Changing Environment-Behavior Interactions in a Bosphorus Settlement: the Kurucesme case

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Abstract
Kurucesme, a village on the Bosphorus, reflects the particular characteristics of its own as well as those of both the Bosphorus and the city of Istanbul. Accommodating different cultural and social layers is the most discriminating feature of the Kurucesme settlement. From a starting point of this stratification, this paper aims to investigate the mechanisms of environment-behavior interaction, particularly place attachment and the dynamics of community change.

The study investigates the concepts and processes of people and their relations with the environment, focusing and exploring the neighborhood, community life and the physical environment. The study also reviews the research about place and community attachment. To establish a relation between the theoretical framework with the Kurucesme case, the data collected by in-depth interviews with the various groups of inhabitants and on-site observations using maps and photographs related to the public places and streets are analyzed and evaluated.

Introduction
The built environment we have been living in is a complex web formed of various relationships. There exist different types of relationships taking place not only between people and people but also between people and places. Arguments about the information society often contain claims that the role of places in contemporary society is undergoing fundamental change. To some theorists personal relationships (to places as well as to other persons) become less stable and that more and more of personal experience and social relations become mediated by information and communication technologies and thus disembedded from their local contextes (Hay, 1998). To others, globalization brings about localization and the ways in which people relate to places become an important expression of social stratification (Gustafson, 2001). Such arguments give rise to important questions about how people interact with their environment and the others and how these have changed in time.
Kurucesme, a village on the west side of the Bosphorus, reflects the particular characteristics of both the Bosphorus and the city of Istanbul. Its specific, hard topography and the difficulties of transportation forced people to settle along the narrow seashore. Having a history dating back to ancient times, Kurucesme, where the most beautiful, magnificent houses were built in the 17th century, was one of the foremost neighborhoods at the time of the Ottoman Empire (Akbayar, 1998). After most of these houses were destroyed in a fire in 1919, the shore was used for coal and sand depots until becoming an open public space in the 1980s (İstanbul Kultur ve Sanat Ansiklopedisi) (Sluis, 2000). In the 1950s the Kurucesme hills started to be filled with squatter settlements, most of which were turned into apartment blocks in the following years. Recently, new gated communities have been established and the old traditional houses started to be renovated (Kara, 2003).

As with most of the other neighborhoods in Istanbul, Kurucesme has increasingly experienced a series of physical, social and cultural changes over time, which reflects the different characters / faces of the settlement. Today, Kurucesme is a heterogeneous settlement, comprised of various cultures, religions, languages, origins, ages, economical status, education levels and cultural backgrounds. It is a complex entity with no clear distinctions between the existing patterns of traditional houses, apartment blocks, luxurious apartment groups, villas and squatter settlements.

Accommodating different cultural and social layers is the most outstanding, discriminating feature of Kurucesme. This stratification can explicitly be read all through its physical, social and cultural environments. The settlement accommodates different groups of people: those who have had roots there dating back three or four generations and living in the old traditional houses; those who have migrated since the 1950s living in squatter dwellings; and those who have recently settled, living in the new gated communities and renovated old houses.

Different resident groups affect the settlement characteristics in their own distinctive way. They adapt their environment and themselves, not only according to their demands, but also to their cultural and individual backgrounds. The people convey certain behavioral patterns, social and cultural repositories, lifestyles, values and world views in their own physical messaging styles. For instance, in the streets formed by distinct types of inhabitants, the relationship of the house and the street is different, the group identity is realized explicitly.

Various new functions have entered the neighborhood as a result of the alteration of the resident profile. Along with houses, an elementary school, religious buildings (mosques, churches), grocery stores, supermarkets, pharmacies, it is possible to find offices, shops (car, furniture etc.), vets, pastry-shops, cafes, restaurants, sport centers, art galleries and even an open concert area.

Today Kurucesme is a place serving not only its residents but also the whole city, Istanbul. Having a highly qualified physical environment enables the settlement to host concerts, meetings, exhibitions, parties, public marches. In return, these help developing even a better physical environment, and also building a strong, mutual supporting interaction between the social life and the physical environment.

