



Research Paper

EMBRACE THE FUTURE WITHOUT ERASING THE PAST

Linking historical aspects with
modern needs

June 2025



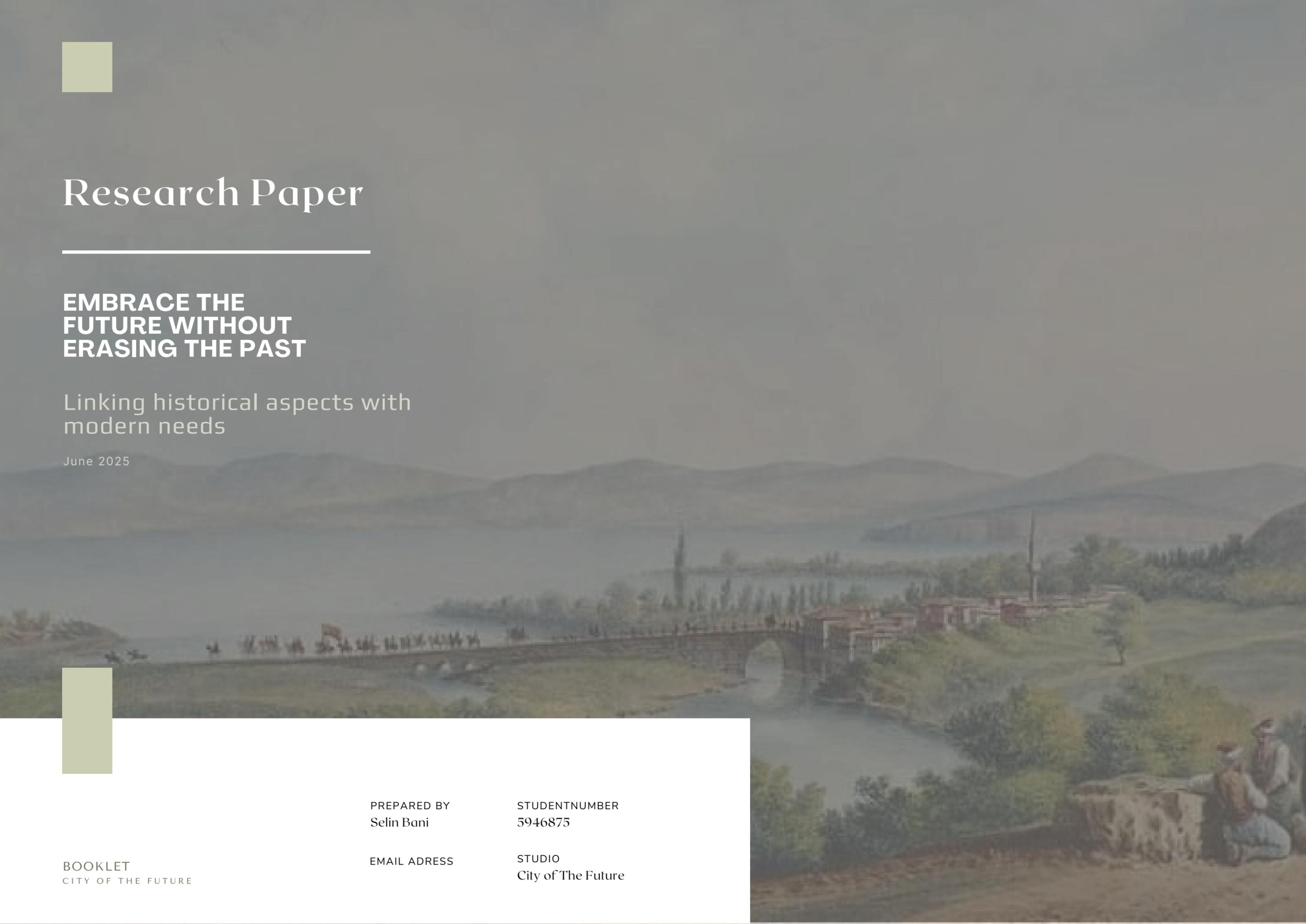
BOOKLET
CITY OF THE FUTURE

PREPARED BY
Selin Bani

EMAIL ADDRESS

STUDENTNUMBER
5946875

STUDIO
City of The Future



Research Paper

Student:

Selin Bani
5946875

Mentors:

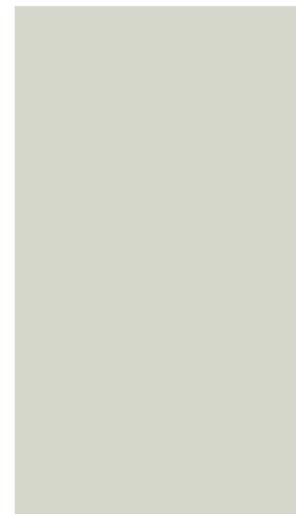
Johan van Lierop (Architecture)
Aksel Ersoy (Research)
Florian Eckardt (Building Technology)

University:

Delft University of Technology -
The Faculty of Architecture and
the Built Environment
Master of Science

2024/2025

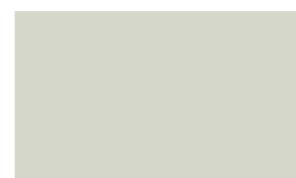
ABSTRACT



ABSTRACT

This research explores how urban design can contribute to preserving and strengthening the historical and cultural identity of Küçükçekmece, Istanbul, amidst the rapid urban transformations driven by the urbanization. It focuses on the balance between heritage and modernization, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding local identity and traditions.

The findings reveal that residents take pride in their local heritage but are also concerned about the potential loss of identity due to urbanization. The research highlights the potential of urban design to bridge the past and future by preserving the historical essence of the area while supporting sustainable urban growth.



KEYWORDS

Urban identity, Küçükçekmece, Urbanization, Heritage preservation, Modernization, Sustainable urban development, Historical essence, Urban transformation, Local traditions.

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00. FASCINATION

Fascination

Istanbul has always been a profound source of inspiration for me, captivating me with its unique interplay of history, culture, and space. Each visit unveils a new layer of its rich and multifaceted identity. As I walk through the bustling streets, from the historic landmarks of Sultanahmet to the vibrant neighborhoods along the Bosphorus, I am continually struck by the contrasts that define the city. Istanbul is a living mosaic, ancient yet modern, traditional yet cosmopolitan, retaining a profound cultural depth at its core.

This fascination ties into my broader interest in how architecture influences the identity of a place. Architecture is not merely the construction of buildings; it is a medium that conveys stories, holds memories, and shapes lives. Istanbul's architectural landscape exemplifies this idea, serving as a testament to centuries of human ingenuity, cultural exchange, and resilience. It provides a lens through which a city's identity can be understood, celebrated, and preserved.

The Istanbul Canal project, an ambitious plan to create a waterway connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, has heightened my focus on these themes. While the project offers economic and infrastructural opportunities, it also poses significant risks to the cultural and historical identity of areas like Küçükçekmece. Once defined by its fishing heritage and deep connection to the waterfront, this district now faces the threat of placelessness, a concept describing the loss of unique identity and the rise of generic, homogenized spaces (Relph, 1976).

What draws me to this subject is the tension between progress and preservation. How can a city like Istanbul modernize without erasing the elements that make it unique? This question is not just academic but deeply personal. Every stone, street, and structure in Istanbul carries a story, and I feel compelled to explore how these narratives can be safeguarded for future generations. Preserving the identity of Küçükçekmece is not merely about saving the past; it is about shaping a future where cultural narratives continue to thrive.

My fascination with Istanbul and the urgent challenges posed by projects like the Istanbul Canal drive me to examine the role of urban design in preserving urban identity. This research transcends academia, it is a mission to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about honoring the past while building a future that respects the soul of our cities.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Cities are made of people, not buildings. Their character is the character of their people.”

— Herbert Gans

Identity is the essence of existence, shaping who we are and how we connect with others and our surroundings. This connection to place, feeling at home or belonging, makes identity a cornerstone of human life. It provides continuity and stability while fostering cultural exchange and community cohesion (Relph, 1976). Cities, too, develop identities, rooted in their history, culture, and people. For Istanbul, a city rich in cultural diversity and layered histories, urban identity is not a static relic of the past but a living, evolving phenomenon (Yazılım, 2019).

Design plays a pivotal role in defining and preserving the identity of cities. It serves as a storyteller, making the intangible tangible and embodying societal values (Lynch, 1960). In Istanbul, architecture has historically acted as a bridge between civilizations, shaping the city's cultural identity over centuries. As Yaşar Kemal eloquently observed, "Every stone in Istanbul whispers stories of its past." Regional architectural styles are more than aesthetic expressions; they are deeply intertwined with the identity of the city's residents and communities, reflecting its cultural heritage and collective memory.

Yet Istanbul is a city of contrasts. As Orhan Pamuk described, "It's ancient and modern, conservative and liberal, traditional and cosmopolitan. The challenge is to embrace its future without erasing its past." This challenge is particularly pronounced with urbanization. While promising progress, urbanization raises profound concerns about its impact on Istanbul's historical and cultural identity.

The Küçükçekmece district, the second-largest district of Istanbul and the seventh-largest in Turkey, exemplifies this tension. Once a fishing hub with a strong local identity tied to its waterfront and historical structures, it now faces the pressures of rapid urbanization and commodification. "Menekşe is a paradise," wrote Yaşar Kemal, "but would they leave it to a handful of fishermen? They'll build their tourist hotels there." His words echo the ongoing struggle to preserve cultural identity in the face of economically driven development.

This research explores how design can address these challenges while preserving the unique identity of Küçükçekmece. It seeks to understand how Küçükçekmece's historic essence can be safeguarded through design strategies that harmonize heritage and modernity. By examining the role of design as a tool for cultural continuity, this study aims to contribute to a future where Küçükçekmece retains its soul amid transformation.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Problem Statement

Küçükçekmece is under increasing pressure from rapid urbanization and large-scale development projects in Istanbul. These transformations accelerate the erosion of its cultural and historical identity, as traditional ways of life face growing tensions with modernization.

Modern urban development prioritizes economic efficiency, often leading to the commodification of space and the marginalization of local heritage. This process replaces diverse, meaningful places with generic, placeless environments, weakening social cohesion and diminishing the area's unique character (Relph, 1976; Harvey, 1989). Additionally, the spread of globalized culture and centralized planning further amplifies this placelessness, threatening Küçükçekmece's identity and sense of place.

Why is this a problem?

There is no question of a problem that suddenly occurs, but of a long-term process of deterioration of identity. The tendency is that development is increasingly disconnected from the characteristics of 'the place', the current urbanisation is often prompted by a process from economic and social aspects, which creates more and more uniformity. It is becoming increasingly clear that this process of flattening must be reversed.

Due to social and technological changes, new forms of identity emerge, which people seek to express in different ways. Spatial design and architecture can support and strengthen these evolving identities.

1.2 RELEVANCE

This research on the impact of urbanization on the historical and cultural identity of Küçükçekmece offers significant value as a graduation topic within the fields of urban planning and architecture. It goes beyond physical infrastructure to address broader themes such as placelessness, cultural preservation, and the integration of historical and modern urban needs. By exploring how architectural and urban strategies can counteract placelessness and enhance the local identity of Küçükçekmece, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of balancing large-scale urban transformations with the preservation of cultural and historical context.

While the research focuses on Küçükçekmece, its insights are applicable to other cities navigating the challenges of modernization and cultural erosion. In the context of rapid globalization, this work underscores the importance of grounding urban projects in local traditions and community values. It provides a framework for sustainable and inclusive urban development, highlighting the role of design in fostering meaningful connections between residents and their environment.

My personal connection to Istanbul strengthens the depth and relevance of this research. With a vision to guide urban transformation in a way that respects and amplifies local heritage, I aim to propose strategies that not only preserve Küçükçekmece's unique identity but also demonstrate how urban change can enrich rather than erode a city's character. By critically engaging with the impact of urbanization, I seek to contribute to both academic discourse and practical solutions that ensure urban development remains aligned with the cultural roots and aspirations of local communities. This commitment enhances the significance of the research as a meaningful and impactful graduation project.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The problem statement, combined with my fascination for the tension between rapid urbanization and the preservation of cultural identity, forms the foundation of my research. This leads to my main question:

How can urban design contribute to preserving and enhancing the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece, while addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization and modernization?

Phase 1: Literature Study

The first phase focuses on understanding the theoretical framework and identifying key concepts related to urban identity, cultural heritage, and the challenges of modernization. This phase is guided by the following sub-questions:

1. How can we identify the unique cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece?

2. What are the main challenges facing the urbanization of Küçükçekmece, and how do these challenges impact the preservation of its cultural and historical identity?

Phase 2: Contextual Analysis

The second phase involves a detailed analysis of Küçükçekmece, focusing on its historical development, current urban dynamics, and the role of local stakeholders. This phase aims to identify the specific needs and opportunities for intervention in the area. The sub-questions guiding this phase are:

3. How can the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece be integrated into urban planning, with the involvement of local communities and authorities, to ensure the district develops into a modern, livable city while preserving its unique character?

4. Which design strategies can enhance the experience of Küçükçekmece's identity while linking its historical aspects to modern needs, ensuring that new developments contribute to, rather than diminish, the area's sense of place?

Phase 3: Design Proposal

The final phase translates the insights from the literature study and contextual analysis into a design proposal. This proposal aims to create a tangible intervention that enhances Küçükçekmece's identity while addressing modern urban needs. The sub-questions guiding this phase are:

Outcome

This research, together with the design proposal, aims to provide a framework for preserving and enhancing Küçükçekmece's cultural and historical identity in the face of rapid urbanization. The proposal will not only address the immediate challenges but also serve as a model for other neighborhoods in Istanbul facing similar pressures. The ultimate goal is to create a resilient urban environment where cultural heritage and modern development coexist harmoniously, fostering a strong sense of place and community.

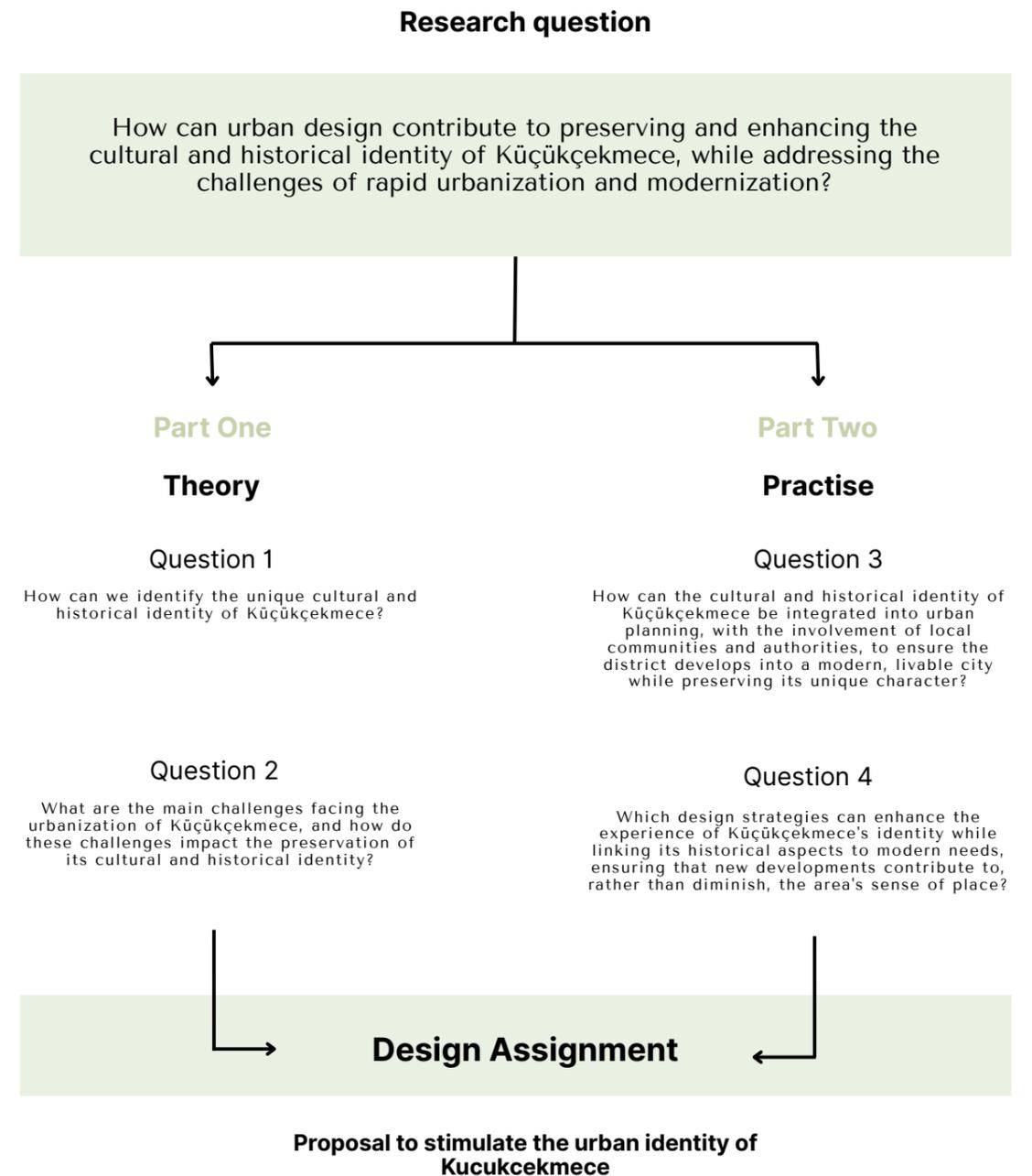


Figure 1, Analytical Framework

2. METHODS

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research focuses on how we can identify and preserve the unique cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece, considering its historical development, current threats, and the role of design in maintaining this identity. By combining the theories of Kevin Lynch and Edward Relph, we can develop a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural urban identity of Küçükçekmece.

Identity plays a crucial role in the interaction between people and their environment. Cities like Küçükçekmece function as dynamic spaces where history, culture, and daily life converge, forming an essential part of self-identification and cultural expression (Burgess, 1978).

2.1.1 WHAT IS URBAN IDENTITY?

The concept of urban identity is central to understanding how cities and neighborhoods develop a unique character that reflects their history, culture, and social dynamics. Urban identity is not just about the physical appearance of a place; it encompasses the collective memory, traditions, and values of the people who live there. Due to globalization, historical cities are increasingly losing their unique identity. Historic sites play a crucial role in creating, reinforcing, and promoting the identity of a place. In other words, historical urban spaces serve as narratives of an idealized past that keep urban culture and history relevant (Lynch, 1972).

