

## Can place-attachment provide cultural sustainability? Empirical research on Turkish neighborhoods 'mahalle'

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### Abstract:

Place-attachment is generally considered in the context of social environment but the physical environment also affects place-attachment in which social life goes on and is shaped by it. The aim of this paper is to examine how and to what extent the built environment affects place-attachment by asking the question 'Can place-attachment affect cultural sustainability in neighborhoods and how?'

The paper focuses on the hypothesis through a specialized kind of neighborhood in Turkey: 'mahalle'. An empirical research method is used to analyze the case studies from İstanbul city. The social reaction in the case studies - Arnavutköy and Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi- is described and then the social and physical background of this behavior is explained. First, the mahalle concept is considered in order to clarify the components affect place-attachment and cultural sustainability. The case studies and their analysis are considered in two levels: Parameters of place-attachment in natural, built and perceptual environmental and parameters of socio-cultural sustainability.

The results show us that place-attachment brings environmental consciousness: people who feel they belong to a place want to conserve and sustain the components of that place's features. The built environment has a great effect on this behavior through the features of scale, street morphology, diverse mixed-use, pedestrian walking distances or the limits of the mahalle. The weaker the place-attachment, the more awareness of the environment is seen.

**Keywords:** *Place-attachment, neighborhood, cultural sustainability, "mahalle", urban design*

In traditional societies everyone had their own defined place, but with the modernization process people have had to redefine themselves as Giddens (1998) says. In this globalized world, people, societies and also cities have to define themselves. It is argued whether place still matters or not but if we start with the ontological need of belonging to a place, as Heidegger (1998) explains, this behavior is "*an internal need that humans want to feel they belong to a place*". It is essential to analyze the reflections of this need. If space and the built environment is "*a kind of being*" (Abel, 1997), it is culture

that shapes it. So place-attachment and cultural behaviors such as the sustainability approach or built environment have integrity; this paper aims to analyze the background of this relationship.

### **Intersection of place-attachment and cultural sustainability on a neighborhood scale**

It is essential to briefly explain 'place' in the term 'place-attachment'. There is a wide range of literature on the concept of place, but it can be summarized briefly as *"place is a space endowed with meaning"* (Low and Altman, 1992; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977 cited in Lewicka, 2008) or as Tuan (1977 cited in Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005) defines, *"through everyday experience, we transform geometric space into lived space by including values and socio-cultural meaning"*. Marx (cited in Lefebvre, 1974, pp. 115-127) emphasizes this reality by saying *"space has never been either an object or subject in its history but it has always been a social reflection, any reality in space can only be explained via its past"*. Lefebvre (1974, p. 11-17) also emphasizes that *"space is not built anyhow but it is produced socially and is meaningless when it is understood on its own like energy or time"* On the other hand Augé (1997) discusses the anthropological place as that *"which has a priority of meaning and tangibility with its three characteristics defined as identity, relational and historical; the dwellers born in there have a history and meaning with the environmental dimensions"*.

Related to this definition, place-attachment is close to social values, meaning and geography. There are again several explanations of place-attachment and related concepts such as *"sense of community, place dependence, place identity, community attachment, sense of place, genius loci"* (Norberg-Schultz, 1980; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Lewicka, 2008) so it will not be explained again here. But briefly, place-attachment is defined as *"an affective bond or link between people and specific places"* (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). For example, according to Shumaker and Taylor (1983 cited in Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001) *"place-attachment is a positive affective bond or association between individuals and their residential environment"*. Hummon (1992, cited in Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001) considers it *"emotional involvement with places"* while Low (1992, cited in Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001) defines it as *"an individual's cognitive or emotional connection to a particular setting or milieu"*. The majority of authors agree that *"development of emotional bonds with places is a prerequisite of psychological balance and good adjustment"* (Rowles, 1990 cited in Lewicka, 2008), *"that it helps to overcome identity crises and gives people the sense of stability they need in an ever-changing world"* (Hay, 1998 in Lewicka, 2008). According to Lewicka (2008) *"place-attachment refers to bonds that people develop with places"* (Giuliani, 2003; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Low and Altman, 1992; Manzo, 2003; Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston, 2003; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, J. W. and Watson, 1992, cited in Lewicka, 2008) and has three important components which are: affective, cognitive and behavioral. (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001; Kyle, Mowen and Tarrant, 2004; Low and Altman, 1992 cited in Lewicka, 2008). Ilgin and Hacıhasanoğlu (2006) consider these concepts in terms of territoriality which emphasizes the importance of appropriation and its interaction with place-attachment. According to their survey, place-attachment is affected by individual and social identities.

Identity has several meanings in the social and physical environment in which the urban identity is constituted on a neighborhood scale (Wiberg, 1993 cited in Ilgın and Hacıhasanoğlu, 2006). Thus, it is hard to put absolute definitions between the social and physical features of environment in terms of place-attachment. Hence, the physical dimension of the environment has to be considered in terms of culture, which is a determinant of the process. As a living organism, man's experiences shape the environment and vice versa: "*Experience constitutes the integration of space, culture and man*" (Aydınlı, 2002).

On the other hand we have the reality of a globalized world in which we question whether place still matters or not. The debates on this issue consist of two opposing schools of thought. The first view asserts that "*the 'non-place urban realm'* (Webber, 1964 cited in Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005) *and the hypermobility of capital and people have rendered place and geography increasingly irrelevant*" (Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005) while the second view argues that "*place matters*" (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom, 2001; Shuman, 1998 cited in Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005). Today it is more appropriate to say as Lewicka (2011) tells us "*the form of place-attachment changes: the active- and self-conscious attachment replaces the traditional attachment*". If we talk about place-attachment, it is important to think that place still matters with its several dimensions, which will be explained below. Ever since mankind has felt he belongs to this world, he has been trying to change and rebuild it. Due to this behavior of mankind, today's societies and cities have several issues. Sustainability is one of the concepts borne out of necessity in the globalized world which has "*environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions*" (UN, 1987) and is defined as that "*which implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Brundtland Report, 1987). The European Urban Charter (EC, 1992) has 13 points related to goals for a better life in cities: 1) transport and mobility; 2) environment and nature in towns; 3) the physical form of cities; 4) the urban architectural urban heritage; 5) housing; 6) urban security and crime prevention; 7) disadvantaged and disabled people in towns; 8) sport and leisure in urban areas; 9) culture in towns; 10) multicultural integration in towns; 11) health in towns; 12) citizen participation, urban management and urban planning; 13) economic development in cities.