Even though the changing social structure of the Kurucesme settlement mostly positively influences the physical environment, there are some negative cases as well. As stated before, Kurucesme has different layers. For instance, in the traditional streets the boundary between the house and the street is ambiguous as they seem to be penetrated into each other and defragmented. On the contrary, the luxurious apartment blocks and villa groups, for some reasons (especially security), build up borders such as high walls and wire fences, apart from the street and even the whole neighborhood. These restrictions, which reject the community sentiment, separate the district both physically and socially. One of the other problems facing Kurucesme settlement is the impact of the outsiders which is perceived as an attack to their private (both physical and social) territories by the residents. Consequently, the neighborhood’s identity is damaged and becomes equivocal.

From a starting point of this above mentioned stratification in the Kurucesme settlement, this paper aims to investigate the mechanisms of environment - behavior interaction, particularly place attachment and dynamics of community change in the neighborhood. By making a comprehensive literature review and conducting a case study, the paper endeavors to find out whether the levels of attachments (to their
neighborhood) among the groups of residents are different or not. Moreover, it also concentrates on the different types of people-place bonding and how the attachments have changed or stayed the same.

The study first deals with the concepts and processes of people and their relations with the environment, focusing and investigating the neighborhood, community life and the physical environment. Later, profoundly, the study reviews the research about the place and community attachment, concentrating on formation and maintenance processes, affecting factors, and inseparable, mutually defining qualities, types, dimensions and actors. To establish a relation between the theoretical framework with the Kuruceme case, the data collected by in-depth interviews with the various groups of inhabitants and on-site observations using maps and photographs related to the public places and streets are analyzed and assessed. The findings reflecting the physical and social structure of the settlement are comparatively discussed with the available place and community attachment literature.

The Relationships between People-People and People-Environment

Human beings have various needs which must be met in order to attain a feeling of fulfillment. Maslow classified these needs hierarchically from the strongest to the weakest as follows: physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem, actualization, cognitive and aesthetic needs (Maslow (1943, 1954) cited in Lang, 1987).

Once we are no longer focused on satisfying needs such as hunger, thirst or safety, most people feel the need to belong to a group of people or to several groups. There are however differences in how each individual fulfills that need for affiliation, dependent on personal patterns and preferences. Membership within a group, as well as the uniqueness of each person’s patterns of membership, contributes to that person’s personal identity and feelings of self-worth (Lang, 1994). In addition to providing a sense of belonging, connections to people are also important because they offer a sense of security, that an individual’s rights are protected to some extent through membership with the group (Carr, 1992).

The tendency of being a member of a group and forming groups suggests the need for places for groups to form. Group formation may develop with individuals who have similar backgrounds or interests, if they have shared experiences, or through regular use of a space. It may occur where people with similar interests come in contact with one another (Hester (1985) cited in Gehl, 2001).

Encouraging social interaction and group formation are important in any community. Typically, friendships and membership do not exist among the new residents. So, they will be unaware of the other persons within the neighborhood who have similar interests or backgrounds. It is an obligation that all the residents interact with each other in order to develop a community life. Without such a relationship the neighborhood may become increasingly socially segmented. In these cases, the qualities of physical place that provide opportunities for interaction become important for facilitating the process of group formation.

Affiliation with individuals or settings provides affection, support and identity. If affiliation needs are not met, an individual will feel isolated and alienated from the community or neighborhood. Involvement in a supportive social system is not only necessary to an individual’s survival but also to his or her psychological comfort. Although the other needs also have an importance for people, this discussion will primarily focus on the need for affiliation and the physical space that may support the interaction and community life (Lang, 1994).

Another aspect of meeting affiliation needs is having associations or familiarity with a specific place. The interaction with the places is related to the physical, social and cultural features of that place. Relationships to a place consist of the ways people relate to, or the types of bonds they have with that place. The different types of connections with place, categorized according to the interviews with the residents of Cross’s study (Cross, 2001) are shown in the Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>relationship</th>
<th>type of bond</th>
<th>process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biographical</td>
<td>historical and familiar (strongest)</td>
<td>being born in and living in a place, place is an integral part of personal history, develops over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual</td>
<td>emotional, intangible,</td>
<td>feeling a sense of belonging, simply felt rather than created, difficult to describe, often unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideological</td>
<td>moral and ethical</td>
<td>living according moral guidelines for human responsibility to place, guidelines may be religious or secular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative</td>
<td>mythical</td>
<td>learning about a place through stories, including creation myths, family histories, political accounts and fictional accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commodified</td>
<td>cognitive (based on choice and desirability)</td>
<td>choosing a place based on a list of desirable traits and lifestyle preferences, comparison of actual places with the ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>material</td>
<td>constrained by lack of choice, dependency on another person, or economic opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Relationships to place (Cross, 2001)