The shared images formed in the collective consciousness of society also shape urban identity (Karagüler & Korgavuş, 2014; Kaya, 2016). Lynch (1984) defines urban identity as the abstract value of the tangible elements that constitute urban identity, also known as the concept of "atmosphere," or "sense of place," "place attachment," and "belonging," highlighting the relationship individuals establish with their surroundings.

The images of the landscape shaped in the mind through cognitive, perceptual, and past experiences contribute to urban identity by combining concrete values with the spirit of a place (Qazimi, 2014; Karagüler & Korgavuş, 2014).

Since the 20th century, rapid development in what Bauman (2017) refers to as the "liquid modern era" has led to the emergence of anonymous structures that, as Bilgin (2002) argues, are disconnected from the history and experiences of a place. These structures, apart from their geographical coordinates, lack distinctive features or a unique personality. Aesthetic studies suggest that people generally prefer historical environments over modern architecture. Integrating traditions into historical settings fosters a sense of continuity with the past, strengthening people's emotional connection to a particular place (Lewicka, 2008). Urban identity, as articulated by scholars like Kevin Lynch (1960), is shaped by the interaction between the built environment and its inhabitants. It is influenced by factors such as architecture, public spaces, cultural heritage, and social practices. When these elements are preserved and celebrated, they contribute to a strong sense of place, fostering community pride and social cohesion. Conversely, when they are neglected or erased, the result is a loss of identity and a weakening of the social fabric.

It is insufficient to consider only the artificial environment when defining urban identity. Cognitive, perceptual, and past experiences of the landscape shape mental images of the city's tangible values and the spirit of the place in the minds of individuals.

2.1.2 HOW CAN WE CAPTURE URBAN IDENTITY

Edward Relph introduced the concepts of place and placelessness in his book *Place and Placelessness* (1976). He emphasizes the importance of a sense of place, the feeling of connection and meaning that people experience in a particular environment.

The perception of a place's identity depends on the individual observing it. For some, identity is primarily determined by their own history, lifestyle, and relationship with the place. For others, identity is shaped by the use and experience of a location, with personal history playing no role. This means that a place can have multiple identities that coexist and influence each other. These theories examine cultural and historical urban identity.

Kevin Lynch introduced the concept of urban imagery in his book *The Image of the City* (1960). He argues that people understand and navigate their environment through mental maps, which consist of five key elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. By analyzing these five elements, one can capture the urban identity of a city and understand how residents and visitors experience it.

By combining the theories of Kevin Lynch and Edward Relph, we can develop a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural urban identity of Küçükçekmece. Lynch's focus on the physical structure of the city and Relph's emphasis on the meaning and experience of place provide a comprehensive framework for capturing and preserving the district's identity. This approach helps strike a balance between modernization and the conservation of cultural and historical values.

First, we will examine the physical structure of how identity is experienced using Kevin Lynch's theory, followed by an exploration of how people feel connected to Küçükçekmece itself through Edward Relph's theory.

2.1.3 SENSE OF A PLACE

Edward Relph's concept of place identity offers a lens to understand how physical characteristics, activities, and the meanings people attribute to a place come together to create a sense of connection. His theory of placelessness warns against the homogenization of urban spaces and the loss of unique identities due to standardized developments. For Küçükçekmece, this is relevant for analyzing how transformation brought by urbanization carries the risk of placelessness and for exploring how this threat can be countered through meaningful and contextual urban and architectural interventions.

Relph's model shows that a comprehensive 'sense of place' emerges when these three components intersect, revealing how places are not merely physical locations but also carry profound personal and cultural meanings that are essential to individual and community identity. This model will aid in understanding how people experience Küçükçekmece's identity and the role design plays in shaping these experiences and meanings.

Relph (1976) suggests that place identity is shaped by a combination of physical characteristics, observable activities, and the meanings attributed to those places. His dialectical approach to place identity provides a valuable theoretical framework for analyzing the interplay between the physical transformations brought about by urbanization and the social and cultural significance that residents attach to these changes. Relph's model conceptualizes place through three interrelated components:

- **Place (physical setting):** The tangible and physical attributes of a location, including its natural geography, built environment, and spatial configuration.
- **Experience (activity):** The ways in which individuals perceive, interact with, and navigate a place, encompassing both everyday practices and personal memories.
- **Meaning:** The symbolic, historical, and cultural values associated with a place, shaped by collective identity, traditions, and individual interpretations.

This triadic structure highlights how place identity is not static but rather evolves through continuous interactions between spatial form, human engagement, and cultural significance.

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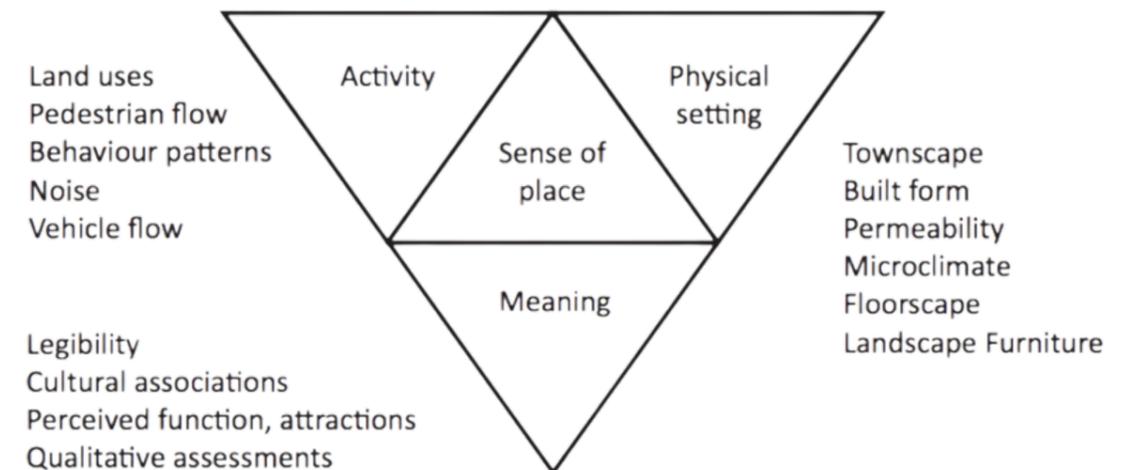


Figure 2, Diagram Edward Relph "Sense of place"

PHYSICAL SETTING

To research the physical setting, as defined in Edward Relph's concept of place, referring to the tangible attributes such as natural geography, built environment, and spatial layout, there will be an analysis based on Kevin Lynch's theory. His framework will help identify how these physical elements contribute to the perception and identity of the urban environment.

Using Kevin Lynch's theory, the physical structures in Küçükçekmece have been analyzed in detail, mapping the relationships between paths, nodes, districts, edges, and landmarks. These elements influence how urban space is perceived and used.

Kevin Lynch's "Image of the City"

Kevin Lynch (1960) introduced the concept of legibility, emphasizing how individuals mentally map urban environments. He identified five key elements that contribute to an area's identity and navigability:

1. **Paths** (streets, walkways, transit routes)
2. **Edges** (boundaries between districts, natural or built barriers)
3. **Districts** (areas with distinct identities and characteristics)
4. **Nodes** (focal points where activities and interactions occur)
5. **Landmarks** (iconic buildings or structures that serve as reference points)

Applying Lynch's model to Küçükçekmece will help to understand how residents experience and perceive their environment. Strengthening these elements through urban design can enhance the district's distinct identity and prevent placelessness.

ACTIVITY

The other triangle consists of activities and functions. We will examine how Küçükçekmece is used and what role this plays in the identity of the area. Since the Küçükçekmece area is quite large, we will approach this on a more general scale, analyzing broader patterns and structures rather than detailed, local observations.

The identity of an urban environment is not only shaped by the physical structure but also by the way people use and interact with the space. Edward Relph's concept of sense of place emphasizes the importance of human activities and the meaning people give to a place. This research focuses on the activities and functions in Küçükçekmece and analyzes how these contribute to the identity of the area. Additionally, it investigates to what extent there are signs of placelessness, the loss of a unique identity through uniformity and alienation.

MEANING

In this triangle, we examine the meaning people assign to Küçükçekmece, which is essential to the area's identity. We do this by exploring the city's historical significance and how it has been passed down over time, allowing us to understand how its historical identity has been carried into the present. Personal stories play a crucial role in this process, as they reveal how residents experience the area and the meanings they attach to it. By analyzing symbolic values, we can assess how people connect with their surroundings. This helps us determine whether they experience an authentic sense of place or, conversely, a sense of placelessness, feeling disconnected from the area in which they live.

The diagram below shows what the theoretical steps are that I want to take.

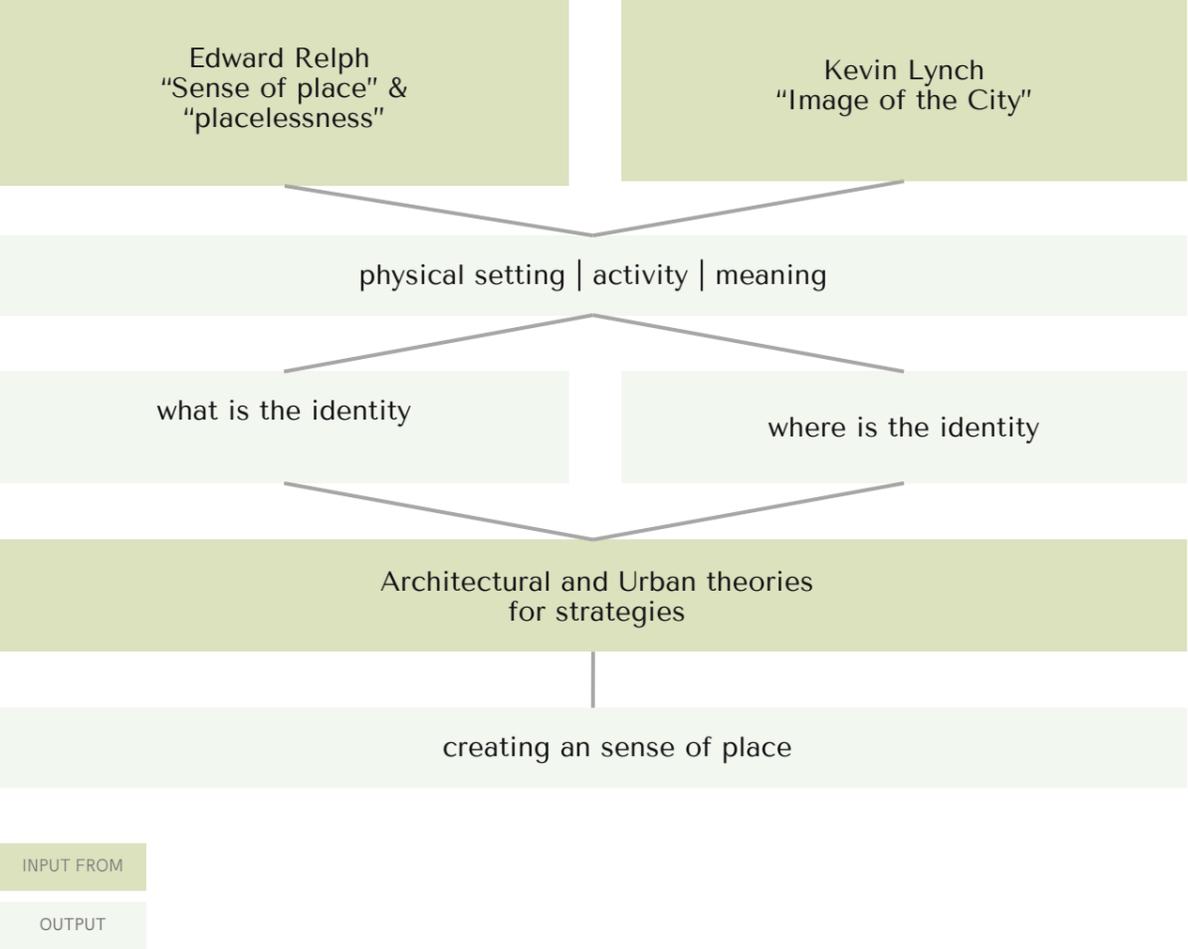


Figure 3, Diagram made by Selin Bani

SENSE OF KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE

By looking at the aspects of physical setting, activity, and meaning, we can understand the sense of Küçükçekmece, as described in Edward Relph's theory.

Relph's theory also offers a framework to actively contribute to the creation of a sense of place. According to him, this experience is not only shaped by physical design but by the interplay between the physical environment (physical setting), the human actions that take place (activity), and the meanings and memories attached to it (meaning). When these three elements are balanced and resonate with each other, a strong place identity emerges in which people feel connected to their environment.

By analyzing these elements, it becomes clear that the identity of Küçükçekmece does not only arise from its physical characteristics, but also from daily life and the meanings residents and visitors assign to it. This insight forms the basis for a broader conclusion on how urban identity can be preserved and strengthened amidst rapid urbanization.

By mapping out the sense of Küçükçekmece, we can identify the cultural and historical elements that define the identity of the area. Based on this, we can explore how urban design can contribute to preserving and strengthening this cultural and historical identity while addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization and modernization. This will be further explored and applied to a specific location.

To investigate this, we will first zoom in on the specific challenges urbanization brings to the Menekşe area. Next, we will explore how identity can be reintroduced into the space and how residents respond to and interact with it. Finally, urban design strategies will be employed to recreate a sense of place in this specific area, with Edward Relph's theory serving as a guide to connect space, use, and meaning.

This approach will help us understand the deeper relationship between people and their environment, shedding light on how to maintain and enhance the unique identity of places like Menekşe amidst the pressures of urban change.

2.2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

For my research on urban identity, I use a mixed-methods approach. This method combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a holistic insight into how urban spaces are formed and shaped by the identities of their inhabitants. By integrating these methods, I aim to capture the complexity of urban identity, considering both the physical characteristics and the lived experiences of residents.

The research is grounded in the epistemologies of urban theory, place identity, and phenomenology, with connections to spatial analysis and participatory planning. These theoretical frameworks are essential for understanding how the built environment interacts with individual and collective identities. Urban theories and place identity, especially the works of Kevin Lynch and Edward Relph, provide insights into how people experience, navigate, and connect with the spaces they inhabit. Phenomenology emphasizes the sensory and experiential aspects of space, while spatial analysis provides insight into the physical structure and organization of the city.

To collect data, I employ qualitative methods such as interviews, participatory observations, and narrative analysis. These methods allow me to capture the personal, subjective experiences of individuals and communities, offering valuable insights into how urban identity is formed and transformed. Additionally, quantitative methods such as surveys and spatial mapping are used to investigate broader trends and patterns in the experience of urban identity across different areas of the city.

By combining these methods, this research offers an in-depth analysis of urban identity, examining both the material and symbolic dimensions of the city. It will provide insight into how urban transformations, social interactions, and personal experiences shape the identity of a place.

2.2.1 Application of the DRM Methodology by Blessing and Chakrabarti

For my research on the impact of urbanization on the urban identity of Küçükçekmece, I use the Design Research Methodology (DRM) by Blessing and Chakrabarti. DRM provides a systematic framework that connects theoretical insights with practical applications, enhancing the clarity and effectiveness of the research process. The four phases of DRM: Research Clarification, Descriptive Study, Prescriptive Study, and Evaluation, enable me to define objectives, develop strategies, and thoroughly assess the potential impact of urbanization. (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009).

By applying DRM, I can address the complexity of urban transformations in a structured way, integrating both theoretical and empirical insights. This approach supports a holistic analysis and provides a well-grounded perspective on how urbanization affects Küçükçekmece's identity.

The primary goal of my research is to develop urban design strategies that preserve and enhance the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece, while addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization and modernization. To answer my main and sub-questions, I employ a combination of various methods:

1. Personal Observations

Direct observations were conducted in Küçükçekmece to gain insight into the cultural and historical identity of the area, as well as the influence of rapid urbanization. The observations focused on residents' daily lives, the use of public spaces, and the interaction between traditional and modern elements in the urban fabric. By spending time in the neighborhood, I was able to identify key issues such as the loss of cultural heritage and the tension between local identity and globalizing development trends.

My fascination for the topic of urban identity and the preservation of cultural heritage stems from my background in architecture and my interest in the relationship between people and their built environment. During my visits to Küçükçekmece, I engaged in informal conversations with residents, local business owners, and community leaders to understand their perspectives on the changes taking place in their neighborhood. These interactions provided valuable insights into the social and cultural dynamics of the area.

2. Literature Research

A preliminary literature research study will be conducted to explore the theoretical foundations of urban identity, cultural heritage preservation, and the challenges of modernization. The research will focus on the following themes:

- The concept of "sense of place" and its role in urban design (Relph, 1976; Harvey, 1989).
- Strategies for preserving cultural and historical identity in rapidly urbanizing areas.

The literature research will provide a framework for understanding the key issues in Küçükçekmece and will inform the development of my research questions.

3. Contextual Analysis

A detailed contextual analysis of Küçükçekmece will be conducted to identify the specific challenges and opportunities in the area. This analysis will include:

- A historical overview of Küçükçekmece's development and its cultural significance.
- An assessment of current urban dynamics, including land use patterns, infrastructure, and public spaces.
- An evaluation of the roles and perspectives of key stakeholders, such as local residents, developers, and municipal authorities.

Data for the contextual analysis will be collected from a variety of sources, including municipal reports, historical archives, and field surveys. This data will be used to identify the most pressing issues in Küçükçekmece and to define the scope of the design proposal.

4. Interviews

To gain deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities in Küçükçekmece, interviews will be conducted with local residents. These interviews will provide valuable perspectives on the following topics:

- The role of urbanization on the cultural identity.
- Strategies for engaging local communities in the design process.
- Best practices for integrating historical elements into modern urban developments.

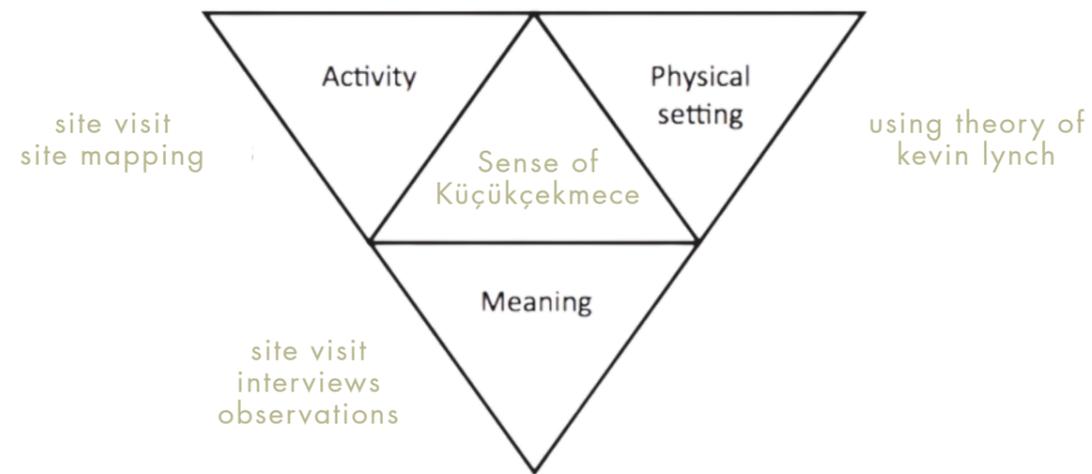
The insights gained from these interviews will be used to refine the research questions and to inform the development of the design proposal.

