent. Of the participants, 24 (40%) find sensory experience of the neighbourhood excellent, 32 (53.3%) find the neighbourhood cosmopolitan and sophisticated at an excellent level.

Table 5. Factors defining the neighbourhood according to residents

Components	Factors / Average	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Physical Attributes	Public realm (3,4)	13.3% (8)	10% (6)	25% (15)	31.7% (19)	20% (12)
	Landscape (4,4)	1.7% (1)	1.7% (1)	11.7% (7)	28.3% (17)	56.7% (34)
	Built form (3,8)	5% (3)	3.3% (2)	21.7% (13)	45% (27)	25% (15)
	Landmarks (4)	3.3% (2)	8.3% (5)	13.3% (8)	28.3% (17)	46.7% (28)

<b>Social Activities</b>	Cafe culture (2,45)	30% (18)	21.7% (13)	30% (18)	10% (6)	8.3% (5)
	Street life (3,4)	11.7% (7)	6.7% (4)	31.7% (19)	30% (18)	20% (12)
	Noise and smell (2,9)	16.7% (10)	16.7% (10)	38.3% (23)	13.3% (8)	15% (9)
	Events and local traditions (3,3)	8.3% (5)	16.7% (10)	28.3% (17)	31.7% (19)	15% (9)
<b>Personal and Shared Meanings</b>	Cultural associations (3,2)	11.7% (7)	15% (9)	38.3% (23)	11.7% (7)	23.3% (14)
	Symbolism and memory (3,9)	6.7% (4)	8.3% (5)	15% (9)	25% (15)	45% (27)
	Sensory experience (4)	1.7% (1)	8.3% (5)	18.3% (11)	31.7% (19)	40% (24)
	Cosmopolitan/Sophistication (4,1)	5% (3)	8.3% (5)	11.7% (7)	21.7% (13)	53.3% (32)

Table 6. The reasons of the residents' choice of the neighbourhood

Components	Factors / Average	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Physical Attributes</b>	Architectural style of the houses (4,2)	5% (3)	5% (3)	6.7% (4)	33.3% (20)	50% (30)
	Many places to see in the neighbourhood (1,3)	11.7% (7)	10% (6)	26.7% (16)	23.3% (14)	28.3% (17)
	Landscape (4,4)	1.7% (1)	5% (3)	5% (3)	33.3% (20)	55% (33)
<b>Social Activities</b>	Street life, pedestrian and vehicle flow (2,3)	36.7% (22)	23.3% (14)	16.7% (10)	16.7% (10)	6.7% (4)
	Café culture (1,8)	50% (30)	28.3% (17)	13.3% (8)	5% (3)	3.3% (2)
	Events and local traditions (3,7)	3.3% (2)	13.3% (8)	16.7% (10)	41.7% (25)	25% (15)
<b>Personal and Shared Meanings</b>	Preserved neighbourhood culture (4,3)	3.3% (2)	1.7% (1)	16.7% (10)	20% (12)	58.3% (35)
	Tolerance and religious unity (4,3)	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	8.3% (5)	28.3% (17)	56.7% (34)
	Cosmopolitan/sophistication (4,3)	3.3% (2)	1.7% (1)	8.3% (5)	31.7% (19)	55% (33)

Another question based on five-point Likert scale was prepared on the rating of the factors reflecting the reasons of the residents' choice of Kuzguncuk as a neighbourhood. The question asks whether residents agree with these factors of the sense of place.

