

## **An indicator of sustainable development: Urban identity**

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### **Abstract:**

The concept of sustainability is developed to counter the idea that the environment is simply a resource to be exploited with no concern devoted to its possible depletion and disappearance. Natural environment and economic activities—in the context of Sustainable Development—are pursued with a concern for the conservation of our natural resources and protection against their becoming exhausted. But, a planning approach that seeks to conserve our natural resources, only so as to hand down to future generations an environment not suffering from exhaustion falls short of the full meaning of Sustainable Development. Going beyond the whole exhibited by the elements of the general natural, social, and built environment, the environment in its widest sense must be developed through a comprehensive planning approach that subsumes the conservation, development and sustainability of the environment. Such an understanding would be more appropriate to the concept of sustainable development. Interactive influence among the elements of the natural, human and built environments mostly occurring in human settlements are urban settlements. Cities acquire an identity through the effects of the environment and their interaction. This identity in Turkey, presents a multi-dimensional, original and special circumstance, for it is an identity that derives from a plurality of cultures and the environmental data of the various natural, social and built environments in the cities. By means of sustainable environmental and spatial planning, we should leave as a legacy to future generations the preservation—before it is lost—of the sustainability of an “urban identity.” By taking “urban identity” as an indicator of sustainable development, this paper is based on a research project whose goal was the identification and delineation of “urban identity” in the context of an environmental and spatial sustainable development strategy to support sustainable development in the globalization process in Turkey.

**Keywords:** *Urban identity, urban image, sustainability, Istanbul*

### **The concept of urban identity**

Identity is a state whereby an entity is original and unlike any other entity. Identity is formed not by similarities but by distinctions (Lynch, 1981). Webster's dictionary specifies that identity is the state or character that

makes it possible to distinguish an object or a creature (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1983).

What is more is that identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation. It is always within representation. Identity is not something which is formed outside and then we tell stories about it. It is that which is narrated in one's own self (Hall, 1991).

No doubt, the circumstance of being original or of a distinctive character can be perceived in the course of relations established with other creatures. A relationship, according to Proshansky, is the form of action necessary for the emergence of identity (Proshansky, 1983). The identity of an individual is first of all formed and matured within the environment in which one lives. The development of the identity of an individual is dependent on both the relationships established with other individual identities and the development of the objective and spatial relations surrounding the individual at the same time. The identity of the individual constitutes the identity of the society. Group identity is also active in the formation of the identity of the individual (Beer, 1990).

Identity on an urban scale is defined as much by the changes and variables in the city as by the unvarying constants. Urban identity is created through interaction and interrelations with the environmental elements of natural, social and built. The elements of identity based on the natural environment are natural events. The elements of identity dependent on the social environment are essentially integral with the cultural structure in which they are found. The elements of identity deriving from the built environment are structures whose values are assessed through their forms, locations and types of utilization and meanings (Ocakçı, 1993, 1994, 1995).

Güvenç has shown, identity is not identical with image. The perception of the existence of an image is from the exterior; whereas identity is the definition of the creature itself. While image and identity may influence each other, they may also alter independently of each other (Güvenç, 1994).

The elements that make up the identity of a city may be positive or negative. With a decline in the positive elements designating a city, negative elements come to the fore. This is an indicator that the balance has shifted and that the elements of identity the city had acquired in the course of the historical development process have disappeared or diminished or that the negative aspects have become dominant.

Cities are areas representing a space within which change can take place and possess a dynamic structure. Change is a process of breakdown in equilibrium or entropy in the system. This change may be in the direction of development (positive) or it may be in the direction of degeneration (negative). On the urban level, the act of differentiation in the variables of the environment that are natural, social and built may affect identity and cause change. But this change should not mean the loss of elements of a rich identity and the variety created by different historical segments, which have been acquired in the historical development process of the city.

The concept of urban identity has been under the influence of "globalization". Globalization in the present context is about some of the new forms, new rhythms and new values. In cultural terms, the new kind of globalization has



to do with a new form of global mass culture. Global mass culture is dominated by the modern means of cultural production, dominated by the image which crosses and re-crosses linguistic frontiers much more rapidly and more easily, and which speaks across languages in a much more immediate way. The most important characteristic of this form of global mass culture is its peculiar form of homogenization. It is a homogenizing form of cultural representation, enormously absorptive of things, as it were, but the homogenization is never absolutely complete, and it does not work for completeness. Some parts of the modern globalization process are producing the global post-modern. The global post-modern is not a unitary regime because it is more homogenous conception of its own identity (Hall, 1991).

### **Influences on the urban identity of Istanbul**

Influences having a bearing on the urban identity of Istanbul will be surveyed in two chronological divisions—the eras up until and after world war II.

The circumstances operative in the formation of the urban identity of Istanbul up until the world war II are discussed in relation to the elements of identity that Istanbul acquired through the historical development process. Brief background information is furnished in the first section concerning the existence of a multiple-identity in Istanbul. This serves as a witness to the different ages and cultures: the interactive influence of the socioeconomic and cultural environment is reflected in the environmental data of the natural and built environment, which have been bestowed by the historical development process.

The urban identity of Istanbul following the world war II is examined in connection with the various factors exhibiting development in this period. At the end of the world war II, Istanbul became subject to internal migration, which flowed predominantly to large cities—and especially the metropolitan city of Istanbul—and the associated population activity, squatter housing and unauthorized settlements fed by domestic migration and a demographic urbanization and inability to urbanize.