**Neighborhood and Community Life**

The functions of contemporary communities are much more complex than in the past and in many ways are less understood. Although they are not tightly knit communal groups, today’s communities serve many of the functions of the past (Rivlin, 1987). A neighborhood can be defined both as a geographical place and a social network consisting of relationships. As the social networks become more reachable, the neighborhood exceeds beyond the boundaries, causing the geographical importance to lessen. According to some researchers, contemporary neighborhoods are heterogeneous units based on different geographies, numbers and kinds of people, the socioeconomic status of these people, their ages, cultural backgrounds and housing forms. They are those internal social qualities that differentiate the neighborhoods (Rivlin, 1987).

The expression ‘community life’ is the second level of spatially defined social relationships (public life, community life, private life). It is the interaction between people who know each other to some extent. These persons may include acquaintances, the clerk at the grocery store or the mailman. This level of interaction often takes place within the realm of the neighborhood, semi-public or semi-private places such as the parks and the local coffee shops (Lofland, 1973).

Today’s community life has turned inward, inside the home, less dependent upon each other for social contacts and entertainment. At the same time, it has turned outward, moved by media and public or private transportation to geographies far beyond the neighborhood boundaries (Rivlin, 1987).

In the Turkish language we call the neighborhood ‘mahalle’. Helping each other, hospitality, sharing happiness or sadness etc. are very important concepts in our culture. Kurucemsme, as an old Istanbul neighborhood, reflects the above mentioned characteristics that a good, living community should accommodate.

**Place and Place Attachment**

**Place and Attachment Concepts**

Place can be defined as a unit of environmental experience; a convergence of cognitions, effects and behaviors of the people who are living them (Canter, 1986; Canter, 1991; Pretty et. al., 2003). According to Steadman (2002), a place is a center of meaning or field of care based on human experience, social relationships, emotions and thoughts. The concept of place shows diversity in many aspects. For instance regarding scale, places can be very large, mid-sized, smaller or very small-sized. They can be tangible or symbolic, experienced or not experienced, known or unknown. The concept of attachment determines
effects whereas place focuses on the environmental settings which people are emotionally and culturally attached to (Low and Altman, 1992). The relationships formed with diverse places are different from each other. Consequently the level of attachment varies according to the type of this affiliation.

**Place Attachment: Definitions, Historical Background**

Scientific interest in the phenomena of people – place bonding is not new and has approached a great variety of points of view and disciplines (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001) such as phenomenology, anthropology, environmental psychology, architecture, marketing, sociology, ecology, geography, urban planning. The study of feelings that people develop toward the places where they were born and brought up and the function these places have in their lives are research areas that have been receiving growing attention recently by the environmental psychologists.

When dealing with the study of place attachment, the main difficulty the researchers encountered was the diversity of approaches both at the theoretical and the empirical levels. There was no agreement regarding the concept's definition or the methodological approach (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). In order to describe the people-place bonding phenomena, authors have used a number of terms such as community attachment, sense of community, place identity, place attachment, place dependence, sense of place, insidedness, rootedness, environmental embeddedness (Low and Altman, 1992). It is often difficult to tell whether it is the same concept with a different name or a different concept. For instance, Lalli (1992) used place attachment as a component of place identity whereas Brown and Werner (1985) used both of them as synonyms (cited in Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001).

Although there seems to be a consensus today, researching its various definitions used by different disciplines will be beneficial. Below are some of the definitions from different researchers in different disciplines, thus demonstrating the diversities and commonalities among them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>&quot;Place attachment is the symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space of piece of land that provides the basis for the individuals and groups understanding of and relation to the environment.... Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Psychology</td>
<td>&quot;Sense of place is the particular experience of a person in a particular setting (feeling stimulated, excited, joyous, expansive, and so forth).&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>&quot;Topophilia is the affective bond between people and place or setting.&quot; Such ties vary in intensity, subtlety, and mode of expression. Responses to the environment may be aesthetic, tactile, or emotional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Architecture/History</td>
<td>&quot;A sense of place is something that we ourselves create in the course of time. It is the result of habit or custom.... A sense of place is reinforced by what might be called a sense of recurring events.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>&quot;By sense of place, I mean people's subjective perceptions of their environments and their more or less conscious feelings about those environments. Sense of place is inevitably dual in nature, involving both an interpretive perspective on the environment and an emotional reaction to the environment.... Sense of place involves a personal orientation toward place, in which one's understanding of place and one's feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meaning.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: What the social scientists say (Cross, 2001)