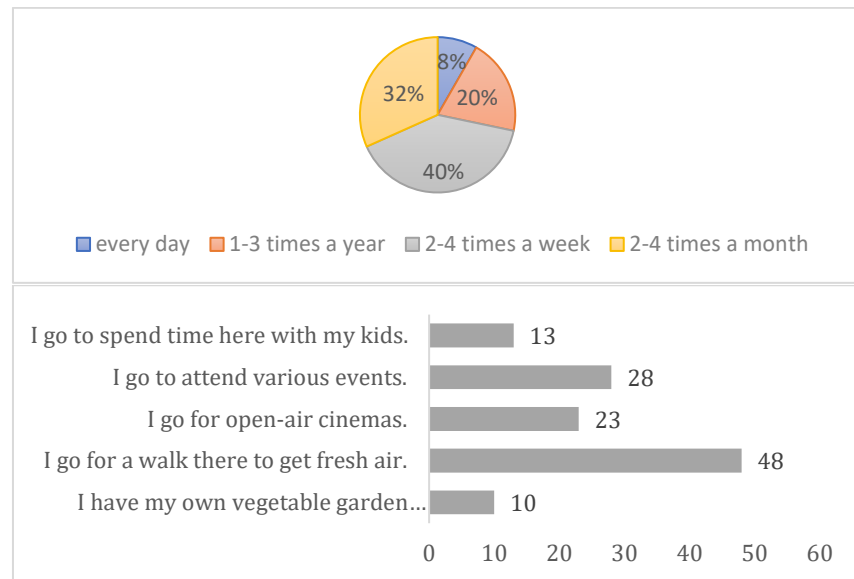
When the factors related to '*social activities*' are evaluated, Table 6 shows that 22 (36.7%) of the participants strongly disagree with the factors of street life, pedestrian and vehicle flow as reasons to choose this neighbourhood. Of the participants, 30 (50%) also strongly disagree with the café culture factor. Despite that, 25 (41.7%) of them agree with the factor of events and local traditions. When the factors related to '*physical attributes*' are evaluated; of the participants, 30 (50%) strongly agree with the architectural style of the neighbourhood, 17 (28.3%) strongly agree with attractors and 33 (55%) strongly agree with the landscape of the neighbourhood. When the factors related to '*personal and shared meanings*' are evaluated; of the participants, 35 (58.3%) strongly agree with preserved neighbourhood culture, 34 (56.7%) strongly agree with tolerance and religious unity, and 33 (55%) strongly agree with the cosmopolitan factor.

Similarly, according to the answers to the question addressed on how often residents use the newly opened cafés, of the participants, 25 (41.7%) stated that they had never been to new cafés and pastry shops, 20 (33.3%) said it is once a month, 11 (18.3%) said once a week, 4 (6.7%) said it is 3-4 times a week. Of the participants, 13 (21.7%) stated that they prefer to meet with neighbours in the square next to the pier, 9 (15%) prefer to meet in cafés, 3 (5%) prefer to meet in Fethi Pasha Grove, 6 (10%) prefer to meet in open spaces in front of the apartments, 3 (5%) prefer to meet in public gardens, and 5 (8.3%) prefer to meet in the Kuzguncuk Bostan. In addition, despite the negative approach to newly opened cafes and pastry shops, according to the answers received from other questions about the public realm in the neighbourhood, of the participants, 42 (68.3%) indicated that they prefer Kuzguncuk Bostan as an open public space, 37 (61.7%) stated that they use Çınaraltı Café and the square next to it, 36 (60%) stated that they go to the pier, 20 (33.3%) stated that they use areas in front of the apartment buildings, 18 (30%) specified that they prefer Fethi Pasha Grove, and 15 (25%) stated that they use sidewalks and open public spaces belonging to cafés. Only one person stated that he preferred to sit in his own garden.

When the answers given to the questions related to the Kuzguncuk Bostan, the majority of residents who prefer it as an open public space are evaluated. Of the participants, 24 (40%) stated that they go to the Bostan 2-4 times a week, 19 (31.7%) said they go 2-4 times a month, 12 (20%) indicated that they go 1-3 times a year, 5 (8.3%) stated that they go every day. Of the participants, 10 (16.7%) marked the purpose of visiting the Bostan as "I have my own vegetable garden here", 48 (80%) marked it as "to get fresh air", 23 (38.3%) marked it as "to go for open-air cinemas", 28 (46.7%) marked it as "to go to attend various events",



13 (21.7%) marked it as “to go to spend time here with my kids” (Figure 6). According to the short interviews with residents, the factor of ‘personal and shared meanings’ of Kuzguncuk comes to the fore among these three components. Of the participants, 40 (66.7%) defined Kuzguncuk as a place to be seen with its symbolic values and multiculturalism that appeal to the senses, 17 (28.3%) defined the neighbourhood as a place to be seen with its landscape, built form and scale and 3 (5%) defined it as a place for its social activities and street life.