5. Design Proposal

The final phase of the research will involve the development of a design proposal that addresses the challenges identified in Küçükçekmece. The proposal will be based on the findings from the literature research, contextual analysis, and expert interviews. It will include:

- A set of urban design strategies that preserve and enhance the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece.
- A detailed plan for a specific site in Küçükçekmece, demonstrating how these strategies can be implemented in practice.
- A program of requirements that can be used by local communities and municipal authorities to guide future developments in the area.

The design proposal will aim to create a resilient urban environment where cultural heritage and modern development coexist harmoniously, fostering a strong sense of place and community.



This diagram illustrates the methods employed within Edward Relph's theory.

Figure 4, Diagram made by the author



Figure 5, Diagram made by Selin Bani inspired by DRM-methode van Blessing

| Phase | Relevant RQs | Step | Content | Method |
|------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Research Clarification | Main RQ | Introduction background Problem statement | Context & significance of Kucukcekme's identity and the urbanization | Literature Review |
| | Main RQ | Research relevance | Importance of urban identity in K.cekmece | Literature Review, Observations. |
| | Main RQ, SUB-Q1 | Research Aim | Problem Statement, Main and sub-questions | Literature Review |
| Descriptive Study 1 | SUB-Q1, SUB-Q2, | Thematic Research | Analysis of K.cekmece's identity & transformation through urbanization | Literature Review, Observations, Interviews/surveys |
| | SUB-Q1, SUB-Q2, | Theoretical Framework | Theoretical models such as Lynch's urban identity | Literature Review, Interviews, Mapping, |
| | SUB-Q1, SUB-Q2, SUB-Q3, SUB-Q4 | Analytical framework | Analyzing urban elements impacted by urbanization | Mapping, Observations, Characterizing Details Classification, Interview |
| Prescriptive Study | SUB-Q3 | investigating needs residents | Analyzing the needs due to urbanization | Interviews, online documents |
| | SUB-Q4 | Urban Strategies | Strategies for urban/architectural interventions | Strategic Interviews, Urban Analysis |
| | SUB-Q4 | Strategy Evaluation | Evaluating the strategies | Surveys, Observations |
| Descriptive Study 2 | Main RQ, SUB-Q1, SUB-Q2, SUB-Q3, SUB-Q4 | Reflection | Reflection on methodology and research proposals | Analysis of Results, Future Directions |

Figure 6, Diagram made by Selin Bani inspired by DRM-methode van Blessing

2.2.2 Schematic research diagram

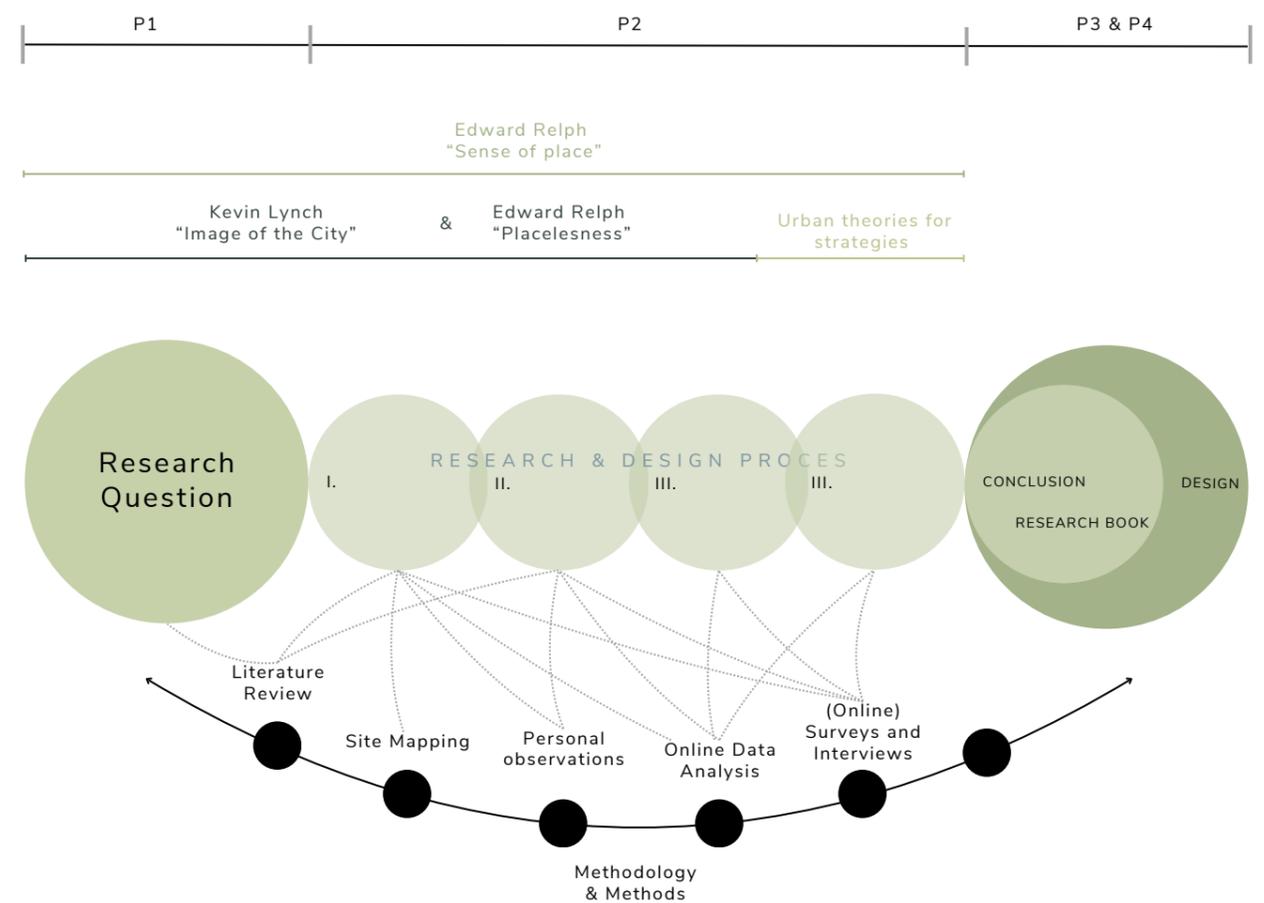


Figure 7, Research Plan Scheme made by Selin Bani

RESEARCH

May 2025

"They will remove Menekşe from there... Menekşe will be gone. Instead, they will build a tourist hotel. Menekşe is a paradise, would they ever leave it to a few shabby fishermen?" (p.416)

-Yasar Kemal

03. URBAN IDENTITY

1. How can we identify the unique cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece?

3.1 SENSE OF PLACE

To determine the identity of a place using Edward Relph's sense of place theory, a systematic approach can be followed. Relph emphasizes that a place's identity is shaped by the interaction between physical characteristics, activities, and meaning. Using this approach, we first examine the physical setting.

3.2 PHYSICAL SETTING

To analyze the physical setting of Küçükçekmece in greater depth, Kevin Lynch's approach is applied. Lynch studied how people orient themselves in cities, both as residents and visitors, and how they form mental images of urban environments.

Through surveys and mental maps, he identified five visually memorable elements that contribute to the legibility and identity of a city:

- **Paths** – Roads, streets, and walkways that structure movement.
- **Edges** – Boundaries such as coastlines, rivers, or infrastructures that define areas.
- **Districts** – Areas with a distinct spatial or functional identity.
- **Nodes** – Strategic points such as squares or traffic junctions.
- **Landmarks** – Iconic objects or buildings that are easily recognizable.

By applying these elements to Küçükçekmece, it becomes possible to map how the physical structure contributes to the area's recognizability and how residents relate to their environment. This analysis forms an important part of understanding the sense of place and the identity of Küçükçekmece.

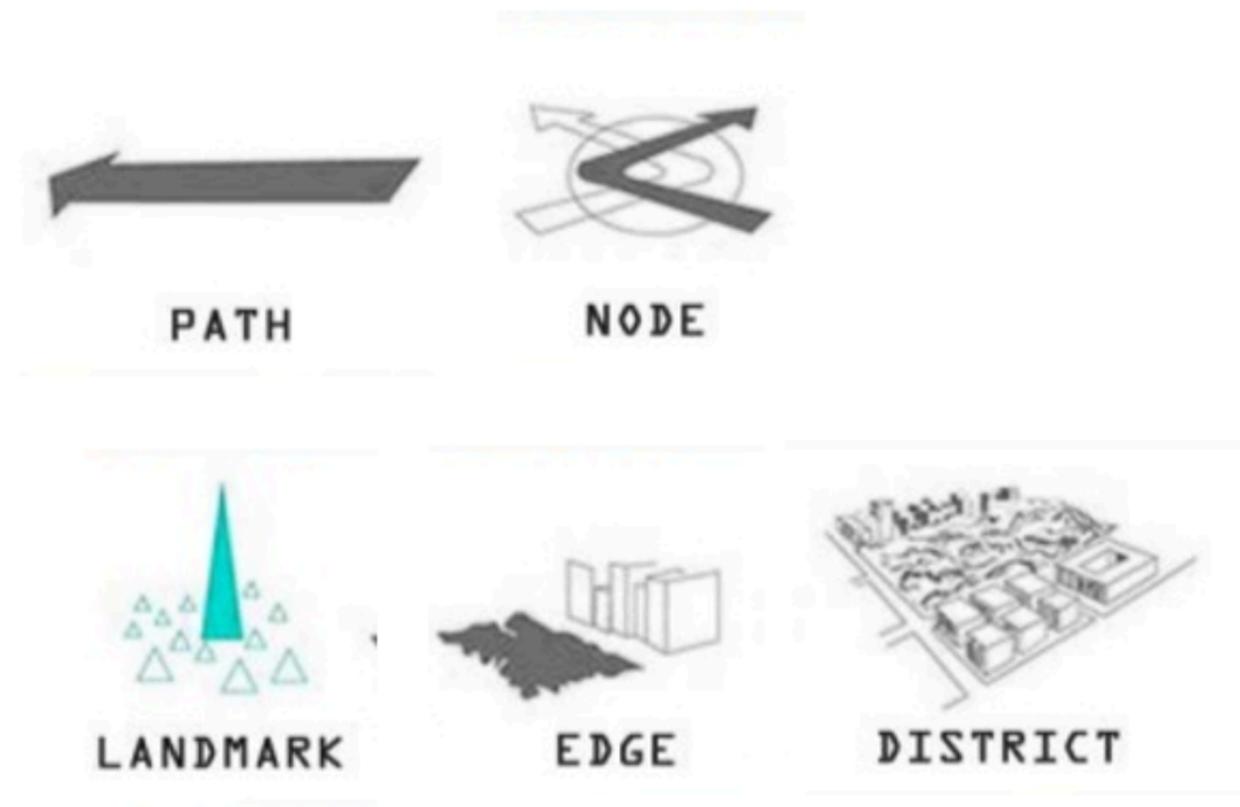


Figure 8, Kevin Lynch - Image of the City

3.2.1 Kevin Lynch: Urban Identity through Spatial Structures Landmarks

Kevin Lynch describes landmarks as external physical objects that can be used as reference points. Some landmarks are tall and visible from a great distance, often serving as radial references. Other landmarks are lower and more local, visible only from specific angles. These contribute to the identity of an area.

Küçükçekmece has several prominent landmarks visible from most parts of the district, partly due to the open space around the Küçükçekmece Lake. Some of these landmarks are more local and can only be seen from certain areas within the district. These play an important role in the character and atmosphere of the area.

The most prominent landmark in Küçükçekmece is the Küçükçekmece Lake, which serves as a natural reference point and plays an important role in both the ecological and urban identity of the neighborhood. Due to its open location, the lake is visible from various parts of the city and serves as a recognizable landscape element.

The Mimar Sinan Bridge, a historically significant bridge spanning over the Küçükçekmece district, is an important landmark in the area. Designed by the renowned Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan, this bridge showcases classical Ottoman design elements and has been a crucial point in the city's infrastructure for centuries. It not only serves as a functional transportation link but also stands as a symbol of the city's architectural and cultural heritage, contributing to the district's unique identity.

The Rhexion Ruins, located near Küçükçekmece Lake, are among the most historically significant landmarks in the district. These ancient ruins date back to the Byzantine and even earlier periods, serving as a testament to the long and layered history of Istanbul. The remains of ancient structures in this area help connect Küçükçekmece to its historical roots.

The Yarımburgaz Caves, one of the oldest known human settlements in Turkey, are another major landmark. Located north of Küçükçekmece Lake, these caves date back to the prehistoric period and provide valuable insights into early human habitation. As an archaeological site, the caves play a significant role in the historical and cultural identity of the region.

Industrial complexes and old factory buildings along the lake's shores, such as the Menekşe Kibrit Fabrikası, are lower-lying landmarks that contribute to the unique atmosphere of the area. These structures, remnants from the Ottoman period, hold architectural and industrial significance. Although some of these buildings are being demolished or transformed, they remain a visual reminder of Küçükçekmece's former economic role, and their preservation contributes to the district's historical narrative.

Fisherman Island (Balıkçı Adası), located within Küçükçekmece Lake, is a small but distinctive natural landmark. Known for its role in the local fishing culture, it has long been a point of interest for both fishermen and visitors. The island adds to the lake's scenic character and contributes to the traditional identity of the district.

All of these landmarks are crucial to the character of Küçükçekmece. It is important to preserve and highlight these physical elements within new urban developments to ensure that the historical and cultural significance of the area is maintained.

The strong presence of landmarks around Küçükçekmece Lake highlights its centrality to the district's identity. These elements, whether natural, historical, or urban, play an essential role in defining Küçükçekmece's character. It is important to preserve and highlight these physical elements within new urban developments to ensure that the historical and cultural significance of the area remains intact.

Conclusion

Landmarks are recognizable structures that serve as symbols for the city. In Küçükçekmece, these are the old buildings, or natural features that visually and symbolically define the city. It's important to preserve and protect these landmarks so that they not only serve as navigation aids but also as cultural symbols that enhance the historical consciousness and identity of the city.



Mimar Sinan Bridge



Balıkçılar Adası and Mimar Sinan Bridge



The Küçükçekmece Lake



Menekşe Match Factory



Figure 9, Analysis - Landmarks

Edges and Barriers

Edges are, according to Kevin Lynch, linear elements seen as boundaries between two faces. Some edges are barriers which close one area off from another and are therefore hard to penetrate.

In Küçükçekmece, the most prominent edges are found around Lake Küçükçekmece, which naturally divides the district into different zones. These edges play a crucial role in the area's connectivity, accessibility, and visual perception.

The most dominant edge in Küçükçekmece is Lake Küçükçekmece itself, serving as both a natural boundary and a barrier. While it acts as an ecological and visual focal point, it also limits movement between the eastern and western parts of the district. Bridges and roads crossing the lake, such as the Mimar Sinan Bridge and major highways, function as key connections that help mitigate this barrier effect.

On a smaller scale, railways and major highways, such as the E-5 highway, create additional edges within Küçükçekmece. While these transport infrastructures enhance regional connectivity, they also act as physical barriers that restrict pedestrian movement and create isolated urban pockets. For example, the railway line serves as a significant barrier between the neighborhoods of Menekşe and Basıncöy, reducing their accessibility to each other.

In northern Küçükçekmece, industrial zones and fenced-off areas create artificial edges that separate residential neighborhoods from commercial and logistical centers. These edges contribute to the fragmented urban structure and limit spatial cohesion within the district. Additionally, the Rhegion Ruins, located near the lake's shores, mark a boundary where the historic urban fabric meets modern development.

While these archaeological remnants enhance Küçükçekmece's layered identity, they also create a contrast between the preserved past and ongoing urban transformation.

Further, Fisherman Island (Balıkçı Adası), located within Lake Küçükçekmece, acts as a spatially isolated landmark. While it adds to the area's scenic value, its separation from the mainland limits accessibility and interaction with the broader urban fabric.

Many of these edges function as barriers, impacting both movement and visual connectivity within Küçükçekmece. Future urban planning initiatives should focus on reducing these barriers to ensure that Küçükçekmece remains an integrated and accessible district rather than a fragmented landscape. Special attention should be given to preserving historical and ecological elements while enhancing connectivity and seamlessly integrating new developments, such as the Istanbul Canal, into the existing urban fabric.

Conclusion

Edges can be physical barriers, such as rivers or highways, that divide the city. In Küçükçekmece, these edges may hinder interaction between different areas. By analyzing and reducing these barriers, such as by creating new crossings or connection paths, the cohesion between different districts can be enhanced. This will help bring together the diverse cultural identities within the city and create a stronger urban identity.



Edge and barrier

Barrier

Figure 10, Analysis - Edges and barriers

Paths

Kevin Lynch describes paths as the channels along which people move. These paths shape how individuals experience and navigate their surroundings.

In Küçükçekmece, the most prominent paths are concentrated along the edges of Lake Küçükçekmece and the major road networks. Due to the presence of natural and artificial barriers, many areas within the district have limited direct pathways, forcing movement along specific routes.

The primary movement corridors run in a north-south direction, connecting Küçükçekmece with surrounding districts and central Istanbul. This is largely due to the E-5 highway, a major arterial route that channels most vehicular traffic. Additionally, railway lines parallel to the E-5 create linear movement patterns but also act as barriers, limiting cross-district accessibility.

One of the most frequently used pedestrian and vehicular paths in Küçükçekmece is Halkalı Street, which connects different parts of the district and serves as a key transportation route. However, many smaller streets lack proper pedestrian infrastructure, leading residents to create informal footpaths along roadsides and open spaces.

For cyclists and pedestrians, shoreline paths along Lake Küçükçekmece provide scenic but disconnected routes, as urban development and infrastructure projects fragment continuous movement. Similarly, Menekşe Street and Florya Coastal Road serve as critical east-west links, but their usability for non-vehicular traffic remains limited.

Currently, Küçükçekmece lacks a cohesive network of paths that align with Lynch's concept, making navigation fragmented and inefficient. To enhance connectivity, new pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and multi-modal transportation corridors should be developed. Improving existing paths and integrating them with planned urban projects will be essential in transforming Küçükçekmece into a more accessible and well-connected district.