Below are some assessments regarding the concept of place attachment. Place attachment:

- is a complex and multifaceted concept. It has many inseparable, integral and mutually defining features, qualities and properties. Affects, emotions and feelings are central to the concept (Low and Altman, 1992). It can be developed consciously or unconsciously (Twigger and Ross, 1996; Brown and Perkins, 1992).

- is an integrating concept that involves patterns of places that vary in scale, dimension, specificity and tangibility; different actors and social relationships – individuals, groups, cultures; temporal aspects – linear, cyclical (Low and Altman, 1992).

- is continuous and dynamic as well having stability and change (Brown and Perkins, 1992). In the course of time not only the people but also the places they are living in are changed. The attachments formed in the period of childhood, youth and adulthood are different from each other (Low and Altman, 1992).

- is an individual and subjective process varying from person to person which is dependent on the person's situation in the life cycle, his world view etc. It helps the formation of identity (Brown and Perkins, 1992).

- generates identification with place and fosters social and political involvement in the preservation of the physical and social features that characterize a place (Mesch and Manor, 1998).

- has its formation or maintenance associated with the biological, environmental, psychological and socio-cultural processes (Low and Altman, 1992).

Community Attachment

People develop attachments to the places they live in, where they share familiar, communal or cultural bonds with their neighbors. These bonds can form intimate links between people and places extending beyond the home and the street into a wider area where a sense of belonging is established, where the places as well as the people are cherished (Fried, 2000).

Community attachment is an emotional investment in a locality which appears to be most strongly rooted in involvement in local social relations along with the features of the built environment as well (Hummon, 1992). Social scientists interested in the concept of community attachment have generally defined it as a sense of belonging or rootedness in a community (Cross, 2005). ‘Rootedness’, ‘at-homeness’, ‘insidedness’ are some of the terms researchers use to demonstrate people’s experience of a deeply relatedness with their home environments, the dwelling unit and the local environment beyond. People may experience positive psychological bonds within the home environments. The home place becomes the place of comfort and security, care, concern and commitment, and the place in which the personal meanings of home become tied to the individual's concept of self (Feldman, 1990; Fried, 2000).

Attachment to the community often entails efforts to remain within the protective range of familiar places. Since security is provided within the neighborhood, greater freedom of behavior, exploration, confidence, and affective responsiveness within the community are encouraged. It is these aspects of attachment behavior that are distinctive of close community bonds, particularly among people with few independent resources, such as lower status groups and immigrants contrasted with residential and community satisfactions of people from higher status positions (Fried, 2000).

A person's community attachment consists of his or her experience in a particular setting as well as the feelings about that place (Fritz, 1981). There are five types of community attachment: ideological rootedness, taken-for-granted rootedness, place relativity, place alienation, and placelessness (Hummon, 1992). Based on her own investigations, Cross (2001) revised Hummon's typology in which each type can
be described by a person's level of attachment, identification and involvement with the community, past experiences and future expectations, and their assessment of the place (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sense of place</th>
<th>satisfaction</th>
<th>home as insidedness</th>
<th>local identity</th>
<th>type of attachment</th>
<th>future desires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rootedness: cohesive</td>
<td>high, positive assessments</td>
<td>here (physical, spiritual, emotional)</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>biographical spiritual ideological</td>
<td>continue living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rootedness: divided</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>here and there (physical, spiritual, emotional)</td>
<td>split</td>
<td>biographical spiritual dependent</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place alienation</td>
<td>low, often negative assessments</td>
<td>there (physical, spiritual, emotional)</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>desire to leave, but unable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relativity</td>
<td>variable, not strongly rooted to any particular community</td>
<td>anywhere</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>commodified (biographical) (dependent)</td>
<td>to live in ideal place, wherever that may be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncommitted placelessness</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>anywhere/nowhere</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>no specific expectations of place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Revised sense of place typology (Cross, 2001)