**Figure 6.** Answers to the questions “How often (top) and for what reason (bottom) do you go to the Kuzguncuk Bostan?”

The opinions of the residents about the negativities in Kuzguncuk as a result of the developments regarding urban transformation are also among the variables that are questioned within the questionnaire (Table 7). In this context, when the factors related to ‘physical attributes’ are evaluated, of the participants, 43 (71.7%) strongly agree with the idea that “TV series crews, wedding photographers disturb the public realm of the neighbourhood” and 42 (70%) strongly agree with this viewpoint that “New applications will adversely affect the scale and density of the neighbourhood”. When the factors related to ‘social activities’ are evaluated, of the participants, 40 (66.7%) strongly agree with the view “The crowd of people coming from outside to disturb the peace”, 47 (78.3%) strongly agree with the view “Vehicle traffic and sounds on Pasha Limanı Avenue and Icadiye Street are disturbing”, 49 (81.7%) strongly agree with the view “Many sidewalks are used as open spaces for cafés, which prevents pedestrians from walking comfortably”, 51 (85%) strongly agree with the view “There is a parking problem in the neighbourhood; the occupation of trucks on the streets is disturbing”. When the factors related to ‘personal and shared meanings’ are evaluated; of the participants, 40 (66.7%) strongly agree with the view “Rapid changes will damage the neighbourhood's memory and traditional values”.

Table 7. Negative views about the developments of the urban transformation in Kuzguncuk

Components	Opinions / Average	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Physical Attributes</b>	New applications will adversely affect the scale and density of the neighbourhood (4,5)	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	8.3% (5)	15% (9)	70% (42)
	TV series crews, wedding photographers disturb the public realm of the neighbourhood (4,5)	1.7% (1)	5% (3)	6.7% (4)	15% (9)	71.7% (43)
	Kuzguncuk's relationship with the sea is weak (4,1)	5% (3)	6.7% (4)	8.3% (5)	31.7% (19)	48.3% (29)
	Urban furniture (benches, resting areas) in the public spaces of the neighbourhood is insufficient (3,8)	5% (3)	10% (6)	28.3% (17)	18.3% (11)	38.3% (23)
	Antennas on roofs, items in front of the apartment, etc. create visual pollution (3,9)	5% (3)	5% (3)	25% (15)	16.7% (10)	48.3% (29)
<b>Social Activities</b>	The crowd of people coming from outside to disturb the peace (4,4)	3.3% (2)	5% (3)	5% (3)	20% (12)	66.7% (40)
	Traffic and noise on Pasha Limani and Icadiye Streets are disturbing (4,7)	1.7% (1)	0	6.7% (4)	13.3% (8)	78.3% (47)
	There is a parking problem in the neighbourhood; the occupation of trucks on the streets is disturbing (4,8)	1.7% (1)	0	1.7% (1)	11.7% (7)	85% (51)
	Many sidewalks are used by cafés, which prevent pedestrians from walking comfortably (4,6)	5% (3)	3.3% (2)	5% (3)	5% (3)	81.7% (49)
<b>Personal and Shared Meanings</b>	A problem of safety due to new people coming to the neighbourhood (3,6)	11.7% (7)	21.7% (13)	8.3% (5)	13.3% (8)	45% (27)
	Beggars create a problem of safety (3)	20% (12)	20% (12)	23.3% (14)	10% (6)	26.7% (16)
	Rapid changes will damage the neighbourhood's memory and traditional values (4,5)	0	5% (3)	11.7% (7)	16.7% (10)	66.7% (40)

In addition to such negative views, it was questioned whether the residents agree with the positive views emerging as a result of the urban transformation experienced in Kuzguncuk (Table 8). When the factors related to *'physical attributes'* are evaluated; of the participants, 37 (61.7%) strongly disagree with the view, "There are leftover spaces where vehicles will be parked", 37 (61.7%) strongly agree with the view, "Objects in front of the apartments, flowers and pots, etc. reflect the colourful identity of Kuzguncuk", 31 (51.7%) strongly disagree with the view, "As long as the existing old houses are preserved, urban transformation in the leftover spaces will increase the value of the neighbourhood". When the factors related to *'social activities'* are evaluated, of the participants, 22 (36.7%) strongly disagree with the view, "The cafés/pastry shops on the streets offer a variety of activities, the flow on the street keeps the neighbourhood alive". When the factors related to *'personal and shared meanings'* are evaluated, of the participants, 32 (53.3%) strongly disagree with the view that the "TV series, movies and wedding photo shootings provide vibrant open spaces and public realm for the neighbourhood" and 26 (43.3%) strongly disagree with the view "New transformation developments will improve Kuzguncuk's sophistication".