Conclusion

The paths in Küçükçekmece, such as main roads and small streets, are essential for connecting different areas and creating a sense of cohesion. To preserve identity, we must protect and enhance the existing paths that hold historical and cultural significance, such as old trade routes or key connections between neighborhoods. New paths can be designed to improve these historical routes, creating a sense of continuity without overshadowing the past.

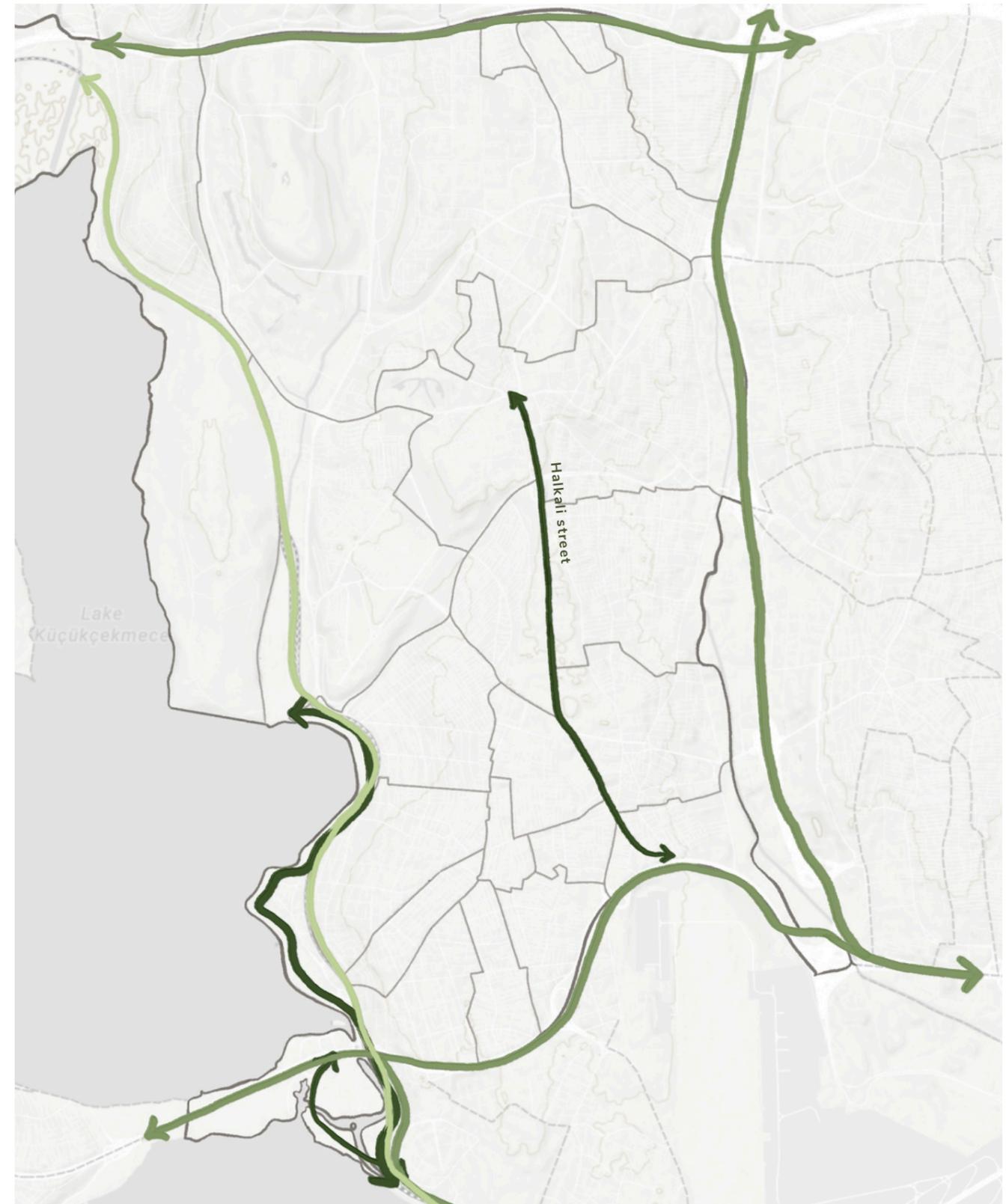


Figure 11, Analysis - Paths

Districts

According to Kevin Lynch districts are medium to large sections of the city, which are possible to enter inside. The districts are recognisable from their common identifying character. We have based the districts on differences in density, usage and physical appearance.

District 1: Küçükçekmece Lake and Historical Surroundings (Natural and Historical District)

This district is located around Küçükçekmece Lake and its surrounding green areas, as well as the historical landmarks nearby. It is characterized by natural elements, including the lake and green spaces, alongside important historical sites and remnants. The area remains largely undeveloped with a very low density, providing a peaceful, recreational environment. The use is primarily recreational and nature-oriented, but the historical context of the area adds a significant cultural layer. The physical appearance is defined by lakeside views, parks, and ancient landmarks, offering a unique blend of natural beauty and historical richness.

District 2: Residential Areas Luxe (Residential District)

This district consists of upscale residential areas, including luxury apartments and high-end housing developments. The density is medium to high, depending on proximity to the urban center. The use of the area is primarily residential, with additional local amenities such as high-end shops, cafes, schools, and mosques. The physical appearance features well-maintained streets, spacious properties, modern architecture, and green spaces. The district caters to a wealthier demographic and has a more polished and planned appearance.

District 3: Residential Areas (Residential District)

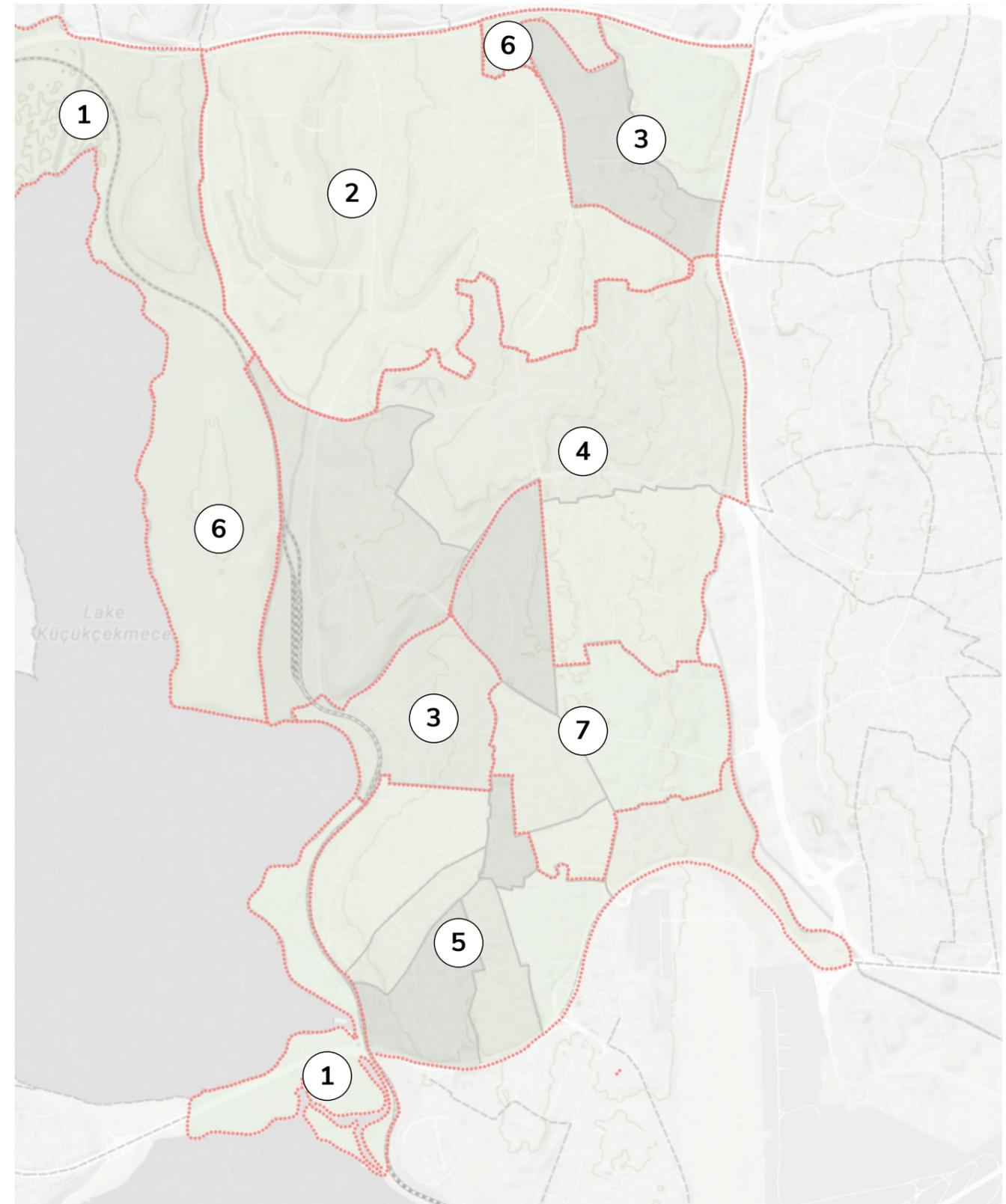
This district is primarily made up of typical residential zones, with a mix of low-rise houses and mid-rise apartment buildings. The density varies depending on the area's proximity to the center of the city, but it generally remains medium. It has a mix of old and new buildings, with streets lined by homes, small shops, and green spaces. Local amenities such as schools, mosques, and parks are common. The physical appearance is characterized by housing blocks, a variety of architectural styles, and well-organized residential neighborhoods.

District 4: Urban Center (Commercial and Cultural District)

This district serves as the commercial and cultural heart of Küçükçekmece. It features a high density of both commercial and cultural establishments, including shops, restaurants, theaters, and museums. The area is characterized by busy streets, high-rise buildings, and modern architectural styles. Administrative functions are also present, with municipal buildings and offices. The district has a vibrant atmosphere, with a mix of pedestrian zones, busy markets, and contemporary urban designs.

District 5: Mixed Areas (Transition Zones)

This district functions as a transition zone between other districts, with a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses. The density can vary significantly within this district, with some areas being denser and others more open. It combines housing, offices, and small businesses in a flexible and adaptable manner.



① District 1: Küçükçekmece Lake and Historical Surroundings (Natural and Historical District)

② District 2: Residential Areas Luxe (Residential District)

③ District 3: Residential Areas (Residential District)

④ District 4: Urban Center (Commercial and Cultural District)

⑤ District 5: Mixed Areas (Transition Zones)

⑥ District 6: Industrial and Commercial Area (Industrial District)

⑦ District 7: Industrial Center (Areas with a clear industrial presence)

The physical appearance of this district is diverse, with a combination of buildings, green spaces, and open areas, allowing for a smooth integration of various functions. This district acts as a buffer zone between residential and industrial/commercial areas.

District 6: Industrial and Commercial Area (Industrial District)

This district is characterized by light and heavy industry, as well as commercial activities. It has a functional, utilitarian character, with a mix of factories, warehouses, and business parks. The density is medium, with buildings closely packed together but interspersed with open spaces for industrial use, storage, and transportation. The physical appearance is dominated by large industrial structures, wide roads designed for freight transport, and minimal green spaces. The area is primarily designed for business and industrial use.

District 7: Industrial Center (Areas with a Clear Industrial Presence)

This district is dominated by industrial and commercial zones, with minimal residential areas. It includes factories, storage facilities, and industrial parks. The density is medium, with large buildings and wide roads designed for freight transport.

Conclusion

Each neighborhood has its own character and historical significance. By identifying the unique qualities of the districts in Küçükçekmece, such as architecture, streetscapes, or social structures, the urban identity can be preserved. It's essential to protect these districts from uncontrolled development and ensure that new buildings respect the existing context, preserving the historical value of the area.

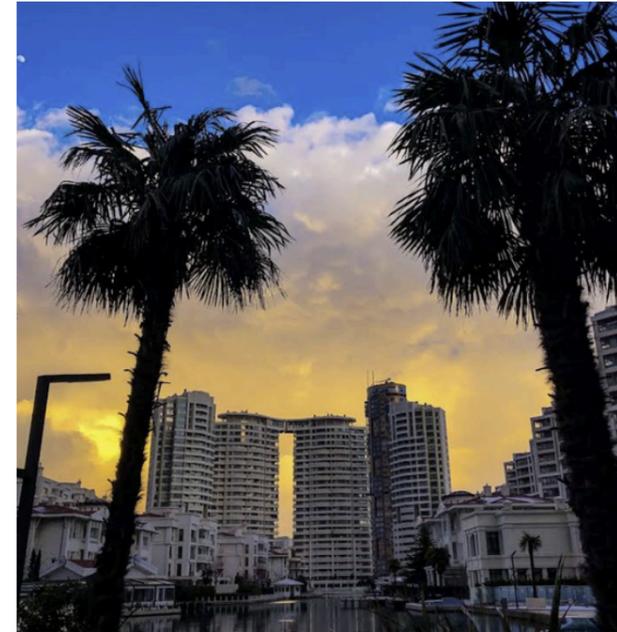


Figure 12, Küçükçekmece Districts

Nodes

Kevin Lynch describes nodes as strategic points with intensive use often located at junctions or connections.

There are several important nodes in the area of Küçükçekmece, each serving different functions within the urban structure. These nodes can be categorized into three main types: transport nodes, commercial & urban centers, and recreational & tourist nodes.

Transport Nodes

- Halkalı Station (Northeast): This is the primary public transport hub of Küçükçekmece, with connections via the Marmaray line, high-speed rail, and metro. Thousands of passengers pass through here daily, especially during rush hours. The station is also surrounded by shops, cafes, and restaurants, making it an urban hub.
- Basın Ekspres Yolu & E5 Metrobus Station (East): This is a crucial traffic artery with connections to the metrobus and metro. This node acts as a transition zone between Küçükçekmece and the adjacent districts of Bahçelievler and Bağcılar.
- D-100 Highway Node (South): A key interchange for car, bus, and metro traffic. This node is where the coastal road and the D-100 highway intersect, ensuring a continuous flow of traffic.

Commercial & Urban Centers

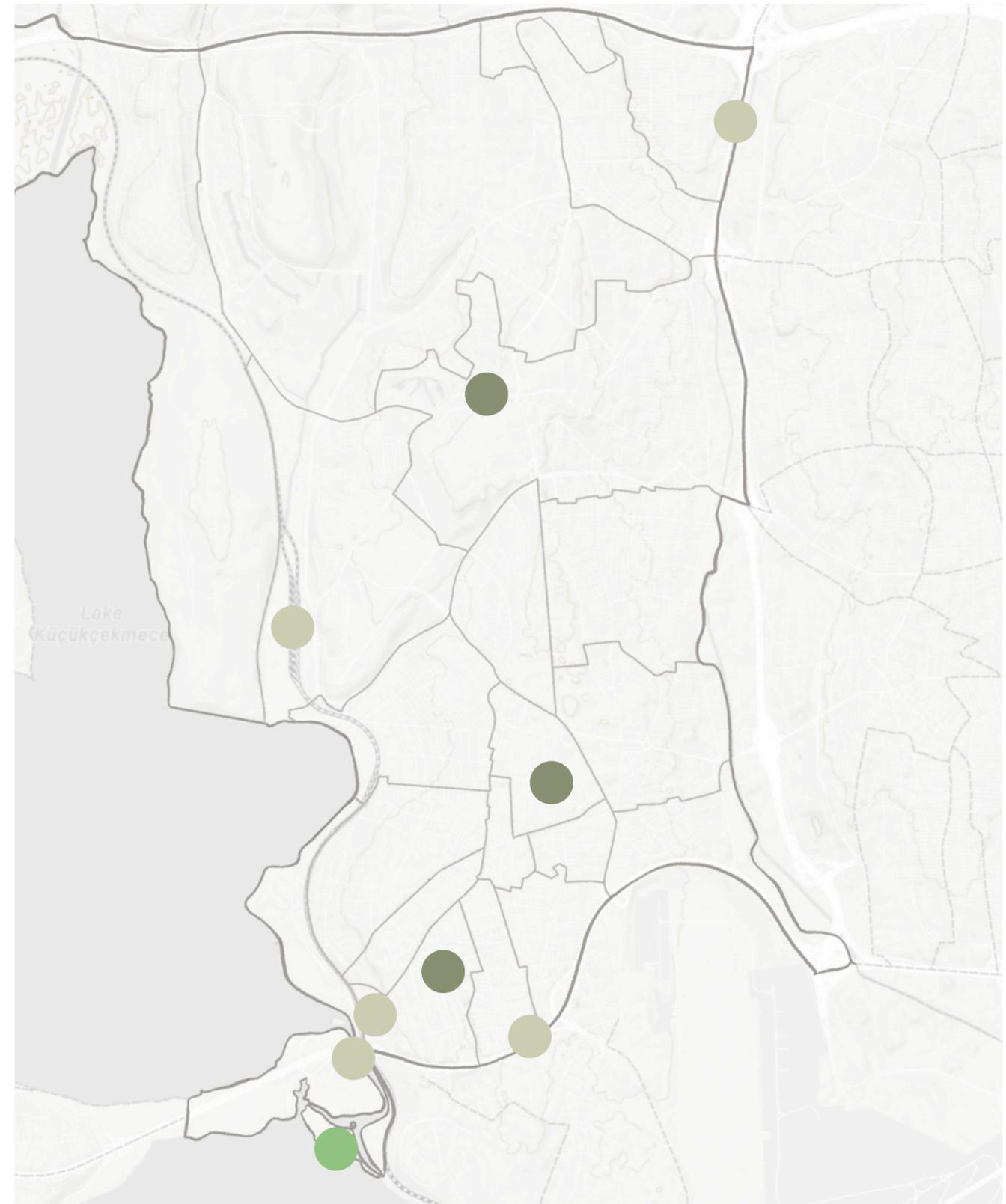
- Sefaköy Meydanı (Central): A significant commercial and public transport hub with numerous shops, markets, and daily activity. The square serves as a major transfer point for buses and dolmuş minibuses.
- İkitelli Organize Sanayi Bölgesi (North): This is an economic and industrial hub with numerous factories and businesses. Thousands of employees commute here daily. The infrastructure is primarily designed for logistics rather than pedestrian accessibility.

Recreational & Tourist Nodes

- Küçükçekmece Gölü Promenade (Southwest): This lakeside area is a significant recreational node, popular among walkers, cyclists, and families. It attracts many visitors, particularly on weekends and holidays. The connection to surrounding residential and commercial areas could be improved.
- Avcılar-Küçükçekmece Coastal Road (South): This node links the highway to the coastline and various residential neighborhoods. The area is used for both commercial traffic and recreational access to the coast.