All of these points emphasize the process of culture and the responsibility of generations in transferring it to the next generations. "*This process is more than a planning step; it is more likely a vision. In fact it is a priori for cultural sustainability to be mentioned because culture is always being lived and developed.*" (Cebeci and Çakılciöğlü, 2002). It is important to understand how cultural codes are transferred, to consider the codes that compose urban space. Stephenson (2008) gives several explanations of the term culture: "*Current interpretations propose that culture is a dynamic process whereby people are actively engaged in constructing group life and its products*" (Johnston et al., 2000 cited in Stephenson, 2008). Thrift and Whatmore (2004 cited in Stephenson, 2008) suggest that 'culture' is used today in three main (but overlapping) ways: "*in an anthropological sense as the whole way of life of a people; as a functional means of ascribing identity to a group; and to refer to particular social processes*". Güvenç (2002) and Özer (1993) say that culture as a harmonic whole includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, tradition and institutions which are integrated over time and it is a concept that is learned, is being learned and will be

transferred to the next generations. According to Rapoport (1977) *“culture and space has an ontological relationship. The difference and meaning of spaces born from their substructure that is constituted with the codes of that culture.”* Cebeci and Çakılcıoğlu (2002) emphasize that, *“continuity of local characteristics is essential for cities to go on living which is provided by cultural interaction”*. So it can be said that the built and also the natural environment are integral to culture.

All these social or cultural concepts come into life in a ‘space’. When research into place-attachment refers to a spatial dimension, it is generally the neighborhood scale which is the preferred area of study. Galster’s work (2001) on neighborhood puts forward several definitions of the concept as either spatially made (Keller, 1968; Morris and Hess, 1975; Golab, 1982 cited in Galster, 2001) or socially made (Hallman, 1984 cited in Galster, 2001). For example, Keller (1968 cited in Galster, 2001) defines neighborhood as a *“place with physical and symbolic boundaries”* while Downs (1981 cited in Galster, 2001) defines it as *“geographic units within which certain social relationships exist”*. Galster (2001) summarizes this as follows: *“Neighborhood is the bundle of spatially based attributes associated with clusters of residences, sometimes in conjunction with other land uses”*. He also emphasizes that *“the unifying feature of these attributes constituting the bundle called neighborhood is that they are spatially based.”* In Jiménez-Domínguez and López Aguilar’s work (2002), these spatial and social dimensions of a neighborhood unit are clearly defined as: *“This urban and residential structure, with a mixture of housing, workshops and trade, not only is maintained today as a real cultural and architectural heritage but is also the spatial context of the narrow social networks that define and maintain the neighborhood’s identity”*.

Without doubt, the physical environment has a very important role in social interactions as explained in Wilkerson and friends’ work (2011): *“Neighborhoodness-including reciprocal relationships and trust of neighbors as well as neighborly knowledge and contacts-increases with the cumulative presence of physical-environment characteristics that provide semiprivate space for informal interaction, including front porches, continuous sidewalks and freedom from high-traffic streets (traffic-calming devices), bars on windows and doors, and litter and graffiti.”* Also Mehta and Bosson’s work (2010) emphasizes the importance of the physical environment with its different dimensions, such as sitting spaces, personalization, permeability and shelters, while Alfonso (2005 cited in Wilkerson et al. 2011), Saelens, Sallis and Frank (2003 cited in Wilkerson et al. 2011) also say *“physical characteristics of neighborhoods associated with greater “walkability or pedestrian friendliness may encourage residents to spend time walking in the neighborhood and thus facilitate casual interaction and enhance informal relationships between neighbors”*.

With these several features of place-attachment and its different components, two neighborhoods were chosen from Turkey, in order to examine different subcomponents of place-attachment on a neighborhood scale. Although the cultural substructures of societies and cities act in their own way, some basic principles are common in terms of architecture or built environment. So this survey aims to make a contribution to the literature

while on the other hand there is the potential for further research in different cultures.

### **Description of the case studies**

Arnavutköy and Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi are located in the city of Istanbul, which maintains a distinguished position among the metropolises of the world with its location and a cultural heritage of thousands of years. Like any society, Turkey has experienced traditional, industrialization and globalization periods according to its own dynamics. One of the important dynamics of this society has been 'mahalle', which refers to a wide range of concepts such as administration, neighborhood, place-attachment or urban design.

The aim of this paper is to analyze different districts and compare the results in terms of place and cultural sustainability. Each of the case studies has also been selected because of its different reactions in terms of place-attachment. Arnavutköy has been chosen from a historic part of the city with its memories so as to differentiate between the old and new districts, while the second district has been chosen from the globalized part of the city.

### **First Case Study: Arnavutköy**

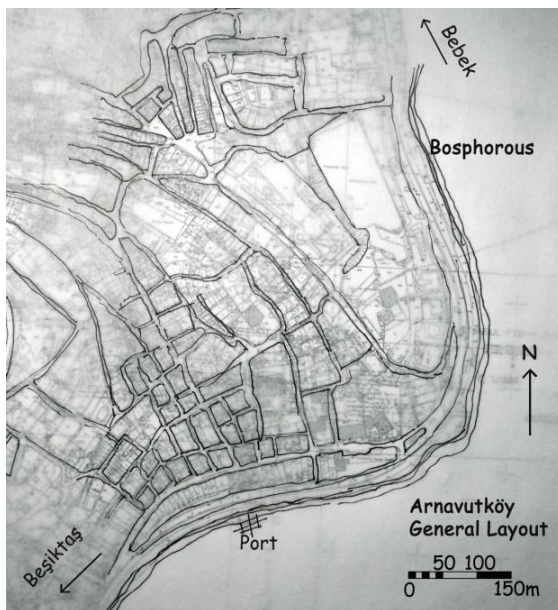
Arnavutköy, located in the historical part of the city, Bosphorus, is a typical neighborhood with its multi-ethnic demography and culture (Figure 1, 2). The fragments of architectural and spatial organizations through social changes and their cultural influences constitute a typical example for this paper. This example has been chosen because in recent years the district has been going through the extraordinary experience of a local initiative group's social resistance to a third bridge.