Table 8. Positive views about the developments of the urban transformation in Kuzguncuk

Components	Opinions / Average	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Physical Attributes</b>	There are leftover spaces where vehicles will be parked (1.85)	61.7% (37)	15% (9)	8.3% (5)	6.7% (4)	8.3% (5)
	Objects in front of the apartments, flowers and pots, etc. reflect the colourful identity of Kuzguncuk (4.43)	1.7% (1)	1.7% (1)	10% (6)	25% (15)	61.7% (37)
	As long as the existing old houses are preserved, urban transformation in the leftover spaces will increase the value of the neighbourhood (2.1)	51.7% (31)	13.3% (8)	16.7% (10)	10% (6)	8.3% (5)
<b>Social Activities</b>	The cafés/pastry shops on the streets offer a variety of activities, the flow on the street keeps the neighbourhood alive (2.2)	36.7% (22)	25% (15)	23.3% (14)	8.3% (5)	6.7% (4)

<b>Personal and Shared Meanings</b>	Public realm in the neighbourhood is kept alive with vibrant open spaces and various activities (3.33)	11.7% (7)	8.3% (5)	33.3% (20)	28.3% (17)	18.3% (11)
	TV series, movies and wedding photo shootings provide vibrant open spaces and public realm for the neighbourhood (2.05)	53.3% (32)	15% (9)	15% (9)	6.7% (4)	10% (6)
	New developments that improve the neighbourhood increase the quality of urban spaces (2.3)	33.3% (20)	25% (15)	26.7% (16)	5% (3)	10% (6)
	Families and children can spend time safely outside (3)	16.7% (10)	16.7% (10)	28.3% (17)	23.3% (14)	15% (9)
	Cats and dogs breathe life into the neighbourhood (4.2)	6.7% (4)	5% (3)	8.3% (5)	20% (12)	60% (36)
	New transformation developments will improve Kuzguncuk's sophisticated and cosmopolitan structure (2.13)	43.3% (26)	23.3% (14)	21.7% (13)	0	11.7% (7)
	Cultural associations, non-profit organizations preserve the local traditions of the neighbourhood (3.33)	16.7% (10)	10% (6)	25% (15)	20% (12)	28.3% (17)
	The neighbourhood is clean and safe (4.08)	1.7% (1)	1.7% (1)	18.3% (11)	43.4% (26)	35% (21)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When the findings of the study are examined, it can be said that a vast majority of the residents of Kuzguncuk have a high level of neighbourly relations in terms of getting to know each other by name. They want to keep visitors who have a temporary familiarity with the physical environment of the neighbourhood, clients to the newly opened cafes, TV series crews and foreigners such as photographers away from them and from the neighbourhood. In a way to confirm this situation, it has been observed that the places where the neighbourhood relations of the residents are established and maintained are the Çınaraltı Café, the

coastal side and the Kuzguncuk Bostan, which have appeared among the prominent urban images of the neighbourhood. Considering residents' ratings of relationships between neighbourhood and the attributes of the sense of place, the factors with the highest average values are identified as *landscape* and *landmarks* components from the **physical attributes**, and *sensory experience* and *cosmopolitan/sophistication* from the **personal and shared meanings** component of the sense of place. Accordingly, it is possible to say that **physical attributes** and **personal and shared meanings** are the most effective constituents among the components that the residents of the neighbourhood find appropriate to define Kuzguncuk. In contrast, the least effective factors that residents use to define the neighbourhood are the *café culture* and *noise-smell* components of **social activities**. Looking at the average values of the factors that reflect the reasons for the residents to choose Kuzguncuk as their neighbourhood, the factors of *built form* and *landmarks* from the **physical attributes**, and *symbolism and memory* and *cosmopolitan/sophistication* from the **personal and shared meanings** component of the sense of place are the most effective ones. The least effective factor used by residents to choose the neighbourhood is *pedestrian/vehicle flow* and *café culture*, among the component of **social activities**. Therefore, it is seen that the most effective component is again **physical attributes** and **personal and shared meanings** for residents to choose Kuzguncuk as their neighbourhood (Table 9).