Conclusion

Nodes are crucial locations in the city that serve as centers of activity. In Küçükçekmece, these could be historic squares, markets, or intersections of cultural importance. These nodes should be recognized and preserved, while strengthening them with new functions that reflect the local culture, such as cultural centers or markets that maintain the traditions of the neighborhood. Strengthening the connections between these nodes can help promote urban identity and support cultural life.



- Recreational & Tourist Nodes
- Commercial & Urban Centers
- Transport Nodes

Figure 13, Analysis - Nodes

3.2.2 Relations Between the Elements

When considering Kevin Lynch's elements in relation to each other, barriers emerge as the primary obstacle within the urban structure of Küçükçekmece. These barriers disrupt connectivity by preventing paths from linking different areas and nodes from developing or expanding. Additionally, they fragment districts, hindering their ability to integrate and grow into a cohesive urban fabric.

By reducing these barriers, Küçükçekmece can unlock new opportunities for urban development. Existing nodes have formed along the limited number of paths available in the area. Introducing more paths can facilitate movement, enhance accessibility, and create stronger and more interconnected nodes, ultimately improving the overall urban experience.

Furthermore, landmarks in Küçükçekmece are not evenly distributed across the district; they are concentrated mostly in the historical center. These landmarks play a crucial role in the collective memory and orientation of both residents and visitors.

Natural Features

The natural environment of Küçükçekmece has a direct impact on the identity of the area and how residents and visitors engage with it.

- **Küçükçekmece Lake:** This lake is the most prominent natural element in the area and serves as a key spatial reference and recreational attraction. It provides a contrast to the surrounding urban structures and plays a role in leisure activities, such as fishing, walking, and picnicking.
- **Green Spaces:** Parks and open spaces around the lake and in residential areas enhance the sense of openness and nature in an otherwise urbanized environment. These green areas contribute to a healthier urban living space, offering residents a place to relax and socialize.

- **Protected Area South of Küçükçekmece:** This area is one of the few places where historical elements have been preserved and actively used by locals. It represents an important cultural and ecological heritage within the region.
- **Agricultural role:** Küçükçekmece has historically played an agricultural role, with farming and fishing as key economic activities. The area was once known for its fertile soil and fish-rich waters. Küçükçekmece Lake was not only a recreational destination but also a fishing source that supported the local economy. Additionally, the surrounding fields and gardens contributed to Istanbul's food supply. This agricultural heritage is deeply rooted in the identity of Küçükçekmece, still remembered by the older generations, even though urban development has largely replaced these traditional practices.

Built Environment

The architecture of Küçükçekmece is highly diverse, featuring a mix of traditional neighborhoods, modern high-rises, and industrial zones. This diversity contributes to a layered urban identity but can also lead to fragmentation in how the area is perceived.

- **Traditional Neighborhoods:** Areas such as Sefaköy and Halkalı are characterized by low-rise buildings, narrow streets, and an organic urban structure. These areas preserve traces of historical architecture and small-scale housing, contributing to a sense of authenticity and a connection to the past.
- **Modern High-Rises:** In contrast, the planned high-rise complexes in Atakent and Bahçeşehir offer modern amenities and infrastructure but sometimes lack the social dynamics and spatial complexity of older neighborhoods. As a result, they may contribute less to a strong sense of place.
- **Industrial Zones:** The Menekşe area is dominated by large-scale industry. The Menekşe Kibrit Fabrikası (match factory) stands out in this zone, although only part of it remains in use. This highlights how industrial functions evolve over time, influencing both the urban landscape and the identity of a place.

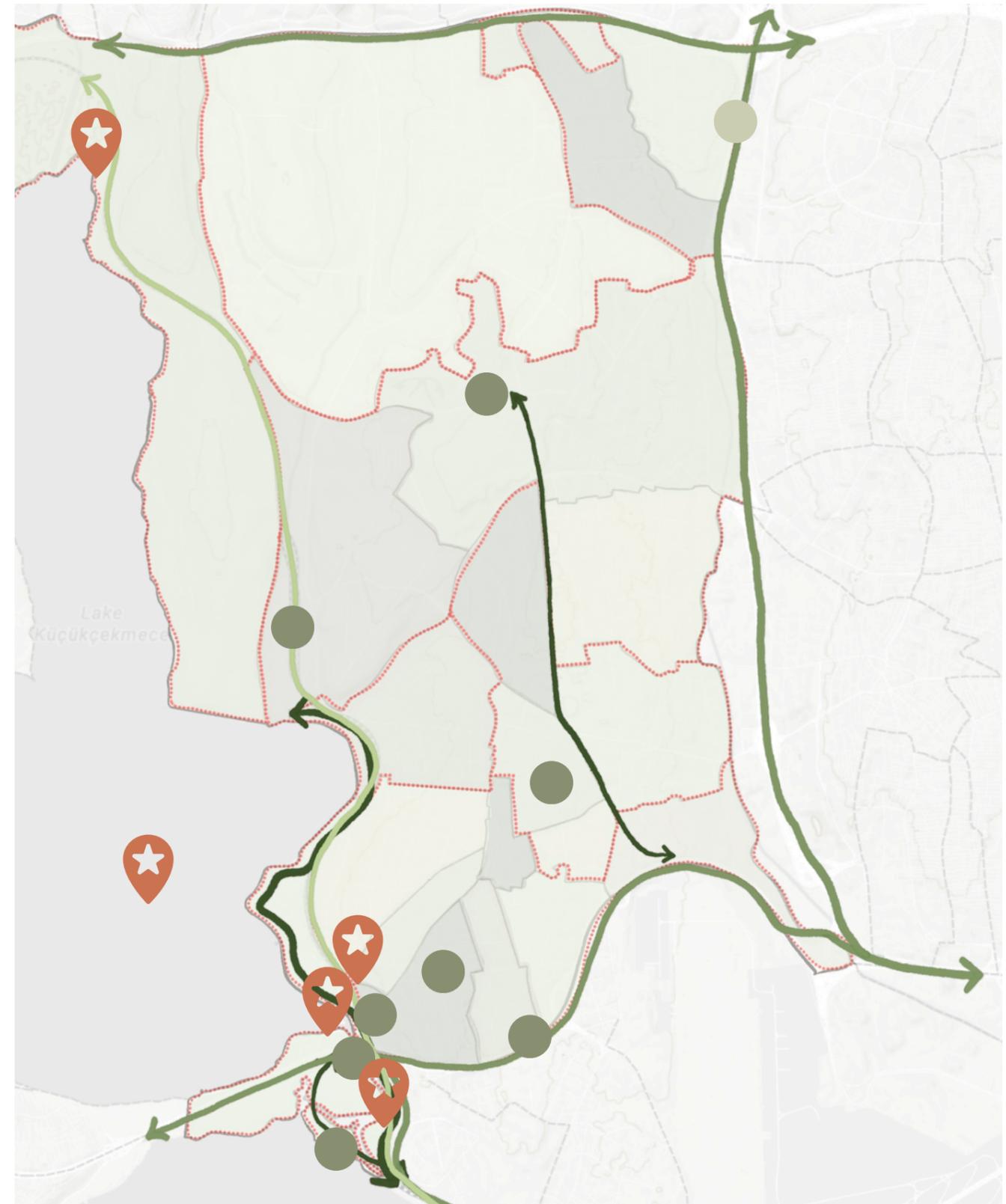


Figure 14, Combined Elements

Infrastructure

Küçükçekmece's infrastructure plays a crucial role in the connectivity and accessibility of the area. Roads, public transport, and other transportation systems greatly influence how residents and visitors experience the city.

- **Major Roads:** The D100 highway and E-5 are the main traffic arteries connecting Küçükçekmece to other parts of Istanbul. These roads provide high accessibility but also act as barriers, potentially dividing the urban structure and limiting interaction between different neighborhoods.
- **Public Transport:** The Küçükçekmece Metro Station and various bus lines serve as transportation hubs for daily mobility. While these transport options enhance connectivity, some parts of Küçükçekmece remain less accessible, influencing how residents move through the city and experience its urban identity.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the physical setting of Küçükçekmece through the lens of Kevin Lynch's theory, it becomes evident how the built and natural environment, together with infrastructural barriers and landmark distribution, shapes the way the area is experienced and perceived. These spatial conditions not only influence the urban identity but also determine the level of connectivity, accessibility, and emotional attachment residents have to their surroundings.

3.3 ACTIVITY

The other triangle consists of activities and functions. We will examine how Küçükçekmece is used and what role this plays in the identity of the area. Since the Küçükçekmece area is quite large, we will approach this on a more general scale, analyzing broader patterns and structures rather than detailed, local observations.

To understand the influence of activities on the identity of Küçükçekmece, we can make observations regarding space usage and human interactions. We will conduct this for different locations within Küçükçekmece. Through interviews and surveys with residents and visitors, we ensure that we capture their perceptions of the area. Through spatial and functional analysis, we can understand how the distribution of functions (housing, commerce, recreation) contributes to the identity.

Through field observations and site mapping, the following aspects have been analyzed:

- **Busy vs. quiet places:** Where do people gather, and which areas remain underutilized?
- **Types of activities:** Are there social, cultural, commercial, or recreational activities present?
- **Duration of stay:** Do people stay in certain places for a long time, or are they just passers-by?
- **Use of public space:** How are squares, parks, streets, and waterfronts utilized?

3.3.1 Findings from Observations

Observations show that the central markets and commercial streets of Küçükçekmece have a strong attraction, where hundreds of people gather daily. A wide range of activities takes place here, from commerce and informal meetings to street performances.

In contrast, there are various areas along the coastline and newly developed residential neighborhoods where little social interaction occurs. This may indicate signs of placelessness, where the space does not encourage active use and social connection.

3.3.2 Interviews and Surveys

In addition to observations, interviews were conducted with both residents and visitors of Küçükçekmece. The questions focused on:

- **Personal connection:** Do people feel at home in Küçükçekmece?
- **Changes over time:** Have developments changed the character of the area?
- **Experience of placelessness:** Are there places that are perceived as generic or meaningless?

3.3.3 Findings from Interviews

The majority of those interviewed indicated feeling a strong connection to Küçükçekmece due to the social and cultural activities, especially around markets and historical areas, and because they grew up there with many memories. However, younger generations experience a weaker sense of place, especially in the newer urban developments where there are fewer public meeting places. Some respondents mentioned the loss of traditional shops and small-scale businesses as a factor threatening the identity of the area.

3.3.4 Spatial and Functional Analysis

Based on the distribution of functions and the use of space, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- **Strong areas with a sense of place:** Traditional markets, streets with small-scale commerce, and older residential neighborhoods have a strong identity and are heavily used.
- **Areas with signs of placelessness:** Large-scale, newly developed residential neighborhoods and business centers seem to generate less interaction and engagement from residents.
- **Movement patterns and accessibility:** Infrastructure plays a significant role in how connected or fragmented an area feels. The presence of barriers (such as highways) can disrupt the cohesion of a neighborhood.

3.3.5 Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that activities and functions play a crucial role in the perception of place and identity in Küçükçekmece. Areas with a rich mix of functions, social interaction, and cultural activities contribute to a strong sense of place, while a lack of these elements can lead to placelessness.

To preserve and strengthen the identity of Küçükçekmece, the following recommendations are made:

- Preservation and promotion of traditional functions and meeting places, such as markets and public spaces.
- Development of newer residential areas with more focus on social interaction and public spaces.
- Improvement of accessibility and connectivity between different parts of the district to strengthen cohesion within Küçükçekmece.



Figure 15, Central markets, commercial streets, gathering places



Figure 16, Places showing placelessness

3.4 MEANING

In this final step, we examine the meaning people assign to Küçükçekmece, which is essential to the area's identity. This is done by exploring its historical significance and how this has been passed down over time, offering insight into how Küçükçekmece's historical identity continues to shape the present. During the site visit, conversations were held with various individuals in both Küçükçekmece and Istanbul to understand how the area is perceived. To uncover its meaning, the focus lies on three aspects: Historical Significance and Continuity, Personal Stories, and Symbolic Values and Cultural Representation.

3.4.1 Historical Significance and Continuity

Understanding the historical significance of Küçükçekmece is essential to uncovering how the area's identity has developed over time. The long history, from ancient settlements around the Küçükçekmece Lake to Ottoman structures and modern urban developments, reflects a layered urban identity where different time periods converge.

Heritage and Collective Memory

Although many historical elements have been lost due to urban growth, certain remnants, such as old neighborhoods, religious buildings, and industrial structures, continue to serve as tangible memories of the past. These places contribute to the collective memory, passing down history to future generations.

This is especially evident in Küçükçekmece Meydanı in the Fatih district. This area has undergone significant changes over the years but once served as a central meeting point for the community. The transformation of this public space reflects broader urban developments and the changing social dynamics within the district.

Another example is the Menekşe Kibrit Fabrikası, a former matchstick factory that once played an important role in the local economy and identity of Küçükçekmece. Today, the building is largely empty, with only a small portion still in use. As a result, the factory has lost its active role in the area's identity. Once a bustling workplace that fostered economic activity and brought the community together, it now stands as an abandoned structure, disconnected from the current urban context. This highlights how industrial heritage, without adaptive reuse, can slowly lose its meaning and relevance to the city.

Nevertheless, the factory still lives on in the collective memory of residents, especially among older generations who had family members working in the factory. Stories shared during interviews reveal nostalgic memories of the factory as a symbol of pride, stability, and community cohesion. For many, it is not merely a building, but a marker of a past way of life—of a time when local production and shared labor contributed to a strong sense of place. These memories continue to shape how people emotionally relate to their environment, even as the physical space itself decays.

In addition, Küçükçekmece's agricultural heritage, once characterized by fertile land and local food production, can still be traced in small, everyday practices. Although many of these areas have been replaced by housing developments, traces remain in the form of small vegetable gardens that residents maintain in courtyards or between buildings. These modest green spaces act as living reminders of a rural past, reflecting the area's deep-rooted connection to cultivation and self-sufficiency.



Mimar sinan Bridge in the Past



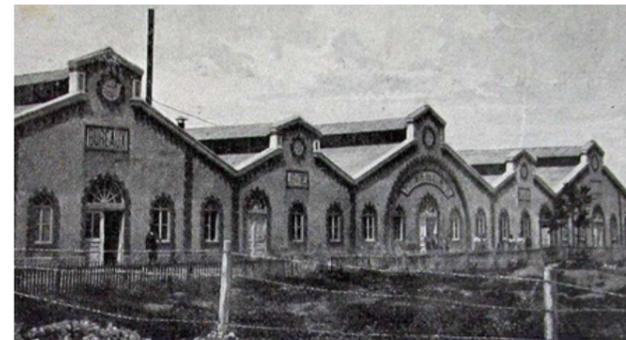
Mimar sinan Bridge currently



Küçükçekmece Square, 19th century



Küçükçekmece Square, currently



Menekşe Match Factory, 1896



Menekşe Match Factory, currently



Menekşe area agriculture



Menekşe area, currently

Transmission of Identity

The way historical stories are passed down, through oral history, architecture, public spaces, and local traditions, strongly influences how people relate to their city, as emerged from the interviews conducted in Küçükçekmece.

In Küçükçekmece, identity is primarily transmitted through the stories of older generations, who share memories of how the area used to look and function. However, many young people feel less connected to this historical identity. This is partly because many of them moved to the area later and are not necessarily familiar with the district's original settlements. Additionally, the disappearance of traditional crafts has led local communities, historically closely tied to Küçükçekmece, to leave the area in search of work in other parts of the city.

It is notable that outside the museum in the municipal building, there are no public spaces where the history of Küçükçekmece is visibly presented. This lack of physical representation of the past makes it more difficult for residents to connect with the historical identity of the area.

As a result, the collective memory of the past risks fading, and new generations may experience a sense of placelessness rather than a strong connection to their living environment. Due to these social and spatial changes, the historical identity of Küçükçekmece is becoming less visible and less actively experienced. This raises the question of whether urban transformations contribute to the preservation or, conversely, the fading of the area's original identity.

3.4.2 Personal Stories and Daily Experience

In addition to historical significance, personal stories and everyday experiences play a crucial role in the emotional and psychological meaning that Küçükçekmece holds for its residents. The way people experience their daily lives, navigate through the city, and build memories directly contributes to the perception and identity of the place.

Perspectives of Residents

Testimonies from long-term residents who have lived in Küçükçekmece for many years reveal how the area has changed and how these transformations have affected their connection to the place.

- Long-term residents who have experienced rapid urban growth sometimes feel a sense of loss as recognizable places disappear. This may involve old shopping streets that have been replaced by large residential complexes or neighborhoods that have lost their social cohesion due to large-scale transformations.
- For newcomers to Küçükçekmece, the focus is less on nostalgia and more on the accessibility and functionality of the neighborhood. They build their own meaning within the contemporary urban landscape.

Social Connectivity and Loss of Traditions

Küçükçekmece is a place where social interactions, traditions, and shared experiences contribute to the community's identity. Markets, mosques, cafés, and the lake form important gathering spots where residents come together. These are not only physical locations but also symbolic spaces where meaning is continuously created and redefined.

Interviews have shown that many residents are concerned about the loss of traditional fishing activities in Küçükçekmece due to water pollution and ecological changes in the lake. Fishing was not only an economic activity but also an important cultural element that connected generations. Families shared fishing techniques and recipes, and fishing by the lakeside was a social activity that strengthened the community.

Due to the deteriorating water quality and decreasing fish populations, residents fear that an essential part of the local identity is being lost. This contributes to a growing sense of alienation from the area and a shift in how people feel connected to it.

Generational Differences and Changing Experiences

The way different generations experience Küçükçekmece shows how urban identity evolves:

- Older generations often associate the district with tradition, stability, and a familiar social structure. They recall a time when communities were closer-knit, and the neighborhood had a more small-scale and recognizable character.
- Younger generations experience the area differently, influenced by modern infrastructure, digital connectivity, and changing lifestyles. The presence of new shopping centers, social media, and a more diverse population has altered the perception of urban identity.
- The decline of traditional crafts and the departure of families who had lived in Küçükçekmece for generations has weakened the emotional connection to the area. Many young people feel less connected to the historical identity, especially since it is not prominently presented in the public space.

3.4.3 Symbolic Values and Cultural Representation

Symbolic values help us understand how people relate to their surroundings and whether they feel connected to Küçükçekmece.

Landmarks as Carriers of Identity

Places such as the Küçükçekmece Lake, historical mosques, the Mimar Sinan Bridge, and Fisherman's Island serve as symbols of local identity. The Mimar Sinan Bridge is not only an important connection route but also an icon for the city's history. Fisherman's Island has its origins in fishing traditions that are of great importance to many residents. The loss of the Menekşe Kibrit Factory, which now stands empty, illustrates how a building can lose its significance when it loses its function. Preserving these places is essential for the continuity of urban identity.