### **The period prior to the world war two**

Istanbul has been in existence ever since the legendary megarians selected it for settlement in 685 BC. throughout its history, Istanbul has been an important city center. It possesses an extremely favorable geographical situation, which is enhanced by the extraordinary natural formation of the Bosphorus providing access to Europe and Asia and the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and a safe harbor and maritime arsenal in the Golden Horn.

During its historical development, Istanbul not only maintained the importance it had accrued, it also managed to preserve itself through increase. Besides its wealth of natural resources, the strategic superiority provided by its topographical structure and defensive position secured its designation as the second Rome after 324 AD. Its symbolical resemblance of seven hills and seven gates to the city was augmented by the identical formation of fourteen administrative regions; in addition, seven leading Romans were chosen to establish a new administration under emperor Constantine I.

As described by Kevin Lynch in his book titled, image of the city, Istanbul's seven hills that recall Rome are landmarks of reference for the city, from the

perspective of both the natural and the built environment. Conveying the aspect of a citadel, they are like jewels in the crown of the city. The first hill has been the acropolis setting for a palace in all eras except the present. Today, it presents Topkapı Palace, the museum of St. Sophia basilica and the mosque of Sultan Ahmet. On the second hill rises the mosque of Nuruosmaniye and the Covered Bazaar. The third hill is graced by the imperial mosques of Sultan Beyazıt II and Süleymaniye. Istanbul University and Beyazıt Square which partake of great significance in the cultural life of the city lie on the perimeter of this hill. The fourth hill had earlier attained renown with the church of the Apostles; today, it is capped by the complex of Sultan Mehmed the conqueror. The fifth hill provides a space for the mosque of Sultan Selim and the church of the Theotokos Pammakaristos. On the sixth hill is the monastery church of St. Savior in Chora museum, today called Kariye; it also furnishes a site for the mosque of Mihrimah, an Ottoman princess. The seventh hill provides a space for cistern of St. Mosius. The construction of the city crown of the natural reference points of Istanbul throughout its history demonstrates both how their importance has intensified through their preservation and how a multi-dimensional cultural formation in a single space has secured a unity.

Istanbul served the special function of capital city in the Byzantine and Ottoman periods and as a metropolis of the Turkish state. They form the foundation of the urban identity. An amalgam can be perceived of a Byzantine identity, an Ottoman identity and a secular Turkish Republic identity.

#### **The post-world war two period**

Istanbul's role as capital city was completed when Ankara was designated the capital of the new Turkish state on October 16, 1923, and it gradually assumed a position as the preeminent metropolis of the nation. Urban identity as a metropolis highlighted the position of Istanbul as the most important center of communications and transportation—in short, the foremost socioeconomic and cultural center of Turkey.

Internal migration and population movement: the flow of internal migration was directed towards Istanbul as the most industrialized and urbanized city of Turkey where the rate of population growth was around 2.5% in the years between 1965 and 1975; the rate in the same period in Istanbul was about 5.3% (Table1).

**Table 1: Population and Annual Increase by Years in Turkey and Istanbul**

Years	Turkey		Istanbul	
	Population in Census	Annual Increase Rate (%)	Population in Census	Annual Increase Rate (%)
1950	20.947.000	2.17	1.166.477	
1955	24.065.000	2.77	1.533.822	5.47 (1950-55)
1960	27.755.000	2.85	1.882.092	4.09 (1955-60)
1965	31.391.000	2.46	2.293.823	3.95 (1960-65)
1970	35.605.000	2.51	3.019.032	5.49 (1965-70)
1975	40.348.000	2.50	3.904.588	5.14 (1970-75)
1980	44.737.000	2.06	4.741.890	3.88 (1975-80)
1985	50.664.458	2.48	5.842.985	4.17 (1980-85)
1990	56.669.109	2.17	7.309.190	4.47 (1985-90)
2000	67.166.000*		11.280.200*	



Source: Statistical Year Book of Turkey, 1985-87, SSI-DIE

\* estimate of mid-year population,

Confirming the hypothesis that the rate of urbanization lowers the rate of fertility, during this period of industrialization and urbanization in Turkey, the rate of population growth in the early years of urbanization gradually fell; the rate of growth now stands at roughly 1.82%. In response to this situation, a drop occurred in the rate of population increase between the years 1970 and 2000.

Squatter housing, unauthorized settlements and the phenomenon of squatter housing sites: *gecekondu*, the Turkish term devised to denote squatter housing entered the vernacular after 1940 and literally means "settled overnight." It has been defined as an "unsanitary and unsound shelter, hastily built in violation of zoning laws and on property to which no deed is held" (Gençay, 1962).

This spontaneous use of land by the migrants and their settling at random, dependent alone on their individual wills for shelter resulted in unplanned land use. Though services and public utilities and the technical and social infrastructure were provided by the local authorities for these unauthorized settlements, haphazard settlement created serious problems and difficulties both in socio-economic terms and for the organization of residential space.

Further, the decision that residential units in rehabilitation squatter housing sites should not exceed four storeys now led to the general incidence of four-storey housing units. This means that the roughly 4 million inhabitants living in squatter housing at present in Istanbul will be pushed up to 12-16 million in the near future. In that case, today's inadequate social infrastructure will most certainly lead to the exhaustion of available services (Suher, 1987-1989) and a less sound situation will emerge.

We should not dismiss the fact that the migrants arriving in Istanbul from various regions of the country—through establishing relations with the city and conforming to the multi-dimensional identity of the city of Istanbul—will accelerate the process of their becoming urbanized and democratized as a consequence of the tolerance gained in living together. Otherwise, in terms of both content and form, squatter housing will form the most pronounced negative factor in the identity of Istanbul.