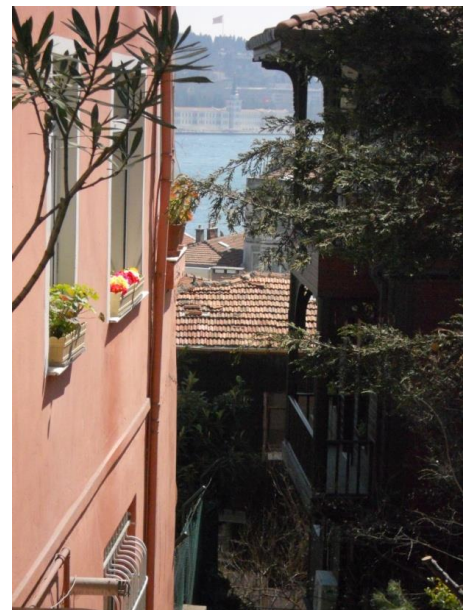
**Figure 1.** Silhouette of Arnavutköy (Photo: Cengizkan, K. and Günel, D., 2009).

Arnavutköy is one of the most important historic villages in Istanbul, which has always had a multi-ethnic population since the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 3). In the mid-1500s, the population seems to have been mainly Jewish. The Jewish population moved away after the great fire of 1877 and their place was taken by Muslims (Gülersoy, 1999). After Istanbul's conquest by the Turks, the city's population decreased so families who were brought from Albania were made to settle in Arnavutköy. In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were no mosques or imarets but houses that belonged to Greeks and Jews, and the Muslim congregation was quite small. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Inciciyan wrote down that the whole population of Arnavutköy was Greek. In Arnavutköy, before World War I, 342 Armenians were living with 5,973 Greeks. According to the records, Jews had existed there since 1654. Before the Mora Uprising (1821), Greeks moved from Arnavutköy and the waterside residences belonged to Greeks which were then sold to Jews. In

the late 1800s, Muslims started to settle in the places that had been emptied. Most Greeks immigrated to Greece as a result of the 6-7 September events, 1964 Decree and 1974 events (Mega Revma, 2012). Arnavutköy has a rich natural and built environment with its green areas, water and architectural and historic fabric (Figure 4, 5). In the 1980s, parallel to the modernization process of the city, a motorway was built in front of the district's 'yalı' buildings. This caused a discontinuity between the center and the shore. Although this transformation changed the district morphology in this region, human movement was not affected by this discontinuity due to their lifestyle a priori.



**Figure 2.** General layout of Arnavutköy  
(Sketch: Ozbek Eren, İ.).



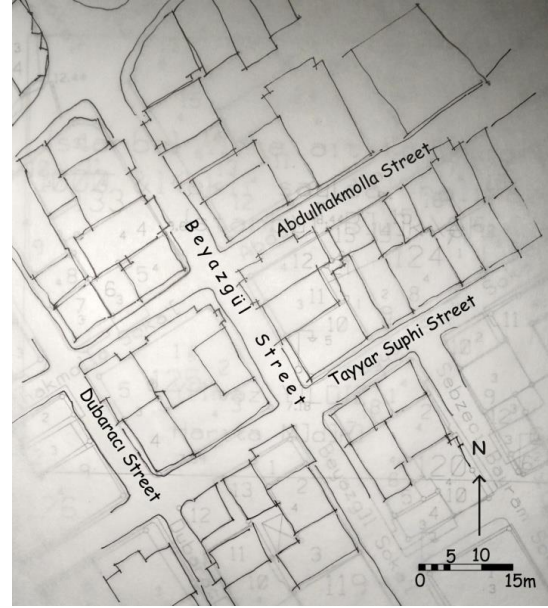
**Figure 3.** Photo of Arnavutköy  
(Photo: ÖzbeK Eren, İ., 2011).

In 1998, the Ministry of Public Transportation claimed that a third Bosphorus Bridge would be a solution to the transport problems in Istanbul and Arnavutköy - the Vaniköy line was ideal for it. After this claim, inhabitants of Arnavutköy established a local initiative group and decided to do something. All parts of the community were in this group, just to save their neighborhood. The Arnavutköy local initiative group's aim is still to make people of Istanbul aware that our cultural and natural heritages are at risk and to make government and other linking ministries aware that Arnavutköy is not ownerless. Arnavutköy's initiative was the first local movement and a very effective way of giving its people a voice in Istanbul (Gülçat, 2004; Danişman and Üstün, 2000).





**Figure 4.** Photo of Arnavutköy  
(Photos: Özbek Eren, İ., 2011).



**Figure 5.** Morphology of Arnavutköy  
(Sketch: Özbek Eren, İ.).

#### **Second case study: Kadıköy, Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi**

The district is located in the Anatolian part of the city and has been chosen because it had a similar experience in the 2000s. In Kriton Curi Park, which is a unique large green and public area of that particular mahalle, there had been an attempt to build a hospital. In contrast to the Arnavutköy case, the attempt was successful and today there is a big building on the corner of the park.

Kadıköy was one of Üsküdar's (known as Skutari in ancient times) towns until 1930. After that it had two districts, which were Kızıltoprak and Erenköy in the beginning. Parallel to Turkey's social dynamics in the 1940s, the town developed and its population doubled in ten years. Sea transportation had an effect on this development. After the first Bosphorus Bridge was built in 1973, car transportation increased, and Kadıköy has become one of the biggest towns of Istanbul with a population of 533,000 today (Kadıköy Belediyesi, 2011).