Cultural Expressions

Lokale kunst, muziek, markten en culinaire tradities spelen een belangrijke rol in het versterken van de culturele betekenis van het gebied. In Küçükçekmece hecht de gemeenschap veel waarde aan het gezamenlijk ondernemen van activiteiten, zoals buurtfeesten, sportevenementen aan het meer en lokale marktdagen. Deze gezamenlijke belevingen dragen sterk bij aan de sociale cohesie en de levendigheid van de wijk. Bewoners vrezen echter dat de vervuiling van het meer zal leiden tot het verdwijnen van de traditionele visserij, een belangrijk cultureel symbool.

Emotional Connection versus Placelessness

When cultural symbols are preserved, a strong emotional bond with the area is formed. However, if standardized urban development takes over, placelessness can occur, where the area loses its uniqueness. The lack of historical representation, aside from the municipal museum, contributes to this loss of connection.

SENSE OF KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE

The "sense of place" of Küçükçekmece, based on Edward Relph's theory, can be described as a complex interaction between physical characteristics, activities, and the meaning that residents attach to it. The identity of Küçükçekmece is mainly concentrated in the historical center, located in the south of the district. Here, past and present come together in a unique spatial and cultural experience. It is a combination of the physical environment (such as Küçükçekmece Lake, historical buildings, and infrastructure), the activities that take place (such as local fishing traditions and the daily life of residents), and the personal and collective significance residents give to this environment.

Sense of Küçükçekmece:

- **Physical Setting:** Küçükçekmece is characterized by its natural and built environment. The lake plays a central role in the identity of the area, serving as a historical source of fishing and recreation, while the surrounding neighborhoods and industrial areas reflect the urban transformation. These physical features provide a foundation for the experience of the place.
- **Activities and Functions:** The daily life of the residents is deeply influenced by local activities, such as fishing on the lake, visiting markets, and engaging in social interactions in public spaces. However, due to urban expansion and pollution of the lake, these activities are slowly disappearing, affecting the residents' connection to their place.
- **Meaning and Culture:** Küçükçekmece has strong historical and cultural significance, shaped by its agricultural past and the fishing traditions that defined the area. The symbolic value of the lake and the old buildings representing history remains strong with the older generation but is sometimes less felt by younger generations. There is a sense of loss, especially due to the disappearance of traditional practices.

The "sense of Küçükçekmece" is therefore layered and dynamic. The historical identity, strongly connected to the natural environment and agricultural activities, is primarily located in the southern, historical center of Küçükçekmece. However, this identity is increasingly challenged by urban transformation, pollution, and modernization. The residents experience a mix of connection and loss: the older generation clings to the historical and cultural significance of the place, while the younger generation often experiences the area differently and sometimes feels less connected to its past.

Urban identity is not just about the physical appearance of a place; it encompasses the collective memory, traditions, and values of the people who live there.

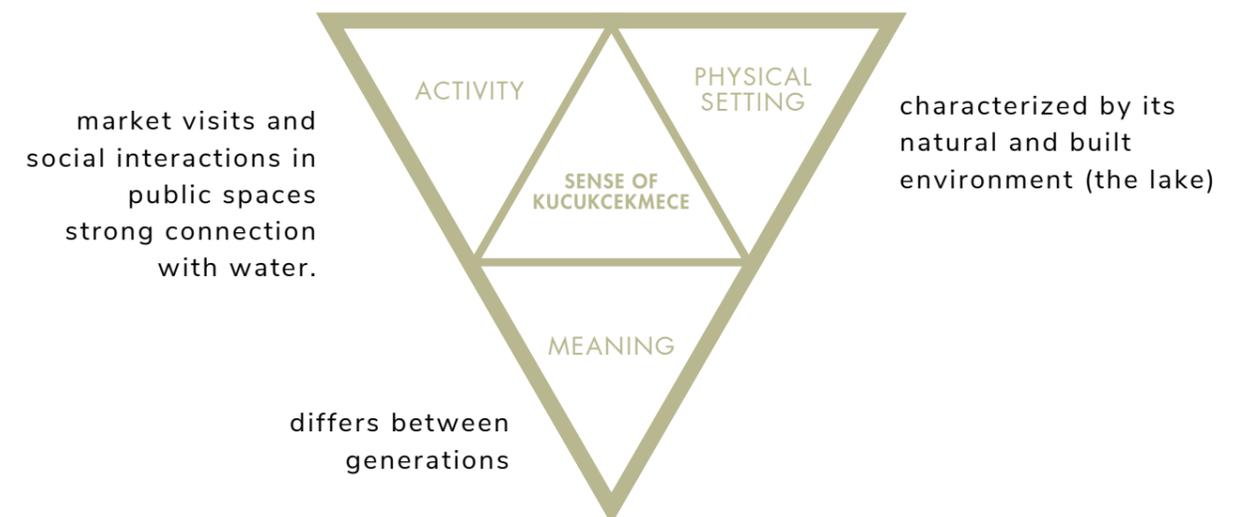


Figure 18, Diagram made by the author

04. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE URBANIZATION

2. What are the main challenges facing the urbanization of Küçükçekmece, and how do these challenges impact the preservation of its cultural and historical identity?

Now that the sense of Küçükçekmece has been mapped out, this chapter explores how urbanization has influenced the area's identity. Istanbul, a city with a rich history spanning thousands of years, has experienced rapid urbanization in recent decades. As Turkey's largest city and economic hub, it has attracted millions of migrants from rural areas, leading to significant population growth and widespread urban sprawl. This swift transformation has reshaped both the physical and social fabric of the city, bringing with it a range of opportunities as well as challenges. The neighborhood of Küçükçekmece has also been deeply impacted by this wave of urban change.

4.1 IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON URBAN IDENTITY

The rapid urbanization of Istanbul has had a profound impact on the city's urban identity. The construction of high-rise buildings, shopping malls, and transportation infrastructure has often come at the expense of historical landmarks, traditional neighborhoods, and public spaces (Keyder, 1999).. This has led to the erosion of cultural heritage and the loss of a sense of place in many parts of the city. But how has it affected the district Küçükçekmece?

4.2 IMPACT ON KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE

Küçükçekmece, a district on the European side of Istanbul, exemplifies the challenges of preserving urban identity in the face of rapid urbanization.

Once a quiet, predominantly rural area, Küçükçekmece has experienced significant development in recent years, driven by its proximity to the city center and transportation networks. This development has brought economic growth and improved infrastructure but has also led to the loss of cultural heritage and the displacement of long-standing communities.

4.2.1 How has Küçükçekmece grown?

With over 800,000 residents, including both local inhabitants and foreigners, Küçükçekmece has become the second-largest municipality in the city Istanbul. Since the 1980s, the district has undergone significant transformation, primarily driven by internal migration from various parts of Anatolia. This wave of migration has turned Küçükçekmece into a thriving industrial and service hub, where new residents sought opportunities in Istanbul's rapidly growing economy.

Since April 29, 2011, Turkey, and particularly Küçükçekmece, has experienced a new wave of migration, this time of a foreign nature. Due to the political and humanitarian crisis in Syria and other countries, many refugees and migrants have settled in the district. Since 2015, Küçükçekmece has become a key settlement area for these new residents. For these people, factors such as employment opportunities, relatively low living costs, and the presence of support networks play a crucial role in their decision to settle here.

4.2.2 What has led to challenges?

The challenges that Küçükçekmece faces today have their origins in a profound transformation the district has undergone since the late 19th century. Küçükçekmece was once a rural area with a strong agricultural and fishing-based economy. The fertile land and proximity to the Küçükçekmece Lake, which was of great importance to local communities as a source of water and fish, determined the rhythm of daily life. Until well into the 20th century, the area lay outside the core of Istanbul and was relatively isolated from the larger urban changes taking place in the metropolis.

The first signs of change appeared in the second half of the 19th century, when the industrialization of Istanbul gradually began to influence the surrounding areas as well. The construction of transport infrastructure, such as railways, increasingly connected Küçükçekmece with the city. This marked the beginning of the transformation from a rural zone to a more industrial area. Factories, such as the famous Kibrit Fabrikası (match factory), were established in the district, leading to the rise of industry and new job opportunities for the surrounding villages.

After World War II, Küçükçekmece underwent an acceleration of the urbanization process. Istanbul rapidly expanded westward, and Küçükçekmece, once a remote area, was quickly integrated into the urban fabric of the metropolis. This period was marked by a large influx of migrants from rural areas, seeking work and better living conditions in the city.

The population of Küçükçekmece grew explosively, leading to a massive demand for housing, infrastructure, and public services. Many new residents settled in informal settlements or temporary housing, resulting in the rapid expansion of neighborhoods of varying quality. At the same time, the industry expanded further, causing the district to evolve from an industrial enclave to a mixed area with both industrial zones and residential areas.

With the arrival of new residents from different parts of Turkey and later from abroad, Küçükçekmece became a melting pot of cultures and backgrounds. This diversity brought new dynamics and opportunities, but also complex challenges. The interest in the area became increasingly diverse, leading to the need for expansion and modernization. However, this rapid growth and changes often came at the cost of existing social structures, cultural traditions, and the natural environment.

4.2.3 How Does Küçükçekmece Handle This Growth?

The rapid population growth, driven by both internal and external migration, has posed significant challenges for Küçükçekmece. The district has had to adapt to the needs of a rapidly growing and changing population, which has led to profound changes in the social and physical structure of the area (Eraydin & Tasan-Kok, 2014). However, this transformation also brings problems that put pressure on the livability, sustainability, and cultural identity of an city (Harvey, 2008) and in this cade Kucukcekmece.

By examining the challenges that have led to these significant changes in the social and physical structure, we can map out where the challenges lie in the further development of Küçükçekmece, which is still continuing to grow.

Social Challenges: Diversity and Cohesion

The arrival of new residents, both from Anatolia and abroad, has profoundly changed the social dynamics of Küçükçekmece. On one hand, this diversity has enriched the district, but on the other hand, it has also led to tensions and challenges. The integration of new residents, particularly refugees, is a complex process (İçduygu, 2015). Many Syrians live in isolated communities, which can lead to social fragmentation and a lack of cohesion between different groups.

Moreover, the rapid population growth has significantly increased the pressure on social services, such as schools, healthcare, and public spaces (Kucukcekmece, 2024). This has led to overburdening and inequality in access to these services, which particularly affects the poorer neighborhoods. The lack of investment in social infrastructure has caused many residents, both old and new, to not feel fully at home in their own neighborhoods.

Due to the decreasing number of local residents, traditions have also diminished, which can affect the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece. The decline in local residents and their community structures can lead to the loss of vibrant cultural practices and traditional knowledge that are essential to the identity of the neighborhood, and this knowledge cannot be passed down.

Environmental Challenges: Urbanization and Nature Conservation

The rapid urbanization of Küçükçekmece has had significant environmental consequences. Green spaces and natural landscapes, such as the Küçükçekmece Lake and surrounding parks, are under pressure from the expansion of residential areas and industrial complexes. This has not only led to a loss of biodiversity but also to the deterioration of the living environment for residents.

Additionally, industrialization has led to environmental pollution, particularly in Küçükçekmece Lake. Air pollution, water contamination, and poor waste management are common issues that affect the health of residents and the attractiveness of the area (Karaman, 2013).

Climate change exacerbates these problems, with floods and heatwaves occurring more frequently. Furthermore, the lake is no longer suitable for fishing, which has led to the decline of traditional fishing practices in the area. This issue has been ongoing since industrialization, causing many fishermen to find other jobs or move to different cities for employment opportunities.

Economic Challenges and Development

Alongside social and environmental pressures, Küçükçekmece also faces significant economic challenges. As the population grows, so does the demand for jobs, infrastructure, and economic stability. However, the local economy has struggled to keep pace with this growth. Many migrants and low-income residents work in informal or precarious jobs, lacking stability and long-term prospects.

Moreover, while industrial areas provide some employment, they often do so at the cost of environmental degradation and are not well integrated into the broader urban fabric. There is also a noticeable imbalance in the distribution of economic resources between older neighborhoods and newly developed areas, which leads to further inequality.

A lack of support for small-scale, locally rooted businesses has also contributed to a loss of identity and missed opportunities for sustainable economic development. Revitalizing local economies through heritage-based tourism, cultural industries, and inclusive job creation strategies could serve as a path toward strengthening both the economy and identity of Küçükçekmece (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2020).

Impact on Cultural and Historical Identity

These challenges have a direct impact on the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece. The rapid urbanization and industrialization have led to the disappearance of traditional neighborhoods and historic buildings, making way for modern high-rises and industrial complexes.

This has not only changed the physical appearance of the district but also weakened the connection between residents and their heritage (Lynch, 1960; Relph, 1976).

The influx of new residents, both from Anatolia and abroad, has led to a shift in the social and cultural dynamics of Küçükçekmece. Traditional customs, such as local markets, festivals, and crafts, are at risk of disappearing unless they are actively protected and promoted (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2014). At the same time, the growing diversity has enriched the cultural identity, but it has also led to tensions between different groups (İçduygu, 2015).

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4.2.4 A Balance Between Growth and Preservation

Küçükçekmece faces the challenge of finding a balance between growth and preservation. On one hand, the district's transformation offers opportunities for development and improvements in quality of life. On the other hand, the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece risks being lost if social, economic, and environmental issues are not addressed.

To tackle these challenges, it is essential to invest in the development of the area.

At the same time, the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece must be central to urban planning, so that the district can develop into a modern, livable city without losing its unique character. However, this raises the question: **How can the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece be integrated into urban planning, with the involvement of local communities and authorities, to ensure that the district develops into a modern, livable city while preserving its unique character?**

This question will be further explored in the contextual analysis in the next chapter.

Evolution of Küçükçekmece

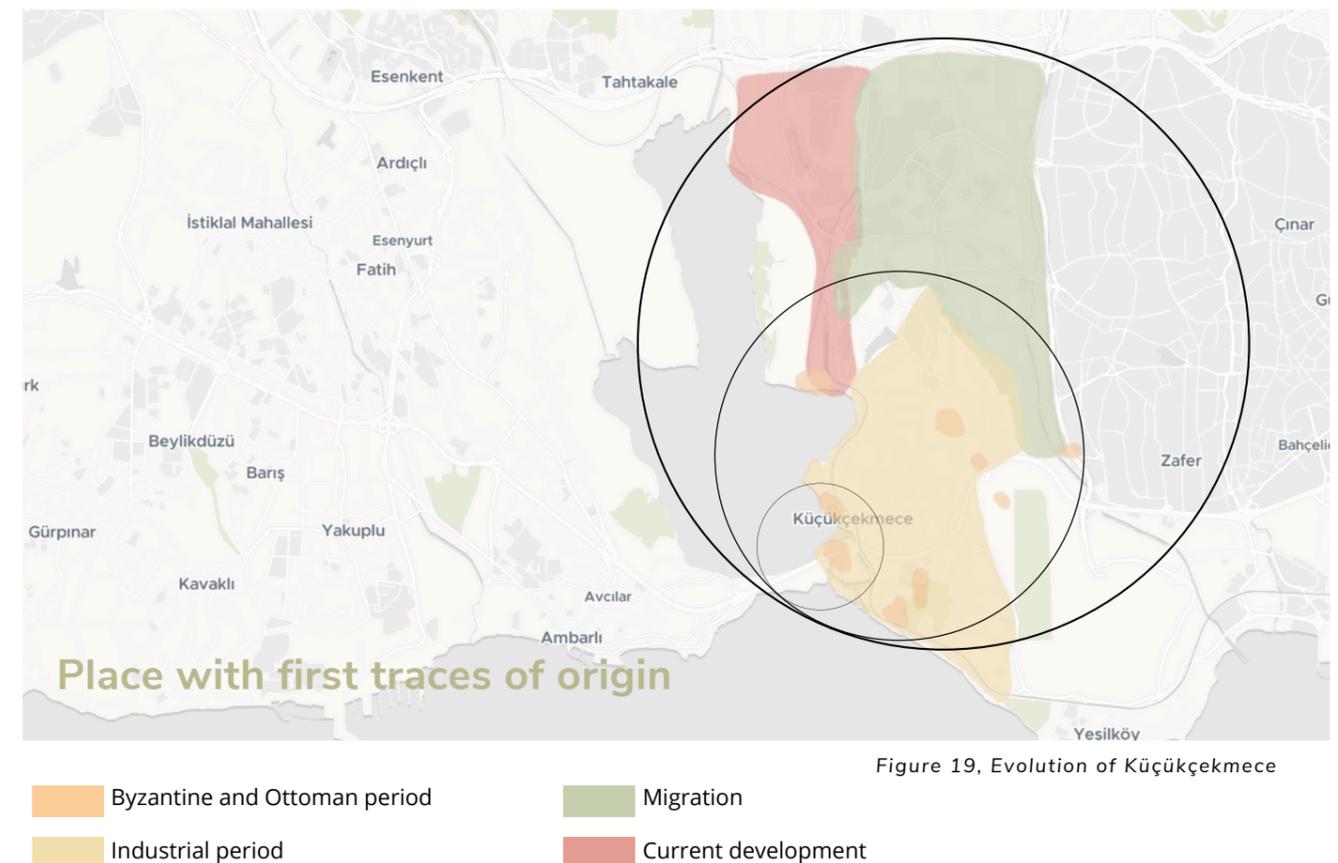


Figure 19, Evolution of Küçükçekmece

05. INTEGRATING CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL IDENTITY INTO URBAN DEVELOPMENT

3. How can the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece be integrated into urban planning, with the involvement of local communities and authorities, to ensure that the district develops into a modern, livable city while preserving its unique character?

To determine how the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece can be placed at the center of urban planning, it is essential to first investigate how the municipality and residents currently interact with and engage in the area's urban identity.

This requires understanding both the institutional efforts of the local government and the perspective of residents themselves, especially in relation to the transformations driven by urbanization. Studying how the municipality integrates historical and cultural elements into urban planning can reveal existing strategies or gaps that need addressing. Similarly, analyzing residents' attachment to their environment can show how they experience changes and to what extent they preserve or lose their cultural ties amid rapid development.

By focusing on both government actions and local engagement, we can identify existing efforts to preserve and promote the cultural identity of Küçükçekmece, as well as areas for improvement or new approaches. This exploration will also help identify key elements, such as monuments, traditions, and local practices, that must be prioritized in planning processes to maintain the unique character of the district while guiding its development into a modern, vibrant city.

The next phase of the research will further elaborate on this through interviews, policy analyses, and observations of how both local authorities and residents contribute to or hinder the preservation of cultural identity within an urbanizing context.