The strongest type of community attachment is rootedness. People with a sense of cohesive rootedness have a strong sense of attachment, identification and involvement in one community; they evaluate their environment positively and expect to continue living there. In contrast, those people with a divided rootedness think of themselves in terms of two communities: community in which they were raised and the community they have lived in as an adult. People who are alienated often have a negative assessment of the place, do not identify and are not highly satisfied with the place. Another type of community attachment is relativity. Many people who fit into this category have lived in so many places in their life that they are not strongly rooted to any particular community. They are more likely to identify their sense of home with either their house or the world more generally than any particular community. They differ from people with a sense of rootedness in two ways. They feel at home anywhere instead of in a specific place and their identity is not strongly tied to their neighborhood. The final category of community attachment is placelessness which is characterized by a lack of place-based identification and emotional attachments to particular places. People do not have a definite or place-based sense of home.

There are also some other classifications of the concept of neighborhood attachment made by different scholars, one of which is Woldoff’s (2002).
The *attitudinal attachment* is divided into *sentiment* and *evaluation* because the way people feel toward their neighborhood is distinct from the degree to which they experience satisfaction with the quality of life. *Behavioral attachment* has two dimensions: *neighboring* and *problem solving*. Neighboring is a behavior that demonstrates a connectedness to the locale and is viewed to be essential to a healthy living environment, fostering a sense of mutual support and trust among residents (Sampson, 1988). Craven and Wellman (1973) suggest that it is important to distinguish between the intensity and type of social interaction within neighborhoods. For instance, social interaction with neighbors may take the form of everyday acts producing a general sense of friendliness or a more intense, deeper friendship. The final aspect of neighborhood attachment is residents’ behavioral problem-solving responses to local stresses. Problem-solving may occur informally, as when residents help each other or work together or formally, as when residents attend meetings. In order for a neighborhood to be vital, a participation platform among the residents should be formed (Sampson, 1988; Taylor, 1995; Woldoff, 2002).

**Factors Affecting Community Attachment**

As new community groups enter the neighborhood, the development of a feeling of belonging for new residents and their integration with the long-time residents are required. The interaction between members of the neighborhood is a powerful means of building bonds between people and place. The changing culture of the neighborhood will present uncertainty especially for the long-time residents, as well as the new residents. With the introduction of new community groups, the cultural identity, the shared social and natural values of these neighborhoods will be ambiguous. Places that encourage interaction among members of the neighborhood may help to build and define the neighborhood's changing culture. Although culture is dynamic and constantly being redefined as times and people change, the culture of the neighborhood will rapidly change as new values, backgrounds, perceptions and interests are introduced to the community. Places and symbols that express the existing culture of the neighborhood will help long-time residents to maintain and newer residents to build attachments to their community, as well as to help preserve the character of the neighborhood.

Community attachment is affected from both the human and place (environment) originated factors. The physical quality of places may themselves contribute to community attachment (Fried (1965) cited in Fried, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>human – originated factors</th>
<th>place – originated factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal experiences and backgrounds</td>
<td>observed physical characteristics of the environment (housing quality and affordability, nearby parks and playgrounds, condition of streets and sidewalks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memories</td>
<td>perceived - subjective characteristics of both the physical and social environment (graffiti, loud neighbors, traffic, parking, stray dogs and cats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquaintedness</td>
<td>natural characteristics of the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social bonds</td>
<td>landmarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social bonds daily relationships, habits</td>
<td>public services (upkeep, cleaning, security)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizen participation (fairs, festivals, meetings)</td>
<td>fear of crime, security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the person’s status in the life stage</td>
<td>voluntary or involuntary relocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person’s psychological condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duration of the residency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: The factors affecting community attachment
The extent of the impact of those above factors varies according to person and the environment in which the person is living in. Furthermore, whereas some of these factors deepen the attachments to one’s community, some of them diminish the attachment level.

Case Study
In order to examine the reality of Kurucesme with the theoretical framework reviewed above, a case study is conducted in which the data is collected by using in-depth interviews, on-site observations and archival materials. The first group of data was collected from the resident groups living in the dwellings having different characteristics. The various building types situated in the Kurucesme settlement are: old traditional houses, squatter settlements and apartment blocks converted from squatter and gated communities, villas, luxurious apartments and renovated houses. The in-depth/structured interviews with the different resident groups were conducted to gather information about resident’s perceptions, emotions, memories, values and attachments regarding the neighborhood. The questions also explored the individual patterns such as the regular activities, personal preferences, the needs and concerns, desires about the neighborhood. The majority of the interviews took place in the residents’ homes, offices or public spaces such as parks and on a one-on-one or small group basis.