Urbanization and becoming urbanized: urbanization may be defined as a process of change conditioned by physical and living standards that emerges in association with adopting the behavior clichés peculiar to a city and taking advantage of all the opportunities and possibilities offered by a city (Erkut, 1991; Suher, 1991; 1995; Karabay, 1993).

Urbanization should be considered as an indicator of a transition from a rural society to an urban society and an expression of a process of social change with a content of becoming urbanized in term of social face of urban identity. Legal implementation: legal implementation directly affects the urban identity of Istanbul through proposals drafted by the central government and the articles of the legal and regulatory decisions passed by the parliament. By this means, the articles of statutes put into force with the aim of securing equality throughout the nation brings stereotyping and standardization. This works for the creation of a prototype. It is antithetical, however, to development oriented toward preservation of the unique characteristics,



cultural and natural resources and identity of a city, which are created by its own singular environmental data and values.

Land use in the Istanbul greater metropolitan city planning: in the process of becoming a metropolis, the city of Istanbul as an indicator of commercial activity (commercial institutions and organizations and the international port) is increasingly leaving behind its status as "the number one metropolitan city" in the country and assuming the national position of the "primate city." The metropolitanizing fabric is formed by the interaction of the prevailing trends of both development of the urban area outwards to the periphery (decentralization) and concentration on the center of the urban area (centralization), which is rapidly increasing the urban population throughout the world. Because of the different bases for the process of these relations, this phenomenon projects a different profile for land use in the Istanbul metropolitan area.

Becoming a metropolis necessitates both new and advanced communications and transportation, production technology and specialization, differentiation and the increasing organization which these bring to an advanced degree. In developing countries, the creation of a metropolis is based upon an urban structure that has not adequately experienced the stage of industrial society (Ocakçı, 1989).

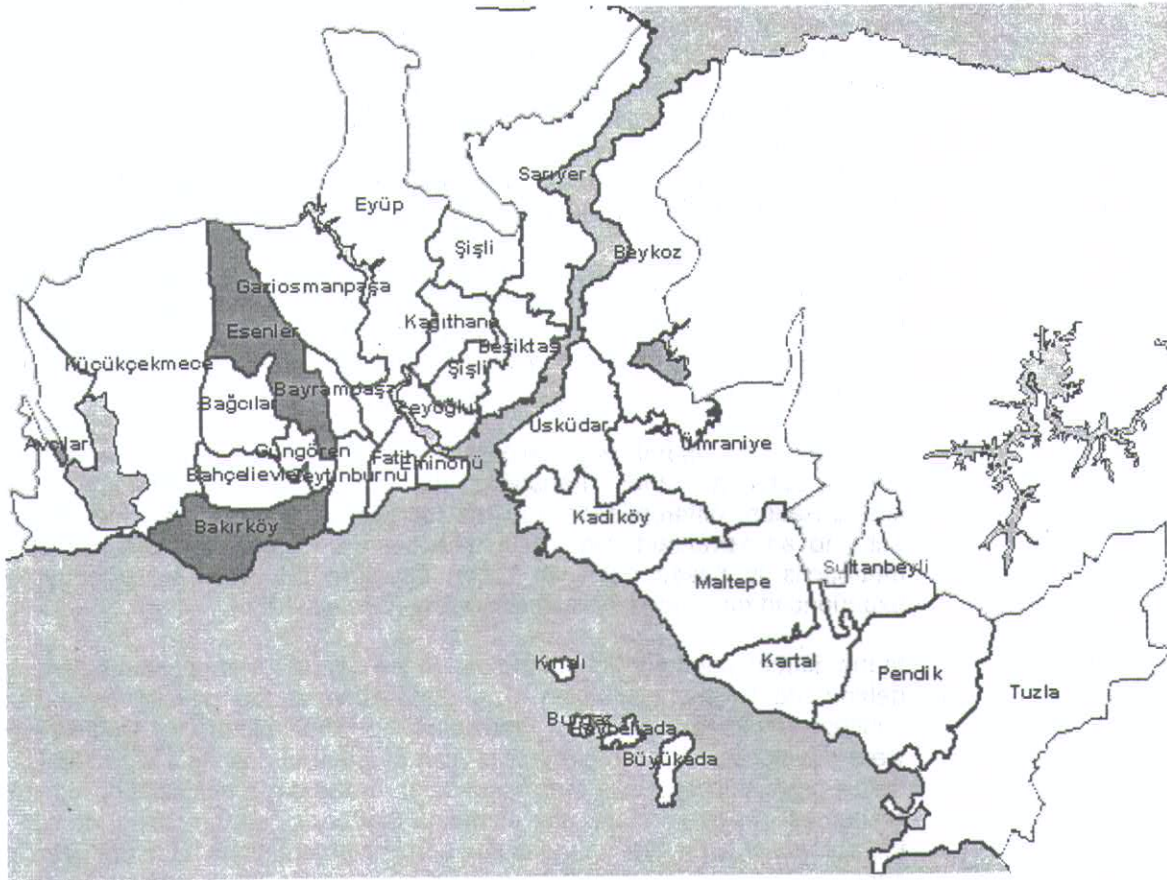
In the direction and control of land use in the city, the metropolitan plan lags behind the de facto situation. The domination of the development plan concept results in a plan that resembles the "after" picture. In studies that were developed for the metropolitan plan of Istanbul despite the declaration that a basic principle was the preservation of the city's cultural and natural resources - in other words, the elements that compose the urban identity - the precautions, preventive measures and implementations have not been in accord with this written targets.

#### **Aims and method of the research**

This project was intended to define and identify "urban identity" through investigation of those who live in the city and their interrelation and interaction with the city. The hope was to develop an urban planning strategy in support of sustainable development and environmentally-aware planning.