The district has been developing since the 1990s due to global impacts and its non-historic period (Figure 6). In 1988, Istanbul's second Bosphorus Bridge was built and brought secondary routes into Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi. Parallel to this, in 1993 a large shopping mall was built here at the intersection of important motorways in the city (the E5 and TEM). New housing blocks and gated communities were built according to 'consumer society' rules in this region. The district is the third of the 21 districts of Kadıköy with its 56 streets and four boulevards (Figure 7).



**Figure 6.** Morphology of Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi (Sketch: Ozbek Eren, I.).

Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi has several centers which act as meeting points. One of them is Kriton Curi Park, which is the site of this case study. The pines in the park were planted 50 years ago by Professor Dr Kriton Curi (1942-1996) and in 1998 the park was opened on his behalf by the Municipality of Kadıköy (Uygun, 2010). Since then the park has become one of the landmarks of the district and a public space for social facilities such as sports, concerts, exhibitions or studios.

An attempt was made to build a small-scale two-storey public health care facility on the corner of the park, which had been granted by the owner of the land to the Ministry of Health. After five years had passed, the Ministry gave it back to the owner who sold it other people who are the current owners. But the new owners began construction of a multi-storey private

hospital. The neighbors and local initiative groups, including the Mukhtar, Engin Arafal, started a social reaction and construction had to be discontinued for several years. Due to the aesthetic and environmental problems caused by the construction, the groups came together to find a solution. They argued about whether the uncompleted construction should stay in that condition or whether it was better to have a hospital that would at least provide employment for the young people despite its inadaptible typology. After long debates, the majority preferred the second choice and in the end it was built in 2004 (Arafal, 2011), (Figure 8).



**Figure 7.** A view from Kriton Curi Park (Photo: Ozbek Eren, I., 2011).



**Figure 8.** The hospital building at the right (Photo: Ozbek Eren, I., 2011).

These two neighborhoods lived similar experiences in the beginning, while their fortunes were different at the end. Both of them had to face losing the quality of the environment, but their socio-cultural and physical backgrounds made their attempts go in different directions. So this paper aims to analyze



the features that caused such different consequences and how.

### **Method**

Before analyzing the cases, "mahalle" concept is considered with its different dimensions in urban life and structure since its origin. Thus, basic features of mahalle are clarified in order to analyze place-attachment and cultural sustainability in this scale.

After converting the abstract concepts of cultural sustainability and place-attachment into concrete elements in mahalle scale, the case studies and their analysis are abstracted in two tables:

- Parameters of place-attachment and their components environmentally in mahalle scale (natural, built and perceptual environmental data based on observation, documentation and analyzing)
- Parameters of cultural sustainability in mahalle scale. (socio-cultural sustainability data based on abstracting the universal approaches)

Most of the research into this subject is based on the induction method, in which several scaling and measuring methods are used to give a general layout of the social and physical environment, while in this paper the deduction method is used. The social reaction in the case studies is described and then the social and physical background of this behavior is explained.

### **Characteristics of mahalle**

Although it is brought up in Wilkerson and friends' work (Wilkerson, Nichole, Carlson, Yen, Michael, 2011) that *"the street block has been considered an ideal unit of measurement for neighborhood behavior"* because it constitutes the *"everyday environment with a recurring pattern of behaviors and a surrounding and supporting physical milieu"* (Taylor, 1997 cited in Wilkerson, 2011), the limits of the neighborhood are defined by the mahalle concept's own definition in this paper, as given below.

The concept 'mahalle' has several dimensions that are different from 'neighborhood'. Mahalle organization can be briefly defined as a unit based on administrative, social and geographical features, which is a rich and unique unit that is part of traditional heritage transferred from Ottoman culture and urban design. *"Ottoman society was a kind of closed community with its unique legal, economic, educational and social formation. Ottoman locality was a self-administration tradition different from "commune", with its non-free character; it was an institution and concept that has been set in order to depute the central authority on several subjects"* (Ortaylı, 2000) until the Administrative Reforms (1839) changed this organization on a city scale.

The Ottoman city had been divided into three parts morphologically which were economic, religious-cultural and residential (Cerasi, 2001: 82). It could be said that, this structure was born from the *"city's authentic associations borne from its cultural sub construction: 'mahalle', principally composed of ethnic or religious groups and 'alm', a kind of facility foundation"* (Cerasi, 2001: 70-71). These complexes had a mosque in the center and other buildings (school, bath house, library, bazaar, soup-kitchen) beside they were built in order to service public life and also provide the alm's sustainability, which was called 'imaret' in the beginning.

Mahalle was an administrative unit that was composed to administer the society in the context of religion and congregation with its social, cultural and administrative status. (Ortaylı, 2000: 107; Cerasi, 2001: 72). The Imam – or priests in non-Muslim mahalles – was the authority in districts until the Mukhtar came in 1839 (Kaya, 2010; Palabıyık and Atak, 2002). *“Mahalle was also a social and physical unit in Ottoman city”* (Ortaylı, 2000:3) with a scale of walkability: *“it was the center’s duty to sign the geographic point of a mahalle with its components namely, mosque, primary school, coffee-house, fountain or a little square”* (Cerasi, 2001: 72.), which provided social interaction. An important rule of the mahalles was the guarantor system which meant being responsible for one another socially (Abacı, 2001, cited in Tok, 2005) while the other was that there had never been any social categorization in them (Kuban, 1997: 18). This public sharing and equality helped people to get to know each other and provided supervision and social coherence that are contemporary concepts of our cities.