Along with the in-depth interviews, on-site observations were conducted in the semi-private spaces (home gardens) or public spaces (parks and streets) to understand residents’ behavior patterns, preferences and the activities they engage in by using maps, bird’s eye view photographs and self-taken photographs from the area.

Analysis and Findings
In the case study fifteen residents were interviewed: four are those having roots dating back four or five generations and living in the old traditional houses; seven are those who have migrated since the 1950s living in squatter dwellings and apartment blocks; and four are those who have recently settled, living in the new gated communities and renovated old houses (see Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>old traditional houses</th>
<th>squatter settlements &amp; apartment blocks</th>
<th>gated communities &amp; renovated houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>having roots 4-5 generations (long-long-time)</td>
<td>semih, umit, nuri, murat</td>
<td>ersin, muruvvet, ihsan, gursel; muhlis, leman, gursev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>since 1950's (long-time)</td>
<td></td>
<td>nil, robert, klaus, gulnur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recently settled (newcomer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Resident profile in the Kurucesme settlement
To make a brief summary, as stated before Kurucesme is a heterogeneous settlement, comprised of various cultures, religions, languages, origins, demographic structure, cultural backgrounds and a complex entity with no clear distinctions between the existing patterns of traditional houses, apartment blocks, gated communities and squatter settlements.
New functions such as offices, shops, cafes, art galleries have entered the neighborhood as a result of various reasons.

Reasons to live in Kurucesme:
Many of the long time residents were settled or maintained to live in this area because of this was the place where they were born, grew up, went to school, got married, and perhaps had their children. The people living in the squatter settlements most of whom have kinships within the neighborhood, migrated here because of having relatives who had settled before. The reason for most of the new residents to decide to move to the area is its close proximity to the city center and variety of activities, its nature having a splendid panorama of the sea and the mysterious groves full of Judas trees on the hills. One of the newcomers described her reasons for moving to Kurucesme as:

“I moved here because it was the most untouched settlement on the Bosphorus which was also very near to the city center. It has never broken up its connection with the city and still is an opening. Kurucesme is a very special point on the Bosphorus shore, looking towards the magnificent historical and modern symbols of Istanbul.” (Gulnur)

How they describe their settlement, Kurucesme:
Since Kurucesme is a very old settlement, it is possible to find local people whose families have been living in the area for over a hundred years, as well as, newcomers who have just settled in the area. Various residents living in different types of houses defined Kurucesme as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“...is something that I gave to birth to, like my son.” (Semiha, 89 years)</th>
<th>“...is a privilege.” (Ersin, 25 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“...is the real Istanbul, not the artificial like in Maslak. Kurucesme for me is the last place before chaos because after Ortakoy starts, which is a mess. It is the last peaceful place before you enter the city basically. On the other side, once you are in Kurucesme you have a that of a feeling, yes now I am on the residential site.” (Klaus, less than 1 year)</td>
<td>“...is a whole full of mutually respectful, warm and mostly educated people.” (Nuri, 86 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **“...is my destiny. It is a center of charm as a result of untouchedness.”**  
   (Gulnur, 14 years) | **“...is a passionate love.”**  
   (Gursev, 22 years) |
| --- | --- |

| **“...is a safe haven.”**  
   (Umit, 62 years) | **“...is my life, my family.”**  
   (Muruvvet, 40 years) |
| --- | --- |

| **“...is identified with good companionships, and pretty souvenirs.”**  
   (Ihsan, 20 years) | **“...is an addiction, like smoking. ...is a miniature of a European city, a metropolis.”**  
   (Murat, 45 years) |
| --- | --- |

### Table 6: Kurucesme definitions made by the interviewees

**Natural and physical qualities:**
The residents that are interviewed have the similar opinions about the characteristics which make the settlement unique such as the sea, its climate, hills and groves.
On the contrary, most of them are not satisfied with the physical features of the neighborhood because of various reasons such as the deficiency of amenities (grocery, bakery, bank, police station, post office etc.) and places for some activities (tea gardens, meeting places, playgrounds for children, bazaars etc.); heavy traffic especially at the weekends with parking problems; unkempt, vacant and unpleasant housing stock and squatter settlements, even the squatter dwellers themselves; dark areas at nights and loud music played in the clubs especially during summertime. Even though most residents are pleased with the physical modifications, some consider them useless or redundant. All of the residents interviewed stated that places such as the streets, nearby parks and the supermarket play a prominent role in their daily lives.