The case study area was selected within the boundaries of the greater Istanbul metropolitan municipality (Figure 1).

The starting point to be accepted was "urban identity as an indicator of sustainable development," for which evidence was collected through a field study conducted in selected districts of the province of Istanbul. Elements making up an urban identity may be positive or negative. Our research study was executed, taking as a hypothesis that the "reduction in the number of positive elements identifying a city and the identification of the city with a greater quantity of negative elements is an indicator that the elements of identity earned in the historical process have disappeared, suffered a diminution or that negative elements have achieved an increased dominance." This hypothesis was tested through the implementation of a survey questionnaire in the case study area selected within the Istanbul metropolitan area.



**Figure 1:** Case study areas within the boundaries of Greater Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

The area for the case study was selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Location within a provincial district of the greater Istanbul metropolitan municipality, but exclusive of the districts of the historical peninsula, the Bosphorus straits and the Anatolian side of Istanbul;
- Area outside the central business district (CBD);
- The research study was conducted in the two districts: bakırköy and esenler (Figure 1). The district of Bakırköy which has been settled conformed to the stated criteria. It was efficient village with an ancient history.
- The district of Bakırköy, which had a total population of 1.328.276 in 1990, was the largest provincial district both in Istanbul and nationwide. This district, which itself had a population the size of a metropolis, was subdivided in the year of 1992 with population of 204.398 (208.398 in 2000). Retaining their original names, four quarters within the boundaries of the same district became the new districts of Bahçelievler, Güngören, Bağcılar and Esenler.
- The district of Esenler originally and present a large squatter settlement having a population of 221.007 in 1992 (380.709 in 2000).

The survey questionnaire was applied to 0.3% of the number of households in the quarters within the boundaries of the selected districts, which number



had been established by the State Statistical Institute (SSI-DİE). The selection of streets in the quarters used as a guide the publication by the province of Istanbul directorate of finance under the Ministry of Finance titled "1995 general appraisal values of cubic meters for tracts and real estate." A representative sample of streets was selected on the basis of number of streets with a range from the lowest to the highest land values. The selection of the streets was, consequently, systematic while the selection of the houses on the streets reflects a random sampling.

A number of households are 51.081 in Bakırköy and 55.252 in Esenler. In short, the selection of a field area was systematic and the households selected for the survey questionnaire represents a random selection.

The direct survey was conducted with the father, the head of the household. The survey questionnaire comprised three divisions: identity of the interviewee; relations between interviewee and the city; elements of urban identity as defined by the interviewees.

### Evaluation of the research findings

The findings of our field study are summarized below. The interviewee was typically in his middle years or younger (Table 2).

**Table 2: Age**

District	<18 (%)	19-25 (%)	26-35 (%)	36-45 (%)	46-55 (%)	56-65 (%)	65+ (%)	Total (%)
BAKIRKÖY	0,0	1,4	16,9	34,5	23,6	14,2	9,4	100,0
ESENLER	0,0	4,5	27,5	38,6	19,1	7,4	2,9	100,0

The family was of the nuclear type with mother, father and children (Table 3, Table 4).

**Table 3: Number of Children in the Family**

District	No Child (%)	1 Child (%)	2 Children (%)	3 Children (%)	4 Children and More (%)	Total (%)
BAKIRKÖY	9,9	29,6	46,1	11,8	2,6	100,0
ESENLER	11,4	32,3	29,1	20,9	6,3	100,0

**Table 4: Size of the Family**

District	Size of Family
BAKIRKÖY	3,41
ESENLER	3,58

The interviewee had generally lived in Istanbul 20 or more years in district of Bakırköy and less than 20 years in Esenler (Table 5).

**Table 5: Length of Residence**

District	5 years (%)	6-10 years (%)	11-20 years (%)	20+ years (%)	Total (%)
BAKIRKÖY	5,9	7,9	7,9	78,3	100,0
ESENLER	14,0	17,8	32,6	35,6	100,0

This situation reveals that a decline in fertility had occurred in the process of becoming urbanized and a part of the metropolis and that the family size had



shrunk. It appears possible to hope that due to their having resided in Istanbul for a long period they had begun to benefit from the opportunities and possibilities offered by the metropolitan city.

The level of education of a high proportion of the interviewees in the district of Bakırköy was at high school; however, most indicated that they had completed primary school in Esenler (Table 6).

**Table 6: Educational Level**

District	Illiterate	Just Literate	Primary School	Junior High School	High School	Technical High School	Islamic High School	Higher Education	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	0,7	2,0	16,8	15,3	31,3	3,3	0,0	30,6	100,0
ESENLER	0,0	3,9	49,6	16,3	13,2	3,1	1,5	12,4	100,0

The number of interviewees who were graduates of Islamic schools for religious functionaries was at a negligible level. The interviewees were mostly self employed. Their occupations were concentrated in the service sector, proportionate to the distribution range of a metropolitan city. Interviewees who were workers dwelled in the newer district of Esenler in the vicinity of industrial sites. The right to early retirement had influenced the proportion of retired interviewees (Table 7).

**Table 7: Profession**

District	Unemployed	Marginal (Vendor)	Laborer	Office Worker	Self-employed	Artisan	Retired	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	0,0	7,4	5,2	14,8	54,1	2,2	16,3	100,0
ESENLER	0,0	1,9	24,8	11,4	41,1	9,4	11,4	100,0

Looking at the relations between interviewee and city, the interviewee's work place was in the district where he resided (Table 8).