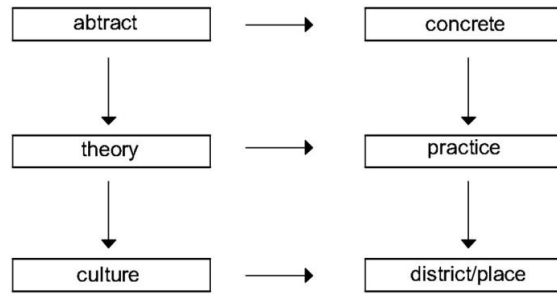
With the Administration Reforms in 1839, which were a reflection of the industrialization process, the aim was *“to provide equality for nations and individuals and bring modern institutions to city life”* (Ortaylı, 2000: 7-18). The first modern district model was founded in 1829 in Istanbul to provide community security and services to those that were not working well. In 1877 the municipality law was stated (Ortaylı, 2000: 157-164). Regulations were drawn up to put in place modern urban design principles: *“organizing the street patterns was important”* (Faroqi, 1997: 274) in this context. Spatial transformations brought about the transformation of social structures and organizations too.

It is hard to give an exact definition of mahalle today. It is a local administration department and also a contact unit between residents and administration. *“Mukhtar’s responsibilities are limited by some regulations such as soldiery, local selections, citizenship formalities, education records. Due to the lack of jural and administrative regulations, today Turkey has districts that are not in connection with either one another or with central administration.”* (Palabıyık and Atak, 2002). Due to the different social parts of society, districts and their spatial components show different characteristics. The administrative dimension generally has a homogeneous structure in districts although they lack sharing, responsibility and participation, but are rich in alienation, slum quarters, and dissolution of neighborhoods and so on. Also the limits of the mahalles are too far apart for people to meet each other easily. According to a survey, *“people see their neighbors generally in markets (34%), and parks or tea corners (25%)”* (Ökten, Şengezer, Hökelek, 2003) and *“only 44% of the conductors feel they belong to Istanbul”* (İBB Araştırma Müdürlüğü, 2001).

### ***Cultural sustainability and place-attachment on a mahalle scale***

The first issue is to clarify the abstract concepts of cultural sustainability and place-attachment on a mahalle scale. The sub-expansions of the concepts have been determined in order to make them tangible while on the other hand searching for an answer to the question ‘Do place and culture have a kind of symbiotic relation and constitute cultural sustainability?’ (Figure 9).

Although we mention how and to what extent the physical environment affects place-attachment while at the same time providing cultural interaction, it is hard to put specific borders between the built, natural, social or perceptual environment. Without doubt, all the components have an effect on each other as it is in the scales of place. But in this paper, in order to analyze and find some specific features of the physical environment, the case studies are considered in two phases. The first is the consideration of different levels of the environment in order to find tangible results. These features are analyzed in the context of the natural, built, socio-cultural and perceptual environment (Table 1). Environmental parameters are dissolved for different scales of the urban space.



**Figure 9:** From theory to practice: How can We define "place" concretely through culture?

**Table 1.** Parameters of place-attachment and their components environmentally in the mahalle scale.

Criteria		Arnavutköy				Ondokuz Mayıs				
		absent	weak	strong	notes	absent	weak	strong	notes	
Urban Scale	Building-Human Scale in The District									
Natural Environment	Topography	Building-Topography Harmony			■			■		
	Climate/Flora/Green	Building-Flora/Climate Harmony			■			■		
	Water	Pattern-Water Harmony			■		■			
	Vista	Street-Vista Harmony			■		■			
Built Environment	Silhouette	Building-Street Harmony			■			■		
	Solid-Void Ratio	Building-Parcel Design Harmony			■		■			
	Morphology	Building Typology			■			■		
		Street Pattern			■		■			
	Human Scale	Diversity Of Services (School, Hospital, Market)			■				■	
		Mahalle borders			■	Either the borders are clear, or the limits of the mahalle have the possibility of walking.		■		
		Easy access to buildings and services			■			■		
	Building-human ratio			■		■				

Table 1. (Continued.)

	Criteria		Arnavutköy				Ondokuz Mayıs			
	Urban Scale	Building-Human Scale in The District	absent	weak	strong	notes	absent	weak	strong	notes
Socio-Cultural Environment	Urban History	Collective Memory			■			■		
		Different Languages, Ethnics Or Cultures			■		■			There are different cultures but this does not come from a history but spontaneous economic levels
	Social Sharing	Knowing Each other			■	People know each other that come from the past and daily street life	■			
		Participation To City And mahalle			■		■			
		Meaning (Historical Or Architectural)			■		■			
	Social Organization	Education Level		■					■	
		Diversity Of Religious And Ethnics			■			■		
		Neighborhood in terms of visiting each other			■		■			
	Public Spaces	Pedestrian Movement		■		Although the streets are full of cars and the street pattern do not allow sometimes this circulation, daily life go on		■		
		Social Facilities		■					■	
	Center	Center that neighbors come together			■	While the diversity of functions and the pedestrian access are effective, on the other hand the community house provides a consciousness meeting point.	■			Just the green areas are effective on the meeting for sportive facilities, while on the other hand the streets have accidental meeting potential.

Table 1. (Continued.)

Criteria		Arnavutköy				Ondokuz Mayıs			
Urban Scale	Building-Human Scale in The District	absent	weak	strong	notes	absent	weak	strong	notes
Perceptual Environment	Urban Image (Physical)			■		■			
	Continuity			■		■			
	Paths			■		■			
	Nodes			■		■			There are mostly the car ways' intersection
	Landmarks			■	Rich house typology provide different landmarks beside the monumental buildings		■		Although the important buildings such as hospital or shopping malls, they do not enrich the environment in terms of urban quality. The land marks are usually great buildings and green areas.
	Edges			■	There are strong edges such as sea, hill, dead streets	■			Due to the same character of the environment, it is hard to mention about edges.
	Urban Image (Aesthetical)	Figure-Ground Or Light-Shadow			■		■		
	Social Activity			■			■		
	Color And Material Diversity		■		The houses have a wide range of colors while the building materials have stone and wood usually.	■			
	Monumental Buildings			■	There are several churches, mosques or fountains	■			

The second phase is the consideration of cultural components in the environment in which cultural sustainability is defined in terms of security, decision and authorization, access, education, equity, local character and movement and activity. The comparison method is based on the analysis of the abstract concept of culture on different scales in order to clarify the architectural components that constitute the mahalle (Table 2).