**Social qualities:**
There are strong, close-knit relationships within the neighborhood. Neighbors, memories, comfort, support, trust have become parts of many long time residents. One of the long-long time residents described Kurucesme as an “extended family”. According to her:

“since the times of Ottoman Empire Kurucesme which has been reflecting communal diversities with its mosque and churches and people from different religions and ethnic groups, is a socially very colorful place.” (Umit)

The residents in the Kurucesme area have a strong sense of community. This might have developed its roots years ago as people played and went to school together and lived close by. According to one of the squatter residents, Kurucesme is a colony composed of relatives, neighbors, acquaintances and even the people who we know maybe little no more than by face. Most of them know and help each other either within or outside the neighborhood. The majority of the residents interact with their neighbors closely at a friendship level. These connections firstly take place at home and street level, and then at the nearby parks and the supermarket, mostly. Besides those positive ones, there are also negative social qualities. Most of the residents, both long-long time and new, stated that there is a lack of participation in the settlement. People neither show reactions to the events taking place within, nor they commit to defend and protect their neighborhood. Some residents living in squatters / apartment blocks expressed negative feelings because of involvement of the elite society in the settlement. According to one of them, Kurucesme totally belongs to the people who were born there, not to the outsiders.

**Sense of belonging:**
All of the long-long-time (4/4) residents living in the old traditional houses and most of the long-time residents (5/7) living in squatters and apartment blocks interviewed feel that they entirely belong to the neighborhood. The new settlers determined that they are attached to their own countries, childhood
neighborhoods or to the city of Istanbul. Surprisingly, one of the new residents, a German citizen, using a renovated house as his office, declared that he really belongs to the Kurucesme settlement, instead of his home-town or to the district where he is living with his family at the moment:

“I have been living in Istanbul for about six years. As far as I and my wife concerned, we wish we lived here. Owing to our children, in order to provide a big garden, a swimming pool or maybe more security, we are living in a recently developed gated community in the Istinye district. I’m going to spend rest of my life in Istanbul, and maybe when my children leave the house I and my wife can move here.” (Klaus)

Figure 6: Sense of belonging and future plans

Conclusion

“Place is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled that one can never shut the lid.” (Hayden, 1997)

Since, as we are all embodied in physical, social and cultural contexts, it is a necessity to understand the nature of our emotional relationships to places. An extensive body of literature investigating the mechanisms and different processes of people and their relationships with the environment, focusing and exploring the neighborhood, community life and the physical environment concepts, has been studied in this paper, as well as the concepts of place attachment and particularly community attachment. The Kurucesme settlement accommodates various types of people residing in different houses, which make the Kurucesme settlement exceptional. Hence, this study aimed to investigate whether the levels of attachments among these groups are different or not and how these attachments have changed or stabled.

Kurucesme is a point of gravity and attraction because of its proximity to the city center and its legendary, marvelous natural features. The majority of the residents interviewed are consciously aware of the physical and social characteristics of the settlement. Its nature, unique architecture, heterogeneous building and individual texture are stated as positive qualities of the neighborhood, whereas the insufficient participation among the residents and the arising of new developments within the settlement which are believed as attacks, are negative. Even though they are not satisfied with the qualities and opportunities of the surrounding environment (physical and social), most of them have a definite sense of belonging to their neighborhood. The results, which are contradicting with the assumption of Fried’s (2000), showed that demographic aspects do not play a determining role in the intensity of attachment. As expected from past research, long term residents and home owners reported more overall community attachments. Some of the new residents reported that they are not belonged to the settlement, expressed low levels of attachments and explained the reasons by their short-term habitation. The findings demonstrated that memories, social bonds, and duration of the residency are essential predictors of sense of belonging in the form and maintenance of attachment processes.

As a last word, for further research, in order to reach a more profound and an meaningful evaluation of the concepts of people-place bonding and community attachment, the number and the variety of
interviews should be increased and the observations should be expanded to a wider area within the settlement.
References


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