**Table 8: District of Work**

District	In District	Adjacent District	Historical Peninsula	Beyoğlu (Pera) District	Asian Side	Other Districts	Other Cities	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	23,0	11,1	16,3	5,9	1,5	40,7	1,5	100,0
ESENLER	48,8	16,3	18,6	4,8	1,6	9,1	0,8	100,0

The most important square in the opinion of the interviewee is "Taksim Square" (Table 9). Taksim Square being an important focus in the CBD on the European side of Istanbul is at a point where important axes intersect and offers a green/park area nearby. Other reasons for its high popularity are that it leads to Istiklal Avenue, one of the most important shopping and entertainment avenue of the city, and that it is the scene of official ceremonies and mass meetings.

**Table 9: The Most Important Public Square in Istanbul**

District	Off district squares									Total
	None	In District	Özgürlük	S.Ahmet	Taksim	Beyazıt	Eminönü	Ortaköy	Other	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	14,5	2,0	22,4	4,6	44,7	11,1	0,7	0,0	0,0	100,0
ESENLER	0,0	2,7	25,7	5,3	47,8	8,0	2,7	4,4	3,4	100,0

The district of Bakırköy constitutes an alternate urban center on the perimeter of transportation axes, where are also held secular meetings and ceremonies. "Özgürlük (freedom) Square" in Bakırköy presents an axial intersection of two important shopping, recreation and leisure activities, making it the second most important square after Taksim square for Bakırköy.

The most important park is the seaside park for the district of Bakırköy (Table 10). The most important park for the district of Esenler is Gülhane Park, located on the historical peninsula. The reason, Gülhane Park holds first place is the variety of activities offered with free admission. It is noteworthy that interviewees living in the district of Esenler have as yet developed no custom of going to parks.

**Table 10: The Most Important Public Park in Istanbul**

District	Off district parks								Total
	None	in District	Gülhane	Yıldız	S.Ahmet	Taksim	Lunapark	Others	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	16,5	39,5	12,5	17,7	0,0	8,5	0,0	5,3	100,0
ESENLER	50,0	0,0	25,0	4,5	0,0	1,6	3,8	15,1	100,0

On a city-wide scale, the structure, "the most important building", identified by interviewees in the both districts for the city of Istanbul was the "Bosphorus Bridge" (Table 11). Grouped according to function, the interviewee's replies indicated that the secondary important building group was "museums, palaces and mosques" for the district of Bakırköy and "ports and terminals" (new grand bus terminal) for the district of Esenler. This suggests that priority is granted to new technology over historical values in the identification of the city's land marks.

**Table 11: The Most Important Building in Istanbul**

District	Museums, palaces, mosques	Bosphorus Bridge	Ports and Terminals	Public Buildings	Other Buildings	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	20,7	42,2	11,2	7,4	12,6	100,0
ESENLER	13,8	35,8	24,8	7,3	5,5	100,0

Our determination of the desire on the part of the interviewees for greater participation in these activities in all the districts is a positive and hopeful sign (Table 12). In general, the main obstacle to participation in urban activities is lack of time and, in second place, their high cost (Table 13).

**Table 12: Intention to Attend to Above Activities More Frequently**

District	Yes	No	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	79,6	20,4	100,0
ESENLER	86,5	13,5	100,0

**Table 13: If the Answer is Yes, What are the Main Obstacles?**

District	No Time	Distance	Expensive	Traffic	Little Child at Home	Others	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	37,4	13,8	13,8	4,1	10,6	20,3	100,0
ESENLER	37,8	10,5	31,5	4,9	9,8	5,5	100,0



Indication that the interviewee in establishing relations with the city generally covered by the social security system is reassuring in regard to becoming organized in a secular manner (Table 14).

**Table 14: Affiliation of Social Security Systems**

District	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
BAKIRKÖY	88,8	11,2	100,0
ESENLER	86,5	13,5	100,0

Identification of the elements of urban identity defined by the interviewees on the İstanbul scale were usually made up of positive elements in the district of Bakırköy; whereas most were composed of negative elements in the district of Esenler (table 15).

**Table 15: Positive and Negative Elements Defined by Interviewees on the İstanbul Scale**

District	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Total (%)
BAKIRKÖY	59,2	40,8	100,0
ESENLER	34,8	65,2	100,0

The most important positive elements defined by interviewees in both districts of İstanbul were generally noted as natural and social environmental elements (Table 16). The subjects were presented with open-ended questions.

**Table 16: The Most Important Positive Elements of Identity Defined by Interviewees on the İstanbul Scale**

District	Positive Elements of Identity Based on Natural Environment (%)	Positive Elements of Identity Based on Social Environment (%)	Positive Elements of Identity Based on Built Environment (%)	Total (%)
BAKIRKÖY	39,3	39,3	21,4	100,0
ESENLER	39,2	37,2	23,6	100,0

The top five responses concerning the positive elements of the city were, in descending order:

Bakırköy

Natural pattern; including unique natural entities such as Bosphorus  
Socio - cultural opportunities and the developed variety of urban amenities  
Opportunities for employment and business enterprise  
Historical landmarks  
Historical values in terms of historical legendary meaning of the city

Esenler

Natural pattern; including unique natural entities such as bosphorus  
Opportunities for employment and business enterprise  
Socio - cultural opportunities and the developed variety of urban amenities  
Historical landmarks  
Historical values in terms of historical legendary meaning of the city

The negative aspects of İstanbul mentioned were generally elements of the social and natural environment in Bakırköy and mostly built environment in Esenler (Table 17).