**Table 2. Parameters of cultural sustainability in the mahalle scale.**

	Criteria	Arnavutköy				Ondokuz Mayıs				
		absent	weak	strong	notes	absent	weak	strong	notes	
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Security			■	Neighborhood provide this security		■		Closed-sites are saved by security guards, rest of the streets are saved by policeman several times	
	Participation	Social Planning And Participation			■			■		
		Social Activities in Public Spaces			■			■		
	Easy Access	Pedestrian Centered House Planning			■		■			
		Legible Streets			■		■			
		Social And Ethnical Interaction			■			■		
	Equity	Housing Services	■					■		
					■				■	
	Multicultural integration			■			■			
	Local Character And Contextuality	Environmental Harmony			■		■			
		Meaning			■			■		
	Movement and activity	Functional Diversity in floor basement			■				■	
		Social And Economic Diversity			■				■	
		Flexible Design	■				■			
		Mixed use of functions and buildings			■			■		
Street life				■			■			
Sport and leisure			■					■		

**Summarized results**

The first case study, Arnavutköy, has important potential environmentally and spatially. The natural environment has a strong impact on the settlement's morphology and typology. In particular, the settlement's morphology reflects environmental influences. Due to Arnavutköy being an important part of Bosphorus, it has a rich flora and climate, which affect the

morphology. Hence, the settlement patterns have formed in harmony with the topography; there are rich vistas from the streets and several little squares. The typology of the houses presents the first image of the settlement with a unique silhouette that continues inside the settlement, translating into an architectural language in which the streets, houses and other environmental parameters act as a whole. This language also makes people feel they belong here. Due to Arnavutköy's history, people have a social memory that constitutes the social life and demographic character of the district. Residents and their families have known each other for a long time which provides a rich neighborhood and social integrity. These parameters also have a strong influence on the perceptual environment. Social and spatial continuity constitute a strong image with an active street life.

In the analysis of Arnavutköy, according to cultural sustainability criteria the mahalle has a high level of security due to people knowing each other. The street life and diversity of functions and also the local initiative house give opportunities to neighbors to participate in the mahalle's issues and events. The mixed-use of the buildings also provides people with easy access to services such as schools and religious buildings. Again, due to the mahalle's historical background, there is rich multicultural integration. Arnavutköy also still has a strong local character that comes from the past and new neighbors or new buildings also act in this contextuality. The street morphology and building typology feed the movement and social activity; people see each other during the day and meet and share social events.

The last case study, Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi has a typical globalized settlement character due to its location and morphology; hence the parameters of the built environment are weak for enabling people to meet. The existence of the highway beside the settlement greatly affects this situation with its noise and creates discontinuity between the closed settlements. All the streets have similar vistas, which are shaped by high buildings and many cars. Due to its development process, the buildings are of a high quality with their car parks, interior design and materials. The mahalle is also rich in its diversity of services, such as hospitals, schools, markets and sports facilities. The green parks are meeting points for sports and social sharing, which are in lieu of street life. Although the mahalle provides potential for social interaction, mixed-use, sports and public places open to everyone, there is still a lack of neighborliness. Due to the disconnectivity of urban spaces and buildings as a result of design scale, the cultural interaction also disconnects. There are big green or empty areas used as car parks. Also the borders of the mahalle are too far apart to walk from end to end which also makes the possibility of meeting weak; it is known that *"there is an association between sense of community and leisurely walking in the neighborhood"* (Wilkerson, Nichole, Carlson, Yen, Michael, 2011).

In the analysis of Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi, according to cultural sustainability criteria, the mahalle also has security, but this security is provided by the security guards, not by a social background. The street life and diversity of functions give opportunities to neighbors to participate in the mahalle's issues and events but the un-centered morphology of the region makes this hard. The mixed-use of the buildings also provides people with easy access to services provided by schools, religious buildings and offices, for example. Although there is multicultural harmony, this is due to the

globalized effects of the region, which make these functions important in terms of the “*consumer society*” (Baudrillard, 2008). People who can buy houses can settle and become neighbors. But this is different from the previous case’s historical background. Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi does not have a local character or a place identity but people prefer this place for its sports, transportation, consumer facilities and location. The street morphology and the building typology do not feed movement so much due to their scale; long buildings and big streets – which are more like motorways - make the possibility of meeting hard for either social activities or events.

### **Discussion**

It is confirmed that in both neighborhoods a well-designed built environment facilitates and feeds the cultural interaction that also provides place-attachment and sustainability.

After matching the features of two mahalles, it is observed that there are two categories that show specific differences physically, socially and perceptually. The first category is physical and is based on the differences of scale, street pattern, collective memory, street-vista harmony, building-parcel design harmony, building-human ratio, mahalle borders and little squares that provide meeting places. The second category is social and is based on the differences of collective memory, language, ethnicity or culture, knowing each other, meaning (historical or architectural), neighborhood in terms of visiting each other and center. The third category is perceptual and is based on the differences of continuity, paths, nodes, color and material diversity, monumental buildings, the relationship between the full and empty spaces, light-shadow and edges.

The comparison of the two case studies shows these results in terms of indicators of cultural sustainability; basic differences are found in pedestrian-centered housing planning, legible streets and street life. Secondary differences are found in social and ethnic interaction, housing, multicultural integration, environmental harmony, meaning, mixed use of functions and buildings, sport and leisure.

The scales - either the pedestrian walking distances or the limits of the mahalle and the buildings’ height or access distances among the neighbors and other facilities - are very important in the interactions of people. Either pedestrian movement or street building scale affects cultural connection, as in Arnavutköy. The mixed-use of houses at ground level and the walking distances between buildings and streets provide an active social life although there is also intensive traffic, as in the Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi.