5.1 Field Observations

During the site visit to Küçükçekmece, various observations were made regarding the area's historical and cultural identity. Different neighborhoods were explored to examine how historical locations have evolved over time. Contrary to expectations, the area did not visibly reflect its historical significance; it appeared more as a densely populated and aging urban environment resembling a suburb of Istanbul rather than a distinct historic district.

A key site visited was Küçükçekmece Square (Meydanı), an important urban space featuring a historically valuable fountain. However, there were no clear indicators of the fountain's historical relevance, making it unrecognizable as a heritage site to visitors without prior knowledge.

Another key location was the Mimar Sinan Bridge, an important historical infrastructure linked to the ancient Via Egnatia trade route. Despite the bridge's significance, only a small plaque noting its association with Mimar Sinan was found, without any further context. Further research revealed that the bridge had undergone name changes and held considerable historical value, none of which was evident on-site.

Adjacent to the bridge lies the Fishermen's Island, known as the oldest settlement area in Küçükçekmece, historically populated by fishermen. Again, despite its historical importance, there were no signs or references highlighting this legacy.

The only place where historical information was visibly provided was at the Küçükçekmece Lagoon, where an information board detailed the history of the area. This was the sole example of publicly accessible historical information, highlighting the general absence of visible acknowledgment or celebration of Küçükçekmece's cultural heritage.

In the Menekşe/Fatih area, the Menekşe Kibrit Factory, Istanbul's first match factory, remains standing. Although the building has lost its original function, it is still physically present. The factory consists of five sections, one used for photo shoots and the others for storage. Despite its size and historical importance, the structure sees little to no activity, making it a silent and underutilized presence within the urban landscape.



Figure 20, Historical signs

5.2 Resident Interviews

Interviews conducted during the site visit provided valuable insights into how residents perceive their neighborhood's identity. Many residents emphasized a strong sense of community, describing Küçükçekmece as a place where neighbors know and support each other, creating a warm and connected atmosphere. For some, moving to the district was a family-driven decision, underlining the value of social ties.

Despite this sense of belonging, there was widespread concern about ongoing changes. While parts of Küçükçekmece have remained largely unchanged, luxury real estate developments near the lake have shifted the district's social fabric. These developments attract new residents who may not share the same backgrounds or communal values, leading to changes in the neighborhood's identity. Some interviewees expressed concern that these developments are targeted toward a different demographic, making Küçükçekmece feel less like "their" neighborhood.

Residents also discussed the area's historical and cultural significance. Although Küçükçekmece has a rich history, there is little visible effort to highlight or preserve it. Historically significant sites are often overlooked or poorly marked, making it difficult for both residents and visitors to recognize their importance. Many felt that the district's history is gradually disappearing under the pressure of modernization and a general lack of public awareness.

Another recurring theme was concern about the future. Many residents fear that large-scale urban projects could lead to displacement, rising living costs, and the loss of their homes. While economic benefits are often cited to justify redevelopment, there is skepticism about who will actually benefit. There is a strong fear that original residents will be pushed out in favor of wealthier newcomers, causing Küçükçekmece's unique identity to be lost.

Above all, residents expressed a strong desire to have their voices heard in the planning and decision-making process. They emphasized that Küçükçekmece's identity is not defined by its buildings, but by its people. Without attention to the existing community, the district risks losing its distinctive character.

5.3 Current State of Küçükçekmece's Cultural and Historical Identity

Field observations indicate that despite Küçükçekmece's rich history, its identity is not visibly integrated into the urban fabric. Many historical locations, such as Küçükçekmece Square and the Mimar Sinan Bridge, lack clear markers of their importance. For visitors without prior knowledge, recognizing the area's historical relevance is difficult. The absence of interpretive signage and conservation efforts contributes to the gradual fading of Küçükçekmece's identity in the modern cityscape.

Additionally, the Menekşe Kibrit Factory, as Istanbul's first match factory, represents a significant piece of Küçükçekmece's heritage. However, it is underutilized, and the area lacks vibrancy and engagement with its historical assets.

Rapid urbanization is also introducing new developments that starkly contrast with the existing character of the area. Luxury housing projects around the lake attract a different demographic, altering the district's social and economic balance. Resident interviews reveal that these changes often prioritize commercial interests over community needs, creating a growing divide between the old and new parts of the district.

5.4 Awareness and Actions of the Municipality

The Municipality of Küçükçekmece is aware of the challenges posed by urbanization. In response, it has launched several programs aimed at improving the district's quality of life. Activities for both young and old are regularly organized, focusing on educational and recreational goals that strengthen community ties. These events reflect the municipality's strong emphasis on arts and culture.

In 2019, the municipality conducted an impact analysis to better understand the effects of urbanization. Surveys were also developed to gather residents' opinions and insights. These findings are being used to draft the 2025–2029 strategic plan, which focuses on making the district more accessible, culturally rich, and socially supportive.

5.4.1 Resident-Oriented Strategies

Under the slogan "Kültür sanat rüzgârı, Küçükçekmece'de esmeye devam ediyor" ("The wind of arts and culture continues to blow in Küçükçekmece"), the municipality organizes a wide range of cultural and educational events. These include workshops, theater performances, film screenings, and exhibitions for all age groups.

Through this accessible programming, the municipality seeks to strengthen social cohesion and cultural engagement, despite the challenges of rapid urbanization. Residents can easily track and register for events via an online calendar, reinforcing the role of culture as a tool for community-building.

5.4.2 Resident Surveys municipality

As mentioned earlier, in 2019, a document was prepared to investigate how the municipality could better address residents' needs amidst urbanization and migration. Surveys revealed that accessibility was the residents' primary concern, followed by "no problems," and then a lack of parks and green spaces (see Figure 21).

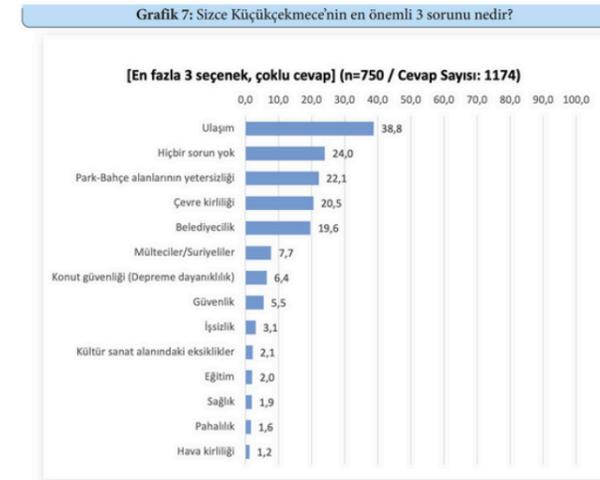


Figure 21, Survey from the 2019 report

In the 2025–2029 strategic plan, residents were asked how they envision the future of Küçükçekmece. Most respondents chose "an educational center," followed by "a center for cultural and artistic activities," and "a healthcare center" (see Figure 22).

These data provide valuable insights into how both the municipality and residents envision the district's future.

TABLO 49 : KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE GELECEKTE NASIL BİR İLÇE OLMALIDIR? (Vatandaş Anketi)

| Kavramlar | Frekans | Yüzde |
|--|---------|-------|
| Eğitim Merkezi | 2616 | 61,58 |
| Kültürel ve Sanatsal Faaliyetler Merkezi | 2071 | 48,75 |
| Sağlık Hizmeti merkezi | 1788 | 42,09 |
| Spor Merkezi | 1678 | 39,50 |
| Teknoloji Merkezi | 1514 | 35,64 |
| Öğrenci Merkezi | 1295 | 30,48 |
| Eğlence Merkezi | 1180 | 27,78 |
| Alışveriş ve Yaşam Merkezi | 1000 | 23,54 |
| Ticaret Merkezi | 932 | 21,94 |
| Turizm Merkezi | 704 | 16,57 |
| Finans Merkezi | 701 | 16,50 |
| Küçük ve Orta Düzeyde İmalat Merkezi | 603 | 14,19 |
| Sanayi Üretim Merkezi | 510 | 12,01 |
| Lojistik Merkezi | 394 | 9,27 |

Figure 22, Strategic Plan 2025-2029 Küçükçekmece

5.4.3 conclusion of Roles and Perspectives of Local Communities and Municipal Authorities

The roles and perspectives of local communities and municipal authorities in shaping the future of Küçükçekmece are intertwined, as both groups play crucial parts in the district's development and the preservation of its identity.

Local Communities: Residents of Küçükçekmece are actively involved in the ongoing transformation of their district. Many express concerns about being inadequately informed about urban changes and highlight the lack of educational and cultural spaces.

Interviews and surveys indicate that residents feel the need for more venues that cater to historical, cultural, and educational development.

These insights are crucial for understanding the local community's priorities and desires, which include not only improving infrastructure but also ensuring that the district's cultural and historical identity is preserved amidst urbanization. The community's participation in various cultural and artistic activities, organized by the municipality, showcases their interest in staying connected to their heritage while embracing modern development.

Municipal Authorities: The municipality of Küçükçekmece is taking a proactive role in responding to the needs of the community, particularly in the face of rapid urbanization and increasing immigration. They recognize the challenges posed by these changes, such as the pressure on social infrastructure and the risk of cultural erosion.

Through regular surveys and engagement activities, the municipality has gathered feedback from residents to better understand their needs. For example, the 2019 document highlighted key issues such as accessibility, the lack of parks and green spaces, and the need for more educational and cultural centers. The municipality is using these insights to create a strategic plan for 2025-2029, focusing on enhancing cultural, educational, and healthcare facilities in the district.

How can the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece be integrated into urban planning, with the involvement of local communities and authorities, to ensure that the district develops into a modern, livable city while preserving its unique character?

Collaboration between the local community and municipal authorities is essential to ensure the preservation of Küçükçekmece's identity. The community's need for more educational and cultural spaces can guide municipal planning, ensuring that these spaces reflect the district's history and culture. By integrating historical and cultural elements into modern development projects and organizing more events that celebrate local traditions, both the municipality and the community can create a dynamic, sustainable environment that respects the past while accommodating growth.

The municipality's engagement in organizing activities such as theater, workshops, and art exhibitions demonstrates their commitment to preserving cultural heritage, which aligns with the desires of the local community.

In summary, by working together, municipal authorities and local communities can shape a future for Küçükçekmece that balances growth with the preservation of its unique cultural and historical identity. The municipality's initiatives and the active participation of residents are key to ensuring that the district evolves into a modern, livable city without losing its historical roots.

06. DESIGN STRATEGIES KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE

4. Which design strategies can enhance the experience of Küçükçekmece's identity while linking its historical aspects to modern needs, ensuring that new developments contribute to, rather than diminish, the area's sense of place?

It has become clear that Küçükçekmece has developed from a small village into a large, urbanized city. The historical and cultural identity of the area is mainly concentrated in the historical center, where the city originated. This forms an important starting point for this research: the focus is on the southern part of Küçükçekmece, the area where the first commercial activities took place and where the city has built its distinctive history (see Figure 23).

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This chapter examines which design strategies can enhance the experience of Küçükçekmece's identity. The focus is on how historical elements can be meaningfully connected with contemporary needs.

New developments should not lead to the loss of identity but should contribute to strengthening the sense of place.

This can be achieved through:

- Integrating historical references into new designs;
- Promoting local culture and a sense of community through public spaces;
- Creating educational and cultural facilities that emphasize history while meeting the current needs of the residents.

By developing strategies that respect both the past and the future, Küçükçekmece can continue to develop sustainably without losing its unique identity. Urban design must therefore not only focus on aesthetics and functionality but also on the social and cultural anchoring of the place, so that residents continue to feel connected to their environment, both historically and contemporarily.

However, within this research, we focus on the historical center of Küçükçekmece in the south (see Figure 3).

6.1 HISTORICAL CENTRE KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE

The focus of this project is on Küçükçekmece, as it is the second largest district in Istanbul and is currently undergoing rapid urbanization. This transformation is largely driven by its predominantly residential character, the spatial qualities of the area, and the specific needs of its target population. Situated on the western side of Istanbul, Küçükçekmece is a densely built-up area, comprising approximately 40,136 buildings. Half of these structures range between one and four stories, while the other half rise up to nineteen stories.

The district suffers from a lack of adequate educational facilities, employment opportunities, recreational amenities, green spaces, and significant open areas. Its vulnerability is also closely linked to its role as a migration destination, particularly for people arriving from the eastern regions and other countries. Many newcomers start new lives here, often in segregation from the broader fabric of the city, which limits opportunities for economic development (Korkmaz, 2011).

In previous chapters, we explored the qualities required for Küçükçekmece to develop into a modern, livable city without losing its distinctive character. To bridge the gap between modern urban needs and the district's historical identity, this section focuses on design strategies that respond to both municipal surveys and the voices of the local community. These strategies will specifically inform the design intervention in the Menekşe neighbourhood.

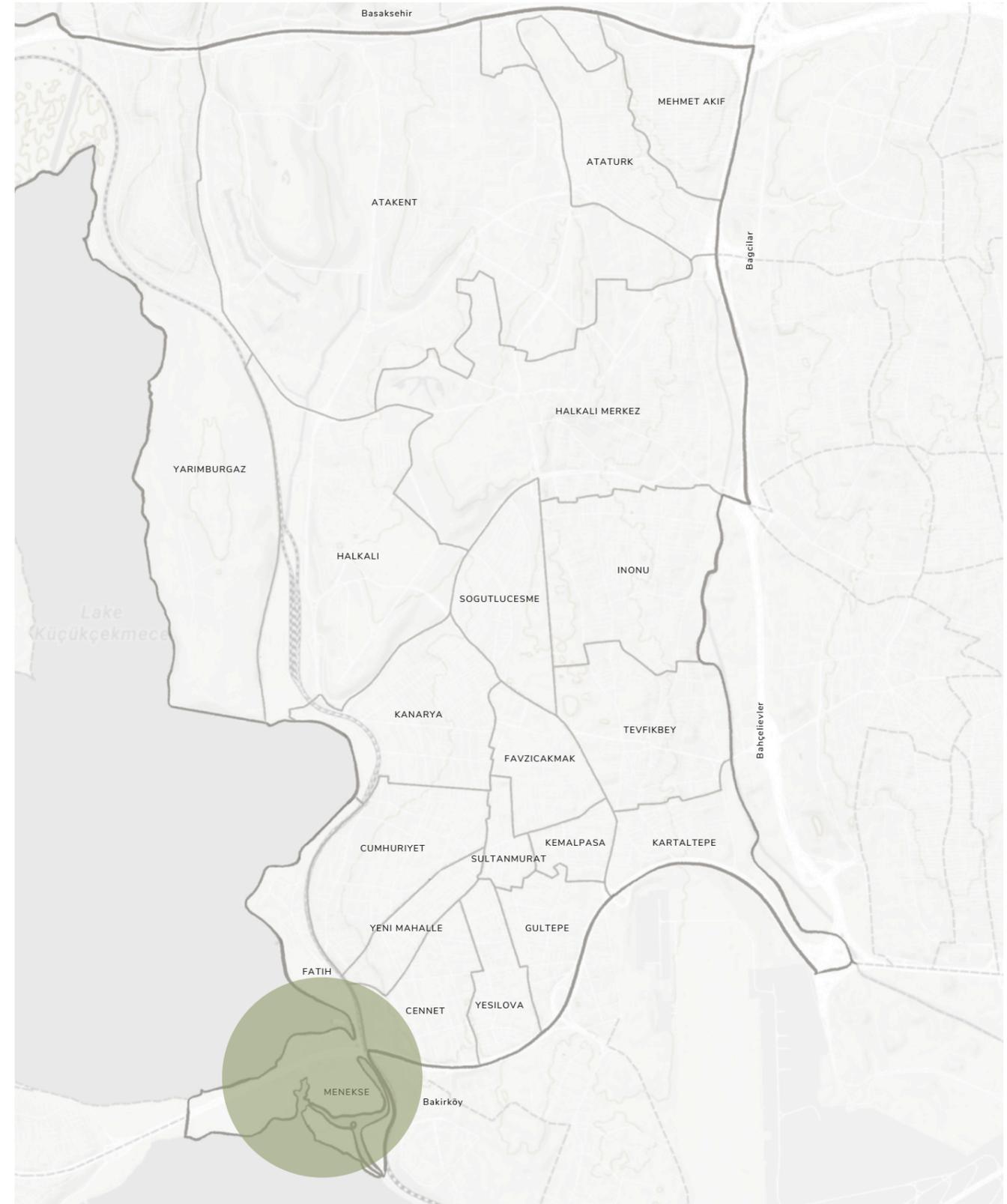


Figure 23, Menekşe District

6.2 MENEKŞE, DISTRICT

Menekşe is a neighbourhood located on the southern part of Kucukcekmece. The area is particularly known for Menekşe Beach, a popular recreational destination for both residents and visitors (see Figure 25). This coastal zone functions as one of the largest green and open recreational areas in the southern part of the district, falling under the “Küçükçekmece İç ve Dış Kumsal Koruma Alanı” (Küçükçekmece Inner and Outer Beach Protection Area). In a city where open space is often scarce, the beach plays a vital role in offering relief from urban density.

On sunny days, the beach transforms into a vibrant public space, attracting families who gather for picnics, swimming, and other seaside activities. The proximity to the sea also supports small-scale fishing, contributing to the local livelihood. Additionally, the neighbourhood features several eateries and cafés, many of which offer scenic views of the water and serve traditional Turkish cuisine, reinforcing its appeal as a leisure destination.

6.2.1 Infrastructure and Amenities

Menekşe presents a blend of residential and commercial areas. Housing in the neighbourhood ranges from older, low-rise buildings to newer constructions. The presence of the beach and nearby green parks enhances the livability of the area, providing space for social interaction, recreation, and community gathering. Local markets and small shops serve the daily needs of residents, contributing to the area's self-sufficiency and neighbourhood character.



Figure 24, Menekşe area



Figure 25, Menekşe Beach

6.2.2 Urban Observations

Zooming in on Menekşe (see Figure 26), fieldwork and site observations reveal that it is a relatively quiet and low-density neighbourhood, currently designated as a protected zone. Although Menekşe holds historical significance, especially from the early industrial development phase of Küçükçekmece, only a few visible traces of this past remain. The most prominent example is the Menekşe Match Factory, a historically important industrial structure that continues to stand as a physical reminder of the area's earlier identity.

Despite this historical weight, the spatial organisation of the area does little to reflect or communicate its heritage. The architectural and infrastructural context lacks integration with the site's cultural narratives, and most of the contemporary development appears disconnected from the historical fabric of the neighbourhood. This underutilisation of Menekşe's rich historical potential highlights the need for sensitive and imaginative design strategies. These strategies should not only aim to preserve what remains but also reinterpret and activate the area's historical narratives, transforming them into lived experiences that enrich both the local identity and the broader urban context.