**Table 17: The Most Important Negative Elements on Identity Defined by Interviewees on the Istanbul Scale**

District	Negative Elements of Identity Based on Natural Environment	Negative Elements of Identity Based on Social Environment	Negative Elements of Identity Based on Built Environment	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	41,4	47,1	11,5	100,0
ESENLER	24,0	25,3	50,7	100,0

(1) This data belongs to 1996

The most commonly noted elements were, in descending order:

Bakırköy	Esenler
Air pollution <sup>1</sup>	Unauthorized, unplanned built-up areas
Over population	Lack of cleanliness and orderliness
Transportation (traffic) problem	Air pollution <sup>1</sup>
Lack of cleanliness and orderliness	Transportation (traffic) problem
Unauthorized, unplanned built-up areas	Over population

Identification of the elements of urban identity by the interviewees on the district scale were usually made up of positive elements in the district of Bakırköy whereas most were composed of negative elements in the district of Esenler (Table 18). The most important positive aspects indicated about the environment in which they live generally relate to the social environment (Table 19).

**Table 18: Positive and Negative Elements Defined by Interviewees on the District Scale**

District	Positive	Negative	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	81,4	18,6	100,0
ESENLER	46,2	53,8	100,0

**Table 19: The Most Important Positive Elements of Identity Defined by Interviewees on the District Scale**

District	Positive Elements of Identity Based on Natural Environment	Positive Elements of Identity Based on Social Environment	Positive Elements of Identity Based on Built Environment	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	11,2	62,4	26,4	100,0
ESENLER	1,0	93,2	5,8	100,0

The five most frequent responses to the question of positive features on the district scale were, in order:

Bakırköy	Esenler
Socio - cultural opportunities and the developed variety of urban amenities	Social relations
Tranquillity	Socio - cultural opportunities and the developed variety of urban amenities
Cleanliness and orderliness of built environment	Nearness to the work places
Social relations	Tranquillity
Nearness to the work places	Cleanliness and orderliness of built environment



According to the interviewees in study areas, the most important negative elements of identity were mainly based on social environment in Bakırköy and built environment in Esenler (Table 20). The five most elicited responses were, in descending order:

Bakırköy	Esenler
Over population	Cuts in the utilities of water and electricity
Air pollution <sup>1</sup>	Unauthorized, unplanned built-up areas
Lack of cleanliness and orderliness	Lack of cleanliness and orderliness
Cuts in the utilities of water and electricity	Over population
Unauthorized, unplanned built-up areas	Air pollution <sup>1</sup>

**Table 20:** The Most Important Negative Elements on Identity Defined by Interviewees on the District Scale

District	Negative Elements of Identity Based on Natural Environment	Negative Elements of Identity Based on Social Environment	Negative Elements of Identity Based on Built Environment	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
BAKIRKÖY	31,5	55,9	12,6	100,0
ESENLER	13,6	13,8	72,6	100,0

## Conclusion

Generally speaking, natural environment and economic activities—in the context of sustainable development—are pursued with a concern for the conservation of our natural resources and protection against their becoming exhausted. But, a planning approach that seeks to conserve our natural resources, only so as to hand down to future generations an environment not suffering from exhaustion falls short of the full meaning of sustainable development. Going beyond the whole exhibited by the elements of the natural, human, and built environment, the environment in its widest sense must be developed through a comprehensive planning approach that subsumes the conservation, development and sustainability of the environment—all these environmental effects and their interaction. Such an understanding would be more appropriate to the concept of sustainable development.

The most important examples of interactive influence among the elements of the natural, social and built environments are urban settlements. In the historical development process, cities acquire an identity through the effects of the environment and their interaction. This identity in Turkey, particularly, presents a multi-dimensional, original and special circumstance, for it is an identity that derives from a plurality of cultures and the environmental data of the various natural, social and built environments in the cities. By means of sustainable environmental and spatial planning, as an ally to sustainable economic development and growth, we should leave as a legacy to future generations the preservation—before it is lost—of the sustainability of an “urban identity.”

Taking “urban identity” as an indicator of sustainable development as our hypothetical starting point, this paper is based on a research project whose goal was the identification and delineation of “urban identity” in the context of

an environmental and spatial sustainable development strategy to support sustainable development in Turkey.

In summary, the interviewee who dwells in the districts having a long history in the Istanbul metropolitan area appears to know the city better and receive more benefit from the opportunities offered by the city. Relations established with the city in the newer district such as Esenler which is the originally and present squatter settlement remain restricted to the district limits. Because the urban opportunities and developed variety of amenities available in the older residential centers of the city were more deficient in this newer district, the interviewees identify both the city and the near vicinity by negative elements. This indicates that the longer the residence in Istanbul the more integrated the interviewee will be with the city.

The positive elements of Istanbul identified by the interviewee—its “natural pattern”, “socio-cultural opportunities and the developed urban amenities” and “opportunities for employment, business enterprise”—are due to Istanbul’s position as a metropolis; whereas the natural fabric of the city derive from the natural features and position peculiar to Istanbul. The positive elements of identity on the district scale are essentially dependent on human relations.

The negative elements of identity of Istanbul on the both city and district scale noted by the interviewee are “air pollution” and “over population” in Bakırköy; “unplanned, unauthorized built - up areas” and “inadequacy of the technical infrastructure services of the city” in Esenler.

Preservation and strengthening of the positive elements of urban identity should be undertaken, that the negative elements may not become permanent elements of identity. This is possible only in the context of planning pursued as an auxiliary to sustainable development. For these possess the capacity to enhance the sense of “belonging” and “continuity” in urban life and space which are integral with positive elements of identity. They contribute to the strengthening of relations established by the individual with the city and the development of the phenomenon of becoming urbanized. We must assume the obligation of preserving the positive elements of city identity through city planning: only then may we achieve sustainability and be permitted to transmit these positive elements of identity without loss to future generations.