The two examples show us that place-attachment brings environmental consciousness: people who feel they belong to a place want to conserve and sustain the components of that place’s features. The built environment has a great effect on this behavior. The weaker the place-attachment, the more awareness of the environment is seen.

Although it is seen that there are social reaction and place-attachment behavior features, the inhabitants preferred to lose environmental quality with a high-rise private hospital when they had a chance to stop it. If the

place-attachment had been stronger, the result would have been more in harmony with the natural and built environment.

Although both settlements have been settling for a long time, it can be said that Arnavutköy has a collective memory, while the neighbors in Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi have lived there for a long time, and it cannot be said that there is a collective memory. Although in Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi' case a social reaction has been seen, it did not manage to stop the construction and they did not prefer the other choice.

The people of Arnavutköy have a strong place-attachment, although there are new neighbors who have adapted to the mahalle's culture. Several components of the built and social environment support and feed this behavior. On the contrary, in Ondokuz Mayıs' Mahallesi case there is also a consciousness of place-attachment due to the dwellers' long habitation period and common public spaces, but the weak bonds of environment analyzed in the tables show that physical environment does not have enough potential to support this behavior.

It can be said that in the process of conservation and sustaining a place's natural, architectural or cultural heritage, which could be called cultural sustainability; physical environment is very effective in terms of place-attachment. Today, cities have to be constructed with new codes again (Lefebvre, 1974: 11-17). During the construction process it is essential to define the components of place-attachment. As Heidegger (1998: 13) says, "*thinking is to be on the way*"; we have to consider our local experiences and possibilities while at the same time detecting the universal ones beginning from a small scale.

This study suggests that the built environment has a determinant role in place-attachment, which also feeds cultural sustainability. Furthermore, studies are needed to develop a more sophisticated understanding of mechanisms and other fields on which the built environment has an effect. For example, the limits of the pedestrian scale or the scale between the services and pedestrian ways or the scale of the streets those provide street life or discontinuity. Also cultural heritage or ecological approaches on a neighborhood- mahalle -scale might be studied in terms of sustainability and place-attachment.

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### **Bir "yer"e aidiyet, kültürel sürdürülebilirliği sağlayabilir mi? Türkiye'den mahalle üzerine bir sorgulama**

Mimarlık ve kentsel tasarım alanlarında, son yıllardır üzerinde çokça tartışılan 'yer', 'aidiyet', 'anlam' gibi kavramlar, literatürde ağırlıklı olarak, sosyal bilimler alanı üzerinden irdelenmektedir. Ancak, bu olguların, içinde şekillendiği fiziksel çevrenin de bu bağlamda irdelenmesi ayrı bir çalışma alanı oluşturmaktadır. Bu noktadan hareket ederek çalışmanın hipotezi, bir "yer"e ait olma/ anlamlandırma/ sahip çıkma davranış biçimlerinin ardında yatan fiziksel çevre ve mekân kurgusunun önem ve etkisinin irdelenmesine dayanmaktadır. Konuya ilişkin çalışmalar genellikle, kentsel ölçekte komşuluk birimi üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın kapsamını da, Osmanlı-Türk kent dokusunda ve yaşamında önemli bir role sahip olan 'mahalle' oluşturmaktadır. Mahalle, içinde şekillendiği Osmanlı'dan günümüze dek taşıdığı kültürel-tarihi-sosyal-mekânsal özellikleri ve kent morfolojisinin önemli bir parçası olması nedeniyle araştırılması gereken çok boyutlu bir kurumdur. Özellikle, bir yandan hızla değişen kent ve toplumlar, diğer yandan eşzamanlı olarak önem kazanan aidiyet, katılım, kültürel ve kentsel sürdürülebilirlik gibi kavramlar arasındaki

buluşma noktası, kentsel-mimari tasarım alanında farklı bir anlam kazanmaktadır. Bu buluşma noktalarından biri olan mekân ve onu biçimlendiren kültür, beraberinde bu çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan, “Bir “yer”e aidiyet, kültürel sürdürülebilirliği sağlayabilir mi? Nasıl?” sorularını getirmektedir.

Aidiyet kavramı, sosyal değerlere, anlam, algı ve coğrafyaya ilişkin çeşitli açılımlar içermekle birlikte, bu çalışma kapsamında mekân ve kültürel sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında irdelenmiştir. Fiziksel, algısal ve toplumsal boyutlarıyla ele alındığında mekân, yaşantıyla bir ‘yer’e dönüşmekte ve anlam kazanmaktadır. Bu türden bir bütünselliğe sahip yerleşmelerde, aidiyet, sosyal paylaşım, katılım gibi sosyal ve psikolojik davranış biçimlerinin yoğun olduğu ve bunun, mekâna ve topluma ait kültürel değerlerin sürdürülmesinde etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Bugünkü güncel kavramlar bağlamında kültürel sürdürülebilirliğe karşılık gelen bu eğilim, günümüz kentleri ve toplumları için son derece önemlidir.

Alan çalışmalarının irdelenmesinden önce, yöntem olarak, mahallenin kent yaşamı ve mekânında taşıdığı farklı anlamlar tarihsel süreciyle birlikte ele alınmıştır. Böylelikle, mahallenin aidiyet ve kültürel sürdürülebilirlik kavramları ile arakesitleri ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Aynı zamanda, alan çalışmalarının irdelenmesine altlık oluşturması amacıyla, soyut kavramlar olan aidiyet ve kültürel sürdürülebilirliğin, somut karşılıkları ortaya konmuştur. Sosyal tepkileri önden bilinen her iki mahalledeki davranış biçimlerinin, indirgemeci yöntemle, arka planında bahsedilen fiziksel çevre ile olan bağlantıları çözümlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu noktada, alan çalışmasına konu olan her iki mahalledeki veriler, belgeler, gözlemler, iki ayrı tabloda özetlenerek karşılaştırılmıştır: Aidiyetin, doğal, yapısal, sosyo-kültürel ve algısal çevredeki karşılıkları ve kültürel sürdürülebilirliğin açılımları.