Table 9. Three intertwined components and their most and least effective factors on Kuzguncuk

Components of the Sense of Place	Factors and their levels of effect	
	Most effective	Least effective
<b>Physical Attributes</b>	-Landscape -Landmarks -Built form	-Permeability -Furniture
<b>Social Activities</b>	-Events and local traditions/pastimes	-Pedestrian/vehicle flow -Behaviour -Café culture -Noise-smell
<b>Personal and Shared Meanings</b>	-Sensory experience -Cosmopolitan/sophistication -Symbolism and memory -Cleanliness	-Safety/fear

Similar to these average values, **physical attributes** and **personal and shared meanings** components, together with the factors of *landscape*, *landmarks*, *symbolic values* and *the multiculturalism*, come to the fore in semi-structured interviews made with the residents of Kuzguncuk. As a matter of fact, residents of Kuzguncuk have mentioned suggestions such as reducing traffic and closing the cafes in order to keep this peaceful and calm neighbourhood as it is. There are also prominent opinions stating that the busy and noisy vehicle traffic observed recently in

Kuzguncuk divides social life in terms of the functioning of daily activities. Some of the notable comments such as remarks, “*Don’t touch Kuzguncuk*”, “*Kuzguncuk’s existing tissue should be preserved, that’s all I want*”, “*Kuzguncuk must remain as it is, new construction must stop*” support this inference. With reference to these offerings, it is seen that the residents of the neighbourhood are against the groups that they think are disrupting the social order of Kuzguncuk and urban transformation practices that transform the space into physically wasted, neglected and unidentified areas. The main reason behind this idea is that they think that fast and uncontrolled transformation practices will damage the memory of the neighbourhood and the strong relationships between the residents.

### CONCLUSION

The concept of sense of place plays an important role in understanding and evaluating urban places. Qualified urban places that have meanings and belongings can only be produced by defining the sense of place related to the urban space. As can be seen from the literature review, there are three basic components that form the sense of place: physical attributes, social activities, and personal and shared meanings. In fact, many studies conducted in this context up to the present have emphasized that physical and functional components contribute to increasing environmental quality. Another fact to be emphasized at this point is that the component of personal and shared meanings, which has been ignored for many years, is important in the process of creating qualified urban spaces.

In fact, this study presented a kind of experiment on interpreting the components of the sense of place through Kuzguncuk, which defines a historical settlement undergoing urban transformation. This methodology can be seen from the inferences made from the questionnaire and short interviews conducted with the residents of Kuzguncuk. In this context, the tables prepared as a result of the holistic evaluation of the obtained data with the Likert Scale show that the neighbourhood is mostly defined by **physical attributes** and **personal and shared meanings** for Kuzguncuk residents, mostly because of their fear and anxiety about transformation. Indeed, based on the answers given by the residents, this spatial and emotional commitment, which can be said to be determined in factors *landscape, landmarks* and *built form* from **physical attributes** component and *sensory experience, cosmopolitan/sophistication, symbolism and memory, cleanliness* from **personal and shared meanings** component shows that they accept Kuzguncuk as a part of their existence, since they have deeply connected to it in an imaginary sense.

If handled over the case of Kuzguncuk, today, on an ongoing basis, urban transformation in Turkey should be considered with long-term policies and planning strategies. It is essential to transfer the urban spaces and inner quarters of the city to the future without changing/damaging a

sense of place and the unique identity. Urban transformation projects not only in Kuzguncuk but in the whole of Istanbul have emerged as a new kind of development. In recent years, these projects have become a turning point in the existing planning system.

In fact, the residents of the neighbourhood have also shown a great effort to prevent this transformation through various institutions and organizations. The transformation project subject to various media was met by massive disapproval from professionals including environmentalists, historians, city planners, architects, artists and academics. As a result, Kuzguncuk, at present, can easily be explained as an example of both conservation and transformation, with its well-preserved historical building stock on the one hand, and new developing structures on the other.

However, given the results determined in this article, the concept of urban transformation should remind us of the concept and importance of the spirit of the place. The urban transformation process should be carried out not only economically based on physical and functional components, but also by considering the perceptual components. In this way, despite all the negativities experienced, it is still possible to say that the transformation process of Kuzguncuk has resulted in an increased awareness of the people. Therefore, demands and preferences of local users should be included in the urban transformation process by way of participatory approaches, and the components of the sense of place should have been taken into consideration in the long-term planning process. Otherwise, the urban identity of the settlements may be lost, and the sustainable existence of residents living in the settlements may be threatened.

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#### **LEGAL PUBLIC/PRIVATE PERMISSIONS**

In this research, the necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant participants (individuals, institutions and organizations)

during the survey, in-depth interview, focus group interview, observation or experiment.

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### Resume

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