6.3 URBAN ANALYSIS

To gain a better understanding of the area, several analyses were conducted. These included spatial analyses, typological studies, on-site observations, and discussions with residents and local business owners. By combining cartographic material, photographs, and field notes, it has become possible to better understand both the physical structure of Menekşe and the social dynamics.



Figure 26, Location of Menekşe Match Factory

6.3.1 Analysis communal spaces

To get a better understanding of Menekşe, analyses were conducted of the communal spaces such as schools, shops, restaurants, and religious facilities. The neighborhood has a few primary and secondary schools, but the availability of educational and cultural facilities is limited, especially for young people and adults who wish to further develop. The area has scattered local stores and small markets that meet daily needs, but there is a lack of a central commercial hub that encourages meeting and lingering. Restaurants and cafés are mainly located along the coastline, offering sea views and attracting large crowds, especially on weekends. Additionally, the mosque plays a central role as a gathering place for the community, both religiously and socially. Overall, the observations suggest that there is potential to strengthen community facilities, provided they are better connected to the identity and needs of the residents.

6.3.1.1 identifying the needs of people in the area

The analysis reveals a clear need for spaces that promote interaction and a sense of purpose, particularly for young people. While the existing park is a valuable meeting place, there is potential for a broader and more meaningful environment where education, social interaction, and cultural development come together.

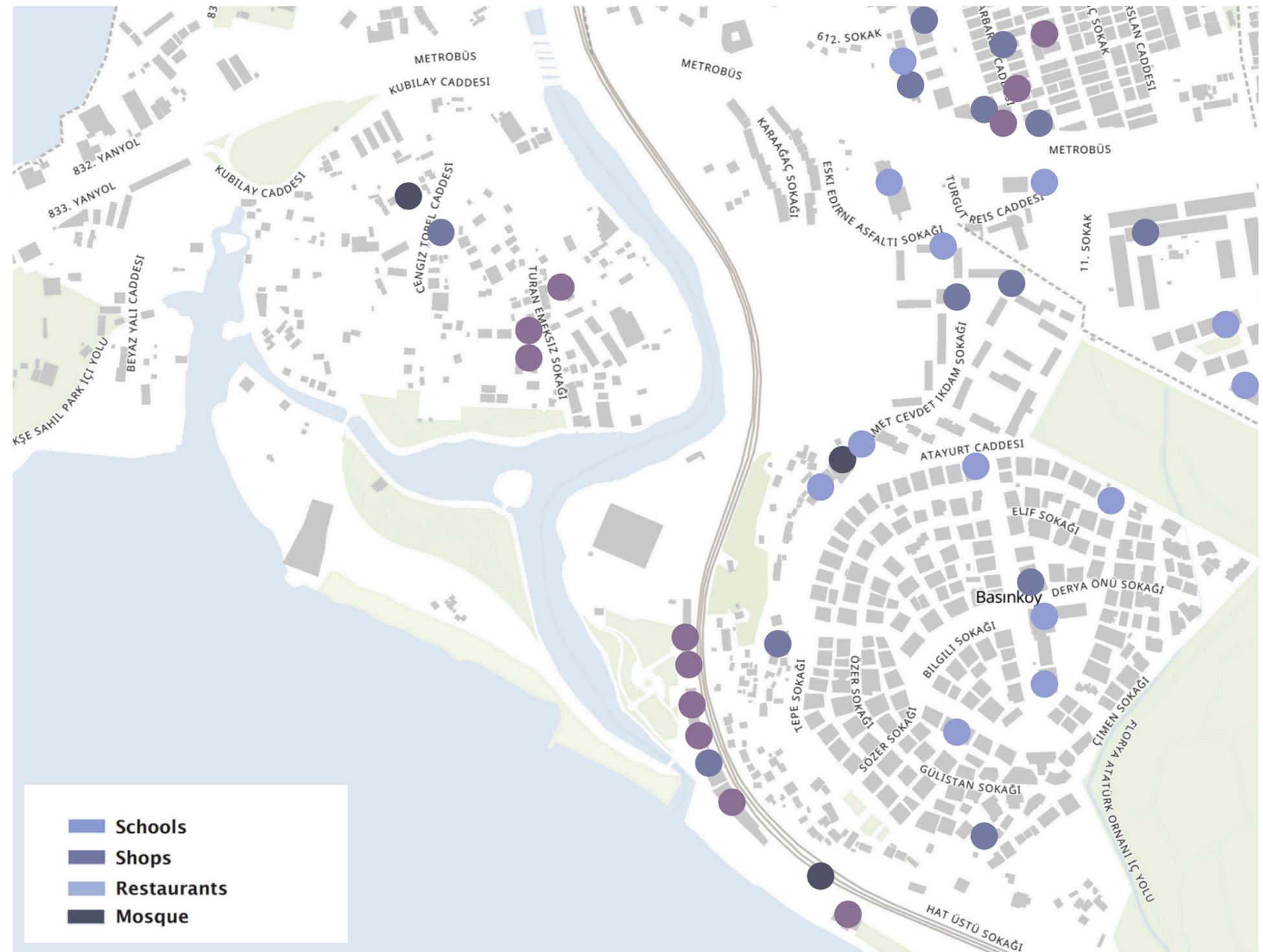


Figure 27, Analysis of Communal Spaces

6.3.2 Analysis green space

The green space in Menekşe plays a significant role as a recreational and social hub for the neighbourhood. The park provides residents with a place to relax, exercise, and gather, especially during warm days. Despite this value, the green areas in the region are limited and not optimally connected to the surrounding urban structure. There is a need for better-integrated and multifunctional green zones that not only offer tranquility and cooling but also contribute to education, ecology, and community building.



Figure 28. Analysis of Green Space

6.3.2.1 Disconnected gardens

Historically, the area surrounding Menekşe was primarily agricultural land, as depicted in Image 29, where residents engaged in the cultivation of vegetables and other crops. Over time, much of this farmland has been replaced by residential developments; however, small, often improvised gardens can still be found, as shown in Image 30. It appears that some long-term residents have continued traditional farming practices despite the urbanization of their surroundings. These gardens, however, remain isolated and disconnected from the broader urban structure, creating a contrast between the area's agricultural past and its current urbanized state.

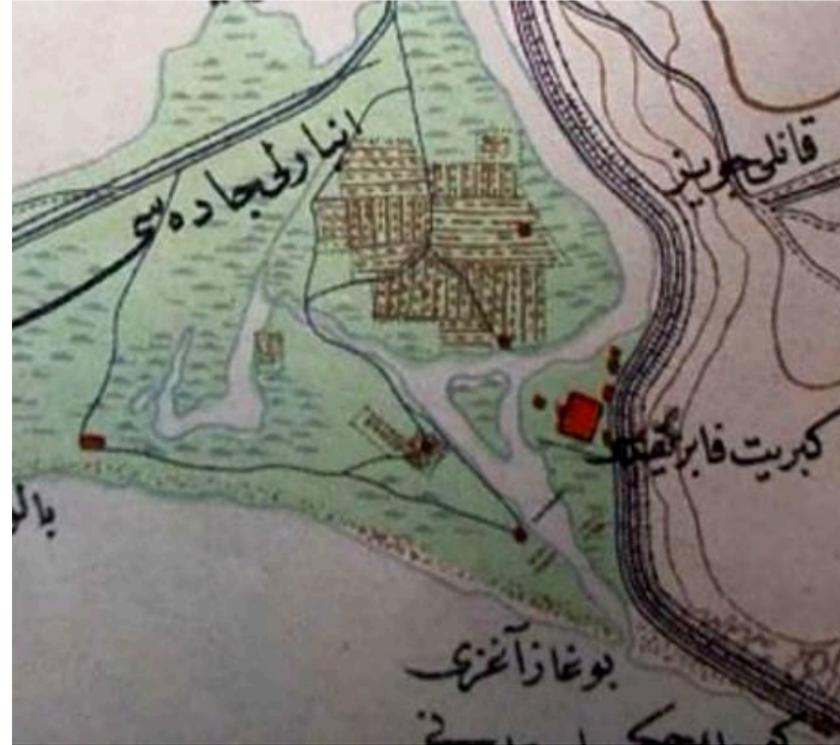


Figure 29, Old map and image of Menekşe



Figure 30, Disconnected Gardens

6.3.3 Analysis transport

The accessibility of Menekşe is currently facilitated by nearby public transportation connections, such as train stations (e.g., Menekşe Station) and bus lines that link to the rest of Istanbul. However, internal accessibility within Menekşe and connections to surrounding neighborhoods still leave much to be desired.

There is a pedestrian route that runs along the coast and towards the beach, but this route is frequently interrupted by roads, fences, or unclear transitions. As a result, the pedestrian experience is not optimal. A more uninterrupted and clearly marked pedestrian connection would help better integrate the different functions within the neighbourhood, such as residential areas, the beach, and public facilities.

Additionally, the connection between Menekşe and the adjacent neighbourhood of Basıncıköy is particularly weak. When taking the Menekşe Match Factory as a central point, it takes about 20 minutes to walk to Basıncıköy, but the route is unpleasant for pedestrians: there is no shortcut, few seating areas, and the infrastructure is mainly designed for car traffic rather than for slower forms of mobility.

For motorists, however, Menekşe is easily accessible. There are sufficient parking facilities near the coastal zone and around residential areas, making it convenient for visitors to reach the beach or local amenities by car. Nevertheless, this car-oriented infrastructure also contributes to the fragmentation of public space and discourages active mobility modes such as walking and cycling.



Figure 31, Analysis of Transport

6.3.4 Analysis Analysis of Public Transport in Menekşe

Accessibility:

Menekşe is connected to Istanbul's urban public transportation network via the Marmaray railway line and several bus routes. The nearby Menekşe Station provides direct access to the Marmaray, allowing travelers to easily connect with both the European and Asian sides of Istanbul. The presence of this railway line is a major asset for the neighbourhood, especially given its location on the western edge of the city.

Bus Connections:

In addition to the railway connection, several bus lines link Menekşe to nearby districts and major hubs such as Küçükçekmece Center, Avcılar, and Bakırköy.

Accessibility within Menekşe:

While external connections to the city are relatively good, internal accessibility within Menekşe is less developed. There are few direct public transport links to important local destinations such as the coastline, recreational areas, and historical sites like the Menekşe Match Factory. As a result, residents and visitors often rely on walking or using private cars to reach these areas.

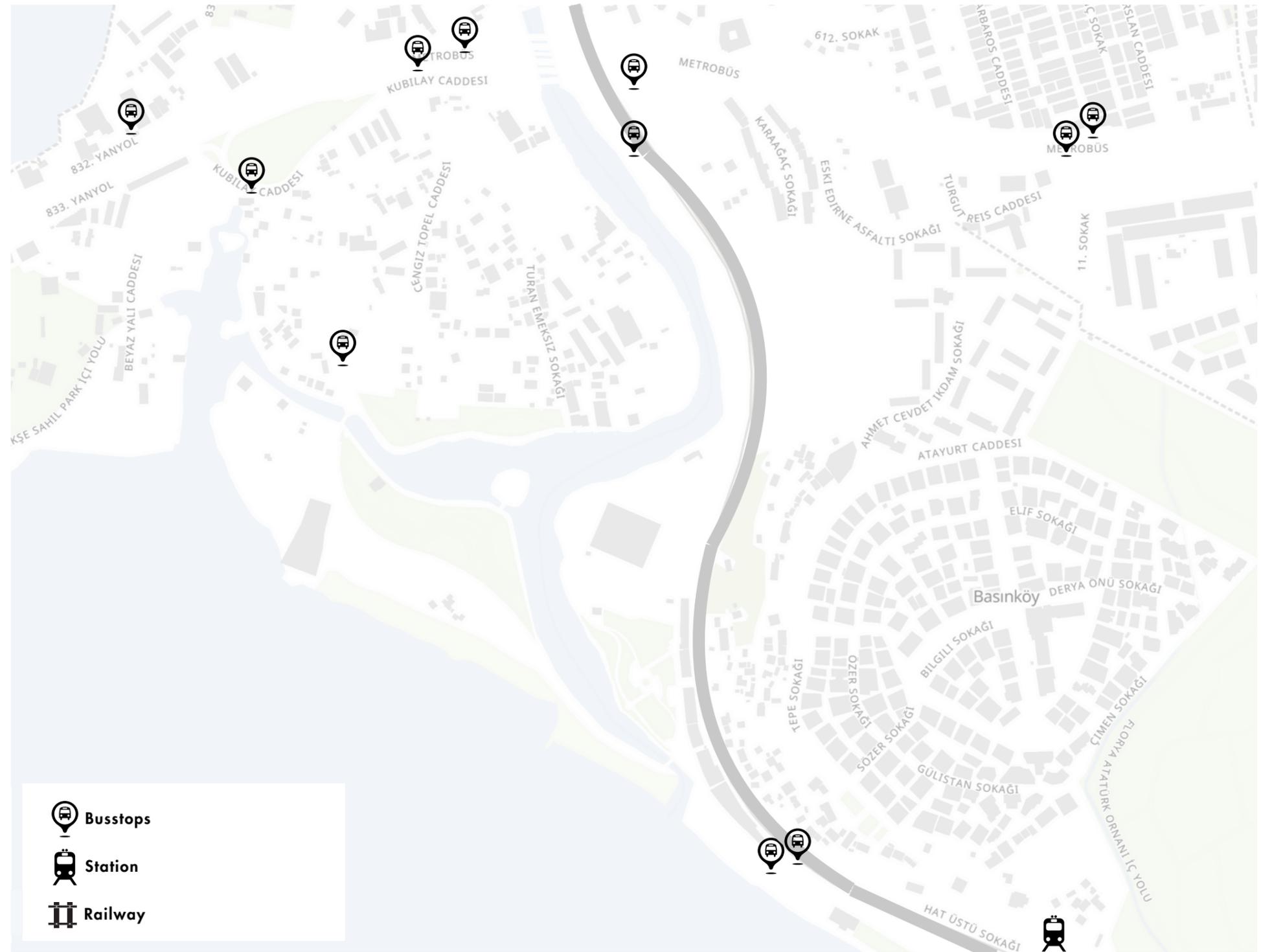


Figure 32, Analysis of Public Transport in Menekşe

6.3.5 Analysis of Integrated Neighbourhood Menekşe

Currently, Menekşe lacks a cohesive and integrated structure where educational, cultural, commercial, and recreational functions naturally and seamlessly connect. As a result, many amenities remain fragmented, limiting the sense of community. However, the neighbourhood presents significant opportunities to evolve into an integrated urban fabric that actively promotes social interaction, local identity, and a strong sense of community.

A major physical barrier to integration is the railway line that cuts through Menekşe, hindering connectivity between different neighbourhoods. Additionally, the busy main road used as a primary route toward Istanbul's city center further fragments the area. This road acts as an obstacle for pedestrians, as safe and attractive crossing options are lacking.

To create better internal cohesion, it is essential to overcome these barriers by:

- Establishing a continuous and safe pedestrian route connecting residential areas, recreational spaces, and central amenities;
- Bridging the railway line with thoughtful pedestrian infrastructure, such as footbridges or underpasses;
- Making the busy traffic road safer and more accessible through elevated crossings, tunnels, or pedestrian overpasses, thus restoring natural connections within the neighbourhood.

Through these interventions, Menekşe can develop into a neighbourhood where urban functions are more closely aligned, and residents can move freely and meet easily, significantly strengthening social cohesion and overall quality of life.



Figure 33, Analysis of Integrated Neighbourhood in Menekşe

07. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research aims to answer the question: "How can urban design contribute to preserving and enhancing the cultural and historical identity of Küçükçekmece, while addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization and modernization?"

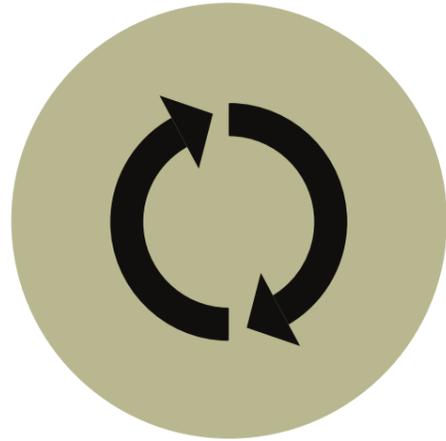
This question is answered by first reviewing the literature and then analyzing the identity of Küçükçekmece. The research has clarified which elements contribute to the identity of Küçükçekmece, focusing on both the physical meaning and experience, as described by Edward Relph to create a 'sense of place.' This provides a guideline for identifying the key elements that reflect the district's identity.

By examining the main challenges that urbanization has brought to Küçükçekmece, it becomes clear where urbanization has impacted the area and to what extent its identity has been altered or affected.

Further research on how the identity of Küçükçekmece can be integrated into urban planning also provided insights into how the municipality is addressing this issue and what the specific needs of the residents are. For the area around the Menekşe Match Factory, design strategies have been identified that not only contribute to the neighborhood and its residents but also help strengthen the identity and create a stronger 'sense of place.'

Regarding the design proposal, this research focuses on creating a space where people can actually experience the identity of Küçükçekmece. The research reveals a clear need for educational spaces. This led to the design of a community hub for learning and development, breathing new life into a historical building (the Menekşe Match Factory).

Within this building, people can not only learn about the history of Küçükçekmece but also engage in activities that bring the local culture and traditions to life. This proposal is significant because Küçükçekmece faces space shortages and is still developing, providing an opportunity to combine both the historical and modern needs of the neighborhood.



Reuse historical building
(Menekse Match Factory)

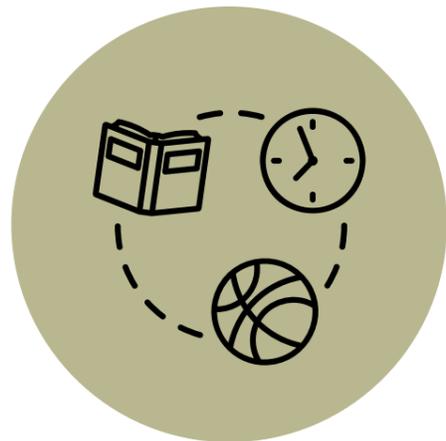


Disconnected gardens



**Need for learning space
about history**

So that people can join activities en
learn from workshops and exhibitions



Learning centre



Uninterrupted Walking Path



**Need for adaptable spaces
for social engagement and
cultural exchange.**

The needs of contemporary life are
constantly changing; to keep the
location attractive, the offerings must
be diverse.



**Need for connected
neighbourhoods**

So that people can have social
interactions

Figure 34 , Outcome analysis, spatial qualities Kucukcekmece
Drawn by Selin Bani

Figure 35 , Needs for community (Menekse/Fatih) area
Drawn by Selin Bani

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