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#### **Sürdürülebilir planlamada bir belirleyici; kent kimliği**

Sürdürülebilir Planlama; çevrenin tüketilmesi ve yitirilmesine önem verilmeden kullanılan bir kaynak olarak değerlendirilmesi anlayışına karşı geliştirilen bir planlama stratejisidir. Bu yeni planlama davranışı, çevrenin sadece o dönem kullanıcılarının istek ve gereksinimlerini karşılayacak ve çevreden en fazla faydayı sağlayacak



biçimde değil, fakat aynı zamanda, çevresel kaynakların gelecek kuşaklarca da kullanma hakkını gözetken, bir değerlendirmeyi yansıtır.

Sürdürülebilir planlama, genelde, doğal çevre ve ekonomik etkinlikler, çerçevesinde olmak üzere, doğal kaynakların korunması ve tüketilmesine yönelik bir değerlendirmede yoğunluk göstermektedir. Oysaki, çevrenin gelecek kuşaklara tüketilmeden devredilmesinde, sadece, doğal kaynakları gözetken bir planlama anlayışı sürdürülebilirlik anlamında yetersiz kalır. Çevre, en genel anlamda, doğal, beşeri ve yapılaşmış çevre elemanları ile bir bütünlük gösterdiğinden ötürü, çevrenin korunması, geliştirilmesi ve sürdürülebilirliği tüm bu çevresel etkiler ve etkileşimi içerecek geniş kapsamlı bir planlama anlayışı içinde geliştirilmelidir. Böylesine bir değerlendirme, sürdürülebilir planlama anlayışına daha uygun olacaktır.

Doğal çevre, beşeri çevre ve yapılaşmış çevre öğelerinin karşılıklı etkileşimlerinin en önemli örneklerinin yer aldığı insan yerleşmeleri, kentsel yerleşmelerdir. Kentler tarihsel gelişme sürecinde, bu çevresel etki ve etkileşimlerle kazanır. Özellikle Türkiye’de, bu kimlik, kentlerde çeşitli doğal, sosyal ve yapılaşmış çevre verileri ve çoklu kültürden kaynaklanan bir kimlik olarak, çok yönlü, özgün ve özel bir durum arz eder. Sürdürülebilir kalkınma ve gelişmeye yardımcı olarak sürdürülebilir çevresel ve mekansal planlamada, “kent kimliği”nin sürdürülebilirliğinin korunması ve yitirilmeden gelecek kuşaklara aktarılması gerekli ve zorunludur.

Bu makale, “Kent kimliği” Sürdürülebilir Planlamada bir belirleyicidir, varsayımından hareketle, Türkiye’de çevresel ve mekansal anlamda sürdürülebilir planlamayı destekleyen bir planlama stratejisi içinde, “kent kimliği”nin tanımlanması ve belirlenmesini amaçlayan araştırma projesi verilerine bağlı olarak geliştirilmiştir. Makale dört bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünde konu özetlenmiştir. İkinci bölümde, İstanbul’da kent kimliğine yönelik değerlendirmeler yapılmış, öncelikle kimlik tanımı, kimlik elemanları üzerinde kavramsal olarak durulmuştur. İstanbul’da kent kimliğine etkiler 2. Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sonrası olmak üzere iki bölümde incelenmiştir. Üçüncü bölüm Araştırma Projesini açıklayan bölümdür. Projenin amacı, yöntemi, bulguları açıklanmış ve değerlendirilmiştir. Dördüncü bölümde sonuçlar değerlendirilmiş ve İstanbul’da kent kimliğinin korunarak “Sürdürülebilir Planlama” ve “Çevre Duyarlı Planlama” kapsamında mekansal planlamaya veri tabanı oluşturulmasına yönelik değerlendirmeler ve öneriler yapılmıştır.

Kimlik, bir varlığın diğer varlıklardan farklılığı ve özgün olma durumudur. Kimlik, benzerliklerle değil farklılıklarla oluşur. Webster’s sözlüğüne göre bir objenin veya varlığın ayırt edilebilen karakteri veya durumu kimlik tanımını oluşturur. Ayırt edilebilen karakter veya özgün olma durumu kuşkusuz diğer varlıklarla kurulan ilişkilerle anlaşılabilir. İlişki, kimliğin ortaya çıkışındaki gerekli eylem biçimidir. Bireyin kimliği öncelikle içinde yaşadığı çevrenin bilinmesiyle oluşur ve olgunlaşır. Birey kimliğinin gelişimi sadece başka birey kimlikleriyle kurulan ilişki ile değil aynı zamanda birey etrafındaki obje ve mekan ilişkilerinin gelişmesine de bağlıdır. Bireysel kimlik toplum kimliğini oluşturur. Grup kimliği de birey kimliğinin oluşumunda etkindir.

Kentsel ölçekte kimlik; kentteki değişimler ve değişkenler olduğu kadar, sabit değişmezler ile de belirlenir. Kent kimliği doğal, beşeri ve insan eliyle yapılmış çevre öğelerinin karşılıklı ilişkileriyle ve etkileşimleriyle oluşur. Doğal çevre’ye dayalı kimlik öğeleri esas olarak birey ve toplumun içinde bulunduğu kültürel yapıya dayanır. İnsan eliyle yapılmış çevreye dayalı kimlik öğeleri ise formları, konumları, kullanım biçimleri ve anlamları ile değerlendirilen yapılardır.