Çalışma kapsamında ele alınan mahalle, içinde şekillendiği Osmanlı toplumunun sosyo-kültürel dinamiklerine ve polietnik yapısına paralel olarak geliştirdiği önemli kurumlardan biridir ve prensipte aynı etnik kökenden ve dinden gelenlerin birlikte oturduğu konut alanlarıdır. Kent morfolojisinde her zaman belirgin bir öneme sahip olan mahalle, tarihsel süreçte önemli değişimler geçirmiş olmakla birlikte, adli, ekonomik, yönetsel, coğrafi ve mekânsal boyutları ile komşuluk biriminden ötede bir anlama sahip olagelmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, alan çalışması olarak, Türkiye’den iki mahalle, farklı sosyal tepkileri ve mekânsal özellikleriyle, Arnavutköy (Beşiktaş) ve Ondokuz Mayıs Mahalleleri (Kadıköy) olarak belirlenmiştir. Arnavutköy, kentin tarihi-kültürel-coğrafi nitelikteki özgün yerleşmelerinden biri olarak ve yerel ölçekte örgütlenmenin ve aidiyetin izlendiği, Türkiye’nin mahalle ölçeğindeki önemli ve ilk örneğidir. Boğaziçi’nde yapılması planlanan 3. Köprü çalışmaları için seçildiği dönemde, mahalle sakinlerinin bu projeye karşı başlattıkları sivil direniş, ait oldukları ‘yer’i korumaları ve sahip olduğu mimari-kültürel tüm değerleri geleceğe aktarma yolundaki yaklaşımları, sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında önemlidir. Ortaya çıkan bu davranış biçiminin içinde şekillendiği fiziksel çevre bu doğrultuda alan çalışması olarak seçilmiştir. Diğer alan çalışmasına konu olan Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesi ise, kentin küresel dinamiklere bağlı olarak, hızla gelişen bölgelerinden biri olması ve benzer bir müdahale geçirmesi -ancak sonuçlarının farklı olması- nedeniyle araştırmaya konu olmuştur. Mahallede yer alan Kriton Curi Çamlık parkı içinde inşa edilmesi gündeme gelen bir yapıya ilişkin başlayan süreç, Arnavutköy’deki projenin başlangıç süreci ile paralellik göstermiş, ancak sonuç, diğer örneğin aksi yönünde gelişmiştir. Buradan yola çıkarak, ait/ait olmama ve kültürel sürdürülebilirlik/süreksizlik eğilimlerini şekillendiren mekânsal biçimlenmeler –diğer çevresel faktörlerle birlikte- araştırmanın eksenini oluşturmuştur.

Çalışmanın sonuçları şunu göstermektedir: Arnavutköy, sahip olduğu doğal, tarihi ve yapısal çevre özellikleri ile önemli bir birikime sahiptir. Toplumsal bellek, tarihte önemli kırılmalar geçirmiş olmakla birlikte, bugün büyük ölçekte devam etmektedir. Bu ilişkiler ağı içinde, komşuluk, tanınırlık, aidiyet, sosyal paylaşım son derece kuvvetlidir. Bu sosyal yansımaların arka planında ise, mahallenin morfolojik yapısının, sokak-bina-yaya ilişkisinin ve zemin katlarda küçük ölçekli ticaretin,

komşular arasında günlük iletişimi kuvvetlendirdiği, sokak ölçeğinin mahalleyi yürüyerek deneyimleme, arazi ve bina biçimlenişlerinin etkisiyle ortaya çıkan küçük meydancıkların ise insanların gün içinde birbirlerini görme, iletişime geçme ve böylece bilgilenme süreçlerine katkıda buldukları görülmüştür. Mahalledeki mimari doku, bina ve sokak tipolojisi ve diğer yapıları çevre öğeleri, topoğrafyanın da etkisiyle, önemli perspektifler ve estetik açılımlar ile güçlü bir kent imajı yaratmaktadır ki sokak yaşamının canlı olmasında etkilidir. Ondokuz Mayıs Mahallesinde ise, mahalleyi çevreleyen karayollarının yoğunluğunun, araç trafiğine öncelik tanıyan geniş sokakların ve yüksek bina tipolojisinin, mahalle içinde fiziksel ve sosyal kopukluğa yol açtığı görülmektedir. Bölgede her ne kadar, okul, hastane, eğitim yapıları, alışveriş merkezleri gibi servisler yoğun olsa da, gün içinde, komşuların çalışmak için mahalle dışına çıkmaları ve bahsedilen morfoloji nedeniyle, diğer örnekte bahsedilen sosyal niteliklerin zayıf olduğu görülmektedir. Mahalle içindeki kentsel boşluklara karşılık gelen yeşil alanlar ve parklar, komşuların bu alanlarda, çocuk- hayvan gezdirmeye ve sportif faaliyetleri için buluşmalarına imkân tanımaktadır. Ancak gerek bölgedeki içe dönük aile yapısı, gerekse de mekân morfolojisi bu iletişime gün boyunca fırsat vermemekte, kurulan ilişkiler ise sınırlı kalmaktadır. Mahallenin sınır ve nüfus büyüklüğü de komşuların birbirini tanımasına imkân vermemektedir. Toplumsal belleğin ve paylaşımın zayıf olması sosyo-kültürel etkileşimi zayıflatmaktadır.

Sonuçta, mahalle sakinlerinin günlük yaşantılarını biçimlendiren mimari ve kentsel unsurların, çevresel psikolojiyi yakından etkilediği görülmüştür. Bu unsurlar ise özetle, insan-bina-sokak ölçeği, kentsel morfoloji, mahallenin fiziksel sınırları ile deneyimlenebilir büyüklükte olması, bina/parsel tipolojisi, karma kullanım ve işlevsel çeşitlilik, servislere ve kamusal alanlara kolay erişim sağlanması gibi bir dizi tasarım ve planlama araçları ile ortaya çıkmaktadır.