Bir kentin kimliğini oluşturan öğeler olumlu veya olumsuz olabilirler. Kenti tanımlayan olumlu öğelerin azalarak, kentin daha çok olumsuz öğeler ile tanımlanması, tarihsel gelişme sürecinde kentin kazanmış olduğu kimlik öğelerinin kaybolduğunun, azaldığının veya olumsuz öğelerin daha çok egemen hale geldiğinin göstergesidir. Kentler değişimlere mekan oluşturan, dinamik yapıya sahip alanlardır. “Değişim: düzenin yada dengenin bozulması sürecidir. Bu değişim gelişme yönünde (olumlu) olabileceği gibi, yozlaşma (olumsuz) yönünde de olabilir. Kentsel ölçekte doğal, beşeri ve insan eliyle yapılmış çevrelerin değişkenlerinde olan farklılaşmalar kimliği



etkiler ve değişime uğratabilir. Ancak bu değişim; kentin tarihsel gelişme sürecinde kazanmış olduğu farklı tarihsel kesitleri yansıtan, çeşitlilik gösteren, zengin kimlik öğelerinin kaybedilmesi anlamına gelmemelidir.

İstanbul'da kent kimliğine etkiler 2. Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sonrası dönemde olmak üzere iki bölümde incelenmiştir.

2. Dünya Savaşına kadar olan dönemde, İstanbul'da kent kimliği'nin oluşumuna etkili durumlar, İstanbul'un tarihsel gelişim sürecinde kazanmış olduğu kimlik öğelerine ilişkin olarak incelenmiş ve İstanbul'un doğal çevresi ve tarihsel gelişme sürecinde kazanmış olduğu yapılaşmış çevre verileri içinde, sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel çevrenin karşılıklı etkileşimlerine bağlı, değişik kültürleri yansıtan ve dönemin tanıkları olarak çok yönlü kimlik varlığına ilişkin bilgiler irdelenmiştir.

2. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında İstanbul'da kent kimliği, bu dönemde gelişme gösteren çeşitli etkiler altında incelenmiştir. 2. Dünya savaşı sonucunda kırsal alanlardan büyük kentlere, özellikle İstanbul metropoliten kentine ağırlıkla yönelen iç göç ve ona bağlı nüfus hareketleri, iç göçten kaynaklanan plan dışı yerleşmeler- gecekondular ve gecekondulaşma bağlamında demografik bir kentleşme ve kentileşmem durumu, bu etkiler altında kalan İstanbul metropoliten alanında, merkezi hükümetlerce getirilen çeşitli yasal durumların güvencesinde yüksek yoğunluklu yapılaşmalar ve tüm bu etkiler altındaki metropoliten kent planlamasında ortaya çıkan arazi kullanımı etkileri olarak ayrı ayrı incelenmiştir.

Örneklem alanı, İstanbul metropoliten kent sınırları içinde Bakırköy ve Esenler ilçe belediyeleri olarak seçilmiştir.

Anket soruşturmaları, örneklem alanı olarak seçilmiş olan ilçe belediyeleri sınırları içindeki tüm mahallelerde, hane sayısı bazında uygulanmış, hane sayısı, DİE tarafından kabul edilen %03 oranı kabul edilerek saptanmıştır. Mahallelerdeki sokaklar arasında seçimde, Maliye Bakanlığı İstanbul Defterdarlığı'na yayınlanmış olan "Genel Beyan Dönemi Arsa ve Arazi Metrekare Birim Değerleri" belirleyici olarak kullanılmış, mahalle içinde en düşük değerde olan sokaklardan en yüksek değerde olan sokaklara doğru toplam sokak sayısı ile orantılı sokak seçimleri yapılmıştır. Böylece, mahalle içinde, sokakların seçiminde sistematik, sokaklardaki konutların seçiminde rastlantısal yöntem uygulanmıştır.

Bulguların değerlendirilmesi sonucunda özellikle söylenebilir ki, kentte uzun süredir yerleşmiş olanlar kenti daha iyi öğrenmiş olmakta ve kentte sunulan olanaklardan daha çok yararlanabilmektedirler. Kent ile ilişkilerin kurulması, gecekondu alanlarında yaşayanlar için o alan sınırları içinde kalmaktadır. Böylece, kent ile daha çok bütünleşme İstanbul'da daha uzun yerleşme ile doğrudan ilişkilidir.

Denekler tarafından tanımlanan İstanbul ölçeğine ilişkin olumlu öğeler "Doğal Yapı", "Sosyo- Kültürel Fırsatlar", "Gelişmiş Kentsel Hizmetler" ve "İş Olanakları"dır. İlçe ölçeğinde olumlu elemanlar ise temelde insan ilişkilerine bağlıdır. İstanbul kent kimliğine ilişkin olumsuz öğeler "Hava Kirliliği", "Nüfus Büyüklüğü", "Plansız-Kaçak Yapılanma" ve "Teknik Altyapı Hizmetlerindeki Eksiklik"dır.

(1) Bu sonuç  
1996 yılına  
aittir.

Kent Kimliğinin tanımlanmasında olumlu öğelerin olumsuz öğelere egemen olması gerekir. Bu durum sürdürülebilir gelişmeyi esas alan planlama anlayışıyla sağlanabilir. Bu durumda kentsel yaşam ve mekanda aidiyet ve süreklilik durumları kent kimliğinin olumlu öğeleriyle bir bütünlük yaratmaktadır. Yerel yönetimler tarafından desteklenen sosyal ve kültürel içerikli programlar kentlinin kent ile bütünleşmesine, aidiyet ve sürekliliğin sağlanmasına yardımcı olacaktır. Kentle bütünleşme aidiyet ve sürekliliğin kentin eski yerleşim bölgelerinde ve gecekondu alanlarında yoğunlaştırılması aynı zamanda demokratikleşme ve kentileşmeyi hızlandıracaktır.